

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

In the early 1800's, a famous French guy came up with the phrase,

You are what you eat...

As I went through elementary school, I remember several of my teachers reminding me and my classmates of this phrase every time they saw us eating junk food.

I pretty much lived on a diet of soda and Funyuns while I was in junior high and High School –

And, I am pretty sure that this along with my family history resulted in me being diagnosed as a diabetic at the age of 18.

You see, our physical wellbeing, for the most part, is dependent upon the nutrition that we put into our body.

If we are constantly eating pizza and donuts – it will definitely begin to show in the way we look, the way we feel and even the way we act.

Garbage in – garbage out.

However, this idea of garbage in – garbage out is not limited to our physical wellbeing –

What we introduce into our minds also dictates how we respond emotionally and spiritually.

If we think garbage – garbage will come out.

You see, way before “Frenchy” came up with this principle, King Solomon had stated the same thing in the book of Proverbs.

Proverbs 23:7a For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.

So the question this morning is...

What are our minds consumed with this morning?

What are we thinking about?

Are we thinking about the chaos that is happening in Washington?

Are we thinking about that guy who cut us off getting to church this morning?

Are we thinking whether the Cardinals are going to beat the Seahawks this afternoon?

Or, are we thinking about what a great God we have? About His faithfulness?

This morning, by the grace of God, we are going to finish this short book to the church in Philippi.

And in our text today, Paul is going to exhort the church regarding what they consume mentally –

and he will finish his letter on a call to be content.

We will see the application of both of these things in our walk in Christ.

Let's pray...

**[Philippians 4:8-23 NKJV] 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. 10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did**

care, but you lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. 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, 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. 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. 19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20 Now to our God and Father [be] glory forever and ever. Amen. 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. 23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.**

**Amen.**

The theme of this short epistle is one of joy – and we have seen Paul exhort the church to rejoice several times through this book.

No matter what our circumstances are, we can rejoice in the Lord.

Now, last week Paul exhorted the church to stand fast in the Lord.

He wanted the division in the church that was caused by Euodia and Synthyche to be resolved quickly as he wanted them to be of the same mind in the Lord. Meaning that he wanted them to focus on the big picture instead of the disagreement that was driving the church apart.

Did you notice the pattern that is starting to develop here?

Rejoice in the Lord

Stand fast in the Lord

Be of the same mind in the Lord

Everything we do is done in the Lord.

And Paul will continue to emphasize this to include what we actually put into our mind.

**[Romans 12:2 NKJV] 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what [is] that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

The mindset of the world is to be rebellious against God.

It is to enact our own will instead of His will.

To do what pleases us – to satisfy all of our desires.

As believers, we are called out to not be conformed to this world which means that we are to have a totally different mindset than that of the world.

We are supposed to think differently.

How is this accomplished?? By getting all the garbage out that is in our minds.

I was reading an online article about this believers who had one guilty pleasure and that was that she enjoyed watching a certain reality show.

She was fully aware that the ideals portrayed on that reality show were not the same as what is in the word of God.

She was aware of the vulgar language that happened on the show – however, because it was bleeped – she thought it was ok – even though she was well aware of every word that was bleeped out.

Then one morning as she was waking up, she was rudely awakened by the sound of one of the words that she had heard bleeped out hundreds of times in the show.

She didn't speak the word – she didn't have to, her own mind revealed the garbage that existed within her.

Being convicted by the Holy Spirit, she finally realized that she was eating a steady diet of garbage— anger, brawling, slander, malice, envy, hatred, cursing, betrayal, greed, self-absorption, lying, and on and on.

The bombardment of ungodly living was having a negative effect on her heart, as the garbage inside continued to pile up.

So instead of garbage, Paul provides us with a list of things that we should be filling our minds with.

**[Philippians 4:8 NKJV] 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.**

So here in verse 8, Paul gives us a list of things that we should be filling our minds with.

