

Acquiring Contentment

Philippians 3:20-21

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Yesterday when I returned from New Orleans I knew I was going to be preaching on this passage where Paul said, “I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.” As I went to my car in the parking lot after a wonderful week in Canada, feeling great, never feeling any sickness, I tried to open my car and the button on the key would not cut off the alarm system. So when I opened the door the alarm went off, and when I got into the car to start it, it wouldn’t start. There I was in New Orleans on Saturday afternoon knowing that I had a big problem, and I will tell you it was a sanctifying experience about learning to be content in every circumstance. If you don’t think God has a sense of humor you are wrong. He uses situation like that to teach us. For about an hour I was ashamed at how much I had to struggle with contentment. I knew that God had planned this. There was no doubt in my mind and probably because I had such a great week, but I also knew I had to preach on this today. It is a humbling experience to preach on things that you struggle within your own heart and mind. I trust God will help us today to understand this wonderful passage. Paul tries to teach the Philippians truth as he closes this letter to them while sitting in a Roman jail.

Let us begin reading in Philippians 4:1,

“Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and my crown, so stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

I urge Euodia and I and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. Indeed, true comrade, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstances I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

You yourselves also know, Philippians, that the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. And my god will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar’s household.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

As I travelled through airports, I love to watch people (not as much as Debbie), but I love to watch people. They are so different and amazing. Every tongue and tribe and race and nation; dressed differently, adorned differently, each one made by God, each one having their own life somewhere in this world, which I don't know, but God knows every single one as much as He knows everything about you and me. Each having a soul that will never die, each needing to be restored to the God who made them; to learn about a Father in heaven, to no longer live for themselves.

It was interesting to see the mothers. Since Mother's Day was coming, that was on my mind. The mothers were herding their children through the airports and caring for their little ones on the flight. If the father was there with them, still it was the mother who took the most care of the children making sure their needs were met, talking to them, nourishing them, distracting them, making sure their snacks and drinks were ok, and making sure their toys were there. The fathers were often involved too and some of them appeared to be Christian men in the way they talked with their children; still not as much as the mothers.

There is a special bond between mothers and their children which is never broken, even when the children grow up. It is hard to understand that bond until you had a child. We fathers look on and have a bond as well, but still there is a difference.

Today we remember our mothers. I have known some of your mothers and grandmothers which has been a blessing to me. Some are still living. Some have gone on before us. Some memories are very good and comforting and wonderful. Some memories are sad and grievous. God's commandment is very strong. If you have a mother that is living, you are commanded by God to honor your father and your mother if you love Jesus Christ. For He said, "If you love me you will keep my commandments." It is God's will to give honor and respect to our parents, particularly our mothers. The book of Proverbs is written to young men and young women to listen to their mothers; to honor their mothers and to follow their mother's and their father's teachings in their lives as they grow up into adulthood. God calls us to do that. He commands it because He would have us understand: whatever father or mother we have He is the one that selected them to be our parents for special purposes in our lives; to teach us certain things, to help us to understand His purpose for our lives and He tells us and commands us that whatever is honorable, whatever is of good reputation, whatever love we have seen and received from them we are to think on those things.

Paul applied the image of motherhood to himself which is sort of strange in a sense. He called himself a mother in giving birth in his ministry to believers. When he preached the gospel to others, he was like a mother in labor agonizing for their life, having pained himself in bringing them forth into new life in Jesus Christ; to bring them into a new world of faith, and when they strayed, as did the Galatians and others, his concern and his work with them was so intense that it was like a woman in labor to bring them to birth a second time: something women cannot do in this life of the same child.

In Galatians 4:19 he said, “My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you...” There is a bond between those who teach the word of God to you, those who are used by God to bring you to salvation, that can never be broken. There is a labor there. There is a concern over your soul that can never be diminished and should you stray away from the faith or from Christ in disobedience to him, that work is almost like going through labor again to bring you to birth in contentment in Christ again.

