

## **Sermon – Thanks Giving 2018**

### **Job 1:6-22 ; Philippians 4:8-20**

- **Pictures - LOSS**

When I was 10 years old, my pet **Rabbit, Smokey** died.

When I was 23 years old, I sold my **first car**.

It's hard to tell which one of those events was a more significant loss. But I suspect it was the car.

Some losses are trivial. Some losses are very painful.

- **Pictures**

**Accidents. Sickness. Death. Divorce. Failure. Poverty. Violence. Abuse.**

We have all had difficult times.

But imagine going through what Job went through.

Job was a godly man. He had everything. And he loved God. Then he lost everything.

It's hard to imagine.

But it's harder because I know many of you here have suffered loss just like Job.

You've lost wealth.

You've lost employment.

You've lost a house.

You've lost a wife or a husband.

You've lost a child.

And reading Job is painful.

And then you read a passage like Philippians 4.

And Paul says this:

- **Philippians 4:12**

I have had lots and nothing.

I have been rich and poor.

I have been at the top of the heap.

I have been at the bottom of the heap.

And I've learned to be content in every situation.

After all of his suffering how can Paul say this?

After all of his suffering how can Job say this?

- **Job 1:21**

*The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away;  
may the name of the Lord be praised."*

How is it possible to praise God and be content when you face difficult times?

I don't consider myself as someone who has suffered greatly.  
So I want you to hear from someone among us who has.

Let me introduce ...

- **Story: Jeanette.**

Welcome...

Tell us about the loss you faced ... years ago. What happened?

What did you find the most difficult at that time?

After all that, were you able to praise the name of the Lord?

Thank you for sharing with us...

I've never faced that sort of loss.  
And I've never suffered like Job.

But Job and Paul speak to all of us.  
We cannot compare our suffering to the suffering of others.  
Because our suffering is unique to us.

Our suffering is OUR suffering.  
Our loss is OUR loss.

But what Paul is teaching us is that contentment has nothing to do with what you have or what you lose in life.  
Contentment doesn't come from being at the top or the bottom.

Contentment comes from your relationship with Jesus.  
Because at all times, he is our strength and he is our riches.

- **4:13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.**

When we're sick. When we're vulnerable. When a relationship is broken. When tragedy happens.

Paul says our strength to be **CONTENT** comes from Jesus.

It takes a lot of strength to depend on God when you have nothing.  
But it also takes a lot of strength to depend on God when you have a lot!

Whether we are rich or poor, we **need** the strength of Jesus to find contentment.

Since I turned 40, I have had many injuries!  
I have injured both shoulders. Both feet. My head. My back. My knees.

I feel weaker in my body every year. Getting older does not usually improve your health! In the long term, the strength of my body will generally decrease with age.

But what Paul reminds us is that Christ's strength in us can increase!

The strength to say **NO** to worldly values.

The strength to say **NO** to sin.

The strength to say **YES** to things that are true and right and noble and pure.

The strength to say **YES** to God's plans for our lives.

The strength to **ACCEPT** difficult times yet still call Jesus our Lord.

- **Picture/video – Kingda Ka**

This is the Kingda Ka. The highest roller coaster in the world.

It will take you to a height of 139 metres

It will take you to a speed of 206km/hr in 3.5 seconds.

Life IS like a roller coaster. It goes up and down. It's easy and it's hard. It's fast and slow. It's scary and it's comfortable.

Jesus is the strength of the safety bar that comes over your shoulder and holds you in place. Without him, we are in danger. We cannot hold **ourselves** in place. Jesus strengthens us by giving us security no matter what happens. He secures us when life is easy AND when life is difficult. He's there for the whole ride. He wants us to depend on him in ALL times of life. That is contentment. When we hold on to him whether life is up OR down.

But Jesus is also our security because he wants us to make it to the end.

You know what often happens on a lot of these roller coaster rides? People lose things.

- **Pictures**

Glasses. Mobile phones. Wallets. Jewellery. Dentures. Glass eyes. And of course, lunch.

This is what happens in life. We gain things and we lose things. We have relationships and we lose relationships. We buy possessions and we lose possessions.

But at the end, we will have nothing from this world.

What we **will** have are the riches of Jesus. Philippians 4:19

- **“And my God will meet all your needs according to *the riches of his glory* in Christ Jesus.”**

The riches of his glory.

Contentment comes when we value riches that cannot be taken away. The riches of Christ’s glory. Heaven. Eternal life. Resurrection.

- And all of this comes from **the cross of Jesus**.

He gave up all his power to display to us his power over death.

He gave up all his riches to offer us the riches of eternal life.

To the world, the cross of Jesus is suffering and weakness.

But to us, the cross of Jesus is a victory of eternal riches.

We will be content only when we depend on the strength of Jesus.

We will be content only when we value the riches we have in Jesus.

Let your thanksgiving today reflect your contentment in Christ.

Let’s pray.

Gracious and loving heavenly Father,

Thank you for your strength in all of our lives.

Thank you for the riches of your eternal glory.

Help us to find contentment in you alone.

Help us to give thanks in difficult times.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen.