

**PHILIPPIANS 4:10-23**  
**JOY IN ALL THINGS!**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Philippians chapter 4 as we continue our in-depth study of Paul's letter to the church in Philippi. And this morning we will finish up this letter that is a letter of joy!

We have been studying this letter for a little over three months and I pray that you have been blessed. Every one of our studies had the focus of joy because I believe that joy flows out of that *AGAPE* love that only God can give to us.

The problem for us is that we can let circumstances cause us to lose focus. What I mean by that is that we take our eyes off the Lord, where our joy comes from, and we focus on the situation we are in, and that joy is lost!

I like what Paul had to say in Philippians 4:4-7, **“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”**

Paul, in making his point about our joy, tells us twice that we are to rejoice in the Lord, and he tells us that we are to always be rejoicing in the Lord!

But what if we lose our perspective of things?

What if things get out of focus?

What can we do if we lose that joy in our lives?

Paul goes on to say in Philippians 4:8-9, **“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”**

In other words, focus your mind on the things of God. Bring your concerns to God, that is important for us to do as then God gives us a peace and joy that goes way beyond our understanding.

Remember what Paul said in Colossians 3:1-2, **“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”**

Where are we to set our minds on?

Paul tells us that we are to set our minds on **“things above”**!

What are we not to set our minds on?

Paul tells us not to set our minds on **“things of the earth”**!

I think we all know this, but the problem comes when difficulties arise in our lives, and we turn our focus on the situation and off of God!

And then we become discontent with life, we don't understand what God is doing, we can't believe that God has allowed this into our lives!

If you struggle in this area, and we all do, I am sure, then I pray this study will bless you and help you because it is called – ***JOY IN ALL THINGS!***

Listen to this story for it illustrates to us the idea of being discontent no matter what we may have and as we are discontent, we will lose that joy that is only found in the Lord.

This is what we are told,

Sometime ago there appeared in a newspaper a cartoon showing two fields divided by a fence.

Both fields were about the same size, and each had plenty of the same kind of grass, green and lush.

In each field there was a mule, and each mule had his head through the fence eating grass from the other mule's pasture.

All around each mule in his own field was plenty of grass, yet the grass in the other field seemed greener or fresher, although it was harder to get.

And in the process the mules were caught in the wires and were unable to extricate themselves.

The cartoonist put just one word at the bottom of the picture – ***“DISCONTENT”!***

- Earl C. Willer

How true that is for our own lives. God has given to us so much and we want more, we are not content!

And when you think about it, like these mules, discontentment seems to lead us into situations in which we become all tangled up trying to get something that we may already possess or don't really need.

And we run around frustrated, angry, mad and, like I have said, we have lost the joy that the Lord has given to us.

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points. They are,

***JOY IN THEIR CARE FOR PAUL – PHILIPPIANS 4:10***

***JOY IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES – PHILIPPIANS 4:11-13***

***JOY IN GIVING – PHILIPPIANS 4:14-19***

***JOY IN KNOWING GOD – PHILIPPIANS 4:20-23***

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Philippians chapter 4, beginning in verse 10 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and look at this topic – ***JOY IN ALL THINGS!***

### **PHILIPPIANS 4**

#### **VERSE 10**

Remember what we are looking at in this verse – ***JOY IN THEIR CARE FOR PAUL!***

Keep in mind that for some two years the church in Philippi had lost touch with Paul. They did not know where he was after he was arrested in Jerusalem and then sat in prison for two years.

Once Paul made it to Rome they heard of where he was located, and they once again had contact with him.

What Paul is basically saying here is this. ***“I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that your care for me has once again flourished. It was not that you did not care for me, you truly did but you lacked the opportunity to help me since you had lost contact with me. But now that you have found me here in Rome, your kindness for me is showing once again!”***

And this gift that Paul is speaking of here, the one that the Philippians sent to Paul by Epaphroditus, is spoken of in Philippians 2:25, where Paul wrote, **“Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need.”**

And this is played out for us as Paul said in Philippians 4:18, **“Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.”**

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“But I have [your full payment] and more; I have everything I need and am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent me. [They are the] fragrant odor of an offering and sacrifice which God welcomes and in which He delights.”**

Please understand that Paul is not rebuking them here saying that they were insensitive to his needs or didn't care about Paul's needs.

