

A Worthy Goal for the New Year

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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Philippians 4, verse 10. I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you had revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and want, abundance and need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. This is the word of the Lord. Well, I am a world-class complainer. I've been complaining my whole life, and I am quite good at it.

[1 : 19] When I was a boy, I complained about eating vegetables. I'm sure no one in this room ever complains about eating broccoli instead of mac and cheese or cake.

And I still remember one time a babysitter made me eat a whole mouthful of green beans. What an injustice. I remember where I was, what they tasted like. Even though it's been over 30 years, I nearly died gagging on those green beans. But I didn't just complain about vegetables. I complained about almost everything. I complained when it was too hot. Complained when it was too cold. I complained when I had to wake up. I complained when I had to go to bed. I complained when I had to do schoolwork or other work or anything than what I was doing, which most often was playing guitar. I even complained on Christmas. One year, about the time Nirvana's Nevermind was released, and if you know, you know, I was trying to shred grunge music on my electric guitar.

[2 : 26] I wanted a jam box for Christmas. That's what I asked Santa for. Then on Christmas morning, I got a jam box. I should have been elated.

The problem was, my older brother got a jam box too, and his was cooler looking. It had speakers that detached so you could move them around the room.

And so, I threw an 11-year-old temper tantrum, complete with anger, tears, and pouting. A typical, entitled, little kid good at complaining.

Now, I no longer cry on Christmas morning. I'm older now. I've begun to learn a lot about why I shouldn't complain, but many times I find it hard, and my guess is you're a lot like me. What would it take for us to really stop complaining? What do we need to do? Do we just need to learn how to grin and bear it?

[3 : 28] Grin and bear the things we don't like. Need to be stronger on the inside or something like that. Or do we just need to stop wanting so much? As my grandfather used to say, when someone's talking about what they want, he'd say, they got a bad case of the I wants.

And is that what our problem is? That if we stopped wanting so much, we would be happy and we'd stop complaining. Or maybe we just need to care less.

They say the people that care less, that just lower their expectations, are happy. They're never disappointed because they care less about so many things. Or do we need to realize that our lives are actually going really well?

We live in one of the richest nations in the world, one of the richest nations in history. Maybe that's our problem. We're so ignorant of how wonderful we have it that we complain.

What would it take? And I'm sure all of those things would be helpful, but that's not what the apostle calls us to in these verses. We're going to look at some of the best known verses in Philippians.

[4 : 32] And they're specifically tailored to helping us learn true contentment. To put off complaining. They uncover what we really need in order to be content.

It's the secret that is needed by all people. By young and old, rich and poor, new believers and seasoned saints. It's a wonderful goal for the new year.

Fight to be content in Christ. In a way, where we're going is train your heart to find joy in Jesus in every situation. That's the goal for the new year, I hope.

In some ways, train your heart to find joy in Jesus in every situation. I'm going to break this out in three points.

The first one is, welcome to the school of contentment. Welcome to the school of contentment. Now, these verses, they begin in a bit of an odd way.

[5 : 30] The Philippians had sent Paul money. Paul was an itinerant minister. And so, he was an apostle. And oftentimes, churches would send him money. And so, the Philippians had sent him money.

This is his letter back to them. He writes to tell them, to respond to them. To tell them a few things on his heart. Which is what he's done in chapters 1 through 4. And he concludes with a bit of a thank you.

But he does it in a bit of an odd way. If you look down there in verse 10, he said, I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you've revived your concern. He's saying, I rejoice that you sent me money.

You revived your concern about me. You were partners with me in the gospel. You were indeed concerned. You proved it by sending Epaphroditus, as he tells us in chapter 3.

With money, with a gift for me. You revived your concern. You didn't have opportunity at one time. But you revived it. Look at verse 11 though.

[6 : 29] He says, not that I am speaking of being in need. So Paul is happy and thankful for their gift. Expressing how grateful he is for their gift.

But he continues, though I am thankful for it, it is not like I needed it. Now people like that can be annoying. Have you ever tried to give a gift to someone who says they don't need anything?

Your mom might say, I don't need a gift. I just want to be with you. I find that annoying. Now your wife might say that. Your spouse might say that.

But I've been married long enough to know that's a bit of a trick. Because if you call a bluff on that, it's not going to go well. But Paul essentially says, I don't need it.

