

NOW: Part 3- I can't wait until...
Philippians 4:11-13

I. ME

- A. Welcome/Online/So What About
- B. Safe Spaces Update/Why not Gateway?
- C. NOW
 - 1. It's all we have
 - 2. God wants what's best for us now.
 - 3. Wants us to be happy now
 - 4. Easy? Rich? No.
 - 5. Happy now despite circumstances...
- D. Thieves
 - 1. Past- Guilt and Shame
 - 2. Current- Distractions
 - 3. Future

II. WE

- A. We often miss out on enjoying and experiencing now b/c we are busy hoping/wishing/longing/yearning for a better tomorrow.
- B. Doesn't matter what age...
 - 1. Little kids can't wait to be teenagers (think they are)
 - 2. Teenagers can't wait to be drivers and out of school
 - 3. Young adults can't wait to be married, start careers
 - 4. Young married people can't wait to have kids
 - 5. People with kids can't wait to have older kids
 - a. "Days are long but years are short"- annoying
 - 6. Retirement
 - 7. Grandkids

C. We miss out on NOW by waiting for tomorrow.

- 1. Miss the beauty, opportunities, adventure, and experiences of NOW pining away for something that might or might not come.

- D. Not only miss out but it actually ruins what we could have NOW
 - 1. Makes us restless, annoyed, dissatisfied with what, and even who, we do have NOW.
- E. **The tomorrow we hope for rarely becomes reality.** -Expand
 - 1. **Pictures of what people thought future would be**
- F. Nothing new. Part of the human experience.
 - 1. Apostle Paul knew all about it and wrote about how to actually be happy now...

III. GOD (Philippians 4:11-13)

- A. Paul Background
- B. Philippians background
 - 1. Paul started a church in Philippi (Greece) around 50 AD
 - 2. Colony of former soldiers.
 - 3. 1st church in Europe
 - 4. Writing about 10yrs later
 - 5. Section telling them thanks for sending support
 - 6. In it we see how to avoid letting tomorrow steal our NOW

C. V. 11

- 1. **Contentment is the backbone of happiness.**
- 2. When we are too busy wishing for tomorrow it makes us unhappy with what and who we have today.
- 3. We become discontent... we want more, better, different.
 - a. Not only do we want it... we feel that we deserve it... it's owed to us.
 - b. What we have now is beneath us... just not good enough for the likes of me.
- 4. Yeah, but this is the APOSTLE PAUL... easy for him to say...

D. V. 12

1. He knows both sides
2. More background on Paul- **2 Cor. 11:23b-29**
 - a. Sounds like a horrible life.
3. AND... he's in prison while he's writing this letter.
4. Yet he says he has learned the SECRET to being content in every situation.
5. SECRET (Mysterious Knowledge)- contentment really is a mystery to most of us, isn't it?
 - a. Try everything we can to be happy/content.
 - b. Money/Food/Prestige/Entertainment/Sex- Always left wanting more... not fully satisfied.
 - c. We see people with everything being miserable and discontent and yet we know people who barely have anything and are happy.
 - d. BUT... also vice/versa
 - e. **What you have has nothing to do with how content you are.**
6. Xianity isn't the only belief system to agree with that...
 - a. Stoics of Paul's time- Your strength comes from within... calmly accept whatever happens to you... be tough and shrug it off.
 - b. Eastern philosophy (Buddhism)- You're discontent b/c you're too attached to this world. Rise above it. Be content within yourself.
7. Paul is different- He's not saying rise above, or detach from the world and seek contentment within yourself (basically ignoring your circumstances).
8. Paul says he has learned to be content IN every circumstance.
 - a. Not ignore it. Not say it is just part of your attachment to the physical world.
 - b. But looking your situation square in the face. Accepting the reality of your situation...
 - c. And being content in it and through it.

9. And it doesn't come from just choosing to detach, just forcing yourself to be content, or just letting life happen to you.
10. It's better than that... it's more active than that, it's more powerful than that...
11. Something that sets Following Jesus apart from any other philosophy or belief system.
12. One of most misused verses in modern Xianity

E. V. 13

1. **The secret to true contentment is relying on the strength of Jesus.**
2. It's not choosing to give up attachments and just letting life happen to you...
3. It's not finding some inner strength that really is finite and ends up running out in the long run leaving you feeling defeated and exhausted.
4. It's relying on the empowerment of Jesus.
5. It's active. He doesn't say, "I can accept all circumstances."
6. He says, "I can DO all of this." I can be actively content in every situation.
 - a. Big/Small, good/bad, easy/hard
7. You have the love, peace, and power of Jesus IN the reality of your circumstance.
8. It's not your strength. It's all done THROUGH his strength... the strength that even death can't overpower.
9. If you have this strength, whatever circumstance you are in, you can face it head on, and be content, happy, and at peace.
10. How?

F. V. 11 and 12 (Highlight the two "LEARNED"s)

1. Contentment doesn't just happen.
2. **Contentment is learned and practiced**
3. You have to practice relying on the strength of Jesus to learn to be content.
4. You know how you practice relying on Jesus?

IV. YOU

A. Philippians 4:4-7

1. Thankfulness cultivates reliance, which cultivates contentment.
2. When you thank God for everything you have, you realize nothing comes from you.
3. You realize you are 100% reliant on him for everything.
4. When you see that the God of the universe has taken care of you and given you everything you have... you can be content no matter what b/c you have God providing for you.
5. He knows best and you know that what you have is what is best for you right now.
6. When you are thankful you acknowledge that God has given you what is best for you for right NOW.
7. You don't NEED anything else.

8. Thankfulness produces contentment

9. There is no such thing as a thankful discontent person.

B. What does this look like?

1. Jesus-Follower... When you pray... when you ask for what you don't have also thank him for what you do have.

2. House and Kids Example.

3. **When dreaming turns into discontentment do a NOW assessment.**

C. Not Jesus Follower- Can still be thankful.

1. If there is a God, and he really is FOR you... there should be proof in your life.
2. Coincidence? Or Care?
3. Every good and perfect gift is from him.
4. Thank him.
5. Don't even have to believe he's listening or even exists.
6. It's still better than being discontent about what you can't change.

- D. But maybe it's time to rely on something other than luck, the universe, or inner strength.

1. Maybe it's time to rely on someone else.
2. It's only through Jesus' love and power that you can find contentment in any and all situations

V. WE

- A. God wants you to be happy now.

- B. Don't let it be stolen from you.

- C. Be happy now

1. Not dwelling on the past
2. Not just trying to get through our days
3. And not losing what we could have right now for what might happen in the future.

- D. Now is all we have.

- E. Now is a gift from God.

- F. Be thankful for where you are now.

- G. **Rely on the strength of Jesus to be all you were designed to be right now.**