

The Drive

Philippians 4:10-13

Dr. Paul Cannings

A. Motivated (v. 10):

1. But I rejoice in the Lord – Paul is totally consumed with such a refreshing energy it radiates through him even in the midst of the circumstances he is experiencing. This refreshing energy, even though it comes because of the believers of Philippi and their persistence in finding him, he viewed it as taking place because of the power, authority, and dominion of the King of King who reigns.

a) Gratitude may have been particularly important in Macedonia, of which Philippi was a part; in earlier times an ungrateful man was said to have been liable to prosecution there. If Paul had said "thank you" forthrightly, he might have cast himself in the role of a subordinate, dependent client.

b) I now comes to one of his reasons for sending this letter. He wished to express his thanks for the gift which his Philippian friends have sent him. He accepts it with gratitude, and yet he is anxious to show that he could have managed without the money, since with Christ's help he has learned the secret of independence (vv. 10-13). Nevertheless, the apostle wants his readers to know his genuine gratefulness, especially since they are the only community which supplied help when he needed it. He is certain that God will reward their generosity by fulfilling all their needs (vv. 14-20).

2. Now at last – After an accumulation of time the Philippi believers found an opportunity to re-engage in Paul's ministry.

a) Although the idea of "great joy" is consonant with the Christian gospel and often associated with it (Matt 2:10; Luke 2:10; 24:52; Acts 8:8; 15:3), this is the only place where the apostle quantifies his own experience of joy. The adverb he uses, *μεγάλως*, "greatly, immensely," is found nowhere else in the NT, and it's very

uniqueness intensifies what he is saying about the depth of his feelings at this point.^[1]

3. Now at last – This church was so blessed by what Paul had done to serve them spiritually, they valued this so much that they were determined to make sure what the Lord was doing through Paul impacts others.
4. Revive - By finding Paul the believers of Philippi were provided an opportunity to flourish, to refresh their love for Paul and the ministry God called him to.
5. Your concern for me – Finding Paul provided the believers of Philippi, through Epaphroditus, the opportunity to demonstrate their devotion to Paul’s ministry and their affection for who Paul is to them.

a) The verb φρονεῖν is used by Paul to express his “thoughtful care”—the key verb of this letter (Phil 1:7; 2:2, 5; 3:15, 19; 4:2, 10). Fundamental to its meaning is the idea of “thinking.” Paul, therefore, was never out of the thoughts of the Philippians. But φρονεῖν means more than merely “thinking” about someone; it also describes an active interest in that person’s affairs—“thinking leading to action.”^[2]

6. You were concerned before – It was not that they were not affectionately devoted to Paul’s ministry, it was the circumstances that Paul was going through that prevented them from assisting him. When the opportunity arose they spontaneously responded because it was always in their minds to do so.
7. You lacked opportunity – The only reason these believers were unable to passionately serve Paul was because it provided a decisive moment to actively engage in fulfilling what they believed God called them to do.

B. The Secret (vs. 11-12):

1. Not that I speak – Paul repeatedly communicates his response to the generosity of the Philippian believers.
2. In respect of want – Paul did not allow his poverty, his inability to be able to take care of his own needs (once a self-sufficient tent maker) to cause him to complain or to control how he would purposefully serve God.

a) I feel neglected is literally "according to want." The word rendered "want" is used elsewhere only in Mark 12:44, where it refers to the material poverty of a

widow. (Translators New Testament TNT), and "I am not talking about shortage of money." (JB)

3. I have learned to content - Paul says that he has come to a full knowledge and understanding of how to be independent of external circumstances, which he counted as loss (Philippians 3:4-8), even to the point of not desiring aid from others, living self-sufficient completely trusting in the power and sufficiency of the Lord God.

a) The words "have learned" are in a construction in the Greek which speaks of entrance into a new condition. It is, "I have come to learn." Paul had not always known that. He had been reared in the lap of luxury, and had never known want as a young man. The "I" is emphatic. It is, "I, for my part, whatever others may feel." ^[3]

b) The adjective rendered satisfied (literally "self-sufficient"), appearing only here in the New Testament, was an important word in Stoic ethics. It was used to describe a state of mind or attitude in which a man is absolutely independent of all things and of all people. It was a cultivated attitude of a wise man whose sufficiency was not dependent on circumstances and conditions. As used by Paul, however, this attitude is a gift from God, made possible through Christ (v. 13), not something achieved by an act of human will. (from the UBS Handbook Series. Copyright © 1961-1997, by United Bible Societies.).

