

# Quiet Contentment

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**Bible Verse:** Psalm 131  
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Psalm 131, it's a very poignant Psalm, it's a very searching Psalm, at the same time beckons us to a profound life in Christ and at the same time will have the effect of exposing to us the ways in which we do not keep our souls still as we live life in the presence of Christ. The contrast will be stunning and remarkable.

Let's read it together, Psalm 131, beginning in verse 1. This is another one of the Song of Ascents written by David. He says,

1 O LORD, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty; Nor do I involve myself in great matters, Or in things too difficult for me. 2 Surely I have composed and quieted my soul; Like a weaned child rests against his mother, My soul is like a weaned child within me. 3 O Israel, hope in the LORD From this time forth and forever.

In this brief and picturesque prayer, David is expressing his heartfelt assurance in the Lord's goodness, protection, and blessing. We don't know the occasion upon which he wrote this and we don't know when he wrote this, but we see a high and lofty expression of spiritual life that is worth far more meditation than we'll be able to give it in 50 minutes here this evening, and it sets a far higher spiritual goal than you would ever suspect from its brevity. You know, we look at long Psalms like Psalm 119 and we say there's a magnificent ode to the word of God, and it is, and yet sometimes truth can come to us in such concentrated forms that we could miss it just from its brevity. Its brevity is not an indication that it is not critical for us to understand, its brevity is actually pointing us to the simplicity of the purity of spiritual life. It reminds me of what Paul said in one of the Corinthian letters, "I do not want you to be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ," and this Psalm is expressing the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ without a lot of other distraction.

This is an intensely personal Psalm. The first person singular pronoun is used nine times in the first two verses which is just stunning to think about. It's reminiscent in that way of Psalm 23 where David says, "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He leads me beside quiet waters," and on and on it goes, you know, "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Very intensely personal and that draws us in, that draws us in. Brother and sister in Christ, this

is a Psalm that is laying out before you what spiritual life can be like for you despite the obstacles that you face in life. And so we're going to see this unfold and I've just come to love this Psalm so deeply even in these latter days of preparing to bring it before you.

I'm not going to review the pattern of the Songs of Ascent, just note that this is the third Psalm of the fourth Triad of the Songs of Ascent, and so therefore it's speaking about peace just like we have seen throughout. This Psalm is going to be speaking to us about peace and it breaks down in two parts: in the first two verses you see David's assertion of humility; and then in the final verse, in verse 3, you will see him making a call or an exhortation to hope. An assertion of humility and an exhortation to hope. And at the core of it all is David's contentment, his satisfaction in the Lord himself. And so we're going to walk through this together. There's a beautiful picture that he paints to show the composure of his soul and we'll get to that in due course.

So David opens here in Psalm 131 by calling on Yahweh, and let's look at verse 1 there. He says,

1 O LORD, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty; Nor do I involve myself in great matters, Or in things too difficult for me.

David's expressing before the Lord that he has a humble heart in his presence. He's not coming making demands. He's not coming with a sense of self-righteousness or anything like that. He's cast all of that aside and is just casting himself gently on the pillow of the love of God, you might say. And the name LORD there which we've looked at so many times but it's important here, the name Yahweh is expressing God's loyal love to his own. This is the name that identifies God as the covenant-keeping God of his people, the God who can be trusted, the God who can be relied upon, the God who keeps his promises. And that understanding of the nature of God is absolutely crucial to a right view of this Psalm. He's casting himself upon the loyal love of God from the very beginning and he brackets the entire Psalm in this name.

So you see there in the first verse, "O LORD," and then at the end at verse 3, he says, "O Israel, hope in the LORD From this time forth and forever." And so the name of the Lord brackets this Psalm and his covenant-keeping, promise-keeping, loyal, loving faithfulness is what brackets this Psalm and what makes the expression of peace so possible and so necessarily the outcome of genuine trust in him. The faithfulness of God is not a matter of abstract theology. The faithfulness of God affects your inner man profoundly when you understand it. If you say, "Yes, I affirm the faithfulness of God," and yet you live in a constant state of turmoil and anxiety and agitation, there's a serious disconnect between what you say you believe and what the reality is in your heart because those two things should not be in opposition. The one who truly knows Christ, the one who truly understands the attributes of God should have a direct connection from the nature of God, those blessed attributes and perfections of God in a way that changed the way that we approach life and the way that we think about it, and so this is very very searching and challenging.

