

Keys to Contentment

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[0 : 00] Philippians chapter 4 verses 10 through 19.

! 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 hunger, abundance and need.

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you only.

Even in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. I have received full payment and more.

[1 : 15] I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

May God add a blessing to the reading of His Word. Would you please be seated? Last Saturday was Jack's seventh birthday.

And what he wanted for his birthday was a bicycle. And we'd heard about that for a long time. In fact, he had been borrowing the bicycles of our neighbors. We have about two or three bicycles from neighbor kids in our garage.

And so we knew that, you know, this was an important gift for him. And so he had spent the week with my parents. And then on Saturday, the day of his birthday, he came back home. And waiting in the garage for him when he pulled up was a brand new bicycle.

And so he was delighted, the big smile on his face as he hopped on that bicycle and zipped up and down our street. And has been doing so ever since he's got it.

[2 : 21] Every day, wanting to go outside and ride his bicycle. Yesterday morning, a week after his birthday, he comes out of his bedroom. First thing in the morning, and he sees me and he says, Dad, I want a motor, I want a dirt bike for Christmas.

It's like, that was fast, you know. It's like, I want a dirt bike for Christmas too. How can we make this happen? But you know what I'm saying is, we all are like that, aren't we?

Maybe not so much like children. We're a little bit more filtered. But we struggle with contentment. We get something, we're happy, we're satisfied with it for a while. And then as time goes by, we look on to that next thing.

Look for that next thing that we think we need to bring us contentment and satisfaction. Hoping that it will be all that we think that it will be. And so I read this poem that I think does a really good job of describing the elusiveness of contentment in this life for human beings.

Let me read it to you. It was spring, but it was summer I wanted. The warm days and great outdoors. It was summer, but it was fall I wanted.

[3 : 30] The colorful leaves and the cool dry air. It was fall, but it was winter I wanted. The beautiful snow and the joyful holiday season. It was now winter, but it was spring I wanted.

The warmth and the blossoming of nature. I was a child, but it was adulthood I wanted. The freedom and the respect. I was 20, but it was 30 that I wanted.

To be mature and sophisticated. I was middle-aged, but it was 20 I wanted. The youth and free spirit. I was retired, but it was middle-aged I wanted.

The presence of mind without limitations. My life was over, but I never got what I wanted. Isn't that poem symbolic of what we see very much in our day?

And probably you can identify, I'm sure, with that yourself. Whatever season of life that you find you're in right now, you may be either looking to the future, to a different set of circumstances that you believe will bring you the joy and the contentment that you are looking for.

[4 : 38] Or you may be looking to the past and thinking, if only you could go back in time and relive those days, you would be joyful and content again.

I'm 35 years old, and I tell you, a lot of time what I think about is retirement. And I think about, you know, where we'll go, and my dream is to have a lake house, right?

And just be there all the time. And I have about 30 years to go, right? So I'm going to waste a lot of time if all I'm doing is thinking about that future, that who knows if God even has that in store for me. Others of you are the opposite. Again, you are retired, and you think back to, oh, if only I was 30 or 35 years old again, the things that I could do, you know, to have that kind of physical health that I once had, to have my children in my home, and to have them dependent upon me like they used to be.

You long for those good old days. You know, we're all, I'm sure, familiar with the saying that the grass is greener on the other side. And each of us, I'm sure, has a story that we could share about an experience where we learned the truth of that principle.

[5 : 47] We desired something, and we didn't have it, and so we pursued that thing until we did have it. And once we had that greener grass, we realized that it brought satisfaction, but its satisfaction was only momentary because for not too much long later, we were pursuing the next thing, looking for that next great prize that we could acquire that we thought would bring us happiness, peace, and satisfaction, ultimately contentment.

But it didn't. You found out, just like James Dobson once said, the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, but it still needs to be mowed, right?

We think that it's going to be so much better, but there is still life to contend with on the other side of the fence. The Bible and the world say different things about how we can experience contentment in this life.

