

Ridin' High Cowboy Church

8771 FM 35

Union Valley/Royse City, TX

Pastor: Steve Bishop

October 9, 2016 – Finding Contentment

Belled Coyote – about a cowboy who couldn't find contentment...

The people of the Bible did not see adversity as something to be afraid of or steer clear of most of the time they saw it as an opportunity for God to show his power.

Contentment: When things on the inside are OK when things on the outside are falling apart.

Paul was arrested and put in prison in Rome. He could no longer go and do the things he usually did, so he sat down and wrote. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon – written while Paul was in prison, all Paul could do was write...that's it, just sit here and write down what pops into his head. Paul thinks this one letter to one church and he just hopes it makes it to the church and it ends up being the most circulated letter in the history of mankind.

Paul has no idea what hung in the balance of his decision to follow God's plan when the circumstances were difficult. Our lives as Christians and the church as we know it hung in the balance of Paul's writing down what God was telling him during this time.

Like Paul, you have no idea what hangs in the balance of obeying God when the circumstances are difficult.

Philippians 4:11-13

11 ... for I have learned (this is a process, it does not come natural, Paul used to feel this way) **to be content whatever the circumstances.** Paul is saying to us there is a way to learn how to be content in every and all circumstances. And Paul was not a laid back guy. When he wasn't a Christian, he wanted to kill them all when he became one he wanted to win them all.

Paul was rich early in life into young adult life and very poor the rest of his life.

12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty.
Being in need may cause us to depend on God more, but having plenty is the tough one.

1. THE EFFECT OF ALWAYS WANTING MORE, I have had “plenty” and I want it again attitude

“Do not wear yourself out to be rich; have the wisdom to show restraint.”
Pr. 23:4

“The more money you have, the more money you spend...”

Ecc 5:11

“A working man...can get a good night’s sleep. But the rich man has so much that he stays awake worrying.”

Eccl 5:12

“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from the desires that battle with you?”

James 4:1

“You will never be satisfied if you long to be rich. You will never get all you want.”

Ecc. 5:10

I have learned the secret (Greek word for secret is like a mystery, secret handshake or code, word only used once in Bible) ***of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty of in want.***

This next thing Paul says is how we live for God in the middle of extreme circumstances.

13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

A very misquoted verse, the t-shirt of a bull rider with this verse on the front...40 years before Paul wrote the above, Jesus said

Matthew 5

He said: 3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

To be poor in spirit means that no matter how rich or poor you are, you are dependent on God ... they live every day as if they are dependent on God. The moment you transfer your trust to (money, education, skills or talent) you become unhappy. When you transfer trust from God to you, you become responsible for the outcomes.

4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

People who understand the fact that death is a natural part of life, they embrace death, they don’t try not to think about it. Fear of death will rob you of the joy in life. Happy people are prepared for death and don’t spend a lot of time worrying about it.

5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

“Meekness – a proper evaluation of yourself within the context of God’s plan for you.” Meek people know they are part of the world NOT the center of it. Not striving to be more than God has made you to be.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

People who are committed to doing the right thing even when it cost them, no guilt, no regret and a clear conscience.

We either hunger and thirst for right things or for sin. Sin separates...

Your greatest regret was never for doing the right thing, but for doing the wrong thing. Nobody wishes if they could go back to high school, they would have gotten in more trouble!

7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Happy, are relationally generous, you give people exactly what they DON’T deserve, they are not consumed by paying people back for things they have done to you.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Being able to see things before they happen when making decisions. Purity leads to clarity ... We have decisions that we think w2e are missing out, pure in heart people SEE like and what God see’s.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God.

God wants to make peace with you, so when you make peace with other people you are like God.

DO you know any troublemakers? They target happy people.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

These don’t seem to go together – Happy and persecuted.

You are going to suffer in this life, for doing the right or wrong thing. One of them will leave you happy, the other will not.

If you suffer for doing the wrong thing, you won’t have peace with God OR with YOU!

Choose to pursue righteousness and you can be happy...

Paul is saying: I CAN’T, GOD CAN, HE WILL THROUGH ME.

Think about the thing in your life that stirs up discontentment in you the quickest. The thing you feel like will never change.

The opposite of doing all things through Christ is looking for a short cut to miss the tough circumstances of life.

Definition: Shortcut: doing the right thing the wrong way.

Three reasons we take short cuts:

Simply we don't trust God

We're greedy (we want it now, what God will give us later)

We're short sighted (can't see beyond the now)

Three realities about short cuts:

They will always be available

They will always cost our character

They always come before the blessing of God

Consequently, we pay a high price in a short cut. When we take shortcuts in life, we short circuit what God wants to do in our lives, and we miss out on what he has planned.

REFOCUS ON WHAT'S GOING TO LAST

Give your attention to permanent values. Reorganize your life around eternal priorities.

II Corinthians 4:18 "We fix our attention, not on the things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts forever."

Everything you see is temporary. Nothing you see is going to last. Everything you see in the world is eventually going to decay or rust or wear out or fall apart.