Again, they lost track of where Paul was for some two years and now that they had located him, they were trying to help him out as much as they could!

Paul wanted them to know he understood, and he is rejoicing in the Lord that at this time they are able to help him out.

It is such a blessing when I see people helping me in the work of the ministry! That is a tremendous joy to me. That is how Paul felt here. Tremendous joy in how the Philippians were concerned about Paul.

Let me ask you this. Do we look for ways that we can bless people?

We should!

Remember what Paul wrote in Philippians 2:1-4, **“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”**

If you want to bless people you have to get to know them.

If you want to bless people you have to talk with them.

If you want to bless people you have to know what they need.

If you want to bless people you have to put on the mind of Christ!

That was what the Philippians had done, and, like I have said, this love they had for Paul brought him great joy! He saw them living out their faith!

Now, as you look at all that Paul had to endure, two years in Caesarea, then he gets shipwrecked on his way to Rome. Then, when he gets to Rome, he is two years under house arrest chained to a soldier awaiting to present his case before Nero.

And Rome did not provide much for you to live by, they expected family and friends to supply your needs.

So Paul could have been upset in this situation, but he wasn't and we see – ***JOY IN THEIR CARE FOR PAUL!***

And, as we read on, we will see that Paul had – ***JOY IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES!***

VERSES 11-13

What we see here in these verses is that Paul wants them to understand that whatever state he is in, whatever happens to him, he is content in life!

In other words, Paul had – ***JOY IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES!***

Think about the situation that Paul was in and he was content!

Now, look at this world and for the people of this world, contentment seems to be an unattainable goal!

Why is that?

Because they seek contentment where it can't be found, like money, possessions, jobs, power, freedom from difficulties and so on.

In this fallen world that is impossible to attain.

What is contentment all about?

According to Webster's Dictionary the word "***contentment***" means, "***the state, quality, or fact of being contented. A satisfying or being satisfied.***"

The word "***content***" means, "***happy enough with what one has or is; not desiring something more or different.***"

In other words, to be content is the opposite of being covetous, or being greedy, or being worldly, or being materialistic.

Jesus put it this way in Luke 12:15, "**... 'Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.'**"

And yet, in America today we tend to focus on the abundance of things we can possess!

We think it is there we will find joy, contentment and the like!

But do you really think that what Jesus said was wrong?

Of course not. He knows what is best and He knows things will not satisfy us, possessions will not bring us that joy we were looking for!

They may bring happiness for a time, but in the end, that is gone, and we have to replace that happiness with some other possession!

Make no mistake about it, we truly are living in the days where the mentality is, ***“More is better!”*** Thus, we grab for all that we can. We try to obtain bigger and better things. The latest this, the newer that and thus, we are not satisfied, contentment eludes us because we are not seeking it, but things.

This commercial was on several years ago, so I don't know if you remember it or not. But in this commercial, there was this man who is boasting of all that he has. A new car, a new home, a new riding lawn mower, a swimming pool. And he says something like this. ***“And I am in debt up to his eyeballs!”***

He needs help, not just in buying things he can't afford, not just in how to pay off his debt, but learning how to be content in life.

It is like the story of the Pompeii lady.

You remember the explosion of the volcano in Pompeii, don't you?

This is what we are told,

Of the 20,000 inhabitants of Pompeii, some 2,000 lost their lives, among them a woman who loved finery about all else [she had the best of everything].

As the deadly rain of fire came down, she decided to run to the harbour and escape by ship.

That was wise, but this rich and beautiful woman stayed behind just long enough to collect as much jewelry as she could carry.



Snatching her rings, she hastily thrust them on her fingers. There was no time to hunt for a box or a bag in which to cram her ornaments, so she picked up as many as she could hold, and rushed into the street, clutching her pearls and diamonds, her rubies and sapphires, her gold brooches and her earrings – a wealth of finery that would be placed at thousands of dollars today.

