



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Choosing Joy: Joy and Contentment

Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor

Scripture: Philippians 4:10-13

I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:10-13 (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

As we close out our series on the book of Philippians, we see Paul writing to say thank you to and for this church community. Paul's letter to the Philippians is a letter of gratitude to the church. Paul loves this community and is offering his thanks for the ways they have stepped in to help him.

In v10 we read: "I learned to be content whatever the circumstances." We see that Paul had to learn contentment, as he probably failed at this at some point. Contentment is something that must be worked at and learned, it doesn't just happen magically or on its own. We are born into this world with this notion of being discontent – always wanting more. This is a hard lesson for us all.

There are times when we have a legitimate need/want for things, then there are other times where we are wanting more for the sake of wanting more. We believe that the goal of life is bigger is better. In process of trying to secure bigger and better things, we become fixated not on what we have but on what we don't have. We all have this temptation inside of us to be discontent.

The nurturing of contentment will largely determine your level of joy. Contentment is living free from the lie that having more of something makes you something more. The lie we hear and tell ourselves about contentment is "When this happens, then I will be ..." Contentment is saying no to everything else so you can be present in this particular moment.

In v13 we read: "I can do all this through him who gives me strength." When Paul says this, he is not talking about all things, as there are many things we cannot do through Christ. Paul is talking about contentment - through the context of being content - whether we have a lot or a little, it doesn't matter. What matters is that God is with you and God is strengthening you no matter what you are facing, no matter what may be in your way. Paul is talking about Christ's sufficiency working in and through him. Paul's life is about Christ. Christ is Paul's life.

What is the story you tell yourself when you see someone else with more than what you have or someone who has accomplished more than you? We tell ourselves: "I am not _____ enough." These stories we tell ourselves are lies, because in Christ we have more than enough!

What is the illusion you are believing when you see the lives of other people, maybe on social media? Often what we see and make conclusions about is an illusion. We see what people want us to see, but when the cameras are turned off or they are not in public, what we don't recognize is the struggle of pain they may have behind having those things.

What are the gifts you need to acknowledge? All of us have received gifts from God that we fail to acknowledge. Praise God for the gifts you have.

The reality of our lives is that we find ourselves obsessed living lives of compulsion, of always needing more. We do violence against ourselves and others when we live this way. Violence against our bodies and against the stewardship of money, which becomes a trap that never ceases to end.

Christ has come to rescue us. If you let Christ be your life, you will be free from the tyranny of thinking you always need more. You will live with the spacious freedom inside of yourself where you will be free from the compulsion, obsession and tyranny of thinking that you always need more. Look at what Christ has already done for you. In Christ we can do all these things with the joy of contentment.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday Lead Pastor Richard Villodas finishes our series in Philippians. Today Pastor Rich talks about the connection between joy and contentment, how we are living in a world often marked by discontentment and coveting and shows us how to explore the forces within us and outside of us that can hinder our joy.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, were people generally content? Was there a concern about status and things you could accumulate and show off? Or were people more frugal and found joy in smaller things/were able to find joy in what they had? What were those things that brought joy?
3. How do you know if you are living your life from a place of contentment? Ask yourself these three questions: How much time do you spend complaining about what you have? How much time do you spend coveting what others have? How much time do you spend comparing your life to others?
4. What have you attached yourself to that your heart is so fixated on that your identity is formed by it? -- Something you want for the sake of wanting it as opposed to needing it.
5. If you were to take an inventory of the things you want, how can you separate them into things you need vs. things you want? What story are you telling yourself about each of these things? What is the illusion you are believing?