

Philippians 4b

What can I do? ALL THINGS!

Last week's text ended with these scriptures: 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. 9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

- **V9 CEV** – “You know the teachings I gave you, and you know what you heard me say and saw me do. So follow my example. And God, who gives peace, will be with you.”
- **COURSON** - I like Paul's ministry: It was "Show and Tell." Not only did he tell people what to do, but he showed them by doing it himself.
- Look, it was true that Paul had problems. He had health problems, he had people problems, he had problems with his past and he had problems from within his own team.
 - BUT PAUL HAD PEACE. He had the peace of God! This is why he could write in V10...

Philippians 4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished (**Blossomed**) again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity.

- Why did the Philippian Church lack opportunity?

- Either because they themselves were being persecuted and just couldn't afford to...
- OR... Perhaps it was because they did not know where to send it. Paul was known to move around a lot, and they did not enjoy the "Find a friend" feature that we have on our devices.
- One advantage of being in prison is that anyone can find you.

CHARACTER OF CONTENTEDNESS

11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:

- The Apostle never "worked" people for money. He would never stoop to some of the distasteful antics some ministries commit.
- Peter told his team of Pastors to Shepherd the flock of God WILLINGLY, and not just for the shekels. 1 Peter 5:2
- Paul was so happy to preach that he often stayed and worked a second job so that he could afford to stay and preach.
- Listen to what he had learned about being content.

12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound.

- NLT - I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything.
- More advanced Christianity, right? I doubt that Paul had a storage locker.

12b Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

- There were times when Paul was the honored guest at church potlucks and he had learned to be full...
 - Now, he writes from prison where the food is NOT being prepared by loyal and grateful admirers. AND... He is fine with it.
- Just to bring this principal home, let me ask: Do you think Paul would have bought a lottery ticket last Friday? How hard is it to be content? **Listen...**

WHAT CAN I DO?

13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Chuck Smith liked to compare this verse with John 15:5, which says:

- **John 15:5** "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."
- I like **V13** in the CEV too: "Christ gives me the strength to face anything."
- I apply this verse to myself like this: "I can do anything that is God's will."
- SO... Paul is suffering... Facing an execution by being beheaded... Hearing that some of his staff members are undermining the ministry for money... He will tell Timothy that his cell is cold... But he is more concerned for the Philippians than himself and he writes...

CARING IS SHARING

14 Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress.

15 Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, *(His 1st trip)* no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. 16 For even in Thessalonica you sent *aid* once and again for my necessities.

17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.

- **Chuck Smith** – "God has a very interesting bookkeeping system. And in God's bookkeeping system, your investments that you make in the kingdom of God bring fruit to your account. Jesus said, "Don't lay up for yourself treasures on earth where moth and rust can corrupt and decay and thieves can break through and steal. But lay up for yourself treasures in heaven where these things cannot happen, for where your treasure is there will your heart be also." **Matthew 6:19-21**
- When you invest in a retirement plan... AND YOU SHOULD! Your payoff is for the rest of your days here.

- What you invest in ministry pays off for all eternity. I believe you will meet people in heaven who came to the Lord because of your investment in the ministries that God used to win them.
- **V17 NLT** – “I don’t say this because I want a gift from you. Rather, I want you to receive a reward for your kindness.”

THE FINAL FINALLY

18 Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

- They didn’t send the Apostle aftershave... But he is expressing how THE LORD felt about their gift...
- Like the sacrifices of old – It pleased the Lord like a sweet-smelling feast.
- CCSV, THIS is how the Lord receives YOUR sacrifices too!
- SOME of you actually DID deliver some sweet-smelling sacrifices to the Lampp family this week. The Lord was right there with you as you blessed His Family. **SO... I too can promise...**

19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

- What an amazing promise...

20 Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

FINAL GREETINGS

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. 22 All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household. **Paul was SO content that his captors accepted Jesus!**

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

NEXT week – 121 miles southeast of Ephesus was Colossae...