But she delayed too long.

The poisonous fumes overcame her as she ran; and with all her trinkets she stumbled, fell, and died, clutching the things she prized so much.

There, under the ashes of Pompeii she lay; and when the excavators found her, she was still lovely, and her hands were still laden with jewels.

- Prairie Overcomer

What are you holding onto, grabbing for, not willing to let go?

What has consumed your life?

What are you passionate about?

You see, whatever it is can bless you or destroy you.

Paul was a man who had the right perspective of things, the right perspective of the situation. He knew what was important and because of that, he was content!

Paul, in I Timothy 6:6-12 tells us this very thing. This is what Paul wrote, **“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”**

Paul is saying that we are to live a life surrendered to the will of God; to find contentment in that and it will be a blessing. Being satisfied with what God has given to you.

If you aren't surrendered to the will of God for your life you will drown in trying to find contentment in the mire of this world!

Keep in mind that Paul warns us in II Timothy chapter 3 that in the last days times of great stress will come upon people as they focus upon self, they are unthankful for what they do have, and they are trying to find contentment, satisfaction outside of God, and it is eluding them, they will never find true contentment outside of God, lasting contentment!

Now, please keep in mind that when Paul says that he accepts all things it is not some fatalistic attitude, a ***“Whatever will be will be”*** mentality.

Nor is Paul saying this as he sat like some fat cat in some ivory tower looking down upon those that had nothing. Again, Paul was in prison chained to Roman soldiers twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week!

Then how did Paul find contentment!

Interestingly enough, Paul says that he has “**learned**” these things and it is a word that speaks of learning by experience. This was not some theoretical idea, something he read about in a book, something he contemplated, but through his life’s experiences he learned how to be content.

Keep in mind that Paul was a Pharisee at one time, someone that people looked up to.

He had the best schooling, the best teacher of their day.

He had it all!

But Paul also knew about having nothing. He knew what it was like to be cold, to go without eating, to not have a warm place to rest at night. He knew what it was like to be persecuted, to be stoned for sharing his faith, to be put in jail for sharing his faith, to be beaten up and-so-on.

And Paul says he knows how to live no matter what situation comes his way and not only to know how to live like this, but to accept all things that came his way, he learned how to be content as he went through the school of life.

A great example of discontent is seen in pro-athletes, but they are not alone by any means.

For football players, the ultimate goal is getting a Super Bowl ring.

What that means is that you are the best team in football that year.

Because of that we see players work hard, they even try to get on the best teams so they can get a Super Bowl ring before they retire.

Barry Sanders from the Detroit Lions played on that team his entire career without winning the Super Bowl.

As it got closer to retirement for this great running back, the team he was on wasn't looking too good to obtain his goal of winning the Super Bowl, so he wanted to be traded to another team.

The problem for Barry was that the Detroit Lions would not release his contract, they would not let him go and thus, instead of playing for a losing team, he retired, maybe hoping that then he would be released by them and could join a winning team.

That didn't happen.

And so, because he couldn't get his way, he couldn't get the ring he wanted so badly, he just quit the game, he was not content just to play the game.

Interestingly enough, I believe it was Troy Aikman, who was the quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys, who said after winning the Super Bowl, and I am paraphrasing, "***Is this all there is?***"

You see, something that so many covet so much, when it is obtained, is not that great after all, it didn't bring contentment! In other words, it was empty!

Then there is Carl Malone who played basketball.

He played almost his entire career with the Utah Jazz, and he ended his career with the Los Angeles Lakers.

He was asked by a reporter about not having won a world championship ring in the NBA, if that was important to him, if people would judge how good he was or wasn't because he didn't win an NBA championship.

He responded, and I am paraphrasing again, but he basically said, ***“I would have liked to win but I hope people don’t measure my career by that. I hope they look at how I played the game, that I gave it my all every game and I hope I encourage these young players in the NBA to do the same!”***

I like that. He was content with playing basketball and when he did, he did his best!

