

Ps 24:1
 Hy 1A
 Ps 62:1,2,3
 Ps 37:9,11
 Hy 48:1,2,3,4
 1 Timothy 6:3-19
 Colossians 2:20-3:4
 Lord's Day 44.113

Yarrow, December 12, 2010

Beloved Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ!

We live in society/culture known for its consumerism. Ie,

- Abundant advertising feeds among population a sense of needing *more, better, bigger*. Result: discontent with what we have...
- Because of recession we also encouraged to spend, ie, buy new/more so that factories can put people to work...
 - So: not necessary to use things till they finished; throw out before used up.
 - Also: things made cheaply/poorly; shouldn't last too long because put factories out of work....
- We live in this culture, are part of it. Here Lord gives us 10th commandment: do not covet.... Ie, be content with what you have.
 - How this command impact our way of living in today's Canadian culture??

OUR FATHER IN JESUS CHRIST INSTRUCTS HIS PEOPLE TO BE CONTENT.

1. The Cause of Contentment,
2. The Colour of Contentment,
3. The Consequence of Contentment.

1. The Cause of Contentment

10th commandment: tells us not to covet neighbours wife, house. We understand those terms.

- Man-servant? Male employee..., and equipment we've invented to replace employee, ie, lawnmower, chainsaw, drill, computer, etc. Maid-servant = female employee, and equipment..., ie, dishwasher, kitchen-aid machine, vacuum cleaner, etc. Ox → pulling plough, cart = tractor; donkey → transportation = car, motorbike. "Anything that is your neighbours" = exactly that, ie, his clothes, even his character, looks, etc.
- "Covet" = wanting (≠would you like a coffee), but craving, lusting.
 - Biblical examples: Num 11:4,34 → gluttony; Joshua 7:21 → stealing; 2 Sam 11:2f → adultery; 1 Kings 21:18f → murder. Realize: coveting comes in different intensities, with differing consequences. Can go to great lengths to keep up with Jones'. But even wanting to keep up boils down to coveting....

Why coveting wrong?

- Paradise: Garden of Plenty, no place for discontentment, coveting. God had provided richly.
 - Coveting entered world because of sin. In fact, coveting part of 1st sin, cf Genesis 3:6.

- Result of fall: God drove Adam/Eve out of Garden (Genesis 3:23) into world of pain, thistles, sickness, toil, grief, ie, shortage, ∴ jealousy... (cf Genesis 3:15ff).
 - But: if I throw away my coat on a cold winter day, is it right for me to complain about the cold? Or be discontent and covet your coat?
 - Pt: my discomfort is own fault, now I to live with it.
 - Scripture: fall into sin is own fault. But that means I to live with consequences, ie, not right for me to complain about thistles and pain and grief of my life, nor right for me to covet the grass on other side of fence.
 - To do so is to belittle/deny own responsibility for mess I'm in....
 - 2nd reason why coveting wrong: Lord God controls all events in lives of all people, cf Lord's Day 10. Does so in perfect wisdom.
 - To covet what another has (and so to complain re own circumstances) is to say that God hasn't cared well enough for me, ie, does a poor job.
 - This is criticizing God – and that's uncalled for because
 - God is perfect in all He does,
 - You but a creature; who are you to speak against God?
 - This is the more so for God's children by covenant. Ie, though we rejected Him (and so threw away abundance/comforts of Paradise), Lord made us His again, redeemed from Satan's bondage. Gave Son to atone for sin, ∴ Romans 8:32, ie, 8:28. How dare you criticize what He does?? How dare be discontent with what He gives, ie, covet what He gives another??
 - Cf Israel at Mt Sinai: delivered from bondage in Egypt, ie, from cruel suffering, shortage. At Mt Sinai Lord gives bread/manna, clothes (cf Deuteronomy 8:3), all because of gospel of atonement proclaimed in tabernacle. Rich!! Israel obviously special to Him. ∴ 10th commandment: be content.... So obvious to us....
 - How much more true is this for us in New Testament dispensation!!
 - Cf Mt 6:33 → Father is faithful.... ∴ prayer of Mt 6:11
 - ∴ Paul in Philippians 4:11-13, ∴ promise of 4:19
 - Such contentment in life's brokenness out of reach for us??
 - Not at all. Cf fruit of Spirit, Galatians 5:22f → patience, peace, gentleness.... Ie, confidence that Father's leading is good. ∴ spirit of Ps 62:1f
 - ∴ eg of godly men: 1 Sam 12:3-5; Acts 20:33.
- This leads to 2nd point: what this contentment look like in relation to today's consumerism?