We need to remember how our mothers feel about our life. Those who teach the word of God, who have brought you to salvation, who still teach you, keep a motherly feeling toward you. In 1 Thessalonians 2:7 Paul said, “But we prove to be gentle among you as a nursing mother, tenderly cares for her own children.” That is how he characterized his love for them: the tenderness he felt in his heart is seen in that wonderful bond when a mother nurses her child. You and I are to honor our spiritual mothers and fathers as well as our physical ones. It is this motherly spirit that Paul tries to teach the Philippians about how to live for Christ faithfully in this world and how to be content. This is not a disjointed or a distant teacher trying to teach facts. It is a mother’s love of wanting their children to have joy in this life and to have comfort and contentment in this life.

When our children are unhappy it pains our souls; we for them. Our greatest desire is that they would know joys that we have never known and a happiness that we have not fully experienced. This is the attitude of Paul as he writes to the Philippians. He is concerned for them; He is like a mother. He first brought them into the world of the kingdom of God when he preached the gospel on a riverbank in Philippi. They had been faithful for many years and he had continued to labor among them as a mother tenderly cares for her nursing child.

But now after years of early joy with them, these spiritual children had forgotten him. They had forgotten to return honor to him in jail. Not that he was personally offended. He was concerned about their soul and their thoughtlessness toward God as well as toward him. He had many needs in jail: food clothing and shelter, and in the past they had helped him before when no other church had helped him. But now, not far from Rome, they had not come to his aid even though he had written them before about it. They had not done what they should have done, and yet all through this letter as you read the words and the attitude of Paul, you detect this motherly attitude: this genuine love and affection trying to give the best construction on what they were doing, hoping for the best for them, desiring them to do what God wants them to do not just toward him but toward God. He deals with them kindly and gently giving the best construction to their forgetful behavior toward him. And even when they finally remembered him and sent Epaphroditus with perhaps food, perhaps money, perhaps warm clothing, what he had needed all this time, and did without, he does not take offense at how long it took for them to supply his needs. He does not hold a grudge. He does not make them feel bad, because they took so long to honor him. He is full of tenderness and contentment in Christ; so content that others do not have to act the way they should for him to have joy.

He writes this letter out of his own experience with Christ; the help that he had found in Christ. First of all to give thanks for their remembrance of him and then to help

them to understand how to think better, to be more thoughtful, and to be more sacrificial in their own lives toward each other at the church. So first, what was Paul's attitude in this passage, this attitude we call contentment: contentment in every circumstance. I have learned to be content, he says. The word content means self sufficient in every circumstance. How did he get this contentment? How did he get this gentle spirit? How did he get this motherly concern for others even when they were not treating him so well?

First of all, we have to look at Paul's attitude of contentment in jail and remember that he was in a Roman jail, which means that others outside had to supply his food and clothing and warmth. The jail did not. He was chained to a Roman soldier. There were Christians in Rome, but they could not always see him and apparently were not helping him. The Philippians were not helping him either. He was confined, he was restricted, and his life was in jeopardy, as it says in the first chapter. He could not travel around preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ to men; seeing people made in the image of God and on their way to God's judgment without a Savior and bring them Good News: there is redemption, there is reconciliation with God; there is restoration to God, living everyday in communion with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul couldn't preach like he once did.

So, now he writes back this letter of thanksgiving for them finally remembering him and in the process uses this letter of thanksgiving to them to teach them; to teach them about contentment in Christ and how to treat each other. As I said, he is gracious in his evaluation. It says in verse 10, "Now at last you have revived your concern for me. Indeed you were concerned you lacked opportunity." Well, it might have been difficult for them to supply his needs, but the real problem was that they were not as concerned as they use to be. He said, "You have *revived* your concern..."

He attributed their difficulty as the reason, because he wanted to give the best construction on their behavior and show them that he was not holding a grudge. He was not bitter because they were thoughtless toward him or forgetful of him or did not think of him in their life. Now they have revived and flourished like a plant that is dying and is coming back to life. They were reviving their concern for him.

