

## A THANK-YOU NOTE, PT. 1; PHIL. 4:10-13 (Ed O'Leary)

INTRODUCTION. (Originally going to cover verses 10-20; check audio for explanation)

IN PHIL. ~ 4: ~ 10-20, ~ WHICH WE'LL LOOK AT TODAY, ~ Paul adds A thank-you note ~ to the church in Philippi ~ for the gift they sent to him.

▶▶ Looks like this had been a financial gift. ~~ And this sets overall context, ~ parameters.

▷▷ So the passage is ~ primarily ~ talking about ~ their gift, ~ finances, ~ and two contrasting financial situations ~ in which Paul found himself at times.

↪↪ This is ~ extremely important ~ for everyone to keep this in mind.

▶▶ Now, ~ not going to cover everything in this thank-you note. ~~~ Bulk of time on 11b-13.

▷▷ Then we'll basically preview the rest. ~~ Examine passage more closely in pers. study.

IN VERSE 10, ~ PAUL EXPRESSES HIS JOY AND GRATITUDE FOR THEIR GIFT.

"I REJOICED IN THE LORD GREATLY ~ THAT NOW AT LENGTH ~ YOU HAVE REVIVED your concern for me. ~~~ You were indeed concerned for me, ~ but you had no opportunity."

▶▶ Paul was glad and grateful ~ that the Philippians ~ had again expressed their loving concern for him ~ by sending him a gift. ⇨⇨ It seems ~ it had been some time since they had done so.

"I REJOICED IN THE LORD GREATLY ~ THAT NOW AT LENGTH ~ YOU HAVE REVIVED your concern for me."

▶▶ When Paul says this, ~ he was not implying ~ that they had forgotten him or stopped caring about him, ~ ↴↴

▷▷ and suddenly they had remembered him and started caring again; ~~~ and that he was praising the Lord for this sudden change. ↴↴ 1/10

▶▶ He goes on to say, ~ "You were indeed concerned for me, ~ but you had no opportunity."

▶▶ He was acknowledging ~ that they were always concerned for him.

▷▷ He knew ~ that they always remembered him ~ and that they always cared about him.

↳↳ But they just didn't have the opportunity ~ to express it again ~ until this point ~ in his ministry.

→→ Some unavoidable circumstance ~ prevented them ~ from sending support before this point in Paul's ministry.

▶▶ So, ~ when Paul says ~ "You were indeed concerned for me, ~ but you had no opportunity," ~ ¶¶

▷▷ he did not want them to misunderstand him.

↳↳ It seems ~ that he did not want them to think ~ that he felt they had forgotten him ~ or stopped caring about him.

▶▶ Wanted them to know that was grateful ~ that they once again had the opportunity ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to express their love and concern for him, ~ not ~ that they suddenly remembered him ~ and started caring again.

LIKEWISE, ~ IN VERSE 11a, ~ LEB ~ HE DIDN'T WANT THERE to be any other misunderstanding.

"NOT THAT I SPEAK FROM NEED." ~~~ IT LOOKS LIKE HE DIDN'T WANT ANY FURTHER misunderstanding.

▶▶ He was not rejoicing primarily because their gift had met his need, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ but because, ~ again, ~ their gift expressed their love and concern for him.

↳↳ Paul's ~ attitude, ~ thankfulness, ~ and gratitude ~ were not dependent on whether his needs were met or not. ¶¶ 2/10

▶▶ Furthermore, ~ most likely ~ he did not want them to think ~ that he was one who went about with his hand out, ~ begging for money.

SO PAUL LET THEM KNOW ~ TWO THINGS ~ HE HAD LEARNED ~ REGARDING TWO contrasting financial situations ~ in which he found himself at times.

TWO THINGS ~ ALL BELIEVERS ~ WOULD DO WELL TO LEARN.

▶▶ 1st, ~ Paul learned ~ to be content ~ in whatever ~ financial situation he found himself, ~ whether ~ in plenty and abundance ~ or ~ in hunger and need. ~~~ Verse 11b.

▶▶ 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ Paul had learned the secret, ~ or ~ the key, ~ to coping ~ in times of plenty and abundance ~ or ~ in times of hunger and need. ~~~ Verses 12-13.

1<sup>st</sup>, ~ HE LEARNED TO BE CONTENT ~ IN WHATEVER ~ FINANCIAL SITUATION HE found himself.