The Bible and the world say different things about how we can experience contentment in this life. The world says that contentment is something that you can buy. It's something that can be purchased.

And advertisers prey on this, don't they? They prey on this thought that you're not content with your life. But if you buy our product, your life will be simpler, your life will be easier, your life will be happier.

[7 : 09] And so the world says that you can buy contentment. The Bible says something different about contentment. It says that contentment is lasting, and it's permanent, but it's only something that we can receive from being in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's something we can receive, but we can only receive it, we can only have it from being in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so as Christians, we can live lives marked by contentment right now.

No matter the circumstances that you are facing, we can be faithful in our present time to the Lord because we are not longing for another time, a future time, or a past time.

Contentment is not elusive for the believer. We can experience contentment like the Apostle Paul even in the midst of very difficult circumstances.

We can be content. So the question now becomes, okay, how? How can we experience this kind of contentment? Well, Paul gives us the example here that we can follow.

[8 : 21] He gives us three keys to contentment that if obeyed will result in you as a believer living a life marked by contentment.

And so the main idea, I didn't include it in your notes in the bulletin, you can write it down, is this, for this sermon. God wants us to live contently because He loves us, He wants us to trust Him, and He wants us to bear witness to the world that the gospel is true.

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And so in verse 10, we have the first key to contentment. And it's this, that contentment is trusting in God's providence.

If we are to be content in this world, then you must trust in God's providence. Let's look at verse 10 again. There Paul says, I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me.

[9 : 36] You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. So to better understand this verse, we've got to better understand the history between Paul and the Philippian church.

About 10 years prior to this, Paul had been in Philippi. It had been about 10 years since the last time he had been there at this riding. At that time, 10 years ago, he had generously, they had generously, I should say, supported him when he left there to go on to Macedonia, to the cities of Thessalonica and Berea.

When Paul then moved south from there to Acadia, into Athens, into Corinth, the Corinthians continued to support him as he ministered in those places.

But as the years had gone by, the church in Philippi had continued to remain concerned for Paul, but they lacked the opportunity to provide him with any more support.

The reason for their lack is not given, but we can infer that this was a different time, right? There wasn't a telephone. There wasn't social media.

[10 : 46] They couldn't find out where Paul was. They couldn't wire him money. And so a lot of the reason why they lacked the ability to give it to him is because they just weren't sure exactly where he was, so they could send a messenger to him with another offering.

Somehow, though, the Philippians learned that Paul was in prison in Rome. And so as we've read, they sent Epaphroditus, their beloved brother, to him with an offering for which Paul says when he received it, he rejoiced greatly in the Lord.

And now we see also that he wasn't primarily rejoicing because the offering met his needs, but because it gave evidence of the Philippians' church love for him. He was overcome with joy because now, after all these years, this church that he loved and prayed for, they had again revived their concern for him.

And Paul's gracious attitude reflects his trust in God's providence. He was certain, despite his circumstances, that God in due time would arrange his circumstances to meet his needs that he had in the moment.

And so we see that there's no panic on his part. There's no worry. There's no attempts on his part to manipulate people to get what he feels like he needs.

[12 : 08] There's no taking matters into his own hands. Paul trusts God. Paul was content because he knew that the times, the seasons, and the opportunities of life were controlled by God who is sovereign.

According to Ephesians 1.11, as he says, God who works all things after the counsel of his will, thereby causing, as Romans 8.28 says, all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who have been called according to his purpose.

When we seek to take matters into our own hands, we typically end up making matters worse. Don't we? I can testify to that.

My wife can testify to that. I am not good at fixing things. I thank God for YouTube because I can look at a YouTube video and I can pause it and watch it step by step to fix it.

Now here's the thing with me is I'll try to fix things if I think that I can. You just save money, right? And I'll learn something maybe in the process. But usually, at some point in time, what ends up happening is as I try to fix the problem, I make it worse.

