

“Philippians – Week 10”

SUNDAY, JUNE 28, 2026 - MICHAEL BOWERS



Summary - “Press On: Content In Christ”

Week ten of our “Press On” series lands in the final stretch of Paul’s letter – Philippians 4:10-23 – and it closes with a claim that sounds simple, but cuts deep: Paul has learned to be content. He is not born into it. He is not spiritually gifted with it. He has “learned” it. Through abundance and through hunger. Through the freedom of open doors and the chains of a Roman prison. Whatever the circumstance, Paul says he has found a way to stand steady. This week’s sermon unpacks what that actually means and draws a careful line between contentment and complacency. The Greek word Paul uses here (autarkēs) paints the picture of a nation with no need for imports or exports – fully supplied, internally sufficient. That is the kind of contentment Paul is describing. Not settling, not giving up, but a deep, settled sufficiency that comes from a person, not a position. “In Christ” is where we are to live and who we are in, and if that is true, then no circumstance – loss, lack, illness, disappointment – gets to be the final word on our peace. From that foundation, the sermon corrects one of the most misused verses in Scripture. Philippians 4:13 – “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” – was written by a man who had been beaten, shipwrecked, stoned, and jailed. It is not a verse for wristbands at the game-winning moment. It is a verse for the wide-right miss, the hard season, the loss we did not see coming. “I can do all things in Christ” means: in every single one of those moments, God has been faithful, and we can trust Him still. Paul closes this letter – his letter of JOY, Jesus Others Yourself – with gratitude for the Philippian church. They were the only congregation that partnered with him financially from the beginning. And from that partnership, the sermon draws its final word: faith in Christ is personal, but it was never meant to be private. The Gospel is still on the move – through Nero’s court, through distant mission fields, through our neighborhoods – and God’s grace sustains each and everyone of us as we continue pressing on together. Circumstances are not the deciding factor for contentment – Christ is. And because He is, we can press on.

Scripture - Philippians 4:10-23

10 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. [11 Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned, in whatever situation I am, to be content. 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. 13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.](#) 14 Yet it was kind of you to share in my trouble. 15 And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. 16 Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. 18 I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. 19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. 21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. 22 All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar’s household. 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Daily Reflection Questions (Use T.R.U.T.H. below)

DAY 1 | PHILIPPIANS 4:11 | MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK – I HAVE LEARNED. Verse 11 says Paul “learned” contentment – which means he wasn’t always content. He had to grow into it. Think back over the last three to five years of your life. What circumstances – pleasant or painful – have actually taught you something about contentment that you couldn’t have learned in an easier season? What did that learning cost you?

DAY 2 | HEBREWS 13:5-6 – THE LORD IS YOUR SUPPLY. The writer of Hebrews anchors contentment in a promise God has already made: “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Contentment, in this passage, is not a spiritual discipline to achieve but a response to a relationship that cannot be taken from you. Where specifically in your daily life does discontentment most often show up – finances, status, relationships, possessions – and how much of that restlessness is connected to forgetting this promise?

DAY 3 | PSALM 16:5-8 – MY PORTION AND CUP. Verse 5 says “The LORD is my chosen portion.” That word “chosen” matters – David is not passively assigned to God; he is choosing to treat God as enough. Right now, if you’re being honest, what are you actually treating as your primary source of security and sufficiency – and how does that compare to what you would say you believe?

DAY 4 | 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9-10 – STRENGTH IN THE WEAK PLACES. The strength he’s describing is not self-generated power – it is God’s grace filling the exact spaces where Paul had nothing left. Verse 9 says God’s power is made perfect in weakness – not in strength, not in having it together. What weakness or limitation in your life right now are you most tempted to hide or fix rather than surrender? What would it look like to let God’s grace be sufficient in that specific place?

DAY 5 | ROMANS 8:35-37 – MORE THAN CONQUERORS. Verse 25 says Paul and Silas were “praying and singing hymns to God” at midnight – in the stocks, after a beating. This is not metaphorical contentment. Who in your family or friend group is in a midnight moment right now – a season of pain, loss, or waiting – and what would it look like to pray with them or for them specifically this week instead of just thinking about them?

Daily Real Time with God (T.R.U.T.H)

T TALK TO GOD IN PRAYER- Start by asking God to help you understand the text and prepare your heart.

R READ THE BIBLICAL TEXT- Read the initial text, then read it again to look for key words and context clarity.

U UNDERSTAND THE TEXT - Explore who wrote the book and their audience, examine verses around the text, or look up key words to better understand their meaning. Ask questions like: Is there a sin to avoid? A promise to claim? A command to obey? What does it teach about God?

T THINK ABOUT AND APPLY THE TEXT- How does this verse change the way you live? Is there an application or choice you need to make to live or think differently?

H HONOR GOD IN PRAYER- Pray through God's Honor/Adoration, God's Kingdom/Surrender, God's Provision/Gratitude, God's Forgiveness/Confession, and God's Power/Protection (see Matthew 6:5-15).

Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://answersingenesis.org/answers/>
- <https://gospelcoach.ai/>
- <https://carm.org/>

Key Thoughts

"In Christ" – Our Identity and Our Address - Paul never lets his readers forget where they live. He makes at least twelve references to "in Christ," "in Him," or "in the LORD" in Philippians alone – and more than 160 times across all of his letters. That repetition is not decoration. It is the entire framework for everything that follows.

- "In Christ" is not just a statement of belief; it is a statement of location. It tells you who you are and where you stand.
- If you are in Christ, your circumstances do not determine your spiritual address.
- Every season either grows your contentment in Christ or draws you away from it.

When Paul writes to Philippi, he is chained in a Roman prison. When he writes "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly," he is not performing contentment – he is reporting it. And it is only possible because of where he is: in Christ.

