

Dealing with our Difficult and Turbulent times, Philippians 4:10-20 November 30, 2008 - Skip MacMillan

The demise of our financial structure:

How many more companies need billion dollar bailouts?

"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs" (1 Timothy 6:10).

"Naked I came from my mother's womb; and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised" (Job 1:21).

What is going to be our (the Church) response? How are **you/we** going to handle it?

We are going to learn to be content.

Paul says it: "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances" (Philippians 4:11).

1. Contentment is something we have to learn.

It doesn't come naturally, it's going to be a struggle, we have to learn to be content.

If Paul had to learn, then you and I are going to have to learn.

We learn through times just like these, through living life, chasing facades and climbing ridges.

2. Contentment is not circumstantially based.

Great news, our contentment is not based on circumstances. Contentment is more durable.

Paul learned that whether with much or little, contentment was not found in his circumstances. So we need to be reminded that circumstances do not determine our contentment.

Circumstances can make life easier or more difficult, but cannot bring contentment.

Were you really content two years ago?

In difficult circumstances we learn a lot about ourselves, i.e. what our contentment was based on. When circumstances are good it is very difficult to not allow them be our contentment.

Paul learned to take on whatever came his way because his contentment came from somewhere else.

How was he able to experience all kinds of circumstances and remain content?

We are going to deepen ourselves in the LORD.

Paul said, "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 everything through Him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:12-13).

1. **"It is possible" to learn the secret of being content regardless of your circumstances.**

Content = a state of mind in which one's desires are confined to his lot whatever it may be: 1 Tim. 6:6, 2 Cor. 9:8; opposed to envy - James 3:16, avarice - Heb. 13:5, ambition - Prov-erbs 13:10, anxiety - Matt. 6:25, 34, and repining - 1 Cor. 10:10.

It arises from an inward disposition, and is the offspring of humility and knowing God's providence - Ps. 96: 1, the greatness of God's promises - 2 Pet. 1: 4, our own unworthiness - Gen. 32: 10, and understanding that through the gospel we have rest and peace - Rom. 5: 2.

2. "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation".

The secret is God in me.

Paul learned the deep truth that it is Christ in us, the indwelling Holy Spirit.

God enabling me to be content: I cannot do it in myself, but He can!

It is God who will empower and strengthen me to be content.

"For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose" (Philippians 2: 13).

It is the Holy Spirit in you who overcomes your circumstances and ushers in contentment.

"I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4: 13).

Christ gives us the strength to get through difficult times, to rest in the LORD, to fear not! Jesus equips us with every good thing for doing His (Father's) will" (Hebrews 13: 21).

My role is to devote myself to the LORD, yielding over my concerns, submerge myself in Scripture, call on the Holy Spirit each day to renew my spirit, and to comfort, counsel, teach, and empower me.

God's role is to strengthen, empower, help, teach, and enable me to do all He wants = The Secret.

The same God who so powerfully worked through Paul and the church at Philippi is here today. He does not change, not His power nor His means of working in and through you.

The Secret is I can't find contentment in me or in this world.

The Secret of contentment is found in an abiding relationship with the LORD.

This is the time to rise up and worship, seek the LORD, find answers and devote yourselves to God.

3. We are going to deepen ourselves in the LORD by trusting Him to meet all our needs.

"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4: 19).

Personal: "my God" the God who chose me, the God who redeemed me, the God who is there each morning, the God who has carried me through difficult times, My God will do it. Paul knew the LORD. In difficult times my personal relationship with God thrives!

Definite: "My God will meet all your needs": there are no "ifs," "ands," or "buts". He will do it! He is able, it is His history, He will meet our needs.

Complete: "My God will meet all your needs".

How we define needs may change; this is a great time to reassess needs.

Make no mistake, God will meet all our needs, specifically.

What is going to be our (the Church's) response? How are you/we going to handle it?

As a church, individuals, and families we are going to deepen ourselves in the LORD.

This situation we are in is an opportunity, a call to deepen ourselves in the LORD.

We are going to deepen our relationships with each other.

1. We are going to get over this notion that everyone has it together but me.

The Scriptures say we are all fallen, all sinners, all in need of help and we who believe are all sons and daughters, New Creations, reflecting the glory of God, holy, without blemish and free from accusation.

The financial markets say we are all affected by this financial disaster.

Practical, "People relate to our weakness not our success".

Yet we spend our lives trying to show we aren't weak; these facades of strength actually separate us.

This is a great time to be vulnerable, open with each other, lay aside our pride and the things that separate us and deepen our relationships with each other.

Don't even think about looking down on someone who shares their vulnerability.

2. We are going to deepen our relationships by helping each other.

1. First, Paul shared his needs and the church at Philippi met those needs.

The great Apostle had to be vulnerable, humble and admit his need, open and honest. He knew we are all in need, all struggling; he did not have this view that others "had it all together".

We need to make our needs known to each other.

2. Then people in the church meet that need.

Needs are met by going through the church and through your front door or cell phone. This is what the Bible calls living in "action and in truth" - 1 John 3:17-18.

3. We are going to help those inside and outside the church.

Good Samaritan, Luke 10 and 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

This is one way God meets our needs, via the Body of Christ.

4. What does God think of our efforts to help?

"fragrant offering," "acceptable sacrifice," and "pleasing to God" (Philippians 4:18).

So when you take a dinner, help pay a bill, give to the church, this is how God sees your gifts.

Lastly, we are going to live in this day the LORD has made.

Maybe with the future looking so dark we will begin living in today and not tomorrow. Our whole culture is oriented toward the future (savings, college, retirement). What might happen tomorrow – insure everything for fear of what might happen. We work today because tomorrow the bills are coming. How much do we miss today because we are so focused on tomorrow? Pastors' focus is Sunday! Are you letting what might happen tomorrow ruin today?

We will not worry.

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:34).

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

"This is the day the LORD has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24).

Today is the day the LORD has made.

The LORD has made it, brought it about.

Because of the LORD, choose to rejoice and be glad in it.

God has chosen for you to live in this day, in these circumstances; make the most of it.

YHWH

Not the God of the past, I was; not the God of the future, I will be; but the God of the present, I am.

Conclusion

What is going to be our (the Church) response? How are **you/we** going to handle it?

We are going to learn to be content whatever our circumstances.

We are going to deepen ourselves in the LORD.

We are going to deepen our relationships with each other.

We are going to live in this day the LORD has made.

Even in this difficult and uncertain time, we will stand and without hesitation, but in a deep abiding faith, all say "To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Philippians 4:20).

"Naked I came from my mother's womb; and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised" (Job 1:21).