Perhaps you have experienced this: a friend in the past you have shared much with, perhaps one you have helped a great deal, has withdrawn from you or has not contacted you or ignored you, even forgotten you. Perhaps even one of your own children. They know of your need or knew of your need, but they did not call. They did not ask. They did not check on you to help. They did not change the things they were doing in their life and do a little sacrifice in order to give a little time to help you. Even though in the past you had helped them a great deal.

How did you react when they had ignored you and forgotten you? Did you get *hurt*? We love to use that word in our generation: "Oh, I am so *hurt*!"—which means I am so angry. Did you become angry? Maybe call them up and fuss at them and chew them out. Or did you just refuse to call them too?

"They hadn't called me so I am just going to wait and see how long it takes for them to call me." Oh, the bitterness of the human heart and the selfishness and the ignorance of how God would want us to live!

You withdrew from them perhaps, and now you both stand at a distance. This one has not contacted you or ignored you or maybe they have neglected you. And you refuse to call them and now you stand apart—a distance from each other. Who is going to make the first move? Paul made the first move with a gentle gracious spirit, because he loved them.

In the first chapter he writes to them: “I thank my God in all my remembrance of you... (that included them forgetting him)...always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all.” He was praying for their needs even though they seemed to have forgotten his needs. He had joy for God bringing them into his life, even though apparently they had forgotten him to some degree.

“In view of your participation of the gospel from the first day till now...” He didn’t doubt that they were Christians. He thought that perhaps they were thoughtless Christians, but he didn’t doubt their salvation because they were thoughtless to him on this occasion. He didn’t hold a grudge. He did not focus on their forgetfulness or their lack of coming to his aid after all he had done for him. (Those ungrateful wretches!) Instead he thanked God for them all—every single one of them—even Euodia and Syntyche causing problems in the church. Even if they had forgotten him, he thanked God for them.

So when they revived for their concern for him; their *thinking* about them is the word, and they finally sent help with Epaphroditus, he did not harshly rebuke them: “Well, it is about time!” He did not pridefully send back their help as if it were too little too late: “That is OK, I am fine!” No, he rejoiced in the Lord; that the Lord had finally worked in their hearts to cause them to remember him and not for his own needs, but for their need. A thoughtless heart: a heart that did not love as it should have but was grumbling and disputing with others in the church and sometimes even dividing between two believers at a standstill with each other.

He rejoiced in the Lord: that God had moved them to remember his needs. He was content and he let them know in all that time that they had not sent aid to him; he had learned to be content in whatever circumstance that he was in. And that was what enabled him to keep loving them and praying for them as a mother loves a thoughtless child and an ungrateful child that thinks their mother owes them something. What a wonderful example this is to us as well. He sends his example back, and his example is full of theology. He was not self-righteous as he wrote back to them: “See how content I am. I didn’t need you after all.”

Paul had this attitude of contentment in jail. “I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.” But how did he learn it? Where did he get this patient, loving and contented attitude even toward others that had forgotten him? Well, this whole passage is teaching us about the work of God’s grace in Paul’s heart. Do you remember his greatest sin that God used to show him what a self-righteous sinner he was in spite of all his good works and prayers and everything else? God’s Spirit brought to his mind and put the finger on his conscious: thou shalt not covet, thou shalt not complain, thou shalt not grumble, thou shalt not be discontented. He had to learn to be content in every circumstance that he was, and now from God’s work in his heart, the grace that he had found in Jesus Christ he had learned to be content and had a joyful attitude even in jail and a

gracious, motherly spirit toward these spiritual children of his who were ungrateful and unthoughtful and unappreciative of his work in their lives.

He had had to learn that God has a purpose in everything. In any and every circumstance, God has a purpose. The all wise God had sent his only begotten Son into this dark world for a purpose. Jesus lived a perfect life on this earth without sin for a purpose. He went to the cross for a purpose: to make atonement as a perfect man and a perfect God, to atone fully for the sins for those who come to him for mercy. With this God, who had done so much for Paul's greater need than food and clothing and human companionship; this God who had sent His Son to be Paul's savior and Companion, King and Lord, for eternity; this God could be trusted in circumstances to have a purpose in every and any circumstance.