VERSE 11b, ~ "FOR I HAVE LEARNED ~ IN WHATEVER SITUATION I AM ~ TO BE content."

▶▶ The meaning of the phrase ~ "in whatever situation," ~ in verse 11b, ~ is restricted ~ by the context.

▶▶ In the overall context ~ of verses 10-20, ~ Paul is discussing the financial gift he received ~ from the church in Philippi.

▷▷ Therefore, ~ "in whatever situation" is dealing with financial situations.

▶▶ It is further defined ~ by verse 12, ~ where Paul talks about "plenty and hunger, ~ abundance and need."

▶▶ So, the phrase, ~ "in whatever situation," ~ specifically refers ~ to situations ~ of "plenty and hunger, ~ abundance and need." ⇓ 3/10

▶▶ So not circumstances in general, ~ but circumstances narrowed down ~ to having a little ~ or ~ having a lot.

▶▶ Consequently, ~ the point ~ that Paul is making here in [verse 11b](#) ~ is this.

▷▷ "I have learned ~ to be content ~ whether I experience plenty and abundance ~ or whether I experience hunger and need.

▶▶ So, ~ whether Paul had ~ a little ~ or a lot, ~ he was content.

▷▷ He reflected Habakkuk's attitude. ~ Hab. ~ 3: ~ 17-18.

↳↳ Though the fig tree ~ should not blossom, ~ nor fruit ~ be on the vines, ~ the produce ~ of the olive fail ~ and the fields ~ yield no food, ~

→→ the flock ~ be cut off from the fold ~ and there be no herd in the stalls, ~

↳↳ yet ~ I will rejoice ~ in the Lord; ~ I will take joy ~ in the God of my salvation.

▷▷ The question is, ~ "Do we ~ reflect ~ Job's, ~ Habakkuk's, ~ and Paul's attitude?"

NOTICE, ~ BACK IN VERSE 11b, ~ PAUL SAYS ~ THAT HE HAD ~ LEARNED ~ TO BE satisfied ~ with situations as he found them.

▶▶ Could it be ~ that such contentment ~ is not a natural gift? ~ It seems that it's a learned trait.

▶▶ And every believer ~ needs to learn to be content. ~ The NT ~ calls us to be content.

▷▷ Heb. ~ 13: ~ 5. ~ "Keep your life ~ free from love of money, ~ and be content ~ with what you have, ~ for he has said, ~ 'I will never leave you ~ nor forsake you.'"

PAUL HAD LEARNED ~ TO BE SATISFIED ~ WITH SITUATIONS ~ AS HE FOUND THEM.

▶▶ Whether the situation was ~ plenty and abundance ~ or ~ hunger and need. 4/10

## THIS IS A VERY INTERESTING STATEMENT.

▶▶ One would think ~ that he just would have said, ~ he learned to be content in hunger & need.

▶▶ After all, ~ you would think ~ that he, ~ or anyone, ~ would automatically be content ~ in times of plenty and abundance.

▶▶ And we might naturally think ~ that only poverty ~ would lead quickly ~ ↴↴

▷▷ to discontentment ~ and the temptation ~ to turn away from the Lord because of it.

↳↳ I think we would definitely perceive it this way.

→→ And there is ~ definitely this danger ~ in poverty, ~ discontentment and the temptation to reject the Lord.

## BUT SCRIPTURE SHOWS US ~ THAT PROSPERITY ~ IS JUST AS DANGEROUS ~ AS poverty.

▶▶ Prosperity in our lives ~ brings with it ~ no guarantee ~ that we will be content.

▷▷ Eccl. ~ 4 ~ 8a.

↳↳ one person who has no other, ~ either son or brother, ~ yet there is no end to all his toil, ~ and his eyes ~ are never satisfied ~ with riches.

▷▷ Eccl. ~ 5: ~ 10a. ~ He who loves money ~ will not be satisfied with money, ~ nor he who loves wealth with his income.

▷▷ And Eccl. ~ 5: ~ 12.

↳↳ Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, ~ whether he eats little or much, ~ but the full stomach of the rich ~ will not let him sleep.

↳↳ The rich seldom get a good night's sleep. ~ Their anxieties drive them to sleeping pills and tranquilizers. ↴↴ 5/10

▷▷ Having an abundance ~ brings with it ~ no assurance ~ that we will be satisfied.

