

The Lesson of Contentment

Preacher: Sebastian Baker

Date: 2026-03-24

Church: 16th Avenue Gospel Chapel

References: **Philippians 4**, Psalms 51; John 1; John 3; Galatians 5:17; Hebrews 5; Matthew 26; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 2:8-11; Isaiah 55:11

Seeking Contentment

The background is that I think it was last summer, I came home and I was expressing to my beautiful wife that I didn't know what the Lord was trying to teach me. I said to her, I don't know what the Lord's trying to teach me. But there's a situation that keeps happening **over and over**, and it's a **frustrating** situation. And I said to her, I wish I could learn what the Lord's trying to teach me so that it will stop. And then my beautiful wife said to me, "Maybe the Lord's trying to teach you to be content."

And I didn't see the connection or anything, but so then I set out into Scripture to seek out how to be content. And I didn't learn much about it. But what the Lord taught me was about learning. And I found that really enjoyable. So I'd like to share a bit of that with you. And that's **Philippians 4, 11 to 13**. So, and it says this:

[Philippians 4:11-13] - ¹¹ Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: ¹² I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

This is the Apostle Paul talking and he says, "I have **learned** in whatever state I am." And then in verse 12, he goes through the states, right? And the first one is, "I know how to be abased and I know how to abound. I know how to be full. I know how to be hungry. I know how to abound. I know how to suffer need." Most of my Christian life when I read this, I thought it was just different ways of saying the same thing. But it's **not**.

The first one, he knows how to be **abased**. Abased is **humbled**. He knows how to be abased, humbled. That's what goes on with, within him, inside. Right? And then he goes to the **outside** things. Full or hungry. Abounding or suffering need. So, he's saying that what he's learned, that in whatever state he's in, whether it's happening **inside** him, within him, or **outside** around him, or the circumstances, he's learned to be content.

A Learned Trait

So, this is not a natural trait or characteristic of Paul. He **learned** it. Right? We're, we are all born with natural traits and characteristics. And we all find ourselves somewhere between two extremes. Some people, they are **calm** as calm could be. Doesn't matter what happens. Doesn't matter what they go through. They are calm. It's like they don't even react. Right?

On the other extreme are people who **overreact** to everything. Big or small. Big or small. And it doesn't matter what it is. **Huge** reaction. Right? And we're all somewhere in between there. I tend to be more to the reaction side. But the, we're all somewhere in between there. And that's how we're naturally, it's a natural trait. And this is not what Paul's saying. He's not saying, "Just be like me and, and be content." Right? It's not a natural thing in him. He **learned** it.

The other side of that is this. We, we're all born of our parents. Right? We, and we're born with those natural traits and characteristics. And this is our root nature. It's our flesh nature. Brother Paul brought us through that on Sunday morning. Right? We're born of flesh. We're born of sin. That's **Psalm 51**. And the Lord

Jesus tells—you remember Nicodemus goes to the Lord Jesus in **John chapter 3**. And the Lord Jesus tells him in verse 6:

[John 3:6] - That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

The two are **completely** different. We're born of our parents. Whether our parents decided to have a child or it was unexpected, we're born of our parents. We're born with our flesh nature. And the Lord Jesus says, "That which is flesh, that which is born of the flesh is flesh." It is **always** flesh. It will **always** be flesh. It will **never** change.

Brother **Eric Peterson** brought us through that on Sunday night. God does not try to work with our flesh. There's no hope in our flesh. He doesn't try to renovate our flesh or make our flesh better. He says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh. And that which is born of the spirit is spirit." So God does something even **greater**. He gives us the spirit. Something we could never attain ourselves. And that's also the verses Brother Paul brought us through on Sunday. **John chapter 1**. John chapter 1, verses 11, 12 and 13. How does it start?

[John 1:11-13] - ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Born of God. Born of the spirit. And the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit lusts against the flesh. All of the desires of the flesh are the **opposite** of all of the desires of the spirit. So the point of going through all that is to say this: Paul **learned**. Right? It was not a natural thing in him. He learned. And at the same time, it was not a wrestling of his flesh into submission. It was nothing. Yeah.

The Solution in Christ

So. How did he learn then? And the answer is in verse 13. "**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**" The problem that I made, or the mistake I made, sorry, is that I sought out to seek for contentment. When I should have gone to the **Lord**. Right? I chased the **object** rather than the **solution**. **He's** our solution. All of the object, whether contentment, joy, peace, whatever it is, it's all in **Him**. And so when we seek for these things, we go to Him.