Maybe you heard this story before, and if not it’s premise or principle rings loud and clear.

We are told,

Coming downstairs one morning, Lord Congelton heard the cook exclaim, ***“Oh, if I only had five pounds, wouldn’t I be content!”***

Thinking the matter over, and anxious to see the woman satisfied, he shortly after handed her a five-pound note, then worth about twenty-five dollars.

She thanked him profusely.

He paused outside the door to hear if she would express her satisfaction and thank God.

As soon as his shadow was invisible, she cried out, ***“Why didn’t I say ten?”***

- Prairie Overcomer

That is funny to me, and I think it is very true!

Have you ever found yourself in a situation similar to that before?

I’m sure we all have, and the reason is simple, we are not content.

Then what should we do to be content?

First of all, the word that Paul used for **“content”** means ***“self-sufficient.”***

Now don't come to the conclusion that Paul looked to himself to accomplish these things, that he was the master of his destiny, that he was in control. Not at all.

Paul was self-sufficient in the new life he had in Christ, by the power of God working in him and thus, as he learned these lessons on how to be content through the things he was going through, by the power of God's Spirit working in him, by yielding to the Holy Spirit he was able to be content.

The prophet Habakkuk had a problem trusting God, accepting what God was doing, being content in what God was bringing to pass and God changed his heart. He learned how to be content by his life experiences.

Thus, in Habakkuk 3:17-19 we are told, **“Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls - Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills.”**

That is the proper perspective to have. God is in control! Thus, no matter what may come my way, rags to riches or riches to rags, I know how to live – with a content heart because there is – ***JOY IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES*** that I find myself in, or at least there should be!

Make no mistake about it, contentment is a learned way of thinking. You have to teach yourself to be content with your circumstances.

How had the apostle learned such a lesson?

Simply in this way: he was confident that he was in the will of God. He knew that wherever he was, or in whatever circumstances he found himself, he was there by divine appointment. If he was hungry, it was because God wanted him to be hungry. If he was full, it was because his Lord had planned it.

What that means is that we are putting our trust in the Lord and whatever state we are in, we can find contentment because God is with us, and He will see us through these times. It doesn't matter if it is easy or it is tough, God is with us and in that we can find - ***JOY IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES!***

But what happens many times in our life is that we begin to look to the world to find this contentment and once you start feeding this ugly monster of possessions, of obtaining things to find contentment, you will want more and more and more.

***A bigger house!***

***A higher paying job!***

***The newest phone!***

***The newest car!***

What happens is we end up like Solomon who had it all and it never brought him satisfaction!

Make no mistake about it, Solomon had it all. He had wealth, possessions, a boat load of wives, he wrote books, Proverbs, had great building projects, he had it all!

But it was empty, it was vain, there was no joy, no satisfaction to all that he had!

And as you read through the book of Ecclesiastes, you will find this phrase, “**under the sun**” used some twenty-nine times.

That truly is the key to this book and if we understand that then we will understand what Solomon is saying.

Solomon is telling us what life is all about from an earthly perspective apart from God and it is not good.

Thus, we see the word “**vanity**” used some thirty-seven times because life apart from God is empty!

Maclaren wrote these words dealing with Solomon and what he wrote. He said, ***“He looks out upon humanity, and sees that in one aspect the world is full of births, and in another full of deaths. Coffins and cradles seem the main furniture, and he hears the tramp, tramp, tramp of the generations passing over a soil honeycombed with tombs.”***

And that is what many today deal with, a life that seems to be empty, without joy, without hope.

Listen to what taxi driver Jose Martinez has to say about life. ***“We’re here to die, just live and die. I drive a cab. I do some fishing, take my girl out, pay taxes, do a little reading, then get ready to drop dead. You’ve got to be strong about it. Life is a big fake. Nobody gives a - -. You’re rich or you’re poor. You’re here, you’re gone. You’re like the wind. After you’re gone, other people will come. We’re gonna destroy ourselves, nothing we can do about it. The only cure for the world’s illness is nuclear war - wipe everything out and start over.”***

It kind of sounds like Solomon and the tragedy is that many feel the same way as Jose Martinez, there really is no point in life. But there truly is, but he is missing the point.