↳↳ We might think it will bring that assurance. ~~ But it won't.

▶▶ Also, ~ having an abundance ~ brings with it ~ no guarantee ~ that we will not ~ turn away from the Lord.

▷▷ Before entering the promised land, ~ Moses had this warning for the people of Israel.

▷▷ Deut. ~ 6, ~ 10-12. ~~ And when the Lord your God ~ brings you into the land ~ ¶¶

↳↳ that he swore to your fathers, ~ to Abraham, ~ to Isaac, ~ and to Jacob, ~ to give you, ~ with great and good cities ~ that you did not build, ~ and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, ~ ¶¶

→→ and cisterns that you did not dig, ~ and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant, ~ and when you eat and are full, ~ then take care ~~~ lest you forget the Lord, ~ who brought you out of the land of Egypt, ~ out of the house of slavery.

▶▶ There is the further danger ~ of thinking ~ that we are the source of our abundance, ~ when we have an abundance.

▷▷ Moses also warned the Israelites about this.

▷▷ Deut. 8: ~ 17-18a.

↳↳ "Beware ~ lest you say in your heart, ~ 'My power ~ and the might of my hand ~ have gotten me this wealth.' ~~ ¶¶

→→ You shall remember the Lord your God, ~ for it is he ~ who gives you power to get wealth."

SO, ~ WHETHER THE SITUATION ~ IN WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES IS ~ HUNGER AND need ~ or ~ plenty and abundance, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ there is equally ~ the need ~ to learn to be content.

▶▶ In both ~ there is the danger of falling away from the Lord. ¶¶ 6/10

▶▶ May be a large part of the thinking behind author's prayer in Prov. ~ 30: ~ 8b-9, ~ NIV.

▷▷ give me neither poverty nor riches, ~ but give me ~ only ~ my daily bread. ~~~  
Otherwise, I may have too much ~ and disown you ~ and say, ~ 'Who is the Lord?' ~~~ Or I  
may become poor and steal, ~ and so dishonor the name of my God.

NOW, ~ THERE IS A MUCH BROADER APPLICATION HERE.

▶▶ The primary point ~ in [verse 11b](#) ~ is contentment in these two contrasting financial situations.

▶▶ But, ~ application wise, ~ this can be expanded ~ to include ~ any and all circumstances we encounter in life.

▷▷ We need to learn to be content ~ in any and all circumstances ~ in which we find ourselves in life.

↪↪ E.g., ~ times of suffering, ~ trial, ~ sickness. ~ We need to learn to be content ~ in every situation in which we find ourselves in life.

OK, ~ THAT WAS THE FIRST THING PAUL HAD LEARNED ~ REGARDING LIVING IN these contrasting financial situations. ~ I.e., ~ to be content ~ whether he had ~ a little ~ or a lot.

2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ PAUL HAD "LEARNED ~ THE SECRET, ~ OR KEY, ~ OF FACING PLENTY AND hunger, ~ abundance and need." ⇨⇨⇨ [Verses 12-13](#).

1<sup>st</sup>, ~ [VERSE 12](#). ~ I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.

▶▶ Paul knew how to live when things were difficult ~ and when things were prosperous.

▶▶ Then he tells us ~ why ~ he knows how to do both.

▷▷ "In any and every circumstance, ~ I have learned the secret ~ of facing plenty and hunger, ~ abundance and need." ⇨⇨ [7/10](#)

▶▶ Now be careful, ~ even though this sounds like a general statement, ~ it's not.

▶▶ Paul brackets the statement with the meaning.

▷▷ The first bracket: ~ times of poverty and times of abundance.

▷▷ the second bracket: ~ "plenty and hunger, ~ abundance and need."

▶▶ So, ~ the context ~ is telling us ~ that this ~ is what "in any and every circumstance" means.

▷▷ So, ~ again, ~ not circumstances in general, ~ but circumstances narrowed down ~ to having a little ~ or ~ having a lot.

▶▶ Paul's basic point in [verse 12](#) is this: ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "I have learned the secret ~ of living ~ [most likely in the sense of enduring or coping] ~ in poverty or in abundance."

