

“Contentment”
1 Timothy 6:6-8
(Preached at Trinity, October 17, 2021)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **verses 3-5** Paul has given us an illustration of the false teacher.
He teaches another doctrine – a different doctrine.
He doesn't agree with the sound words of the Lord Jesus Christ
He is proud, self-centered, boastful.
He causes division rather than uniting the body of Christ under the banner of truth.
He is covetous making merchandise of God's people—he supposes that godliness is a means of gain.
1 Timothy 6:5 NAU - "men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain."
2. As I pointed out before, there's more than one way to interpret this.
 - A. Some would have presumed that their good works were gaining God's approval, and God's approval results in God's blessings.
One aspect of the false teaching at Ephesus was a hyper ascetism.
1 Timothy 4:3 NAU - "*men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.*"
It was a self-made, self-defined godliness.
They presumed that their self-denial would result in gain before God. It was an empty self-righteousness—a false Godliness.
Works based righteousness has always been a problem in the church.
 - B. Some had discovered that by displaying their pseudo-godliness and making a show of their religion they could draw people to their side. Some were using it as a means of financial gain. This is most consistent with the immediate context as Paul will spend several verses addressing the danger of lusting after money.
One of the qualifications for pastor is that he is not a lover of money.
 - C. Still others were boasting that their financial gains were evidence of God's blessings upon their ministry.
For the false teachers, Godliness was defined and characterized by earthly gain.
They were turning the focus of the Gospel chiefly upon earthly matters.
When you preach a Gospel that brings help to the socially downcast, relief to the poor and needy, deliverance to those enslaved or oppressed, the issue of sin and redemption fades into insignificance. It is a different gospel, a different doctrine.
 - D. Satan's servants often appear as angels of light. Satan is not ashamed to appear as righteous. But it is a false piety. It is all a pretense.
True Godliness is life lived out in Christ. Godliness literally refers to reverence. It is life lived to His glory. It is life of holy devotion to Christ.

3. Paul was not diminishing the importance of true Godliness. In fact, Paul refers to it in **Verse 6** as “great gain.” But he puts a caveat. Godliness is great gain when it is accompanied with contentment—being fully satisfied in Christ. In fact, contentment is at the heart of Godliness.
 - A. The true believer has found true gain, great gain, spiritual gain. He has discovered eternal riches. His reverence for Christ IS his gain and the increase of it is his treasure.
 - B. With this gain is the wonderful fruit of contentment.
This morning I want us to return to this wonderful adorning grace.
On September 5 I preached a sermon titled, “The Poison Fruit of Discontent.” It was our first Sunday back after Hurricane Ida hit Louisiana. I heard many complaining loudly how terrible it was to be without electricity. Few enjoyed the grace of contentment in the face of adversity.
4. What is true contentment? I’ve preached on this subject so many times I feel like I’m being redundant, but it is a subject so difficult to apply to our lives.
 - I. Contentment is a sense of being satisfied
 - A. The word refers to sufficiency
 1. It is found only twice in the NT. The other is in 2 Cor. 9 where it refers to a sense of sufficiency.
2 Corinthians 9:8 NAU - "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;"
 2. In other words, contentment is that state where we have become satisfied.
 3. Perhaps this would be a good place to define what I mean by “satisfied.” There is a minimalist movement that is gaining popularity today. Having become dissatisfied by the hyper-materialism of our day, some have determined to live with the bare necessities. For some it means going “off-grid” without public utilities. Some have become enamored by the “tiny house” movement building homes that are indeed, tiny.
 4. But this isn’t the satisfaction I’m referring to. Minimalism can become just another idol, much like the hyper organic, all-natural craze is for some, or the hyper-environmental movement is for others.
 - B. The satisfaction of contentment has a very narrow focus. Our satisfaction is in Christ.
Hebrews 13:5 NAU - "Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"
 1. True godliness is finding all in Christ. Paul wrote: “For me to live is Christ.”
Philippians 4:11-13 NAU - "Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³ I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." KJV – “Through Christ”

