

# **“A Wasted Life”**

**(Phil. 4:13)**

**Dr. Richard S. Koole**  
**Chapel Pointe**  
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## **I. Introduction**

### **A. The story of David Brainerd**

1. Had a brilliant future
  - a. Born in Connecticut in 1718, David Brainerd was converted at age 21.
  - b. After studies at Yale College, he was ordained a Presbyterian missionary in 1744
  - c. Could have taken a comfortable pastorate
2. Instead, he headed to the unsettled forests of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.
  - a. Tried to share Christ with the American Indians
3. Faced unimaginable difficulties
  - a. Wandering through the forests alone
  - b. Didn't know their languages
  - c. Using drunken translator
4. But he knew that was where God wanted him...and he obeyed
  - a. He worked to the point of exhaustion
  - b. ...and he prayed alone for hours on end
5. Success seemed to elude him and he became sick
6. He returned to live with his in-laws
  - a. ...and died while still in his 20's

7. Appeared to be *“a wasted life”*

a. ...or was it?

## **B. What about your life?**

1. We each just get one chance at life

a. And it goes by quickly

2. Always planning on pursuing your dream....tomorrow

a. Your “bucket list”

3. Waking up old one day with a “list of regrets”

4. Most fail by never trying

a. Or quitting

5. Some of you are afraid of trying great things

6. There is nothing more tragic than a wasted life

**\*\*\*\*but\*\*\*\***

## **C. The transforming power of one verse**

1. Life verse of many

2. Has empowered many to do extraordinary things

3. Contains the secret to achieving beyond your human capability

4. We’ll get to it in a minute

a. First a quick review

## **II. Philippians 4:10-12**

**Paul was...**

### **A. Content with God’s Providence (v. 10)**

*(10) I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.*

1. Paul marveled at God's timing of a special gift
2. God works according to HIS time schedule
  - a. He know best – your life

### ***B. Content with God's Provision (v. 11)***

*(11) I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*

1. Paul had enough
2. Had food, clothing, and shelter

### ***C. Content with God's Promise (v. 12)***

*(12) I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.*

1. Whether “rich...or...poor”; “full or hungry”

**\*\*\*now...one final magnificent thought\*\*\*\***

### ***D. Content with God's Power (v. 13)***

*(13) I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

*“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”*

## **III. Text....v.13**

### **A. Who can do all things through Christ?**

1. “I can”
  - a. Paul could do all things through Christ
  - b. ...and he sure did!!!
2. Who would have thought God could use Paul
  - a. Worst possible background

1. The enemy of the early Christians
- b. Now Paul was a prisoner in Rome
  1. Phil. 1:13 ***“so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;”***
  2. Chained to members of the elite “Palace Guard”
    - a. 10,000 men a part of “Caesar’s Household”
    - b. Committed to protecting Caesar
    - c. The “King-makers” of the Empire
    - d. Retired after 12 years to high honor
  3. Paul chained to 4 soldiers per day...six hours each
    - a. Or should I say they were chained to Paul
    - a. Got to personally meet 3,000 of the 10,000
  - d. What Paul accomplished while a prisoner...Phil. 4:22

***“...All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar’s household.”***

3. Paul used the events of his life to succeed for Christ
  - a. And so can you

***God allows the circumstances of your life to equip you for a unique area of success***

4. The impact of circumstances
  - a. “Multiple intelligences” (Howard Gardner of Harvard)
    1. Algebra vs. emotional intelligence
    2. Everybody is smart in some way
      - a. Mechanical, emotional or social intelligence
  - b. The role of random circumstances (Malcolm Gladwell’s “*Outliers*”)

1. Birthdays of Canadian hockey players

\*January, February, or March

2. Bill Gates

3. The Beatles

- c. Gladwell refers to it as “luck”

1. But I believe it is God directing your life

5. Coming to grips with my background

- a. With no particular advantages

1. Poor and uneducated family

2. When I went away to college

- b. Yet circumstances were preparing me

1. Understood what working people go through

2. I had to work harder

- a. 72 hours a week during the summer

- b. 12 hours/day...6 days/week

3. But it was equipping me

- a. “circumstantial assets”

- b. What I learned by working to survive

- c. Learned what it was like to be “rejected”

- d. Just keep on knocking

4. My passion in preaching

- a. I will be ready whatever the cost

- b. As if it is my final sermon

6. How has God equipped you for success?
  - a. Review your “circumstantial assets”
  - b. People and events
    1. Pleasant and painful

## **B. What they can do?**

*(13) I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

1. **“Everything”**
  - a. No limitations
  - b. Paul evangelized his world
2. ***There is no limit to what you can do***
  2. Most limitations are “self-imposed”
    - a. You don’t believe you can do it
    - b. Therefore you—
      1. Never try, or...
      2. Quit when things get tough
  3. Our church can do all things...
    - a. Evangelism
      1. Our community needs us
      2. We’re different
    - b. Now is the time to strike!
    - c. God has given you a dream
  4. Lighting a fire in some of you today
    - a. There are no limitations

- b. What idea has God planted in your mind
- c. Impacting people in your life

### C. How we must do it?

(13) *I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

1. *“through Christ who gives me strength.”*

- a. The source of your power
- 2. The source of a tree’s strength (#6791)

Generally speaking, the root spread of a tree equals the spread of its branches. Perhaps one tenth of a tree, they suggest, is concealed in its roots. The combined length of the roots of a large oak would total several hundred miles. The giant saguaro of the southwest desert region spreads its roots laterally as much as forty or fifty feet underground from the trunk. Hair like as some tree roots are, an entire system of them exerts a tremendous pressure.