- **Things that are true:** this means that we shouldn't be filling our minds with things that are false or untrustworthy. Things that are imagined. A good percentage of the things that we worry about never materialize – yet we allow these things to fill our minds.
- **Things that are just or honorable** means - things that are not shameful, twisted or foolish. Filling our minds with reality television where they promote the pursuit of fleshly desires.
- **We are to be filling our minds with things that are pure**...not tainted or immoral.



- **Lovely things**, not distorted things or offensive things
- **Things that are of good report** – not gossipy, slanderous or sarcastic.
- **Virtues things** – not flawed or wasteful
- **Praiseworthy**... not distasteful, insulting or evil.

If we are a Christian, we have within us the power to obey this command.

We can literally change our mind if we want to. How?

By remembering that all that is best is embodied in a Person! And of course,

I speak of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

He is the Truth!

He is the Most Noble Son of God!

He is the Standard of Righteousness!

He is the Fountain of Purity!

He is Altogether Lovely!

He is the Admirable Savior!

He is the Source of All Virtue!

He is the One Whom God Entirely Approves!

Jesus Christ is the embodiment of everything that Paul is writing about. We are to think of these things – and as our relationship with Jesus Christ grows, we think about Him more and more. But we first must stop the garbage from coming in.

**[Philippians 4:9 NKJV] 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.**

Paul was a living example for the church in Philippi to follow. Despite the many beatings he endured and the imprisonments he was subjected to, his thoughts were not on his circumstances but on Jesus Christ.

If the Philippians did as Paul had instructed them, not only would they have had the peace of God – which we studied last week, but the God of peace would have also been with them.

So we have the peace of God that surpasses all understanding that we read about in verse 7 last week and the God of peace that we see here in verse 9.

Here's the point-- if we think godly thoughts and we live godly lives, we'll feel God's peace, because the God of peace is the one that we're walking with—

**[Philippians 4:10-12 NKJV] 10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.**

I remember seeing a cartoon somewhere and it was about two mules that were in separate plots next to each other. There was a barbed wire fence dividing the plots, the plots were the same size, they had the same type of grass and the same amount of grass as each other. But each of the mules were depicted as struggling to get their head through the barb wire fence in order to get to the grass from the other plot.

We have all heard the saying, the grass is always greener on the other side and that is what the cartoon was depicting.

Even though it was the same grass, the mules preferred to struggle to eat the grass from the other plot. Somehow that grass tasted better than the abundance of grass that they were standing on.

Contentment is one of the things that we, as believers, seem to struggle with the most.

Think about how frequent we upgrade our smartphones? Why?

Because we are no longer content with our old phone. It's too slow, the battery life is only 4 hours – the new one says it can hold a charge for 2 days.

This is why Apple and Samsung release new phones about every 8 months.

Discontentment drives the false narrative that if you obtain certain thing you will be a happier person.

Discontentment causes us to want a bigger house, a better position at work, a wife that can actually cook or a husband that will listen, children that will behave – and yes, they do exist.

And one of the biggest contributors to being discontent is that we become fascinated in what other people have – we begin to covet.

So how do we acquire contentment?

We have to learn it – just like Paul did.

All those trials that Paul had to go through – they served a purpose, to bring him to the point where he is content.

Our contentment is proportional to our maturity in Christ.

Because only when we yield to the providence of God in all aspects of our lives, that is when we become content.

One of the greatest examples in all of scripture is when Job finds out that he had lost everything.

**[Job 1:21 NKJV] 21 And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."**

Don't mistaken necessity for contentment because they are very different.

One can have very little material wealth or an abundance of material wealth and still not be content.

Think of all the people that play the lotto every week – “if I can just hit the lottery one time – then all my problems would go away – I would be happy”

And you read story after story about how miserable they became and how eventually – they lose it all.

If you read some of the biographies from some of the richest people in the U.S. like Rockefeller – who in today’s \$\$\$ would be worth hundreds of billions of dollars – yet he was not content.