[13 : 21] And then I get frustrated. And then I take my frustration on the problem that I'm trying to fix and it gets even worse, right? And so then it's time to cool down. It's time to pray or to be prayed for because it's not going to get any better for me.

Now, when we have problems like those, do we just run away from them or hide and pray that God will somehow miraculously fix our garbage disposal?

Good luck with that. It's going to still be broken, right? You're going to have to get in there or somebody's going to have to get in there and get their hands dirty. It doesn't work that way. But I'm talking more about the station that you are in life.

A lot of times we're not content, we're not happy about the station that we are in in life. Our relationships at home, our relationships in the workplace, the amount of money that we have in the bank and the bills that are piling up.

A lot of times we are discontent with our station in life and when that happens, what we tend to do is take matters into our own hands instead of waiting and trusting in the Lord and His providence.

[14 : 31] And we see that many men and women in Scripture have done just that and we see from their examples that it doesn't work out well. When men and women of God do not wait patiently and

trusting in God's providence but decide to take matters into their own hands.

We can go back to the very beginning with a couple named Adam and Eve. They were not content with what God had provided and so Satan came along and he bred discontentment in their hearts to the point that they took matters into their own hand believing as he had lied to them that they could be made like God.

Made matters worse, didn't it? Yeah, a lot worse. Cain and Abel. Not too much later, Cain and Abel were brothers. Cain was displeased that Abel's sacrifice was more pleasing to God and instead of trying to make a better sacrifice himself the next time, he took matters into his own hand which for him meant murdering his brother.

Took matters into his own hand. Did it get any better for him? No. Moses and the Israelites in the Exodus, we can see this principle over and over again played out for him and these people.

God had miraculously delivered them from slavery to the Egyptians. They're out in the wilderness. God has parted the Red Sea that they could walk through on dry ground.

[15:58] He had promised them a land flowing with milk and honey. They go up to, they come to a resting place where Moses goes up to the mountain. You remember to receive the Ten Commandments and you remember what the Israelites did in his absence?

We don't know what happened to him. We don't know what happened to this God. You know what? Let's make our own God. Let's take matters into our own hands. We're tired of waiting. We're ready to move on. That did not work out either.

We can go to King Saul. Saul who was preparing his men for war, for battle and in order to be ready for that battle before they engaged the enemy.

They had to have Samuel come, the prophet, to make the sacrifices but he was delayed in his coming. So you remember what Saul did? He took matters into his own hands. He made the sacrifices himself and as a result of that eventually he lost his kingdom.

He was no longer the king and that was given over to David. And we could go on and on and on and see again and again from Scripture that this principle is true.

[17:02] When God's people do not trust in his providence but take matters into their own hands it leads to worse things. Not better. It will lead to greater discontentment not more contentment.

So in order to trust in God's providence we first have to understand what that means. When we say God's providence what are we talking about? Well, a few things. God's providence is the doctrine that God is continually involved with all created things in such a way that one he keeps them existing and maintaining their properties with which he created them.

All these things that we have everything that exists maintains its existence because of God's providence. Two, God's providence cooperates with created things in every action directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do.

And three, God's providence directs them to fulfill his purposes. All this to say that God is in control you and I are not. And thank God that he is in control and you and I are not.

Solomon acknowledged this in Proverbs 6.19 He speaks of God's providence as controlling all events. He said, the heart of man plans his way but the Lord is the one who establishes his steps.

[18:29] God providentially arranged for Joseph remember in Genesis to rise to a high position within Egypt in order to preserve his people.

He had been thrown into a pit by his brothers. He had been sold into slavery. He had been lied about and thrown in jail yet he still rose to this position and finally when he sees his brothers again he doesn't blame them for what they did he forgives them because he knows according to Genesis 50.20 as for you my brothers you meant it for evil but God in his providence meant it for good.

To bring about that many people should be kept alive as they are today. God is in control. I once had the opportunity in seminary to write a paper on Galatians 4.4 about the timing in which God chose to send Jesus to the world.