A good root system serves two purposes in the tree’s development: it functions as an anchor and the roots collect moisture, without which the tree could not thrive.

3. The thorn tree I cut down

- a. Keeps popping back up
- b. Roots

4. Your roots

- a. The Vine and the Branches (John 15:5)

***“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”***

1. The flip side of Philippians 4:13

- b. Jesus is your unseen power source

3. *Allow Jesus to exercise his unseen strength*

5. How He does it

- a. **The Holy Spirit**

- b. **Spiritual gifts**
- c. **Natural talents**
- d. **Circumstances**

\*people and events

6. Life changes when you put your trust in God

***4. Dream no small dreams for they stir not the heart of God***

- a. What do you really want to achieve in life?
- b. It's never too late to begin
- c. Our fear of failure
- d. A dream without a plan
- e. Don't leave God out of your plan

1. "God-sized goals"

- f. You have not because you ask not

***5. Dreams will never compensate for a lack of hard work***

- a. The tragedy of wasted potential

1. God has provided the assets....but those who never achieve

- b. Nothing comes without hard work

- c. "The Outliers"

1. The great musician

a. 10,000 vs. 8,000 vs. 4,000 hours of practice

2. The Beatles in Hamburg, Germany

a. 8 hours a day....7 days per week

3. Bill Gates

- a. More time than any other person
- 4. Some are talented and coasting
- 5. Most of us have “enough” intelligence and talent
- c. Wasting your “lead”
  - 1. Glenn B. and preaching
    - a. Born on third base and thought he hit a triple
  - 2. Dave B.
    - a. Born to fame
- d. Some try to take shortcuts to success
  - 1. Lessons from getting beat up
  - 2. Lessons from being poor
- e. All successful people know the value of hard work
  - 1. You’ve got enough...now get to work
- f. Every prodigy is unprepared in some area of their life

**6. *Don’t quit when you encounter struggles and suffering***

- a. The battle to end slavery in America
  - 1. Frederick Douglas (in 1857)
  - 2. A black man

*“If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation...want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters...Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will*

- 3. All great dreams have a high price attached
- b. “Cradles of Eminence”
  - 1. Those willing to face failure

2. No over-night successes
- c. Churchill “Never give up”
- d. “*No regrets...no excuses*”

## IV. Summary

### A. Back to the Story of David Brainerd

1. Back to the lonely forests
2. His anguish

In 1745, while Brainerd was preaching among the Delaware tribe, a revival began.

5. His journal was discovered after his death

**January 27.** *Had the greatest degree of inward anguish that almost ever I endured. I was perfectly overwhelmed and so confused that after I began to speak to the Indians, before I could finish a sentence I sometimes forgot entirely what I was aiming at. I know it was a degree of distraction occasioned by melancholy, spiritual desertion, and some other things that particularly pressed upon me with an uncommon weight this morning.*

*This distressing gloom never went off the whole day, but was so far removed that I was enabled to speak with some freedom and concern to the Indians, at two of their settlements. I think there was some appearance of the presence of God with us, some seriousness and seeming concern among the Indians, at least a few of them.*

then in August....

**August 3.** *The Lord, I am persuaded, enabled me, in a manner somewhat uncommon, to set before them the Lord Jesus Christ as a kind and compassionate Saviour, inviting distressed and perishing sinners to accept everlasting mercy. A surprising concern soon became apparent among them. They were about twenty adult persons together and only two had dry eyes.*

**August 8.** *In the afternoon I preached to the Indians; their number was now about 65 persons, men, women, and children...the power of God seemed to descend upon the assembly “like a rushing mighty wind,” and with an astonishing energy bore down all before it.*

*I stood amazed at the influence that seized the audience almost universally, and could compare it to nothing more aptly than the irresistible force of a mighty torrent, or swelling deluge, that with its insupportable weight and pressure bears down and sweeps before it whatever is in its way. Almost all persons of all ages were bowed down with concern together, and scarce one was able*

*to withstand the shock of this surprising operation. Old men and women, who had been drunken wretches for many years, and some little children, not more than 6 or 7 years of age, appeared in distress for their souls, as well as persons of middle age. And it was apparent these children were not merely frightened with seeing the general concern; but were made sensible of their danger, the badness of their hearts, and their “misery without Christ,” as some of them expressed it.*

*They were almost universally praying and crying for mercy, in every part of the house, and many out of doors, and numbers could neither go nor stand. Their concern was so great that none seemed to take any notice of those about them, but each prayed freely for himself.*

## **B. The impact on those who later read his journals...**

1. **William Carey**—“read the story of David Brainerd and a fire lit in his soul which drew him to the Coral Strands of India.”
2. **Edward Payson**—at age 20, he caught the power of prayer from the example of David Brainerd”
3. **Robert Murray McCheyne**—“This prayer giant (McCheyne) was first magnetized to this ‘greatest of all human offices that the soul of man can exercise’ by reading about David Brainerd”
4. **John Wesley**—“Let every preacher read carefully the life of David Brainerd”
5. **Jonathon Edwards**
  - a. His role in the Great Awakening
  - b. Daughter married David Brainerd
  - c. Brainerd died in Edwards’ house when he was 29
  - d. *“...I praise God that in His providence, David Brainerd should die in my house so that I might hear his prayers, so that I might witness his consecration and be inspired by his example.”*

## **C. Your unseen impact on others**

1. God has equipped you to succeed
2. Circumstances both pleasant and painful
3. Your “circumstantial assets”