Here is the wonderful news! You see, in Christ there is a point to our life, there is direction for our lives, there is hope for us, there is great joy we can have, there is satisfaction!



We have to remember that we will never find true joy, true contentment in this world but we can, like Paul, find true contentment and joy based in Jesus Christ! Things will never accomplish this in our lives, but Jesus can and does!

Because of that, when Paul had much it was great, when he had nothing, praise the Lord, it didn't matter to Paul because he knew God was in control and thus, he learned how to be content in all things!

As I have said, this was not just some theoretical idea, Paul lived it out in his life and thus, he could speak with certainty regarding these things.

Puritan Jeremiah Burroughs put it this way in regard to contentment. He said, "*Christian contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposal in every condition.*"

The key of course for Paul and for us is the power of God working in us, not relying on our own strength, on self, but upon Him who enables us to do all things! And truly to rest in Him no matter where we find ourselves!

Thus, the power of God in our life causes us not to worry in the situations we are in!

It is as Isaiah 40:29-31 tells us, "**He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.**"

And folks, think about it. God's power indwelling a believer is more than sufficient to strengthen and sustain us no matter what we are going through.

And let's put this into perspective because I don't think we look at things like this. But if we are honest with ourselves, we would see that both abundance and loss will pass, but Christ will remain the same! He is the Rock in our lives!

Again, Jeremiah Burroughs tells us, *"A Christian finds satisfaction in every circumstance by getting strength from another, by going out of himself to Jesus Christ, by his faith acting upon Christ, and bringing the strength of Jesus Christ into his own soul, he is thereby enabled to bear whatever God lays on him, by the strength that he finds from Jesus Christ . . . There is strength in Christ not only to sanctify and save us, but strength to support us under all our burdens and afflictions, and Christ expects that when we are under any burden, we should act our faith upon him to draw virtue and strength from him."*

Absolutely!

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30, **"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."**

May we not forget that as the storms are crashing down upon us! When the world does not treat us fairly! When life gets tough! Our peace, our rest, our hope, our joy, our contentment is in Jesus!

But this contentment and joy seems to elude many people. Let me show you what I mean. Maybe you heard this story, but it goes like this.

Two old friends met each other on the street one day. One looked sad and almost on the verge of tears.

His friend asked, *"What has happened to you, my old friend?"*

The sad fellow said, *“Let me tell you. Three weeks ago, my uncle died and left me forty thousand dollars.”*

*“That’s a lot of money,”* said his friend.

*“But you see,”* the sad man continued, *“two weeks ago, a cousin I never knew died, and left me eighty-five thousand dollars, free and clear.”*

The friend replied, *“That sounds like you have been very blessed.”*

*“You don’t understand!”* the sad fellow interrupted. *“Last week my great-aunt passed away. I inherited almost a quarter of a million from her.”*

The friend was really confused and said, *“Then, why are you so sad?”*

*“This week I didn’t get anything!”*

Again, funny but true many times.

Paul was a man that was content in Christ and because of that it didn’t matter if he was rich or poor because God would see him through or, as Paul put it, **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”** Philippians 4:13.

In a book about Hudson Taylor, called *Hudson Taylor’s Spiritual Secret*, the writer shows us this point.

In this book we see the principle of inner power in the life of a great missionary to China.

You see, for many years, Hudson Taylor worked hard and felt that he was trusting Christ to meet his needs, but somehow, he had no joy or liberty in his ministry.

I am sure we have all been in situations like that.

Then a letter from a friend opened his eyes to the adequacy of Christ. ***“It is not by trusting my own faithfulness, but by looking away to the Faithful One!”*** he said.

This was a turning point in his life. Moment by moment, he drew on the power of Christ for every responsibility of the day, and Christ's power carried him through.

In other words, "**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**" Philippians 4:13.

Here again we can find contentment as we understand, as we realize, as we apply this principle that we can do all things by the power of God working in us.