2. The Colour of Contentment

Fallen human nature is selfish, and part of selfishness is wanting *more, bigger, better*.

- Catalyst:
 - Appreciate sense of fullness, comfort.
 - So eat till stuffed. Can afford it, so do it.
 - Appreciate fineries: can afford it..., have time for it...
 - Build house bigger than need.... Can afford it, so do it.
 - Peer pressure; it's in us to want to keep up with the Jones'.
 - Eg, Cell phone works OK, but it's cool to have an iphone-4, so I'll replace what I have with latest – and that means I throw out my old one.
- Getting what we want/prefer/like/covet/desire/lust after – has its costs....

- So consider 1 Timothy 6:6-10
 - Vs 5: are those who see godliness as means to financial gain.
 - ∴ Paul: godliness *with contentment* is great gain. Reason?? Vs 7: “for” → took nothing into world, ie, born with nothing; take nothing out, ie, material wealth not accompany us into next life. ∴ Q: what value/sense/purpose of luxury/wealth? Especially given danger of vs 9f: temptation of riches.... ∴ instruction of vs 8: be content with food and clothing, ie, basics that this life requires.
 - Here same thought as Jesus in 4th petition: why “daily bread”? Why not told to ask for meat?
 - Pt: life is not about the stomach or satisfying our hunger for *more, better, bigger*. Life is about *service*.
 - Cf Jesus Christ: though rich in the glory of heaven, gave it all away, cf Philippians 2:6ff → Christmas. Result: Luke 9:58
 - Pt: Jesus on way to cross, needs nothing to distract Him from that journey. Ie, on way to defeat sin/Satan, make kingdom come. No distractions!
 - This the instruction for us too, cf Mt 6:32f → pagans pursue food/drink/clothes, but these things not to register highly on our radars because we focused on His kingdom (vs 33) – and so confident Lord will supply our daily needs.
 - Head full of: I need more/bigger/better gets in the way of service, of what we’re here for.
 - This the big temptation consumerism puts before us – gets us thinking that this life is what it’s all about, this life is as good as it gets, and we need to look after ourselves. And indeed: if heaven empty, if God not real, consumerism so right....
 - But you believe God real, more, *your Father for Christ’s sake* – He supplies your needs. More, His kingdom coming, and you part of it.
 - ∴ much self-denial, ie, not looking for *more, bigger, better*, but seeking to serve.... Ie, not coveting but contentment with what Father gives as travel to New Jerusalem → heirs of all world with Christ.
- So in third point:

The Consequence of Contentment

Turn here to Colossians 3:1f

- Paul speaks of a reality: you raised with Christ, ie, belong to Him – exciting privilege!
 - Result:1b: set hearts on things above –why?– this where Christ is, “at right hand of God”. Ie, He Ruler over all world, whole earth. This earth is His kingdom!
 - But all earth He’s given to His people to enjoy, care for. ∴ Paul condemns attitude of Colossians 2:21: can’t touch this, that, the other. Go ahead and enjoy all God’s world, cf, Genesis 2:8ff. See also Deuteronomy 12:15,17,18 → ie, not exclude God from your eating. See 1 Corinthians 10:31.
 - Pt: it all about service of Lord! ∴ Lord's Day 44.113
 - ∴ Paul: Colossians 3:2: mind on earth’s headquarters, not on earth apart from heaven.
 - This dictates what do with earth/possessions: exploit?? Plunder? Consume for sake of consuming? Or share? Be generous? See 1 Timothy 6:17f.

- Share not just money, also space/environment. Lord put animals and many other people in His world/kingdom. Give them as much space/opportunity to live as Lord has given you. Ie, spirit of generosity, cf Ps 37:25f.

Realise: all of this spells end of consumerism, ie, shopping/buying for sake of getting something new.

- Instead, pursues manner of living/shopping that seeks God's glory, and so neighbours' good.
 - This God's will/instruction in 10th commandment. It all about love for God and neighbour....