

THE FIRST 15

Tuesday, October 22, 2024

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Today is Tuesday, October 22 and as we continue our focus on Christ the Cornerstone, we will study how God wants to move us from a posture of scarcity to a posture of abundance.

OPENING PRAYER

Holy and loving God, I worship You in the stillness of a new day with a joyful heart. Help me hear the message You have for me. Speak to me through the power of Your Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ my Lord. Wherever I find myself lacking or in short supply, show me the secret stores of abundant living You promise. Help me recognize Your presence in all today's circumstances and the goodness of Your bountiful supply. 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 scarcity or abundance 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 Jesus. I can be victorious over my circumstances as well. Paul did not give into a posture of spiritual scarcity. He found contentment in the spiritual resources abundantly provided by Jesus. We can find this contentment too. Contentment is an abiding inner peace, gratitude, confidence and joy in the midst of every situation - both good and bad. 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. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul said this,

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:20-21

Ask: What is the source of my contentment? Is it Christ or something else? Where do I seem to be filled to overflowing and where do I find myself 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, in abundance or scarcity, whether I am well fed or hungry, whether I have plenty or little, whether I am full or empty. 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.