You know, I realize that we have things that agitate us and concern us, things that are, in one sense, very profoundly important; to a serious thinking person, life matters and you realize that there are, you know, that there are weighty consequences to the things that we go through in life. You have your loved ones, you have your family, you love them, they're straying, you're concerned for them, but the faithfulness of God gathers all of that up, stretches its arms across all of that and gathers it into this place where we should, we can, we must find a place of peace and contentment even in the midst of the things that trouble us so deeply. So understand this, understand this: the Christian life is not meant to be one that is a state of constant turmoil, of constant agitation. That is not the Christian life. If you're like that, I'm not saying necessarily that you're not a Christian but I want you to see that that state of agitated turmoil that tends to mark so many, that is not the Christian life, that is not the outworking of biblical faith. Psalm 131 is the outworking of biblical faith. It all starts with a recognition of who God is, it starts with an understanding that God has an eternal purpose which he established before the beginning of time, and since time began God has been working out with perfect precision, with absolute certainty everything that he predestined to occur before time began. Scripture is abundantly clear on this. Ephesians 1:11 says that he works all things after the counsel of his own will. The Bible says that God knows the end from the beginning which means that the end is certain because God knows it in advance and God knows all points in between.

He rules sovereignly over all of it and God is not in a position like you and I are of responding to changing life circumstances, as we get more information or as new events occur we have to sometimes change our direction. That is not how God operates. God is working in it all, God is orchestrating everything so that it perfectly achieves and accomplishes what he intended the outcome of creation to be before he even established it. And now if that is true, and it is, beloved, then it means that everything, everything that is in your life, every difficult relationship, every bad job situation, every heartache, every conflict in every relationship, every disappointment, every sorrow and deep profound grief that you may be having here tonight, somehow in a way that I can't explain to you because I don't know the mind of God except as it's revealed in Scripture, but somehow God has brought all of these circumstances to you, including all of the disappointments and heartaches, God has brought all of them to you in order to manifest his faithfulness to you, in order to accomplish everything that he desires, and that means that you are not in a random universe, you are not cast adrift, that means that you do not have to be overly preoccupied with the things that you don't understand. It is enough to know that God is who he is, God is who he is and he does what he does, and as simple as that sounds, beloved, that is the key to finding satisfaction and contentment in your soul, is that you rest in that. God is the LORD. God is Yahweh. And God is a God of loyal love to his own.

So the biblically thinking heart operates is that because that is true, I can be at peace no matter what storm is raging around me, and we'll work through the implications of that as we go along. But God is an eternal God, with an eternal purpose, that he is working out with perfect precision to accomplish the eternal goal without any failings, without any mistake, without any shortcoming, and at the end when it is all concluded, when it is all

said and done and time has come to an end God's glory is on full display throughout all of the unfolding ages of eternity, all of his people will gaze on his majesty and recognize that he has done all things well, and that he has done all things for the good of his people as well as for his own glory, and that includes every sorrow, every grief, every conflict that may be in your life now. One of the blessed things about the Lord giving us, you know, a few decades to live, is that you start to see that in retrospect. We sing a hymn from time to time that says, "Things that once were wild alarms, cannot now disturb my rest. Things that once were wild alarms, cannot now disturb my rest." And it's an expression of this kind of trust that we see expressed in Psalm 131.

So the point of all of that, I'm just dwelling on that to emphasize that the faithfulness of God affects your inner man profoundly when you understand and meditate on it rightly, and so we have to step back from all of the hustle and bustle of the world and focus right here in order to know the benefits of this. In other words, we could say it this way, to use a different word picture, this is not low hanging fruit here that we can easily just pluck off and start eating; these are things that require deep profound meditation on the character and works of God, the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also in response to that it requires us to examine our hearts and to seriously evaluate what is it that I want out of life? Do I want my will to be done? Is it my success? Is it my relationship? Is it my kids? Is it my house? Is it all about me and what my desires are? If so, then you're not on the path to the peace that's described in Psalm 131. Your spinning out of orbit here and, of course, if your priorities are bound up in earthly matters, you're going to know anxiety and that is not the way that God has designed us to live. Jesus expressed this very clearly in Matthew 6:19, you don't need to turn there, but in Matthew 6:19 Jesus said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." You can see the same principle expressed in Colossians 3:1, it says, "herefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."