And he means it. And he's doing it because he wants to underline how he's learned to be happy in Jesus Christ.

[7 : 25] He's teaching them and he's teaching us. First thing he teaches the Philippians in some ways is, all of us have to go to the school of contentment because contentment is learned. So in this context of thank you for this gift, he begins to teach us about contentment.

Look at verse 11. He says, I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. Verse 12, he continues, I have learned the secret.

Beginning of verse 12, I know how to be brought low. I know how to abound. Contentment, you know that word there, it's just a word to refer to being joyful and happy no matter what is going on.

So the apostle Paul says, I know how to be content. Not because I know in my head, like I know that volcanic lava is hot or Antarctica is cold.

He's saying, I know how to be content because I've truly learned to be happy in the Lord no matter what is going on. Now, this is encouraging news in many ways because he's saying contentment is learned.

[8 : 35] Contentment does not come naturally. A lot of things come naturally in this life. We naturally begin to walk and to talk and to run and so on, but not contentment.

It did not come naturally for the apostle Paul. He complained and whined and no doubt battled discontentment like us. And it will not come naturally for us, but it can be learned.

Wonderfully, it's not a super spiritual quality given to super saints either. It's not given to those really good people. I think many times we read the New Testament. We read what the apostle said.

We assume that's just for apostle only category. But that's not what he's saying here. Contentment is learned by everyone. You know that person who you think has the secret, who's learned to be joyful.

They've learned it through trial and error. So it's encouraging news. Contentment is learned. Contentment can be learned, but it's sobering news as well. Contentment must be learned. [9 : 42] Learned here literally refers to appropriate for oneself, to truly learn. We must hear teaching and put it into practice. We must do this for ourselves.

The idea is that contentment is not a feeling that just comes over us. Sometimes we can think happiness is just this feeling that takes over us. Well, that's not the happiness the apostle is talking about here.

It's not something we wait for, but something we work for. Contentment is not something that just comes to us when we get older. J.C. Ryle provokingly says, Two of the rarest sights are a young man who is humble and an old man who is content.

Even Hollywood gets in on this. Grumpy old men. You can grow older and yet not grow content. You can grow older and yet not be truly wise biblically. It's sobering. You have to do more than live. [10 : 48] It's sobering because contentment can remain unlearned. As we get older, life often begins to fall into place in positive ways for us.

We get into the job we really want. We get into more disposable income and begin purchasing the things we want. Many times we curate our lives.

We arrange the commitments in our lives to mainly revolve around the things we want. And on the outside, people can look at us and assume we're happy. And yet on the inside, we can lack contentment.

Several years ago, Anthony Bourdain, famous chef, author, TV star, committed suicide. After he died, a documentary was released about his life.

You know anything about him. No Boundaries, whatever that show was called. This striking chef and striking life and travel. And the documenter spent hours studying Bourdain's life.

[11 : 49] Studying all the video they had recorded on him. This is a television person. So there's tons of video recording, audio recording out there.

And this documenter spent years studying his life. He concluded Bourdain was given everything he wanted. Money, a chance to travel, and freedom.

And this is this documentary. I don't know anything about his soul. But he said, did that find him happiness? Of course it didn't. And I quote, because happiness doesn't come from external things. It's a provoking warning. Contentment can remain unlearned. But it must be learned.

What I want to alert you to right here is that no one can do this for you. I can't make you content. You must seek God and His Word and repeatedly apply it to your life to make your heart content in Christ.

[13 : 04] In math, it's not enough to watch the teacher work. You must learn how to do the problem. Not enough to watch her work and get the right answer. You've got to learn how to do the problem.

Well, contentment is the same thing. You must learn contentment by going to what is true and applying it to your life. Contentment will not come in any other way. You must learn it for yourself. You must learn it for your own heart. You know, and the best book I've ever read on contentment, A Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment. It might be my favorite book by a Puritan, by Jeremiah Burroughs.

I commend it to all of you, even though it's a bit tedious. He says, You must learn to know your own hearts well. If you want to make a dent in this world, follow this.

You must learn to know your own hearts well, to be good students of your own hearts. You cannot all be scholars in the arts and sciences in the world, but you may all be students of your own heart.

[14 : 06] This is wisdom. You will never get any skill in this mystery of contentment, except you study the book of your own heart. A Christian next to the book of God, that's the Scriptures, is to look into the book of his own heart and read it over.