J. B. Phillips translates Philippians 4:13 like this, "**I am ready for anything through the strength of the One who lives in me.**"

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, "**I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency].**"

And The Living Bible puts this verse like this, "**for I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and power.**"

You see, as a Christian you have the power in you to accomplish all the things that God wants you to accomplish – thus, know His will for your life, walk in it!

That means if you have much or if you have absolutely nothing, God is still able to accomplish in you and through you what He wants!

Think about it. Paul was in prison and even in chains and yet the Gospel message was still going forward as the Roman Soldiers chained to Paul were getting saved, the Palace Guard; some of Nero's own family and the brethren in Christ were being strengthened in the faith!

Do we see God working like that today?

Absolutely, just look at this small church and all that God has done, is doing and will do through it.

The missionaries we support around the world.

The radio station that God has provided for us.

There is so much that God has done in us and through us and it is not because we are so special, but God is so good that He can use anyone who is willing to walk by faith!

Have we gone through difficult times over the last twenty-nine years?

Absolutely!

Have we gone through some times where we have had much?

Absolutely!

And that should bring to us great joy that no matter what, God is working!

In other words – ***JOY IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES!***

As we read on, we will be looking at – ***JOY IN GIVING!***

#### VERSES 14-19

Paul starts out by speaking of how the Philippians saw what Paul needed and sent a gift to help him. As Paul was suffering, as he was in need, they too felt what Paul was feeling and out of that they helped Paul!

Keep in mind that Paul is speaking of his ministry in Philippi some 10 years earlier when the church got started and how generous they were in their giving to Paul, supporting the work of the ministry.

Now Paul says that he was not seeking this gift. Why is that?

Because he knew that God would supply his needs one way or another.

Also, he was interested in seeing the fruit that would come to them as they freely gave for the work of God.

And Paul saw their giving was done out of love, not constraint.

The Philippians had a deep love for Paul, and it was not in words only, they showed it.

Paul takes this giving to a higher level by telling them it is a sweet-smelling sacrifice unto God, that is how God looks upon our giving and it is well pleasing in His sight when you give with the right motives!

Notice what Paul said of the Philippian believers in II Corinthians 8:1-5, **“Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.”**

The Macedonian churches included Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea.

But here in Philippians, Paul speaks of Philippi being the only church that was able to help him out and send aid even to the Thessalonians.

And then Paul says, **“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”** Philippians 4:19.

Let me share with you how Spurgeon summed this up for us because many have taken this to unbiblical conclusions.

He wrote in regard to what Paul was saying to them, *“He says to them, ‘You have helped me; but my God shall supply you. You have helped me in one of my needs—my need of clothing and of food: I have other needs in which you could not help me; but my God shall supply all your need. You have helped me, some of you, out of your deep poverty, taking from your scanty store; but my God shall supply all your need out of his riches in glory.’”*

Notice that God will supply all we **NEED** not necessarily all we **WANT** as we give out of the right motives.

Learning contentment in whatever God has given to you is the key, it is something you must put into practice in your life.

Make no mistake about it, God will supply exactly what we need for the work that He wants us to do.

Hudson Taylor often said, *“When God’s work is done in God’s way for God’s glory, it will not lack for God’s supply.”*

Exactly.

Remember what Paul said in Ephesians 3:20, **“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.”**

We tend to think that Paul is speaking of material things, wealth and many teachers take their people down that path and that is not what Paul is saying.

He is speaking of spiritual blessings and yes, we are blessed materially speaking also, but don’t use God like the stock market.

You invest in His Kingdom out of love, not because you are going to get something in return.

God will provide what you need in this life, and it is all based in Jesus Christ!

I like the example of resting in God to supply our needs that Warren Wiersbe gives to us.

He wrote,

A young pastor came to a church that had been accustomed to raising its annual budget by means of suppers, bazaars, and the like. He told his officers he could not agree with their program.

