

A lazy, hazy day

Phil 4:10-23

So this is the fourth and final week in our series called the Pursuit of Joy. We have had a wonder time journeying through the first three chapters and today we will be finishing up with Chapter four.

Goal: How to find contentment and peace so that we can enjoy life.

Intro: I got my first job out of college and it required relocating me to a small little town in eastern NC. Called Louisburg. Now Louisburg was about 45 minutes outside of Raleigh and more often than not the weather could be described as hot and humid specifically during the spring, summer...and fall. Coming from the Northeast I thought I had dealt with hot and humid...nope!

Obviously the heat and humidity would lead us to seek the comforts of the lazy, hazy days.

Those days where there is nothing better than sitting in an Adirondack chair under a nice shade tree, a glass of cold soda (I don't drink that ice tea stuff) within reach and a good book being read or laying across our chest while we doze off.

This is the very image of peace and contentment we are looking for.

But, honestly is this type of peace and contentment even possible? Is the idea of enjoying life something within reach for us?

We are a people in need of peace and contentment.

You turn on the news each evening, and the last thing you see is usually peace (in fact, most news programs save the peaceful stories for the "human interest" story to end the program).

Job security is a thing of the past, due to both changes in the economy and lack of general happiness with jobs.

In the United States, people between 18 and 24 have an average of 5.7 career changes. Meanwhile, people between 25 and 34 change jobs about 2.4 times, people between 35 and 44 years old switch occupations roughly 2.9 times, and individuals between 45 and 52 years old change jobs about 1.9 times.

The US divorce rate is hanging steady at about 50% right now...half of all marriages will end in divorce.

The current divorce rate in the US is 2.3 persons per 1,000 people. Overall, the rate of divorces in America is falling. Fewer couples choose to marry than pre-1990.

The reason for all of this usually boils down to a lack of contentment that keeps life from being enjoyed.

We want those Adirondack and ice cold soda days, instead we tend to find rush hour traffic through some sort of highway construction with our air conditioner not working.

The question is, can we find peace and contentment in our lives here in 2022?

Are those lazy, hazy days of relaxation and enjoyment even possible?

The answer is yes, we can find peace and contentment, and we can find out how in...

Read Phil 4:10-23 and pray

Background: The Apostle Paul wrote this letter to the church at Philippi after being imprisoned for some time without a trial in Cesarea, and was at the time being held in a Roman jail.

He had survived a perilous storm at sea and felt loss as those closest to him had deserted him.

Yet, in this letter to the Philippian church, we can find joy and encouragement.

In my own life, there have been numerous times when I faced trials and tribulations, and I felt the Holy Spirit nudging me to turn to the book of Philippians.

In my Bible, this book is one of the most worn, the most high-lighted, and the most noted, and in it, I too find the joy and encouragement I need.

But the question is, does Philippians speak to us about peace and contentment, does it tell us how to find a lazy, hazy day and enjoy it?

The answer is yes, and to find peace and contentment, we must first...

1. Cherish what you have been given (10-11)

The fact of the matter is, it could be a lot worst.

I remember a couple of years back while getting ready for going to the office, I was watching Fox News and reading the daily high/low temperatures in various cities.

I had already seen on a local channel that our high was going to be around 90, and of course the humidity to boot, so I was preparing for another one of those days.

While reading those daily highs and lows I saw that Las Vegas was going to have a low temperature for that day of 83...we are thankful here when our highs only get to 83!

Be thankful for what you have.

Focus on the "T" section of the ACTS method of praying

The A in the ACTS model stands for adoration, which means worship—glorifying and exalting God.

The C in the ACTS model stands for confession. The word confess means "to agree with." When we confess our sins, we agree with God that we are wrong and that we have sinned against Him by what we have said, thought, or done.

The T represents thanksgiving. Philippians 4:6 says, "With thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (ESV). How is thanksgiving different from adoration? The difference is that worship focuses on who God is; thanksgiving focuses on what God has done. We can thank God for many things including His love, salvation, protection, and provision.

The S stands for supplication, which refers to prayer for our and others' needs. A supplication is a request or petition.

Be thankful...write down what we are thankful for.

When you look at what you have, and not try to compare it to what others have, you will see how blessed you are.

The example we find in scripture is from the life of Paul, look at his situation.

He was stoned, he was arrested, he was beaten, he was ship wrecked...yet he continually rejoiced because of the life he had in Christ.

If you are a Christian...then you have something that is to be cherished...eternal life, salvation, hope, mercy, grace!

No matter had bad things get for you as a Christian, it could be worst...at least you don't have to fear death and be concerned about hell.

To find peace and contentment you must cherish what you have, and then...