In Sunday School this morning Mitch read through 2 Corinthians 11, and he detailed the many sufferings that Paul experienced for Jesus Christ and the gospel and his many trials to bring the good news to others: beatings, jail, five times thirty-nine lashes with a whip embedded with bone pieces. When it says he was beaten with rods, it is talking about the kind of beatings that they administer in Singapore for those who steal, for those who sell drugs or use drugs, for those who commit false witness, even for those who murder; beatings with flexible rods that are so severe that those criminals quit stealing, they quit lying, they quit breaking the law and their recidivism, that is their recovery of criminals behavior in Singapore, is a much higher percentage than we have in America: they do not want to get beaten with the rod again. That is what we are talking about.

He was rejected by friends and families, he was in shipwrecks on his way to preach the gospel and Mitch talked about the things in the water every time Paul was shipwrecked: sharks. Paul was shipwrecked three times and those of us who have been on cruises in the ocean are in much more stable vessels, but don't you still have that thought? All for the gospel! All for others! The grace of God, he said in 2 Corinthians 4, would spread to more and more people for the giving of glory to God. He suffered all these things and in 2 Corinthians 12, right after he detailed that, God had delivered him from all those things and so Satan asked permission to afflict Paul with a thorn in the flesh: a sickness or weakness. So, Paul prayed three times to God for relief from this sickness. God had relieved him from many sufferings from many enemies; it would seem to be a small thing for an Apostle, who had healed many others, to ask his God for physical healing after so many deliverances. Three times he prayed. Three times God said no, "You will keep the sickness."

Paul learned. He learned from all the shipwrecks and beating. He learned from a sickness that God would not take away from him. He learned to be content in whatever sufferings that he was in. He had to learn and did learn in 2 Corinthians 12 where God said to him, "My grace is enough for you. My grace is sufficient for you. For power is made perfect in weakness. Part of the amazing wisdom of God is to allow the weaknesses that enter our lives and the trials that we suffer to be sanctified to us to learn contentment, to learn joy, and happiness in any and every circumstance; that God's grace in Christ, grace to the undeserving sinner, unconditional grace at the cost of the blood of the Son of God, is enough to make us happy in this life, to have God restored, to have Christ our brother and friend and

high priest and savior, to have the Holy Spirit dwelling with us and in us all the time, is enough for joy, enough for contentment in every circumstance, enough to be happy.

Paul said, "When I am weak, then I am strong." In the first chapter of 2 Corinthians this is what he wrote in verse three and four: "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our afflictions." Why does God allow afflictions to come to the believer and then comfort us in that affliction? So that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. God uses the afflictions that He designs for a purpose in our lives to drive us to Christ and find comfort, not in the world, not in our health, not in wealth, not in friends, but in Christ alone we find comfort. Out of that comfort we find that it will be a blessing to those around us and we will use it to comfort those in all their afflictions; to help them, to have sympathy with them, to have empathy for them and do what we can to help them.

God always has a purpose in affliction: that we may learn how to be content in every and any circumstance in God, joyful in God, thankful for grace that we do not deserve, thankful for forgiveness that we do not deserve, thankful for the love and presence of God that we do not deserve that it might become the uppermost and the greatest thing in our life no matter what happens; that we may be able to bring the gospel to others and show the grace of God to others for their soul's good. Is this the way you approach affliction and persecution and forgetfulness of old friends and family? God is teaching you something in the trial or do you just think God is not there and deny the cross? Do you understand that He is trying to strip you of dependency on anything or person in this fallen world for lasting comfort and joy in this life? Do you understand that He is trying to teach you that Christ's love and grace is sufficient, enough to live on and to enable you to still have joy and still to love others when they are not so lovable to you? Do you understand that God is trying to teach you to be a witness to His power in this world of the hope of the gospel in this world?