That's what you have to learn. There's two books you need to learn. The Scriptures and the book of your own heart. So welcome to the School of Contentment.

Several years ago, I read an article about the most common nightmares. Some of the common ones were, you wake up thinking your teeth are falling out. I mean, that sounds terrible.

I've never had that one. You know, you wake up thinking you're falling, and I had that many times in classes in high school. You wake up thinking you're naked before a crowded room.

That's scary. I don't want to think about that. But one of the most common nightmares is wake up terrified about a test you didn't prepare for. We've all had that, right?

[15:13] I remember going back to seminary years ago, after I'd been out of college for some time, and I started having that dumb nightmare again. Oh my goodness, I didn't prepare for these things.

Been out of school a long time now, and I don't want to go back to those nightmares. But if we're going to glorify Christ in this life, we have to go to this school. It will not work to say, I'm not a school kind of guy.

You have to enroll. Are you still in school? Are you still taking classes? Ryle said, never be ashamed of being a learner. Are you still a learner? Are you still training your heart to find joy in Christ?

Have you settled in a deep-seated discontent? A cheerful heart, the Proverbs says, is a continual feast, but is your heart a continual famine of your own making, in which you're constantly grumbling about the things in your life?

I commend you. Get into school. Teenagers, this is a tremendous gift to learn contentment. I know you think your dad's crazy.

[16:26] Sometimes I think he's crazy too, but you want to learn this. You don't know what you don't know, and your dad does.

You can learn contentment now. I think empty nesters have a wonderful opportunity. It's so tempting to pick through the remains of your life and to grumble about what you don't have any longer, what you'd hope to have and you don't have.

It's a tremendous opportunity to keep learning, keep going to school. Grumpy men do not have to get grumpy. They ought not. Point two, your teachers are Mrs. Pleasure and Mr. Payne.

Your teachers are Mrs. Pleasure and Mr. Payne. In the school of contentment, there are two teachers, Mrs. Pleasure and Mr. Payne.

The apostle says in verse 12, I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be content in whatever situation, in any and every circumstance, he says, I know how to be content.

[17:39] He continues and goes through these poles, these opposites. I know how to be, look in verse 12, to be brought low. I know how to be, to abound. I've learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.

He's saying all the highs and lows have taught me that contentment doesn't depend on them.

Contentment is wonderfully not connected to any of the circumstances of life.

True contentment, biblical contentment, what the apostle is talking about, is wonderfully disconnected. And both of these teachers teach us the same thing. Contentment does not depend on them.

Mispleasure teaches us contentment is not gain in pleasure and success. Contentment is not gain in pleasure and success. We often think, why would the apostle need to know how to abound?

Why would he need to learn how to enjoy plenty, to receive abundance? I remember being struck by this passage when I was a young Christian, 21 years old, struck by it. Why would he say that?

[18:49] Surely you need to learn how to face need, but not abundance. But far too often, this is where most Christians fail.

Mispleasure warns that it's easy to continually chase pleasure and success without realizing they will never satisfy. One of the most successful recording artists in the last 50 years, most of you don't know of them because of the, haven't been around for 20 years, is Madonna.

She has numerous hit songs and sold numerous albums, and all of her success is never enough.

And one of the most haunting quotes I've read in mainstream media, she says, and I quote, again and again, my drive in life is to conquer this horrible feeling of mediocrity, of being mediocre.

That's always pushing me, pushing me, because even though I've become somebody, capital S, I still have to prove that I am somebody.

my struggle has never ended and it probably never will. She says, I've attained something great.

[20:19] Financial independence, success, but it's not enough. Sadly, she concludes, my struggle has never ended and it probably never will.

What's she giving us a window into? She's giving us a window into the never ending chase unless you wake up and learn contentment.

Pleasure and success are never enough. Like you will never attain something in this life externally in your circumstance and say that's enough. You will not be content if your income raises 25%.

You will not be content if you go on that dream vacation. You will not be content if all your prayers are answered. You will not be content if that door opens. You will not be, or you would not have been content if your last business hadn't failed.

Contentment is separated from those things. It's a heart work. In fact, Scripture repeatedly tells us, not only will pleasure and success success, not satisfy, they're dangerous.

[21 : 32] In Deuteronomy 8, the Lord warns the people as they're going into the promised land, when you get into the promised land, that land flowing with milk and honey, I don't know all of what that means, but it sounds good.