Do you know what? I've been in pastoral ministry awhile now and I have never, never counseled someone who came to me and started the conversation by saying, "I've been dwelling on God's eternal purpose and the outworking of His perfect plan, and I've been dwelling on His faithfulness, I've been thinking about what that means and the perfection that He has planned for me in eternity and I'm really, really, deeply troubled and I don't know what to do." Those two things don't exist simultaneously. As an elder board, we are glad and happy to counsel people and encourage them and help them in any way that we can, in any trouble that you might have, so don't misunderstand what I'm saying here. We're not talking about the accessibility and the willingness of elders to help you and counsel you but the truth of the matter is that when people come for counsel and they're very agitated, it's always over something earthly. It's always over something earthly and that just highlights the issue and the importance of what we're talking about here. Treasures laid up on earth are going to agitate you. When your mind is set on earthly

things, there are things that are going to agitate you, and what Scripture does is it calls us away from that, calls us to look up, to dwell on, to meditate on, to absorb deeply the faithful character of God, the love and mercy of Christ, and let that affect how we view everything else. You must start vertically before you can interpret the horizontal things properly.

So with those things in mind, let's get into the text here in Psalm 131. David says, "God, now that I am in Your presence," he comes telling God that he does not think too highly of himself, David does not think too highly of David, and he says, "my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty; Nor do I involve myself in great matters, Or in things too difficult for me." What David is doing here is he enters into the presence of God, is he has repudiated any lingering pride that is in his heart. He has repented of that. He's contemplated it and he has cast it aside. And what is he saying here? Well, to put it in simple homely terms, David has done away, first of all, with comparing himself to others. He's done away with that. His heart is not proud. He's not lifting himself up by looking at others. He does not feel the need to compete with men in order to gain the applause of men. That's not important to him anymore. He has laid aside any sense of jostling for position or elevation or acclaim from those around him. That isn't important to him anymore. And look, all of us to some extent or another are infected by a fear of man and a desire to have the approval of man around us, and we're infected by that and we have to resist it and fight against it. What I want you to see is that one of the ways that we mortify that and we put it to death is that we hold it up for what it is in comparison to having the approval of God, in comparison to being at peace with God in our Lord Jesus Christ, what men think of me is absolutely irrelevant. That is not important by comparison to the reality that I belong to the living God and he is faithful and good to me and he always will be and it could be no other way.

So he adopts this posture of humility as he comes into the presence of the Lord and what he's doing is he's making a statement about his inner man as he enters into the presence of God for prayer. It reminds me of multiple passages throughout Scripture that says God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble. You know, our aim far from being getting what we want out of life and from the people around us, our aim should simply be to have a humble heart before the Lord that says, "Lord, I don't care what men think about me. I'm looking to You. I'm done with these comparison games. I'm done with trying to be better than somebody else. I'm just content to be in Your presence."

So he's repudiated that competition spirit in life, he has repudiated the arrogance that looks down on others and thinks more highly of himself than he ought, and he has repudiated all earthly ambition. Look at it there, he says, "I don't involve myself in great matters or in things too difficult for me." What he's saying here, it's not that he will not undertake challenges, he'll rise to the occasion, he'll rise to challenges, but this is the key point, it's that David is not desiring things that go beyond what God has for him. David says, "I don't desire anything beyond what You have for me." In other words, he's repudiated everything in his inner man that would violate the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment of coveting for more, for lusting, for a greedy aspiration for more than what God has given to him. David has repudiated all of that. David has obviously taken a serious look at his

inner man, a serious look at his inner corruption, and under the influence of the Spirit working in his heart, he's repudiated everything that's in opposition to what God has for him.

So rather than a proud approach to life, always greedy, always wanting more, always agitated, he says, "Yahweh, You're a faithful God and I'm in Your presence. I belong to You. That's enough. That's enough." And he goes on to give a word picture that describes it, and we'll take a few minutes to try to unpack this in the way that David intended it to be understood there in verse 2. He says,

2 Surely I have composed and quieted my soul; Like a weaned child rests against his mother, My soul is like a weaned child within me.