It wasn't just by happenstance it wasn't just hey now seems like a good time. God had orchestrated human history all of history to prepare for this perfect moment when Galatians 4.4 says when the fullness of time came God sent forth his son.

Since the beginning since before the beginning of time God had a plan and he orchestrated the events that culminated in the perfect timing for him to send Jesus into the world.

[19:54] You see you read your Bible and you see the Assyrians and the Babylonians they eventually came over and they took capture of Israel and they dispersed them they took them out of

the country and as they were in those locations outside of Israel they established synagogues places of worship where God's word was read and then later on Alexander the Great came and he conquered much of the known world and as a result of that there was a common language most people knew or spoke Greek and so by the time Jesus came and lived and died on the cross for our sins and was resurrected and his disciples weren't out to go spread the gospel guess what?

There was locations for them to go there was places of worship scattered throughout the known world and there was a common language for them to share the most wonderful message that the world has ever heard the gospel the good news of Jesus Christ all this to say to you that God knows exactly what he's doing in your current situation in your current circumstance God knows exactly what he's doing and we can trust him because of his providence an understanding of God's sovereign providential control of events is crucial in order for us to be content in this life in 1st Samuel 7 12 Samuel erects a stone it's called an Ebenezer and what Ebenezer means is stone of help and he does that because Israel had made a big mistake they had lost the ark of the covenant and it ended up in the hands of their enemies the Philistines but now they had received it back in fact it was God who scared the Philistines so much into bringing it back to them they didn't want it anymore and at this time

Samuel took a stone and he set it up stood it up between Mizpah and Shenn and he called its name Ebenezer for he said this till now the Lord has helped us and so that rock served as a monument to remind those people of God's salvation to remind them of God's rockness that he's a firm foundation that he is one whom they can trust in at all times my favorite hymn of all time is come thou fount of every blessing and in that song written by or that hymn written by Robert Robinson he says this here I raise my Ebenezer hither by thy help I'm come Robert Robinson like Samuel is raising a stone of help as a tribute to God's salvation and God's grace by the help he says I've come this far and I praise you Lord God for it so here's the application for this first point trusting in God's providence when you are feeling discontent and we can feel discontent every day and we're feeling discontent we are tempted to doubt in God's providence this is what you should do think back to an Ebenezer of sorts in your own life a stone of help where God was there for you you had reached the end of your strength faith you didn't know what was going to happen you cried out to God and guess what he was there and he was your stone of help that saw you through that time and you surround yourself with those Ebenezers I know for me that him means much to me for many different reasons and so much so that somebody in Leavenworth made a painting for me of that hymn written out and it's in my office and it's right across from my desk and I have it there for a reason because I need to be constantly reminded of what the Lord has done for me because I'm prone to wonder

I'm prone to leave the fold of God that Jesus sought me when I was a stranger wandering from the fold of God it was he who rescued me from danger it was he who interposed his precious blood and so I see that and I'm reminded no matter what difficulty I might be facing no matter how much I want to feel discontent and doubt God that I have a God who loves me that I have a God who gave his life for me that I have a salvation that is secure and so I have every reason at all times to be content knowing and trusting in those truths and if you are a believer in Jesus Christ you have that very same thing so when you're tempted to doubt in God's providence or tempted to doubt that you can trust God think back to a time think back to your salvation when God revealed himself to you when God showed himself to you and you knew that he loved you that he'll never forsake you that he's always there go back and look to those

[25 : 41] Ebenezers and know that God is one you can trust at all times the second key to contentment is understanding that contentment is not controlled by circumstances contentment is not controlled by circumstances let's look at verses 11 through 12 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 hunger abundance and need so my question to you right now is what do you think you need right now to be content if somebody asks you hey right now what do you need to be content honestly what would you tell them and I would say most of you if not all of you would say money give me money you give me a million dollars and I will show you a content person and we think that money holds the secret to our contentment but let me ask you a question we live in a prosperous nation filled with millionaires do they seem all that content to you do they seem all that content to you because they keep buying stuff they keep pursuing more money it's never enough because they're

not content with what they have because money does not equate to contentment you still probably don't believe me you think but a million dollars pastor Mike you know