Learning to Be Content - The sermon draws a sharp line between contentment and complacency. The Greek word Paul uses is "autarkes" – used to describe a self-sufficient nation, one that needs no imports and holds no dependency on exports. It has everything it needs within itself. This is not laziness or resignation. It is settled sufficiency.

"If we claim to be "in Christ," then contentment is guided by our relationship to Christ, rather than governed by our circumstances." – Pastor Michael Bowers

Paul says he has "learned" this – not inherited it, not been gifted it, but developed it through training. The word is the same one used for a skill acquired through repeated experience.

Contentment is a practice, shaped by every season that was harder than you wanted it to be.

- Content people rejoice with others – they can celebrate a coworker's promotion without bitterness.
- Content people are in harmony with one another.
- Content people trust their identity as children of God, not the fluctuations of their circumstances.
- A quick test: when someone nearby is doing well, is your first instinct joy or resentment?

The Verse We've Been Misreading - Philippians 4:13 may be the most quoted – and most misapplied – verse in the New Testament. "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength" was not written to be placed on a wristband before a big game. Paul wrote it from a jail cell, and it is drawn from a life that included shipwrecks, stonings, beatings, and sleepless nights hiding from people trying to kill him.

"Hold in your mind, when you hear Philippians 4:13, not just Paul relaxing at a church member's house, reclining at the dinner table... Hold in your mind his being scourged, having the flesh torn from his back. Hold in your mind his struggling to keep his head above water as the ship he's on sinks violently into the watery abyss. Hold in your mind his restless sleep at night while thugs scour the streets to find him and kill him." – Matt Chandler, To Live Is Christ to Die Is Gain

Key Thoughts

The verse is for both moments: when the field goal goes in, and when it falls wide right. “I can do all things” is not a success slogan – it is a declaration that God has been faithful in every single one of those moments, the highs and the wide-right misses alike.

“The reality Paul is describing is this: I can do All Things in the future because God has been faithful in the past. He was faithful when I had it all, and when I had nothing.” – Pastor Michael Bowers

Gospel Partnership – Faith Is Personal but Never Private - In verses 14-20, Paul shifts from personal testimony to communal gratitude. The Philippian church was the only congregation that partnered with him financially and personally from the beginning of his gospel mission. They sent support when he was in Thessalonica. They sent Epaphroditus to be with him in Rome. They stepped into his life not just with theology but with tangible presence and generosity.

“Faith in Christ is personal, but it was never meant to be private; we are called to walk together.”
– Pastor Michael Bowers

Paul makes a remarkable statement about what their generosity means: “I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.” He is not collecting for himself. He is investing in their account – not a financial account, but a Kingdom one. And he promises them that “my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

The detail that closes the letter is worth a slow read: greetings come especially from Caesar’s household. The gospel was infiltrating Nero’s court while Paul was chained nearby. It crosses political, social, and geographic boundaries that seem impossible. It reaches families, workplaces, neighborhoods – and the world.

From Grace to Grace – The Letter’s Final Word - Paul began this letter with grace and ends with it: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.” That bookend is not accidental. From the first verse to the last, grace is the frame. It is the ground we begin on, and it is what carries us all the way home.

The J.O.Y. framework Paul has lived and written – Jesus, Others, Yourself – comes to its natural conclusion here. To live “in Christ” is to live in that order: Christ first, the community He has given us second, and ourselves held loosely in that light. We press on – not alone, but together, in Christ, from grace to grace.

G.R.A.C.E Questions

ICE BREAKER: What is one thing you are never actually satisfied with – no matter how good it is? (Coffee that's the right temperature for exactly 30 seconds, a parking spot that's close but not close enough, sports teams that win but not convincingly enough, a phone sitting at 79% battery – pick your poison.)

G – GIVE YOUR LIFE TO CHRIST - Surrender, both initially and daily.

- What is one circumstance in your life right now that you keep trying to fix, control, or escape – and what would it look like to surrender it to Christ specifically this week, not as a passive shrug but as an active act of trust?
- Do you tend to think of contentment as something that just happens to certain people, or as something you can actually grow in? How has your relationship with Christ shaped your contentment over the last two or three years – and where is that growth still unfinished?

R – REAL TIME WITH GOD - Bible reading, prayer, scripture memory, journaling

- What does your actual daily rhythm with God look like right now – not the ideal version, but the real one? Where is it most consistent, and where does it tend to break down during a normal week?
- Is there a specific passage, verse, or habit in your walk with God that has most shaped your ability to trust Him in hard seasons? Share it, and talk about what made it stick for you.

A – ACT IN OBEDIENCE - Following through on what God is teaching

- Where in your life right now is God calling you to act – not to wait for better circumstances, but to obey in the middle of the circumstances you're already in?
- Think about someone in your life – a neighbor, coworker, or family member – who you've been withholding something from out of your own discontentment or scarcity mindset. What would active obedience look like toward them this week?

C – COMMIT TO COMMUNITY - Accountability, discipleship, doing life together

- "Faith in Christ is personal, but it was never meant to be private." Where are you most tempted to go it alone right now – spiritually, practically, emotionally – when you actually need the community around you?
- Who in your small group or church family is in a season of genuine need right now – financial, relational, or otherwise – and what is one concrete way your group could show up for them the way the Philippians showed up for Paul?

E – ENGAGE YOUR WORLD - Stewardship of your life, influence, and mission

- The Gospel reached Nero's household through Paul's presence in prison – not through Paul being comfortable. Where is God placing you right now – in a difficult relationship, an uncomfortable workplace, an awkward neighborhood situation – that might actually be a Gospel opportunity in disguise?
- Think about one person outside your church community – a neighbor, coworker, or family member – who doesn't know Jesus. What is one next step you could take this week to be present in their life in a way that opens a door, not just a conversation?