

Philippians
“Living above the Clouds”
III. Main Teaching: D. 4:1-19
IV. Closing: 4:20-23
4:9-23
“Climate Change”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 8-9 Perspective

III. 10-23 What state am I in?

I. Intro.

Throughout Philippians Paul has been challenging his readers not to allow anything to rip us off of our joy in Christ. At times my life has looked more like a thermometer instead of a thermostat! These two devices both work in the same arena but with very different results:

- **Thermometers**: **Register** temperatures going up and down with the rise and fall of the climate.
- **Thermostats**: **Regulate** the temperature by changing the surroundings to make them more enjoyable.

You and I are either going “**register**” the climate change in our life or we are in Christ going to “**regulate**” it! We don’t need to settle for the “*rise and fall*” being changed by **circumstances, people, things** or **anxiety** instead we can regulate those things setting our temperature to JOY and making the room pleasant to all. Looking at this letter and Paul’s statements we can clearly see that he was a “thermostat” as three times in this closing section he says:

- a. 4:11 I am Content
- b. 4:13 I Can do all things
- c. 4:18 I Have all things, abound and am full

II. Vs. 8-9 Perspective

Vs. 8-9 Paul finishes with the third and final thing that will cause you worry and anxiety, **a loss of perspective**. The first thing we note here is that having the right perspective involves two things the:

- d. Vs. 8 ***Right heart***: Paul says we need to search our **heart** with regards to 8 things:
 - True, noble, just, pure, lovely, good report, of virtue and praiseworthy. Oft times our worry and anxiety is because we have not placed our lives within those 8 things and because of it we have lost perspective on life.
 1. ***True***: As Dr. Cavert pointed out a week ago 92% of our anxiety and worry is on things that aren't true. Satan will try to rip us off of our joy in Christ by causing us to focus in on the 92% of things that aren't true.
 2. ***Noble and just***: Things that are not worthy of respect and are not right will cause us anxiety and worry. Paul is saying don't make your focus the things that are unpleasant as they can control your heart and your head.
 3. ***Pure, Lovely and of good report***: "Pure" means of moral purity, and "lovely" means beautiful and attractive where as "good report" means worthy of talking about. Paul is saying that when our mind is in the gutter our heart will be filled with anxiety and worry, so don't let your heart go to those places or even engage in talking about those things.
 4. ***Virtue and praiseworthy***: If something has "virtue" it will motivate us to do better and if it has "praise" it will be worthy of commending to others. Anxiety and worry will control our lives when what our heart is set on things that don't make us better and we can't commend to others.

e. Vs. 9 **Right head**: We are to meditate or **think** on those things. Paul mentions the balance between four things:

1. **Learned and received**: It is one thing to having “*learned*” something a quite another thing to “*receive*” it and make it a part of your life. “**Facts in the head**” are not the same as “**truths in the heart**”.
2. **Heard and saw**: James said in chapter 1 verse 22 that we must be “*doers of the word and not hearers only*”. Effective teaching isn’t just in what a person says, it’s also visible in the way they live their lives.

You will know you have the right perspective in having the right heart and right head when you since the peace of God being with you. God’s peace is the “*umpire*” that call us out!

III. 10-23 What state am I in?

Vs. 10 Paul starts with some financial information as clearly this church had been supporting Paul while he had been imprisoned in Rome but something had stopped their ability to do so but it had regained so Paul praises the Lord. There was no mail service or banks and getting funds to Paul was left up to someone willing to travel on foot to Rome from Philippi and apparently no one had been able to make the trip for a while. Paul says that the circumstance created an opportunity for joy to overcome anxiety when things got tight. We must never mistake contentment with complacency. Contentment is not escape from the battle it’s peace in the midst of the battle.

Vs. 11-20 Paul says his joy was not lessoned as his wallet emptied; his peace in Christ had not diminished as his checking account was drained. **Paul is going to give the secret of how to maintain your joy no matter what’s happing to you financially.** I think this

verse might also handle our joy with regards to our geographical location as well. Paul says, *“I have learned in whatever STATE I am, to be content!”* No matter where you find yourself geographically you can maintain your joy in Christ. Such a climate change is a *learned experience* as Paul had to go through many a rise and fall on the thermometer before he understood that in Christ he could permanently get out of the element’s and enjoy life. There are three things about this statement *“I have learned in whatever STATE I am, to be content!”* that we need to look at:

1. Vs. 11 Define what we mean by the word “*content*”: Most folks I think would define contentment as, *“Having everything you want”* but Paul defines true contentment as *“Wanting only what you have!”* The story is told of a fellow that put a sign in his front yard with an offer of his house for free if any person could come forward and prove that they were content. A few days later a very expensive car pulled up and a well-dressed man came to the door and told the man, *“I’ve come to claim your house. I have everything I want, all the money I need and everything in life that can satisfy me. I am perfectly content!”* The wise home owner answered, *“You say your content then why do you want my house?”* Saint’s God has created us to *“Love Him and people and use things”*. But somewhere over the course of life many have reversed this to thinking that we have been created to *“Love things and use God and people.”*
2. Vs. 12-13 Poverty and wealth are equal trials: Most folks would say, *“I know how to be abased and I’d like to know how to abound!”* Paul didn’t see only poverty as a trial while viewing wealth as a blessing, he saw both poverty and wealth have the ability to distort a person and their view on life. Paul goes on to say that he has learned in Christ how to deal with both of these trials of poverty and wealth as he says in verse

13 “*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*” Throughout this letter Paul has said that *the secret was that He saw himself as nothing, could do nothing of his own power and his sole source of joy was living in Christ’s identity and sufficiency!* The specific application of this is that he didn’t see himself as defined by poverty or wealth, he saw himself only in Christ! Paul chose to go with God and recognize that what mattered was not what he wanted for his life but what God wanted for his life. *What God wanted was that Paul would use things to love people!*

3. Vs. 14-20 Finally Paul address how we are supplied during our contentment: *Paul’s perspective with regards to joy is that it doesn’t come from others meeting our need but rather from us reaching out and meeting their need.* Jesus said, “*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*” Paul said that such loving concern for him seen in their financial sacrifice was to be added to their account and that it was a “sweet-smelling aroma” to God. The word “fruit” in verse 17 is a word that we get our English word for “interest”. Our joy is increased not by what we receive but by rather give. Furthermore in verse 18 he wants them to know that their joy has abounded further than they knew as Paul had taken their gift to him and sent it on to others so that he could have more joy. Notice in verse 19 three things about this supply of joy:
 - a. *The source of the supply:* “*My God*” not just God, but my God, which implies a personal relationship. Not God as in some cosmic force running here and there but a personal Father who is giving to his children. According to Paul this is a family matter!

- b. **The limits of the supply:** “All your need” the promise is not “all your wants” as our wants are sometimes way beyond our needs. **I have noticed that there are far more wants in my life than there are needs!** It was reported that at the beginning of 1900’s the average American wanted 72 things, 18 of which they regarded as necessary. By 1950, the list of American wants had grown to 496 things, 96 of which they regarded as absolute necessities. I’m not certain what that would be today but I’m guessing it would be substantially higher.
- c. **The method of the supply:** “by Jesus Christ” thus joy is available everywhere to everyone in Christ.

So Paul concludes this great letter by taking the pin in his own hand and writing “*the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*” Paul found that he could be content in spite of any circumstance but he could never be content in spite of Christ ill regardless of how favorable the circumstance.