

I. Welcome to Neighborhood Church!

II. Happy Mother's Day Weekend!

- We want to honor Moms and ALL the adult women who have motherly influence in shaping the lives of others.
- "If at first you don't succeed, try doing it the way mom told you to in the first place!" (Author Unknown)

Please Join Me in Philippians 4

III. Today is our 6th and final message in our FREEDOM sermon series:

- We've been discussing the "chains" in our life that hold us back, steal our joy, and keep us from the life God intends for us.
- Today I want us to experience God's freedom from a nasty and sneaky enemy in our life called DISCONTENT.
- What does it mean to be discontent?
- (well, it means to NOT be content...but that doesn't help us yet)
- Let's go back in time to the lunch table at school...Can you remember your first lunch pail?
 - By 5th grade, I started "brown baggin' it"
 - The Brown Bag Lunch
- My basic lunch growing up consisted of a PB&J, an apple, and granola bar.
- It was fine...it was enough for me...it gave me the energy I needed for endless games of tunnel tag, duck-duck-goose, and 3-flies up.
- I was good with the contents of my bag...until I saw what others had in THEIR bag!
- Doritos, twinkies, Capri-Sun, an ice-pack that kept their sandwich meat nice and cool, container for their sandwich to keep it from getting smushed, cookies, pudding cups, a thermos filled with cold milk or warm soup, and a love-note on their napkin.
- (Remember those kids? Wait, maybe YOU were one of those kids!)
 - I became one of those kids when my DAD packed my lunch.
- My Mom packed my lunch to keep me healthy; my Dad packed it to keep me happy! He would throw in tons of what he called "Dillywhompers: Chocolate Dillywhomper, Marshmallow Dillywhomper, Peanut Butter Dillywhomper...)
- When I saw the contents of someone else's bag, my perspective CHANGED about what was IN MY BAG.
 - My bag felt empty; "less-than."
 - What used to be enough for me...now became "not enough."
 - In my mind, I was lacking what I need for health and happiness.
- This is a picture of DISCONTENT.
 - Discontent originates from feeling deprived of something...that you don't have something that you should have (deserve)
 - And if God is the Giver of all things, then our discontent is directed toward God and His provision and decisions.
 - ...a dissatisfaction with the way He is handling things.
- Discontent says, "I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH!"
 - Do you ever feel that you don't have ENOUGH?
- That joy and happiness eludes you because of something you lack:
 - I would be content (satisfied, full) if I had more money...a better job...a better city...a nicer house or car...a better body...better kids!...a better spouse.
- You know one thing that stands between ME and contentment?
 - A stronger toilet!
 - A toilet is supposed to whisk away the contents, right?
 - Not my toilet.
- So we recently purchased a better toilet...one that can make 18 golf balls disappear in seconds with just 1.2 gallons of water! (it's true...I saw the video)
 - I was content with my new toilet...until I read about a better toilet...made in Japan
 - The seat lifts and closes automatically.
 - The seat is heated.
 - Deodorizer, A warm air dryer.

- Water temperature, pressure, and massaging options!
- And I think it even does your algebra homework for you.
- It's like \$5000, but oh so worth it!
- Truth is: there is ALWAYS something we don't have...there's always something better we could have in our bag... (relationally, emotionally, occupationally, etc.)
- And we think "that something" is what stands between US and CONTENTMENT, SATISFACTION, FULFILLMENT.
 - Until we get "that thing", we live in a state of discontent.
 - Discontentment is a JOY-STEALER!
 - It casts a dark shadow on our lives and gives ultimate power to our circumstances we find ourselves in.
 - Discontentment BLINDS US to the good things that ARE in our bag!
- God brings us FREEDOM the chains of Discontentment!
- But CAN we experience contentment today?
- How can we ever be content if our circumstances (or contents in our bag) don't change?
- What IS the secret of contentment?

Let's find out from the Apostle Paul in Philippians 4:10-13

- CONTEXT of PASSAGE:
 - Paul writes this letter from prison;
 - he has faced severe persecution and beatings.
 - The church in Philippi sends a monetary gift to Paul through their messenger named Epaphroditus (what a name!)
 - Paul writes a letter to the church in Philippi to update them on his condition...AND to thank them for their gift (sort of!).
- We are going to look at Philippians 4:10-13 BUT I want to begin with the last verse of our passage...
- Maybe you've heard this verse before:

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)
- I've seen this verse printed on T-shirts, sweatshirts, tattooed on body parts...
- My earliest memory of this verse was when these REALLY STRONG MEN came to my school for an assembly
 - They would rip phone books in half, bend metal bars, and turn a frying pan into the shape of a burrito.
 - Before they would lift, or bend, or rip, or break something in half, they would shout, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!"
 - For many, this verse has become a type of "super-vitamin"...like Popeye's spinach:
 - I can do ANYTHING I dream of because Christ will strengthen me to do it!
 - Can I lift this car above my head? Can I jump across this canyon? Yes! Because I can do all things...
- But we don't read verses OUT of the context by which they're placed.
- Let's read this verse WITHIN the context it's found.
- What did Paul mean when he said he can do all things through Christ who strengthens him?