I could I could live the good life I could give some money to the church we'd all be content money cannot buy contentment have you ever heard about the curse of the lottery you have people who had nothing they were living pretty much in poverty and then they won the power ball and now they've got buckets and loads of money and they can go out and they can buy their dream house they can buy their dream car and guess what ends up happening all these relatives and friends that they didn't know that they had before start coming to them with their hands out and a lot of them end up getting divorces and a lot of people unfortunately who win the lottery end up committing suicide money has not made their life any better in fact it has ruined their life and if you don't believe me go look that up the curse of the lottery because as the scripture says in 1st timothy 6 10 for the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains speaking to that truth the pursuit of that love made their lives worse not better when we allow gold to replace

God it doesn't lead to more contentment but less Paul had learned this lesson and he's teaching us this truth here that Christian contentment can be had no matter the circumstances that you are facing in life Paul says himself that he had experienced poverty he knew what it meant to get along with not very much he also had lived in prosperity he knew what it was to be filled and to have extra as he experienced times of poverty and as he experienced times of prosperity he learned the secret to contentment and it's by going through these times ourselves that we as Christians learn that secret too we learn the secret to contentment as we live in times of poverty and prosperity because both of those situations test us don't they when we are experienced prosperous times we are tempted with greed will having more create in us a greater sense of contentment usually not usually we're greedy to keep what we have and we're tempted to commit sins in order to keep that or to gain more lying cheating taking advantage of the poor so that we can gain more we're also tempted when we are going through times of poverty by greed it's the same when we are prospering we're tempted by greed when we are in poverty we're tempted by greed as well

I had a friend who grew up in an orphanage in Morocco these kids had nothing and she said that it took her a long time to get used to being in America where we pray with our eyes closed because she was used to praying with her eyes open because when they would eat when all the orphans gathered in together you learn to pray with your eyes open because if you closed your eyes your fellow orphans would steal your food people in poverty are just as greedy as people who are in prosperity poor people aren't immune to greed greed has tempted many in poverty to commit sins as well to gain riches they lie too they cheat they steal they rely on others instead of working for themselves in either situation we're tempted to love money and be greedy greed is a hard issue having more money I'm telling you is not the secret to contentment it's not the secret to contentment just look at our nation the

United States of America is the most prosperous nation in the history of the world when you look around at other people in this nation do you see people marked by contentment no you see people who got a bike for their birthday and the next week they want a dirt bike you're the same I'm the same we have so much yet we focus so much on what we don't have we are not marked by contentment though we are filthy rich compared to the rest of the world 1st Timothy 6 17 through 19!

[32 : 07] Again the apostle Paul advises as for the rich in this present age charge them not to be haughty nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches but on God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy they are to do good and to be rich in good works to be generous and ready to share the storing up treasures for themselves as a good foundation for the future!

so that they may take hold of that which is truly life those who make eternal investments the Bible says are the ones who will be content to receive their dividends in heaven not on earth so here's the thing the prosperity gospel says something much different than that doesn't it the prosperity gospel says that you should seek material possessions and that you will never be content living in poverty however the true gospel says otherwise Paul is not prospering at this moment in the eyes of the world yet he is content because he knows the secret to contentment so here's the question now what's the secret if it's not money then what could it be proverbs 37 through 9 two things

I ask of you deny them not to me before I die remove far from me falsehood and lying give me neither poverty nor riches feed me with the food that is needful for me lest I be full and deny you

and say who is the Lord or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God Jesus Christ as the preexistent second person of the trinity was rich as God is rich and God is rich beyond measure owning everything possessing everything all power all authority everything belonging to him but for our sakes the Bible says that he became poor we're answering the question to this secret second Corinthians 8:9 for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich in his incarnation he laid aside his divine prerogatives he left his place with God he took on human form and he died on the cross as a condemned criminal and he did so that you might become rich not rich in material possessions which pass away right there's no