NEXT, ~ IN VERSE 13, ~ PAUL TELLS US WHAT THE SECRET, ~ OR THE KEY, ~ IS ~ TO handling times of plenty and times of need.

▶▶ "I can do all things ~ through him ~ [i.e., ~ Jesus] ~ who strengthens me."

▶▶ This is probably ~ one of the most, ~ if not the most, ~ misquoted ~ and abused ~ verse ~ in all of Scripture.

▶▶ While the phrase, ~ "all things," ~ seems to be ~ all-embracing ~ and is often applied to one's activities, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ especially those that are personally demanding, ~ e.g. ~ athletics, ~ learning to drive, ~ and the like, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ it has ~ absolutely ~ nothing ~ to do with such things.

→→ I'll explain. ¶¶ 8/10



▶▶ Right off the top, ~ we need to understand ~ that Paul ~ is talking ~ more about ~ coping or enduring ~ than he is about ~ doing.

▷▷ The sense ~ of verse 13 is, ~ "I can handle ~ or cope with ~ all things ~ through Jesus ~ who strengthens me."

▶▶ Next, ~ again be careful, ~ this ~ sounds like a general statement.

▷▷ But ~ it's not. ~ The meaning of ~ "all things" ~ is restricted by the context, ~ and refers ~ to what Paul has been talking about ~ since verse 11b.

▶▶ Paul has not ~ suddenly, ~ out of nowhere, ~ changed the subject.

▷▷ He is still ~ talking about ~ hunger and need, ~ plenty and abundance.

↳↳ The expanded sense ~ of verse 13 is: ~ "I can ~ cope in, ~ or handle, ~ or endure ~ [however you want to say it] ~ ¶¶

→→ times of hunger and need, ~ times of plenty and abundance ~ through Jesus ~ who strengthens me."

▶▶ The last phrase, ~ "through Jesus," ~ tells us the how of coping.

▷▷ IOW, ~ this is the key to enduring situations of hunger and need, ~ plenty and abundance. ⇔⇔ Divine enablement.

↳↳ I.e., ~ Jesus enables us ~ to handle, ~ to bear up in, ~ to endure ~ situations of plenty ~ and situations of need. ~ Divine enablement.

NOW, ~ THERE IS A MUCH BROADER APPLICATION HERE. ~ PRIMARILY FINANCES.

▶▶ But this can be expanded ~ to cover any and all circumstances we encounter in life.

▶▶ In any ~ and all ~ types of circumstances, ~ Jesus will enable us to cope with them.

▷▷ E.g., ~ he will enable us to endure every trial, ~ to brave every suffering, ~ to overcome every temptation. ¶¶ 9/10

WHEN WE TAKE THE MUCH BROADER APPLICATION INTO ACCOUNT, ~ we should not miss ~ two implications here overall, ~ when it comes to divine enablement.

▶▶1<sup>st</sup>, ~ divine enablement ~ to cope in any and all circumstances ~ implies ~ 77

▷▷that we are given the ability by Jesus ~ to cope with the situation ~ in a godly manner ~ and ~ to stay faithful to God.

▷▷E.g., ~ we will not fall for the temptation to turn away from ~ or forget ~ the Lord.

↳↳We will not blame him for our circumstances.

↳↳We'll reflect Job's response to his wife. ~ When she suggested . . . .

→→"Shall we accept ~ good from God, ~ and not trouble?"

▶▶2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ divine enablement implies ~ that we need ~ Jesus to enable us ~ in order to handle any and all circumstances we encounter in life.

▷▷ Jesus knows ~ that we cannot handle the various circumstances we encounter in life on our own.

▷▷Loved ones, ~ we need to acknowledge this.

↳↳Believing we can handle the various circumstances we encounter in life on our own ~ will only end ~ in frustration ~ and futility.

▷▷Jesus knows that we can't handle them. ~ So he gives us the ability to handle them.

▷▷Because it's so important, ~ I want to come back to Jesus' statement ~ that ~ apart from him ~ we can do nothing.

↳↳Again, ~ this is not some arrogant statement on Jesus' part. ~ And he's not putting us down.

↳↳I believe ~ that it's a statement ~ of comfort and encouragement.

→→I have confidence ~ that Jesus ~ is trying to save us ~ 77

↳↳from the futility, ~ stress, ~ and frustration ~ of trying to do things ~ apart from him.