We are to be content in the provisions that God has given to us.

Now, Paul is not upset at the church in Philippi that for whatever reason, they were not able to care for him for a period–

He is just rejoicing in the Lord that they remembered him – that they continued in their giving.

We are not told the reason that they couldn’t give – maybe they just didn’t know where he was???

Remember, Epaphroditus had traveled 800 miles to deliver this assistance to Paul, while he was under house arrest.

Paul was content on whatever God had provided him.

**[Philippians 4:13 NKJV] 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**

As I mentioned a few weeks ago when I brought up this verse – it has nothing to do with dunking a basketball or finishing a marathon or climbing a mountain..

I remember in the 90's the Heavyweight boxer – Evander Holyfield, he would enter the boxing ring with Philippians 4:13 on his robe and on his trunks.

He did win the heavyweight championship several times but he also got knocked out wearing those trunks.

**Philippians 4:13 was never meant to be a promise that God would give us power to do whatever we want whenever we want.**

It was Paul's explanation for how he could trust in God, and His loving care, in whatever the world threw at him.

As he sits there in prison chained to the Roman soldier – it is Christ who strengthens him.

Every time he was suffered persecution – it was Christ that strengthens him.

It all about contentment when you study the verse in context.

Being content through any circumstances because you trust that Christ will give you the strength to endure.

If we truly want to claim this verse in our lives, we would be obedient to the will that God has set forth for us and fully depend on His sufficiency.

Turn with me to the gospel of John 15

**[John 15:1-8 NKJV] 1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every [branch] that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you**



abide in Me. **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.**

**6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw [them] into the fire, and they are burned. 7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.**

**[Philippians 4:14-18 NKJV] 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, 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. 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.**

This entire letter is a thank you note from Paul to the church in Philippi.

A thank you for their generosity in supporting the ministry.

I want to draw your attention to verse 17 – because what Paul is saying here is that Paul is much more interested in their act of giving than the funds that he received from them.

Because giving is a reflection on our spiritual maturity.

Unfortunately for the church, is that we see examples after examples of people that fleece the flock.

People who stand on the pulpit and use guilt as a method to bring in more funds.

One of my old fishing buddies was a retired eye doctor and he told me he started going to a church and he got a letter from them asking for a copy of his W-2's so that they can keep track on whether or not he was tithing the correct amount.

That is not the way God intended it.

**[2 Corinthians 8:1-5 NLT] 1 Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. 2 They are being tested by many troubles, and they are**

**very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. 3 For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. 4 They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. 5 They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do.**

I truly believe that were God leads, God provides.

We've been here over three months now and God has provided all of our needs.

Let's finish our text,

**[Philippians 4:19-23 NKJV] 19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20 Now to our God and Father [be] glory forever and ever. Amen. 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. 23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**

Notice that Paul says that God shall supply all your needs.

Needs is very different than wants.

Because of their faithful giving and sacrifice – their needs will be met by His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

In 2 Kings 4 –

There is a beautiful story about a woman whose husband had died and debt collectors were about to take her son away from her – as back then you were allowed to use your children as collateral.

All she had in her house was a little jar of oil.

She goes to Elisha and asks for help and he tells her to go borrow many empty vessels and to take them home – close the door behind her and start pouring whatever oil she had into the empty vessels.

So she is obedient to what Elisha told her and she starts to pour until she finally runs out of vessels.

Now, the scriptures do not tell us how many vessels she collected – but the scriptures do tell us that she filled enough vessels to be able to sell them and pay off the debt and live off the rest.

I believe that the reason that we are not told how many vessels she collected is because the emphasis of the story is not on how big her faith was.

The emphasis of the story is on the faithfulness of God.

As far as the vessels, we are the vessels – and God will continue to fill us as long as we empty ourselves. He will meet our needs.

Church, this is how we become content.

Amen.

Let's pray...