2. Realize that Christ is all you need (12-13)

All too often we quote verse 13 and think of it like Popeye's can of spinach, or better yet...like a night's stay at a Holiday Inn Express (I.e...Someone touring a nuclear power plant saves them from a meltdown after staying at a Holiday Inn Express, the actor/cowboy trying to rescue a snake bite victim after staying at the HIE.)

We need to look at this verse in its context, read vs 12 and 13.

Paul says that he has seen the good and seen the bad.

He has had much, he has had little, and through it all he has learned the secret to being content...and it is in knowing Christ Jesus.

And because he knows Christ, he can make it from day to day.

More often than not, we we think of the "Victorious Christian life" we think of success and abundance...but for Paul...it was survival, and it is the same for us often.

What does it mean for Christ to be all you need?

1. You have a daily awareness of His presence: Even when we feel abandoned, we know that Christ remains.
2. You are constantly looking for His purpose: You are here for a reason, and when you are going through the good and the bad there is a reason to it!

Finding out that all we need for salvation is Christ is only the beginning.

When we realize that our sin has separated us from God and we have no hope...Christ offers us hope and he offers us life when we place our faith in Him and turn to Him.

And in our daily lives, we need to constantly see our need for Him...that is what Lordship is about.

Christ not only gives us hope, He gives us direction. He not only offers us life, but gives our lives meaning.

So, a quick recap...you want peace and contentment you must cherish what you have been given, you must find all that you need in Christ and then...

3. Be a blessing to others (14-19)

Churches throughout history have been made known for different reasons: Ephesus was known as a hard working church, the Bereans were known for being students of the Word, Corinth was known for division and moral laxity and Laodicea for apostasy.

The Church at Philippi was known as a giving church.

They were the Church that remembered how God used Paul to minister to them and helped them establish the church, and they wanted to play a role in helping to support his ministry.

They were blessed and chose to be a blessing to others.

They had a certain security and wanted to share in that security.

One of the biggest issues of the day is security...and I'm not talking about national security either.

We are concerned about Social Security running out...because we need that security.

We invest in 401k's or stocks, hoping to get that nest egg built up for when it's needed.

We have insurance and then insurance for that insurance...all for the sake of security.

We don't want to be without...but all the while, we are keeping ourselves from being blessed.

When we bless others, we are the true benefactors of the blessing.

When we give of ourselves or what we have to those who may need it more, as wonderful as they feel...we feel so much better.

That was the mindset of the Philippian church, and should be the attitude of all believers in all churches.

Some may say, "Well I tithe, isn't that enough"...I don't know, you tell me.

Christ said he came to fulfill the law, to complete it...so we are no longer under law, but are under grace.

What it amounts to is the law should be the starting point for us. We are not required to keep the law, but it's the very least we should do...including our tithes.

What we own is not ours if Christ is Lord of our life...and I use the term "own" loosely", because it really isn't ours.

He has given us what we need according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. according to vs 19, so giving part of it back shouldn't be an issue...no matter what amount God asks for.

But what if at this point in your life, your outgoing is far exceeding your incoming...are your needs being met?

My answer is yes...because there are times where we need the struggles and the hardships so that we can lean more on Christ and his providence.

I told this story before, but I remember when Sam got laid off...

There are times when the only way He can get our attention is by getting everything else out of His way.

A confederate soldier during the Civil War wrote this poem that sums things up for this point:

"I asked for health that I might do greater things,

I was given infirmity that I do might do better things...

I asked for riches that I might be happy,

I was given poverty that I might be wise...

I asked for power that I might have the praise of men,

I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God....

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life,

I was given life that I might enjoy all things...

I got nothing that I asked for but everything that I hoped for.

Almost despite myself my unspoken prayers were answered.

I am among all men most richly blessed."

So, the point of the matter is...regardless of what you think you may have or not have, how can you be a blessing to others?

If God is meeting all of your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus, you have what it takes to be a blessing.

And finally, if you want peace and contentment you must...

4. Nullify selfish pursuits (20-23)

It is all for God's glory.

Read verse 20.

It is no longer about us.

God has called us into a relationship with Him for a reason, it is for us to be a part of building His kingdom.

God has great plans for us, and in all things that we do, it should be for His glory alone.

It means our wants are secondary to God's will.

I wish I could offer you a day to just hang out in that hammock under the shade tree, with the book and iced tea, as previously mentioned.

But, the problem is, I can't even find those days.

But I can offer you the recipe for finding contentment and a peace that far outweighs that, it takes us...

- Cherishing what we have been given
- Realizing that Christ is all we need
- Being a blessing to others
- And nullifying selfish pursuits

Closing: And it starts with knowing Christ as Lord and Savior.

Let us pray...;