I think that was the point. You know, when you get into that land flowing with milk and honey, watch out! that lets your heart be lifted up and you say, my power, my hand, my work has brought this about and not the blessing of God.

The old guys call this the test of prosperity. And it's harder than the test of adversity. You want to pick a test? Pick the other test.

That's what they'd say. The biblical heroes pass the test of adversity. They failed the test of prosperity. Moses failed it. David, Solomon, John Flavel, his wonderful little book, says, outward gains are ordinarily attended with inward losses.

Now take that home. Outward gains are ordinarily attended with inward losses. That's where you fail the test.

[22 : 44] your heart. Inward loss. Contentment's not gained in pleasure and success, but contentment, Mr. Payne teaches us, is not lost in pain or failure.

Contentment is not lost in pain or failure. Numerous people have noted over the years that pain and failure have much to teach us. You will, or you have never heard someone say, my faith became real when I was promoted at work and began making more money than I ever had.

You've never heard someone say, my prayer life blossomed on that once-in-a-lifetime cruise vacation. You've never heard someone say, the scriptures became precious to me this summer we got a new lake house.

But you've heard people say, my faith became real when I was walking through chronic pain.

Rheumatoid arthritis broke down on me, bit down on me.

My prayer time transformed when I suddenly lost my job. Had to struggle to provide. The scriptures became precious to me. You've heard it said during the desperate years of parenting teenagers.

[23 : 58] Pain and pleasure have so much to teach us about true joy. That's what the apostles say. It's not lost. True joy is not lost in the pain and failure. It's strengthened.

The apostle Paul, he talks about this in 2 Corinthians 11 when he's defending his ministry. He defends his ministry in a most shocking way. He starts talking about all the adversity he's faced.

Look up there with me. He says, five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned.

Three times I was shipwrecked. A night and a day I was adrift at sea on frequent journeys in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, dangers from the Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers, in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and in thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

And apart from the other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. That's a rap sheet. When the apostle's saying, I know how to be brought low, he means it.

[25 : 17] He learned. I mean, in many ways, that's what a majority of acts is. These tales of the apostle bearing the marks of his apostleship.

And he's here to teach us. He's saying he's faced hardship and he's learned. He's learned from the test of adversity. He's learned how to face it down.

How to be content. How to walk with the Lord. You know, God has promised pain and failure is coming into your life. In many ways, all of us are being hit by the Mack truck.

The issue is, we don't get to choose the truck. That's what knocks us off our feet. We don't get to choose the truck. Why?

Not because God's cruel, but because God wants to show the world that there is joy that's detached from circumstances. That's what the world desperately needs to hear.

[26 : 18] Otherwise, we're just selling a bag of goods. But we're not selling a bag of goods. We're selling Jesus Christ. We're proclaiming Him. And so God has purposed pain and failure to come into your life, to test you, to see, to help you rely on Him to learn to be content.

You know, pain and failure so often teach us that our main problem in life is not our circumstances, but discontentment. Thomas Watson says, I brought a lot of friends today.

This is a great quote. It is not trouble that troubles, but discontent. It's not trouble that troubles. What troubles you?

Is it the kids? Is it your boss? Is it your nagging mother-in-law? Is it chronic health problems? Is that really what it is? Or is it discontent? Pain and failure teach us that what we really need is not for circumstances to get better, but for our heart to get lower, to learn humility.

[27 : 32] You know, God, the way God works in our life, He's so more interested in the work He's doing in you than the work He's doing through you. He's not served by human hands as though He needed anything, and so that's the way He conducts your life.

He's arranging the details and the circumstances, all the providence of your life to bring your heart lower. That's what He wants. Thomas Watson, again, he says, the way for a man or a woman to be contented is not by raising his estate higher, but by bringing his heart lower.

It's a hard lesson. I remember years ago, I was born again, you know, in the summer of 2001. Summer of 2002, felt called to full-time ministry. I was ready to go take a field for Christ, you know, and I went and visited a seminary that summer with my dad, and we were talking to the Presbyterian Seminary there and talking to this guy, talking to one of the advisors or something, one of the professors.

He said, I just said, I can't, I need to get here right now. I just want to quit undergrad. I want to get here right now. I want to go into the ministry right now.

[28 : 48] And he said, what you need, and I wasn't expecting much from this guy, but that's my own pride. But, you know, because God will, out of the mouth of babes, you know.