This is what he wanted the Philippians to understand in writing this letter. They had begun grumbling about each other and with each other. They had begun disputing with each other over insignificant things that don't really matter to the point that Euodia and Syntyche, fellow workers in the gospel with him, godly Christian women, had reached a point of stalemate that they could not resolve their differences for the sake of the gospel. They had become so entrenched in their own hurt, in their own pride, that neither one would make the move toward the other to restore peace. While each perhaps was waiting for the other to change neither was looking at the other and saying: how does Christ want me to love them? How does Christ want me to forgive them? How does Christ want me to serve them, pray for them, and help them?

Paul had learned the secret of contentment in life that enabled him to love people that were no longer seeking to love him as they should. Now the word *content* in our passage: "I have learned to be content," actually has the idea within it of self sufficient. It is not the self sufficiency that psychologist tell us to have. "You don't need anybody. If anybody hurts you build a wall and cut them out of your life so you are not stressed by them."

The word *self sufficient* means that you are complete within yourself, that you are mature, that you do not function with a need: a needy person, needing this or needing that, or for other people to make you happy; to have this or that to make you happy. You are complete in Christ; you are self sufficient in Him. You and Christ are together. And you no longer need anything in this world to be able to find comfort and joy. It doesn't mean that you cut yourself from others, but it means you become so complete that you are able to write a letter of love and thanksgiving to people who have forgotten you; to pray for them every day, to love them and give thanks for the good times that you have had instead of pointing and focusing on that which is lacking and dividing your relationship.

If you are in poverty, Paul says, "I know how to be rich." And he meant I know how to be content in Christ if I don't have any physical thing that we think is necessary. He said if he is prosperous and prospering he knows how to be humble. There is not one thing that he possesses that he deserves. What right has any man to complain against God in view of his sins? The book of Lamentations says this.

Psalms 103 says that He has not dealt with us according to our iniquities or according to our sins. You know, boys and girls, God takes care of you through your parents. I am sure they love you, and they give you many things, but you don't deserve it. You are a sinner and you deserve God's wrath if you are not a Christian. Every piece of clothing and every toy and every hug and everything that they give you is a gift from God undeserved to you. That is what Paul is trying to teach them. He had *learned* to be content, self sufficient, having Christ as his great joy, the love of God and the presence of God as his great joy. He didn't need everything. He didn't depend on others to make him happy. He was not free to make others happy. And so he said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." That is the meaning of that phrase in this context of the bible. This is not about: "Well, Christ has strengthened me to get through a tough day at work. I made it in spite of it."

This is not Christ strengthening me to live with a disagreeable woman or man in marriage. This is not: "Christ has enabled me to face disappointment with my children. They just don't listen to me, but I still love them." This is not about facing illness and financial woes and getting through them and you are alive. You still have food and a place to live. This is not about enduring a strained relationship and acting nice even though you don't feel nice inside, even with other church members: gutting it out stoically. "This is the way I am supposed to act, so I will."

That is not what he means. When he says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," he is talking about dealing with his own heart, his own mind, his own attitude toward the Philippians and toward God and toward each other; having joy in God in any and every circumstance within yourself: *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*. It is about being content with Jesus Christ in every situation with life; of not just getting through it but of trusting God and finding joy, experiencing joy, contentment, and trust in God. Whatever circumstances you are in you know that God has a purpose and loves you. He has proven it on the cross. You know that every circumstance is designed to cut off another rough edge of your attitude and teach you how to love God and man. You know that God has a purpose to comfort you with the gospel, so that perhaps someday,

someone goes through what you are experiencing: cancer, a job loss, a wayward child and in your comfort that you found with Christ you are able to help them and find comfort in Christ.

It is about being content in God even if people have forgotten you and ignored or neglected you. It means dealing with your own heart toward other people at work not just enduring it. It means dealing with your own attitude toward your spouse not just staying married. It means dealing with your voice and your tone and your concepts of love toward your children when they are ungrateful little wretches. It means being so content in Christ that you can count the best construction on fellow church members that may have neglected you.

When the Philippians finally remembered Paul sending help to him in jail, he didn't lash out at them and say self-righteously: "You know what? God has blessed you and you are so ungrateful and thoughtless. You need to learn to be content and be the happy person that I am!"

