

March 20, 2016

## ***Finding Peace in a Troubled World***

***"I have learned the secret of being content in every situation...I can do all things through him who gives me strength."*** Philippians 4:11-13

***"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!"***  
Philippians 2:1-15

Last week we began a discussion of Paul's letter to the believers at Philippi. We noted that he concludes this letter with this statement, ***"I have learned the secret of being content in every situation...I can do all things through him who gives me strength."*** This letter is, I believe, the Apostle's explanation of the secret of being content. Contentment is the foundation upon which stand both our unsurpassed peace and our overwhelming joy. Until we learn the secret of contentment we can have neither peace nor joy.

So, Paul begins to show us how to be content. First, he shows us how his attitude toward this life insulates him from even the looming threat of death. ***"For me to live,"*** he writes, ***"is Christ, and to die is gain."*** His faith has changed his perspective on life and death.

Next, the Apostle will show us, yet again, what we should understand as the central pillar of our faith. He uses what may well have been lyrics from a contemporary hymn to remind us of the most basic principle of our faith. ***"Your attitude should be,"*** he teaches, ***"the same as that of Christ Jesus."*** And what was Jesus' attitude. Several thoughts stand out don't they? Jesus...

- Gave up being God and became nothing: Jesus gave up being equal to God in order to become a part of his own creation, our world, in order to save us from our sins. If he was willing to give up that much for us is there anything too great or too difficult for us to give up for him?
- Took on the nature or form of a servant: As a man living in the creation that he helped to create, Jesus chooses to live in service to others. In his entire ministry Jesus shows himself as someone who comes to serve and not to be served. He constantly teaches the twelve, who were always fussing about who was the most important, to see themselves as servants.
- Humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death: Ultimately Jesus, who is God, humbled himself and became obedient. Humility is always the necessary first step to true obedience. If we believe that we are too important, or that our way is too correct, then we will never live obedient lives and obedience is the core issue in our relationship with the Father. He cannot be our God if we refuse to be his people.

When we empty ourselves, humble ourselves, and choose obedience to the God of Heaven as his own Son did, then we become the Father's children. We live our lives "...*without complaining or arguing...*" living before the world as the His children and shining as stars in a depraved world.

As we have noted many times this basic train of thought permeates nearly every letter that the Apostle pens. When we put to death the old nature which is controlled by the self and thus, steeped in sin, and when we surrender our existence to the absolute control of the Father taking on the new nature he gives us, he makes us his children. Our lives as his children stand in stark contrast to the lives that we lived in the past and to the rest of the world in which we now live. When I become a child of God and he is in command whatever happens, I can know that he is in control and at that he is at work and I can be content.