I didn't know this guy until this meeting. He said, what you need is character. And that's what these next two years are all about. What a word.

That's what God wants. He wants character. He wants your heart to get lower. Pain and failure teach us to find lasting joy in God. D.A. Carson says, so helpfully, the ultimate ground of our rejoicing can never be our circumstances.

Even though we as Christians recognize that our circumstances are providentially arranged. That means arranged for our good. If our joy derives primarily from our circumstances, then when our circumstances change, we will be miserable.

Our delight must be in the Lord Himself. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why the Lord sometimes allows miserable circumstances to lash us.

[29 : 55] That we may learn this lesson. And you may be fresh from a lashing this morning, and I want you to learn this lesson. Whatever the mysteries of evil and sorrow, they do have the salutary, the good effect of helping believers to shift the ground of their joy from created things to the Creator.

That's what's going on, you know? That's what God is doing. He's shifting the ground of your joy, pain, and pleasure. At the end of the day, they have the same lesson. They're a test.

They want you to learn the lesson that joy is detached from anything going on in your life. Any of the circumstances going on in your life. If your joy is detached to the circumstance in your life, it's not Christian joy.

God wants you to learn the lesson. You've got to learn the lesson. Point three.

All you must learn is found in Jesus. All you must learn is found in Jesus. The Apostle continues and unveils the secret of contentment.

[31 : 19] Contentment is a secret. Why does he say that? Not because God conceals it, because so many don't learn it.

I am to be content. He said, look in verse 12 again, I have learned the secret. Verse 13, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

I've learned the secret. What I've learned is that all the joy is found in Christ. Now that verse, verse 13, one of the most, certainly one verse you know.

It's one of the most widely quoted verses in all of Scripture. Tim Tebow used to write it under his eyes. We don't like him because he played for Florida.

Grateful for his testimony. But Steph Curry used to, he wrote it on his shoes when he made a run with Davidson in the NCAA tournament. No one knew who Steph Curry was.

[32 : 28] Maybe UT should have written on their cleats. We needed some help. It's widely quoted, but widely misunderstood.

It does not mean you can climb every mountain because Jesus is with you. It does not mean you can accomplish great things in a worldly sense with Jesus' help.

does not mean Jesus will give you supernatural strength, superhuman strength. I should say it that way. Superhuman strength. He will give you supernatural strength.

But what it means is so much better. What that means, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I can face any situation with joy because Jesus is with me and will help me.

That's what's going on. I can face any situation with joy because Jesus is with me and will help me.

Now in Paul's day, he's doing something very, very provocative here, provoking, stirring here.

[33 : 29] Contentment was very different in Paul's day. It was a stoic type contentment. So contentment was internally derived. This Grin and Barrett attitude, I can make it through anything, through this determined disposition to not be struck down on it.

But he's saying contentment, according to the scriptures, is not like that. It's not internally derived. Contentment, according to the scripture, is externally derived from Christ.

The contentment you need is not through the inner resolve of your own strength, but through the external application of Christ's strength. Such that you will learn to rely on His strength, to boast in the Lord and the strength of His might.

And so it works out in any and every situation because you have the settled confidence that Jesus will never leave you or forsake you. That He'll give you all that you need to endure and to walk with Him in this life and into the next.

That's what's going on here. Now how does this work out, you know, pragmatically? How does it work out? And I think Paul unveils that to us at the end of 2 Corinthians.

[34 : 44] We just quoted 2 Corinthians 11. And so kind of the conclusion of that part in many ways, how he faces down all those things, comes to us in 2 Corinthians 12.

Paul tells us he is harassed by a thorn in the flesh. Ever stepped on a Lego? Golly. Ever had a really bad splinter?

He said something that was really annoying but it's greater than that. There's a messenger of Satan. He says, Paul says three times you take this away from me, you know, three times.

Numbers are important in the Scriptures. Three times take this away and the Lord tells him, no, I'm going to keep it to humble you. No. And Paul says, quoting the Lord, 2 Corinthians 12, my grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness.

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ then, I am content.

[35 : 57] Content. That's our word. I am content with weaknesses. Insults. Hardships.

Persecutions. And calamity. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

God gives relief to Paul not by removing the thorn but by adding more grace. So often, that's what the Lord wants to do in you to add more grace.

grace. This grace is not merely something sent by Christ. This grace in this passage is Christ.