U-Hauls behind hearses we all know that but spiritually rich possessing the things that never pass away that never corrupt salvation forgiveness joy peace glory contentment and you want Jesus because of the material things that he can give to you the only reason that you're pursuing Jesus at least according to the prosperity gospel so that that Jesus will give you a new car how shallow and superficial what a waste of time when Jesus has given us so much more all the things that you need for contentment in this life and the next have been provided for you in Christ this is the secret to contentment it's not in money it's not in possessions it's not in titles it's in Christ that's it that's all you need on that judgment day when we all stand before that judgment throne and the

Lord is on it all that will matter is that you are in Christ that's it that's all that will matter this world one day is going to blow into smithereens and on that day all that will matter is that you are in Christ all that you need ever is to be in Christ so this leads us to the third key and this is the most important and critical the third key to contentment is abiding in Christ if you're not abiding in Christ then you will not have or be able to possess the other keys it all comes down to this verse 13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me this verse is one of the most well known verses and it's also one of the most misapplied verses in all of scripture this has become the verse of the

[37:28] Christian athlete and has been misunderstood to mean that if you desire something enough if you envision something enough that God will give you the strength to achieve it in college playing baseball my goal was to hit 90 miles per hour on the radar gun with my fastball right if I hit 90 miles per hour on the radar gun I would get attention from professional teams maybe not major league but you know the independent teams we had a guy who hit 90 and he got attention and so I was like that's it and so one thing that one of our team had said is hey you gotta go home and visualize it man go home the night before a game and see yourself on the mound throwing 90 miles per hour and you know what you're gonna get on the mound and the next day mind over matter you're gonna throw 90 miles per hour you know and I could quote this verse before I threw every single pitch

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me 90 mile per hour here it comes but guess what mid 80s mid 80s when I started getting tired low 80s never once because that's not what this verse is talking about that's not what Paul means we've got to understand it in context listen Paul's a prisoner if he means it in that way then he's then he could be saying hey I'm gonna snap these chains I'm gonna body slam these guards and I'm gonna bust through this prison wall because I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me that's not what this verse means that would be cool I mean that would be neat to see but that is not at all what he is meaning to say by this verse context determines meaning what has Paul been talking about contentment he's been talking about contentment and contentment in the midst of poverty contentment in the midst of prosperity and so Paul is saying that through Christ he's able to be content no matter the circumstances that he faces he can do that because he isn't preoccupied with his situation he isn't looking for greener pastures he's able to be content always and at all times because he's always and at all times preoccupied with his

Lord that's the secret to contentment he's abiding always in Christ and so whether he's in poverty he's in prison he's in chains or he's out preaching and people are coming to faith in Jesus Christ in droves and he goes home and he's got a three course meal awaiting him whatever the case may be he is content because he's always focused on Christ Paul is saying that abiding in Christ infused him with the strength that he needed in order to overcome the hardships that he faced when his resources and supplies had dried up when he felt like he'd reached the end of his strength he could continue on and he could do so in the Lord's strength because he trusted in God's providence which enabled him to be content no matter the circumstances that he faced and that all because he was always abiding in Christ and so he knew this verse well

Isaiah 40 29-31 he gives power to the faint and to him who has no might he increases strength even youth shall faint and be weary and young men shall fall exhausted right we're all going to reach the end of our strength but they who wait they who trust in the Lord's providence shall be renewed in their strength they shall mount up with wings like eagles they shall run and not be weary they shall walk and not faint because again even the youngest and the strongest of us is limited in our strength we can only go so long and we can only go so fast and we can only go so far before we get tired and we collapse but the ancient of days never grows weary God is never tired he is never tempted to collapse and faint so when you're struggling with contentment when you're tempted to doubt God's providence what you need most is more of God not less of