So when we look at learning, which has nothing to do with our nature or forcing of our flesh, let's go to the Lord Jesus in **Hebrews chapter 5**. What a Hebrews chapter 5. And we'll read verse 7 and 8. Yeah. Hebrews chapter 5, verse 7 and 8. It says:

[Hebrews 5:7-8] - ⁷ who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, ⁸ though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

This is the Lord Jesus, and it says, "in the days of His flesh," that's while God was man and being found in appearance as a man. Right? And He offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears. Let's go see that. Go to **Matthew 26**. Matthew 26. And we'll start at verse 37 to 39. It says:

[Matthew 26:37-39] - ³⁷ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. ³⁸ Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." ³⁹ He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

In the days of His flesh, offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears. He falls on His face and cries out, "Oh, my Father, if it's possible, let this cup pass from me." He's about to go to the cross. He's about to become sin for us.

[24 Corinthians 5:21] - For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

He was about to, for the first time in eternity, He was about to be **away** from the Father. **John chapter 1, verse 1:**

[John 1:1] - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

That's the Lord Jesus. And He was about to be **away** from the Father and bear our sin. And He cried out with vehement cries and tears, "Father, if there's any other way." And then, we know the story. He goes, they arrest Him—He had to make them arrest Him—and then He gets taken to Pilate. Pilate declares Him blameless, and then He goes to the cross. And He goes through, we've said it many times, **unimaginable** physical torture. And then, He goes through the **wrath of God** on our sin.

Which is interesting, because—it's not the right way to say it—but the bottom line is, if any one of us as humans, as people, any one of us who rejects the Lord Jesus, they're deciding to pay for their **own** sin. They're deciding to go to hell. They don't realize it. But the point is, an **eternity** in hell will not satisfy the payment. God will never go to anyone in hell and say, "Okay, it's over. You're done." But the Lord Jesus, He took the **full** wrath of God to completion for our sin. And He rose again the third day.

And then we know, He ascended into heaven. He was exalted. Sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Given the name above every name:

[Philippians 2:8-11] - ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Learning Obedience

So the question is this. Was it at that moment when He sat down? Was it at that moment that He **learned**? Right? It says He learned obedience by the things He suffered. So was it at that moment that He learned? There is an aspect of that because it says He learned obedience by the things He suffered. There is an aspect of that having gone through it. Right? And we do the same thing as believers and what we go through as having gone through it, we learn things of the Lord. So there is that aspect.

But what I want to suggest is that the **bulk** of the learning was at that moment when He said, "**Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.**" He was crying out, "If there is any other way, take it from me," and then He says, "**Your will be done, not mine.**"

And that, that I think is—the Apostle Paul, he learned in whatever state he is, whether it's happening within him or a situation around him, he learned to be content. I think he had gone through a lot, but it wasn't over. He was going to go through much more. And he learned to **accept**—accept the will of the Father rather than his own.

A Step of Faith

I... we... pray for each other tonight as we pray for each other every Tuesday. And it's good because we love each other. And I think we've all been through something that's quite hard. Sometimes, there are things that we may know are coming. Right? We may see it coming

or... and not want it. And we do our version of vehement cries with tears. Right? We cry out to the Lord and ask him to take it away. Right? And we ask him—yeah, I don't know how to word that. It's our version of vehement cries and tears.

And I think that the learning—I think of how much we can learn and and that where the learning would really start and go to deeper depths is if we took **that step**—that step of **faith** like the song that brother Josh gave out on Sunday—simply trusting and accept the will of the Father over **my** will.

I like to—I like to have great confidence in the Lord and beforehand when there's—when I can't see anything coming and it all feels good and I go, "Lord, yeah, I want **your** will. I want it to be you." And then things start happening and I so easily just go, "Lord, what's going on?"

So I'm grateful to the Lord for what he has encouraged me with, with these thoughts of the example of the Lord Jesus and the and the—yeah, Lord taking the step to **accept** the will of God. Of the Father. And a Father we see. Learning is not that situation stops. Learning is not natural. Learning is not a submission of the flesh. It's taking this step of **faith** to accept the will of the Father. And a Father we know and can trust. He's proven himself. Shown us how much he loves us. Shown us how much he's taking care of us through it all.

I'm going to stop talking. I'm sorry. Let's pray.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for this time. I'm just realizing now, Lord, that I forgot to open in prayer and and I feel like that hindered you. I just ask that you would let your spirit work in spite of—in spite of it. Let your spirit work unhindered. Let your spirit use your word to your glory.

[Isaiah 55:11] - So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

We thank you for your goodness and love to us. We just be with us this week, Lord, please. All the things we lifted each other up tonight. We—we plead with you for answers for that, for all that we lifted up to you. We ask that you help us and keep us as we even **fearfully** say, "Your will and not mine." We thank you for your love to us. We thank you that you are so generous and and you always take care of us and you will help us through it all. Thank you that you've shown us that and we know it. We thank you in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.