It is Christ who strengthens you. The power of Christ upon you so that you're content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamity.

So you're content. That's the secret. Spirit. That's it. Christ being with you and keeping you. After he was resurrected, our Lord called the disciples to take the gospel to the end of the earth.

[37 : 10] He said, behold, I will be with you even to the end of the age. You know, taking many a missionary to the far reaches of the earth with the promise of the gospel. John Patton took the gospel to the islands of the South Pacific called the New Hebrides in 1858.

These islands were filled with people. His heart was set on these islands. They were filled with people who were cannibals. Within a year, like so many missionaries, both his wife and newborn son died of fever.

He lived alone on the island for four more years. Then he married again. You know, how's that for an offer? Come, be eaten by cannibals with me.

But, his wife signed up. She continued, they continued to preach the gospel there for 41 years until John Patton was 81 years old.

He faced many trials, much suffering, much pain, many days. He feared for his life, not just from sickness, but from being killed.

[38 : 23] On one particular night, he tells the experience of hiding in a tree as the savages chased for him. He was alerted ahead of time, so he knew to run and to hide somewhere.

And they're running all around him to take his life. He says, I quote, we have for you. He said, I climbed into the tree that was, and was left there alone in the bush.

The hours I spent there live as if, all before me, as if it were but of yesterday. I heard the frequent discharging of muskets, the yells of the savages.

Yet I sat there among the branches as safe as in the arms of Jesus. Never in all my sorrows did my Lord draw nearer to me, speak more soothingly in my soul than when the moonlight flickered among those chestnut leaves and the night air played on my throbbing brow as I told my heart to Jesus.

Alone, yet not alone. If it be to glorify my God, I would not grudge to spend many nights alone in such a tree to feel again my Savior's spiritual presence and enjoy his consoling fellowship.

[39 : 45] If thus thrown back upon your own soul, alone, all alone, in the midnight, in the bush, in the very embrace of death itself, have you a friend that will not fail you then?

Mr. Patton, ask us, why? Because he's learned the secret. Contentment is not a feeling. It's not a grin and bear attitude. It's a person.

It's Jesus Christ. This is the secret. Jesus is with you. Jesus will help you. Jesus will never leave you. Jesus will supply all the need, all of what you need to keep pressing on with joy.

All you must learn in life, all you must learn from these tests is found in Jesus Christ. In this person, outside of you who takes you upon himself, you will face much pleasure and you must know the secret or you will not find joy.

You will face much pain and you must know the secret or you will lose joy. Do you know the secret? Do you have a friend who won't fail you in the highest of high or the lowest of lows?

[40 : 51] Do you have a friend in Jesus Christ? It doesn't matter if you're 8 years old and learning to face everyday fears or 48 and learning to face the fears of an unknown future.

It doesn't matter if you've done everything right or everything wrong. You must have a friend in Jesus Christ. You must have it for the life to come.

To be rescued from the wrath of God to come. To flee the wrath that is to come for all who have sinned against God. But you must have it to be content. Let us not be among the number that just get grumpier and grumpier as we age but more and more filled with joy because we found that life does not consist in the abundance of possessions but in Jesus Christ who says fear not is the Father's good pleasure that give you the kingdom.

He's the only friend who will never fail. I've been a Christian for 23 years now. He's not failed me yet. He's enough. He's enough.

I don't know what you're staring down. He's enough. I don't know what unanticipated struggles are going to hit you broadside this year but I can tell you this.

[42 : 07] He's enough. I'm content. Are you content? Train your heart beloved to find joy in Jesus Christ in whatever the situation.

That's what we want. That's a goal for 2025. Right? Let's pray. Father in heaven we offer ourselves to you sincerely and completely.

we don't want to play fast and loose. We want to play it straight. Lord we don't want to get distracted by pleasure and success.

We don't want to get submarine by pain and failure. We need you to help us God. We want to walk with you. We thank you that you walk with us.

You know our names. You've written them in the book of life. You've called us by name. Lord we don't want to go to heaven kicking and screaming.

[43 : 25] Kicking the dirt. We want to walk with you rejoicing that everything in our life is providentially arranged so that we might boast in you alone and rejoice in you alone.

Face down whatever's going on in the strength of your might. Help us God. We pray.

In Jesus name. Amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.

For more information about Trinity Grace please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com through the Thank you.