4. I have learned to content - The secret to contentment is being committed to live godly. When we reverence God in our decision making we reflect on His Word more than our emotional needs. The practicing of His Word allows the Holy Spirit to consume us (Ephesians 5:15-18) so that the fruit of the Spirit becomes who we are (Galatians 5:22-25).

5. I have learned to content - Contentment is hard when we conform to the world (Romans 12:2). The flesh always wants more.

a) Wanting more has garages so full we need storages. It has put us in debt with no time for our families.

b) Wanting more has made us unhealthy.

c) Wanting more has left us exhausted with no time for family or God.

6. I know how to get along – Because Paul had learned contentment and therefore was no longer living with a dependence on external circumstances Paul had a complete understanding of what it is like to live in humble means.

7. Humble means – Paul who was once a Pharisee of Pharisee, who obeyed the law based on the strictest set of Pharisees’ circumcised the eighth day.... ‘ Hebrew of Hebrews,’ and found blameless brought himself low like the lowest water level behind a dam for the purposes of Christ. It did not matter what conditions Paul was exposed to. The agenda of Christ would never suffer because those conditions caused Paul to live in a manner that was below what he was accustomed.
8. I also know how to live in prosperity – Because this is the manner by which Paul once conducted his life he has a full day to day experience of how to live when there is an abundance of material resources.
9. Secret of being filled – As a result of trusting the Lord each day, no matter the circumstances that Paul may be experiencing, Paul’s life experiences completely taught him what it is like to live in plenty (like an animal that is completely full and well cared for) and also what it is like to go hungry.
- a) This clause translates a Greek infinitive which literally means "to overflow." The idea is "to have enough and to spare" in the needs of daily life. It may be rendered as "to have more than I need," to "to have more than what is necessary for me."
10. Suffer need – Paul came to a complete experience of what it is like to lack any special benefits that may have been due him, fell short of receiving the same honor as the other disciples or have fallen short of his daily needs.

C. Empowered (vs. 13-14):

3. I can do – Paul says that because external challenges do not shape or determine his commitment to Christ he is capable of prevailing through whatever he may encounter especially since his salvation comes from the inside out (Philippians 2:3).
4. All things – Because Paul came to a full understanding on how to count everything loss, he rejoices in all circumstances, and because of an active prayer life he is anxious for nothing. This has blessed him to completely understand what it is like to serve Christ no matter the short fall. After all, Paul had come to know all of Satan’s schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11). Therefore there are no circumstances that would prevent Paul from doing what the Lord instructs him to do.
- a) But it is also possible to understand it in the sense of "anything anywhere (JB), or anywhere, at any time (TEV), giving the preposition "in" both a local and a temporal sense. Thus, anywhere, at any time may be rendered as "regardless of

where I am and regardless of when something happens." It is also possible to render these expressions as "wherever I happen to be, at any time," or "it makes no difference where I am, or when I experience such things."

5. Through Christ who strengthens – All that Paul does or accomplishes Paul attributes to the inward strength, ability and supernatural power of Christ continuously working within him (Philippians 2:13; 3:12-16). This attitude functionally explains what Paul said before in chapter 4:4-9, chapter 3:2-9 and chapter 3:12-16. These passages explain why Paul viewed remaining with the Philippians was his gain. It also works out for their gain as explained in chapter 4:15-20.

a) It is best to make this meaning explicit, thus "through Christ who gives me power" or by the power that Christ gives me. Verse 13 must sometimes be restructured so as to indicate the causal relation between what Christ does and the strength which Paul has, for example, "Christ causes me to be strong in every kind of circumstance," or "Christ causes me to have the power to face...." (from the UBS Handbook Series. Copyright © 1961-1997, by United Bible Societies.)

^[1] Hawthorne, G. F. (2004). [Philippians](#) (Vol. 43, p. 261). Word, Incorporated.

^[2] Hawthorne, G. F. (2004). [Philippians](#) (Vol. 43, p. 261). Word, Incorporated.

^[3] Wuest, K. S. (1997). [Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader](#) (Vol. 5, pp. 112–113). Eerdmans.