Oh, how gracious this letter is! Read it again and see love and kindness spilling out of every verse; the kind of love that he had experienced from Jesus Christ when he met him on the Damascus road and brought him into the eternal kingdom of God, cleaned him of sin, made him a child of God, established his salvation as a place in eternity to be with the Son of God forever. These things, in jails, stood out more beautifully than they had before. Deprived of the things of this world and the friends that distract our attention, he had time to remember Jesus Christ. He remembered what God had done in the heart of the Philippians. He understood from the remaining sin of his own heart, how the true Christian can be forgetful and neglectful for awhile and that what they needed was a kind letter from a good friend; a phone call if he had had a phone, a visit if he was free to assure them of his love for them in spite of their thoughtlessness, because he was more concerned to minister to them for the glory of God than if they minister to him according to his own selfishness.

This is what the gospel is all about. In jail Paul was freed by the Good News and love of God in Jesus Christ from self pity and worry over his circumstances and anger and bitterness toward anyone that had brought him this way or revenge or self righteousness or self interest and bitterness over those who were not helping like they should. It freed him from that to have Christ; the magnitude of having God the Son as your dear friend and Savior, of His Spirit dwelling with you and in you all the time, of heaven opened before you that you can talk back and forth with Him, because He has atoned for your sins and removed the offense between you or the block between you and God: the veil of the temple has been torn in two, so that not just the High Priest can enter into the presence of God but all who believe. He understood that, and the more he thought about it the more it affected his attitude toward others. It freed him to love others in spite of their weakness and neglect. It is such a spirit that makes a marriage grow, that makes a family happy, and that makes a church mature.

"I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." He did not focus on the faults of others; he focused on Christ. He did not allow himself to ruminate over the faults of others and how often they had forgotten him, but he caused his mind to think about the amazing wonder that Christ is

always thinking of him. That enabled him to be content in his circumstance and unafraid to face any circumstance in the future.

The unbeliever cannot respond like this. They are alone and without God in the world. They may put on a polite face, but their mind and heart is full of restrained love because of offence. Bitterness, though they may not express it; self pity and envy and jealousy of others is there also. Such sins deny the goodness of God. They deny the truth of Jesus Christ and who He is, and they make idols of other people and things we think we need to be content. These attitudes will not stand before the judgment of God who knows the heart, because these attitudes are sin against the two great commandments of God: you shall love the Lord you God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. He made us to be like that. Only those that believe that Christ had to die for such lack of love to others, that it caused His blood to be shed for those sins, will love Him for what He has done. The love of Christ will empower them to forgive and love and serve others who will not serve them.

Is it so with you? How do you treat others? How do you think of others? How do you think of them when they have ignored you or harmed you? Do you pity them for their sins and what they have done to them? Do you pray for them that God might help them? Do you withdraw from them? Or when they cross your path do you lash out at them ignoring their needs, hoping that God will help them? The secret that Paul found is that Christ is enough. He is enough when he is given a sickness that God will not heal. He is enough when he is in jail with his life in jeopardy. He is enough when Christian friends ought to love him right. Christ is enough. He is enough to save him by His blood and righteous shed for his soul and He is enough and wise enough and good enough to have a purpose for each circumstance. He knows that that circumstance is designed to make sure that he understands that Christ is enough.

So I close with these words of Jesus Christ which I believe Paul knew in jail and probably helped him. Words that enabled him to live graciously with others and to continue to be a witness to others instead of a denial of the gospel before others; these words were given by Jesus Christ to his disciples before he went to the cross. And he told them that they would experience grief in His death, opposition from others, and great trials in their life for following Him. And he told them that He would rise again from the dead after His crucifixion, and that if they would focus and believe upon that great truth that they saw with their own eyes: that He is living and alive and that He is the purpose of the universe; He is the purpose of life and knowing Him is the most wonderful thing in this world and believing in Him is the only thing that will save us from ourselves. As He told them that they would have grief, He told them that if they would see His resurrection that they would have joy. So he said,

“Therefore you too have grief now, but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice and no one will take away your joy from you.” Rejoice in the Lord always.