God you need more of God not less and again this is a general principle of the Christian life that those who are patient those who are prayerful will be strengthened by the Lord in due time there have been times in my life and you probably can identify as well where you just felt so overcome by the situation that you were facing you couldn't see a way out of it you ever felt that way before you just couldn't see a way out of it this is it you thought you probably like me you're like Lord right now if you want to come back I don't have to continue on with this situation we can go and be with you and I'd be thoroughly happy with that but you've probably been in that situation like me where I have been before where you just feel the weight of the situation you're encountering and you collapsed underneath it literally on a floor like you melted into a puddle your face was buried into the rug or the carpet the floor and you didn't feel like you could get up you didn't want to get up again you ever been like that before there's been multiple times where I felt that way and you cried out to God in prayer and if it happened to you like I'm sure it happened to me you got up your circumstance hadn't changed yet but you felt stronger you could go on why is that because [43 : 41] God's there right and when you feel like the wind has been taken out of your sails guess what he's there to fill them back up maybe not changing the circumstances but giving you contentment as you go through it because you realize in those moments that all you need is Christ and if Christ is all that you have you don't need anything more that one day because of who he is and what he's done for you you will be with the Lord forever you will dwell in the house of the Lord forever and you carry on not because of who you are but because of who Christ is and you abide in the Lord and when you're abiding in the Lord when you're walking with the Lord when you're in prayer when you're in your Bible you will be strengthened by him you will be content no matter the circumstance!

The key to contentment is abiding in Christ if you're not content right now this morning Christian it's probably because you're not abiding in Christ you're trying to bear that load yourself you're not taking it to him as we talked about last week you're trying to do things in your own power and your own strength and you are not a superman or a superwoman you will collapse under those things what you need most is to turn to Christ now here's the result when we as believers in the church are obeying these and experiencing these keys to contentment this is the result contentment results with an increased concern for others and that comes from the rest of verses 14 through 19 those who only live for themselves will never be content those who live only for themselves will never be content for them contentment can only come when their circumstances are met exactly as they want them to be and that will never happen it just will never happen you're not in control you don't have that much power only those who are unselfishly putting others before themselves are able to be content in this way and so here we see a picture of contentment the Philippians though they've experienced and have been going through some really difficult things they are content and that enabled them to focus not on their needs primarily but the needs of the apostle Paul while he was in Rome and so they sent him this gift and Paul is content that enables him to be thankful not so much that they brought him an offering but he's more thankful get this because of the blessing that they'll receive from it it's like you as a parent when you see your kids opening up their birthday or Christmas presents the gift that you receive is the face that they give to you when they're opening up that gift you know what I'm saying and so Paul is more content not because he's got something but because of what they're going to get for their generosity the blessing that they will receive from the Lord this is a picture of contentment because when we are content it means that we will be more concerned for others than we are for ourselves and contentment then enables us to be flexible with our times our talents and our treasures in the church and with our brothers and sisters in Christ and I'm telling you when this happens the world takes notice the community takes notice and so I want to close with one last story about last week when we were here and we had

our engaged event and we think we had over you know somewhere around 600 people here and I think what they saw was a picture of contentment because that was a long day wasn't it amen there was a lot of work put into that day there was a lot of work going on after that day afterwards I felt like I couldn't talk anymore I didn't have any more words to say but that feeling afterwards the kids who got new shoes the faces that came out of that room the people that we ministered to and their thankfulness for what we were willing to do for them the comments that we've heard afterwards from our community and people who saw that who were encouraged by that all that hard work and so for me contentment was when it was all over and thinking man we did a lot of good in the name of Jesus Christ today felt good doesn't it so that's the thing for us Highland Park Baptist Church is we are putting into practice these keys to contentment the results will be that we care more for each other than we do for ourselves and the world will take notice of that they will see a people who are different and when they see that that will testify that the gospel that we believe in is true and that will give us an opportunity to tell them the good news about Jesus Christ