*“Let’s pray and ask God to meet every need,”* he suggested. *“At the end of the month, pay all the bills and leave my salary till the last. If there isn’t enough money for my salary, then I’m the one who suffers, and not the church. But I don’t think anybody is going to suffer!”*

The officers were sure that both the pastor and the church would die, but such was not the case.

Each month every bill was paid, and at the end of the year there was a surplus in the treasury for the first time in many years.

- Warren Wiersbe

Make no mistake about it, “**... my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**” Philippians 4:19.

Also, make no mistake about it, there is – ***JOY IN GIVING!***

We have again seen it here at Calvary.

The great joy in seeing the children learn about Jesus in Vacation Bible School!

The great joy I saw in going to Russia to share at the pastor’s conference and minister to many groups of people!



The great joy in hearing people that are being blessed by our radio station!

The great joy in giving to the Lord and seeing people blessed!

Now, as we conclude this morning, we will be looking at – ***JOY IN KNOWING GOD!***

### VERSES 20-23

After all that Paul has spoken in regard to what God has given to us, how He has supplied all of our needs, Paul gives to us a brief doxology or a short praise of God and ends it with an exclamation mark or an *AMEN*, which means, “*so be it.*”

As Paul begins to close this letter to the Philippians he does so with words of love and then Paul speaks of greetings from Caesar’s household.

What in the world is Paul saying, Caesar, his household, his guards were ruthless killers!

Here’s the thing. Remember that the Roman soldiers were being saved. Not only that but also some of Nero’s own family had come to the saving faith of Jesus Christ!

This was fine until Nero turned against the Christian faith and even murdered, burned to death members of his own family who had become Christians in around 64 A. D.

The point that Paul is making again is that the work of God continues on, even in prison.

God will provide for us in any circumstance and thus, don’t worry, rejoice in the Lord!

And what joy Paul had because there is tremendous – ***JOY IN KNOWING GOD!***

Let me ask you this.

Why does Paul begin and end this letter with the grace of God?

Because the Christian life begins with the grace of God and it ends with the grace of God working in us, and thus, all that is in between our salvation and glorification is because of the grace of God in our lives! Never forget that fact!

Think about this for a minute.

The Creator of heaven and earth, Almighty God, loves you so much that He died for your sins so that you can fellowship with Him!

If that does not cause you to smile and praise Him, then nothing will!

Again, and to me this is so important, there is – **JOY IN KNOWING GOD!**

So, it doesn't matter how much we have or how little we may have, because we know that "**. . . my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**" Philippians 4:19.

Not only that, but never forget that "**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**" Philippians 4:13.

May we not lose sight of what God has for us!

Let me close with this.

In your Christian walk do you live more like a thermometer or a thermostat?

I know, you are thinking, "***What in the world does he mean by that?***"

What I mean is this. Are you like a thermometer that goes up and down being totally influenced by its surrounding environment?

You see, a thermometer doesn't change anything, it has no influence on anything, it just responds to what is happening around it.

Many are like that today, they go up and down, burn hot and cold depending on what is happening around them.

The thing is, if you are a thermometer, you are not influencing anyone, they are influencing you, the circumstances around you are having a influence on you and you respond accordingly.

On the other hand, a thermostat does just the opposite, it is not influenced by the surroundings, but it regulates the surroundings depending on what is needed.

When it is too cold, the thermostat will cause the heat to go on; when it is too warm, it will cause the air-conditioner to go on and cool things off.

It has the ability to do that.

As Christians, we should be a thermostat and not a thermometer, we should have a positive influence on those around us.

Jesus put it this way in Matthew 5:13-16, **“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”**

That is what the Lord wants us to be, what He wants us to do, to be a thermostat as Paul was, regulating the surroundings and making changes as they are needed, influencing people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ because as people look at us they see men and women that are content in their faith, they are sufficient in Christ and thus, they can accept all things in Christ, do all things in Christ and have all things in Christ!

I pray that you have been blessed as we have gone through our study on Philippians –  
***THE EPISTLE OF JOY!***

And I will close with this, I promise. Remember what Paul said in Philippians 4:3,  
**“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”** May we do that!