¹⁰ But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content. Philippians 4:10,11 (NKJV)
- Paul thanks them for the gift they sent
- Hey, thanks for the gift...sort of!
- "Your gift...material abundance...is NOT what brings me contentment."

(v. 11) "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content."
- I have learned...Paul's contentment has been acquired, not through the classroom, but through the experiences and trials of life.

- Paul uses this word “content”:
 - In whatever state I am (whatever condition, whatever circumstances, whatever is in my bag...) I have learned to be content.
 - This word “content” literally means “self-sufficient”
 - * satisfied; I have enough; I have everything I need.
- Paul takes this word, content (autarkes/ow-TAR-kase), from the Stoic philosophers...going back all the way to Socrates.
- This word had been used by the Stoic philosophers to describe the man who was fully self-sufficient:
 - Emotionless; wooden; independent of any outside pressures.
 - But THIS self-sufficiency was to be found WITHIN YOURSELF!
- Paul hijacks this word!
- My “self-sufficiency” is NOT found within myself!
- It doesn’t come from within me, it comes from Christ...who strengthens me (dwells within me)!
- Paul changes it from “self-sufficiency” to “Christ-sufficiency”
- Paul’s contentment comes from the One who gives him strength.
- The secret of contentment is that is a GIFT of God made possible only through Jesus Christ.
- This is why Paul can say in verse 12:

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. Philippians 4:12 (NKJV)*

 - Abased: brought low (Paul is in prison at this time!)
 - Abound/Be full: when your barrel is overflowing
 - Be hungry/suffer need: when you’re scraping the bottom of the barrel.
 - Whatever my state...my condition...my circumstances...
 - WHATEVER IS IN MY BAG TODAY...
 - I am content.
 - I have enough.
 - I have Christ.
- So when Paul says,

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
I have strength in all things; in all circumstances. Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)

 - I can face any and every situation because Christ strengthens me
 - (He enables me...He empowers me...like dynamite!)
 - Christ enabled Paul to endure all of life’s situations as they came.
 - Paul learned that Christ IS sufficient in times of prosperity AND times of poverty.
 - For those who have received Christ as Savior, we are UNITED with Christ.
 - Superglued to Him!
- Christ strengthens US: Not to rip a phone book in half...but strength to:
 - Get out of bed and face another day.
 - To change another diaper.
 - To meet with your child’s principal...again.
 - To forgive your loved one who hurt you.
 - To clock in at work for one more day.
 - To clock out of work and REST.
 - (trusting that the world will not fall apart if you take a day off)
 - To pray for your addicted son or daughter day after day.
 - To love and serve your spouse day in/day out...until death do you part.
 - To show kindness to that person who mistreats you.
 -
- The secret of contentment for today is the all-sufficiency of Christ.
- Are you content or discontent?

- Have you bought into the LIE of “If only...”?
- If we cannot find contentment in our PRESENT situation, what makes us think we will find it in a FUTURE situation?
 - Do you ever feel you don’t have enough?
 - That your bag isn’t filled with the right things?
 - I felt that way...for the better part of 7 years.

IV. MY STORY:

- I grumbled over what the Lord placed in my bag
- (like the Israelites grumbled against the Lord after he brought them out of Egyptian slavery).
- My bag was FILLED with great things...
- but I wanted something different in my bag.
- It had to do with my place of ministry.
- I longed for God to take me to a different place to do His work.
- I was in a GOOD place, but I was blind to it.
- I moped around for years in a constant state of DISCONTENT, focusing on what I wanted but didn’t have.
- I had resentment toward God for not giving it to me.
- I had resentment toward others who might stand in my way of getting what I truly thought would bring contentment.
- You know what happened? God gave me what I asked for!
 - He moved us to that place.
 - I uprooted my family to go there.
 - I thought, “This is gonna be great!”
 - But you know what? That contentment and satisfaction I was looking for...it wasn’t in that new place.
 - Don’t get me wrong, there was great people and great ministry there...
 - But it came at a cost to my wife and kids.
- I remember the day I said to God, “You gave me what I asked for...but can I ask for something else?...”
- ...something that is a WIN for my whole family, not just me?
 - and He did. He brought us here. To Redding. To Neighborhood.
 - ...He placed even more good things in OUR bags (not just mine)
- Here’s what I am learning:
 - Contentment is NOT in a Place...Not in a Position.
 - It’s in a PERSON.
 - It’s in Christ Alone.
- Paul found contentment in prison.
- The letter of Philippians, written in jail, is considered Paul’s most joyful letter.
- Weird. (or is it?)
- I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.
- I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
- What’s In Your Bag?
- And is your contentment (your satisfaction and sufficiency in life) based on what’s in your bag today?
- Or is it based fully on the powerful presence of Jesus Christ who strengthens you to face whatever comes your way?