

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES

2 Corinthians 12:10 | Romans 8:28 | James 4:7–10

#### STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 11.17.24

#### SUMMARY

As Paul writes this letter to the church, he is imprisoned under house arrest. Local pastors in Rome envy Paul and have resorted to defiling his character. When the church at Philippi heard of his hardships, they sent a messenger to him to care for him and bring him gifts, and the messenger became sick—nearly to the point of death. Despite all these circumstances, Paul tells the church, “I rejoiced in the Lord greatly” (v. 10). How can he say such a thing? The secret to Paul’s contentment lies in his next thought when he tells the church, “For I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content” (v. 11). Paul is not simply saying we should learn to be content when in need, but discover contentment in the Lord when we are in situations of “plenty and hunger, abundance and need.” Paul did not look for contentment in Christ only when he felt lacking; he sought contentment in Christ in want *and* in plenty. In other words, we are always under the Lord’s care in *all* our circumstances—we are never *not* under the Lord’s care. When we realize this truth, we’re not caught off guard by adverse circumstances because we recognize they, too, are a part of his sovereign care for us. We are cared for and learn contentment, most poignantly, in times of adversity. When we lack the contentment that Paul exemplifies and enjoys, it is not because the Lord has failed to provide; instead, our eyes are often fixed on the wrong thing. When we look to our circumstances to be our savior instead of the Savior himself, we convince ourselves that we are lacking, when the reality is, in Christ, we can do all things through him who gives us strength (v. 13). The joy and contentment of our souls is dependent upon our obedience to draw near to Christ, the source of all our strength (James 4:8).

#### GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Philippians 4:10-13.

In what circumstances do you find yourself feeling less than content? What might the remedy be to become content in those circumstances?

What does drawing near to Christ look like in seasons of plenty and seasons of need? Does it look the same in both seasons? Should it be the same in both seasons? Why or why not?

If there’s one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

#### CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today’s themes in what you bring before God.