

THE FIRST 15

Thursday, June 20, 2024

Today is Thursday, June 20 and we are studying what the Bible says about contentment.

OPENING PRAYER

In the quiet stillness of a dawning day, I seek the Lord who loves me. I calm my restless thoughts, slow my breathing and center myself upon God's holy presence. Come, Holy Spirit, teach me to rest in your loving kindness. Help me discover the secret of contentment and peace in this earthly life. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. 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 all this through him who gives me strength. And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:11-13,19

REFLECTION

Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians from prison. The Roman prison system didn't give prisoners meals or provide them with a clean, safe place to live. In ancient Rome, friends, family and humanitarians had to care for prisoners or they would go hungry and dwell in filth and discomfort. The Philippian church sent money with a man named Epaphroditus. When he arrived in Rome, he purchased food and supplies for Paul. The church may have also sent a cloak and blankets to help Paul stay warm in the winter months. Epaphroditus stayed with Paul for a period of time to care for his needs (Philippians 2:25). Paul sincerely appreciated the concern and the gifts and he wrote to thank the church.

Paul rejoiced that he learned the secret of contentment regardless of what he possessed and no matter the circumstances. In either abundance or scarcity Paul was content. He had the resources he needed. The source of his contentment was not himself but Jesus Christ. His satisfaction was not the result of his own achievement, ability or wisdom, it was empowered by Christ. By himself, Paul realized he was powerless, but he learned he could overcome anything with Jesus. He found he could do all things through the strength Christ provided.

Paul was not a victim of circumstances but a victor over circumstances because of Christ. I can be victorious over my circumstances as well. Paul found contentment in the spiritual resources abundantly provided by Jesus. I can find this contentment too. Contentment is an abiding inner peace, gratitude, confidence and joy in the midst of every difficulty. The word "contentment" comes from the same root word as the word "contained." All I need comes in one container - Jesus. I don't need anything else. Christ is sufficient in every situation because through Jesus I have everything I need for whatever life throws at me. I just need to keep my eyes fixed on him.

Ask: What is the source of my contentment? Where am I overflowing and where am I lacking?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Blessed and loving Lord, teach me the secret of contentment. Show me what it means to be satisfied in body, mind and spirit regardless of my circumstances. Let my heart be content in every situation, whether I am well fed or hungry, whether I have plenty or little. Give me strength of soul and faith of spirit to overcome anything through you. I turn to you as the One source for everything I need. You are my provision. You are my supply. Because of you I rest securely confident that you are with me and want to bless me. Amen.