2. The man who has found Christ has found everything. If you have found everything in Christ, there isn't much left to find.
 3. The lost man sees no value in Christ – the saved man sees true value in nothing else.
- C. For those who know Christ this world takes on a whole new meaning.
1. The things on earth must be seen as only temporary. We hold them for just a brief period of time. We all enter and exit this world the same way. We come with nothing and gather a few possessions only to leave them behind when we exit.
1 Timothy 6:7 NAU - "For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either."
 2. If we come with nothing and leave with nothing how much do we truly need between our entrance and our exit?
The things on earth take on more of a utilitarian sense. They have value to us, but only for their value in providing our earthly needs. They are put to temporary use.
1 Timothy 6:8 NAU - "If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content."
Matthew Henry – “if a man has but a little in this world, yet, if he has but enough to carry him through it, he need desire no more, his godliness with that will be his great gain.”¹
 3. Few are content with the bare necessities. And therein lies the problem of life. We fill our life up with stuff and then want more. The storage building business is lucrative. People need a place to store their stuff.
 4. This doesn't mean we can't enjoy the pleasures of this life. We can have a comfortable home, a nice car, fashionable clothes. But these things are not the source of our satisfaction.
The Godly man does not hold tightly to earthly things because he knows he will soon have to give them up. He is content with the things he has. Paul describes this as true gain.
Job was one of the richest persons in the ancient, world but he understood this.
Job 1:21 NAU - "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."
 5. The Godly man is gathering eternal riches. He is content in Christ.
- D. For those in Christ, outward circumstance cease to be their source of contentment.
1. The worldling is always looking for something better.
 2. The Christian is content in spite of his earthly circumstance.
Philippians 4:11-13 NAU - "Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³ I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2358.

3. As I've pointed out in the past, many Christians in our generation are living as if their reward is now.
Nowhere in Scripture are we told to seek the things of this world. Instead, we are taught the opposite.
1 John 2:15-17 NAU - "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷ The world is passing away, and *a*lso its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."
4. Our contentment is found apart from this world. We are commanded to seek heavenly things—things above.
Your job may not be perfect, your income may be small, you may not have a large home or new car. Your marriage may be challenging, you may have a wayward child, you may not have many friends, your health may be failing . . . Yet you can be content.
People have found contentment in prison, in totalitarian dictatorships, in poverty, in disease.

II. Contentment is the result of trusting Christ

- A. Trusting Christ brings the grace of peace
 1. Paul described this as an indescribable, incomprehensible peace
Philippians 4:6-7 NAU - "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
 2. He cares for us. He loves us.
This knowledge crushes our fears.
 3. He is working everything for our good.
Contentment is the ability to receive whatever this life brings with the peace of knowing it is from the hand of God.
That is far different from the Stoic that receives whatever comes because things just happen and he can't control it.
 4. When we are confident of God's care, His love - we can rest content in His purpose.
- B. Trusting Christ results in great confidence in His Divine perfections.
 1. We trust His omnipotence.
God is able to accomplish His purpose. Everything happens by Divine design.
 2. We trust His omniscience. Nothing escapes God's all-encompassing mind.
He knows all things because He has ordered all things.
Worry presumes that God either does not know or He does not care or is unable to help.
We can rest in comfort and contentment knowing God knows all things, sees all things, determines all things.

- C. Trusting Christ results in a Kingdom perspective – an eternal view.
1. We are commanded to seek heavenly things – to set our minds on things above.
 2. The lost man is concerned about earthly things
He stores up for himself earthly things.
His heart is upon earthly things
He worries about earthly things
 3. The believer focuses upon Kingdom matters.
"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God" - Kingdom concerns
We are living for another world
 4. This results in contentment as we live on the earth.

Conclusion:

1. Have you found contentment or do you struggle with discontent?
2. Discontent is a restless craving for something we do not have.
 - a. It is seeking happiness and fulfillment apart from Christ
 - b. It ultimately is a declaration that Christ is not enough – there is something else, something more that has a greater capacity to bring me joy.
 - c. Discontent is a failure to see the value of Christ
 - d. The American life has been described as buying things we do not need, with money we do not have, in order to impress people we do not know.
It is a terrible treadmill with no end
3. Contentment is simply finding our all in Christ.
Godliness is reverence for Christ. It results in contentment.
Paul says, "Godliness with contentment is great gain."
4. One final point.
Contentment is finding our full satisfaction in Christ.
But the Gospel demands that we maintain an unceasing dissatisfaction with this life—a Gospel discontent.
Why is this?
This is because we can never be satisfied as long as there is Gospel work to do.
5. But in the midst of our Gospel work, we seek Godliness in Christ and contentment in every condition of this life.