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EDINBURGH

Total Contentment

Philippians 4:10-14

Paul's happiness with the gift the Philippians sent is less about having his financial needs met and more with them showing that they love him. It's a bit tricky for him: he wants to say thanks but also wants them to know that he trusts in God for all that he needs.

A.W. Pink: "Instead of complaining at his lot, a contented man is thankful that his condition and circumstances are no worse than they are. Instead of greedily desiring something more than the supply of his present need, he rejoices that God still cares for him. Such a one is 'content' with such as he has."

Paul identifies the Philippians' love for him through their generosity. Jesus did the same when He said, "*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*" (Matthew 6:21). It's true that when we feel motivated for something we want to give to it, to help it. We want to see more churches planted across Europe and for them to be well cared for - so we give to New Ground. This is a real partnership, and our Together for Scotland (<http://www.kingschurchedinburgh.org/event/together-for-scotland>) conference expresses this too, as does our Academy (<http://www.kingschurchedinburgh.org/Academy>) leadership training.

Paul doesn't go for emotionalism when trying to motivate the Philippians to support him - he emphasises how ok he is. He is not being a stoic, immune from the body, stiff upper lip, etc. Not grin and bear it, self-reliance, but total reliance on Christ.

Both poverty and riches have major dangers. When we're preoccupied with increasing our comfort we forget about Christ, and our care for others decreases accordingly. This forsakes the power and presence of God that is within us!

Martin Lloyd-Jones: *“The Christian is not just a good decent moral man the life of God has entered into him, there is an energy, a power a life in him and it is that that makes him particularly and specifically Christian.”*

Contentment says that I'm happy with what I've got and grateful for it. More than just about finance: sickness and life circumstances. These can be long-term and involve daily struggles. The moment my heart wants to grumble and complain, I need to start thanking God instead. All that we would dream of, and the world has to offer us is nothing compared to what we have in Christ.

God has a sufficiency beyond our understanding. Verse 13 isn't a magic verse saying I can do whatever I want. The context is: Christ gives me strength to be content, whatever is happening.

Martin Luther: *“I have many things in my hands and have lost them all, but whatever I have placed in God's hands that I still possess.”*

Questions

- On a scale of 1 to 10, one being not at all and ten being totally, how content are you?
- Is there such a thing as godly discontent? (N.B. 1 Corinthians 7:21)
- How do we discern a lack of contentment in ourselves?
- How does the gospel challenge this?



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