Now what is it about a weaned child that he's speaking about? Well, it's a very very deeply sweet word picture of his faith. What he's saying is a weaned child no longer needs his mother's milk. He's transitioned away from that early preoccupation of that which sustained his life around which life revolved, and now he's in a different stage, a more mature stage where he doesn't need what he once cried out for. Now David here is using that picture as the counterpart to the wrong perspective that would otherwise pollute the first verse. What pollutes faith? I'll tell you what pollutes faith: a proud heart, haughty eyes, involving yourself in things that are beyond what God has given to you or just contemplating things that are too difficult for you. That is contrary to the spirit that David describes there in verse 1. Now having set it forth in a negative, he now states it in a positive way with this word picture and it suggests something to us, this contrast suggests to us that David at one time earlier in his life before he was writing this, that David was not humble, that he was not content with his life circumstances, and what we see here in Psalm 131 is the outcome of spiritual growth and what he had learned along the way.

Now all of you mothers know that weaning a young child is difficult, and one commentator describes it in this sense, "The weaned child is one who has broken his dependence on his mother's milk and takes other food instead." He goes on to say, "Weaning, the process of weaning, is usually accompanied by resistance and struggle on the child's part, even by hot tears, angry accusing glances, and fierce temper tantrums. It is difficult for the mother but weaning is necessary if the child is to mature. David is saying he has come through the weaning process and has learned to trust God to care for him and provide for him not on David's own terms but on God's terms."

So before in that earlier stage of his life, David was agitated about these things and his life revolved around the things of the earth. What he's saying now in Psalm 131 is, "God, I have been weaned away from my preoccupation with matters belonging to this earth. Those things are no longer important to me like they once were. Now what is important to me is to know You, to be in You, to be content with what You have provided me, and to rest and to be satisfied with that." Now listen, listen, this is a very short Psalm, it's one of the shortest Psalms in the entire psalter, but its lesson, the spiritual state that it describes is something that takes a very long time to learn. You know, and especially for

those of you that came to Christ in your adult years like I did, there's a whole lot to untangle from your prior life and your goals and aspirations and your presuppositions; sanctification is a process for a reason, you can't just snap your fingers and suddenly change all of that in a way that settles all of the issues forever. We carryover our aspirations. You know, and I can remember having to consciously set aside the proud, greedy things that led me into my first career after I became a Christian. I remember that clearly and, you know, it's just the way it is.

Now let me help you think through this. I want the impact of this Psalm by the help of the Holy Spirit to go deeply into your hearts here today. I want this to go deeply into your heart so that what is it that people want in a Christian environment, what are the earthly things that Christians want? And it's not that these things that I'm about to describe are bad per se, but they're bad as the preoccupation and goal of your life, and it's bad to be in a position where you're not content if you don't have them, okay? The problem is contentment, not the things themselves but a refusal to be content without them if God has not given them to you.

So what could we say? For young people, you know, it's often the issue of marriage. For middle-aged people, you know, matters of wealth and housing and things that you want, and career and the approval of your boss and your peers, and success and all of that. "I want that," you say to yourself. You know, Christian parents want godly children and, you know, they want all of their children to be in the Lord. Fine and high, lofty aspiration. You know, that's what I want for all of my kids too. The question is, the question is how do you respond, what is your life like, what is your inner man like when God does not give you what you want? When you don't have the happy marriage that you aspired after or you don't have marriage at all? What happens when your financial resources are reversed and you lose that which you've worked so hard for? What happens when your children don't follow the Lord and instead they rebel against it and it seems like their whole life is given over to simply rejecting and repudiating everything that you tried to teach them over the first 20 years of their lives? What then? What then? Beloved, what then? What's going on in your heart just then?

Well, this Psalm is pointing you to the way forward in those things. You know, ultimately, I'll just say this one last time, I'm not saying that those aren't good things and that those aren't things worthy of desire and prayer. I'm not saying that. What I'm saying is what's your response when you don't get what you want? That's a far more profound question than these earthly considerations. What Psalm 131 is doing is this, and I'm going to say this slowly because I want you to get it: Psalm 131 points you to set aside your wisdom and your desires and trust your God instead for everything that comes to you in life. When you do that, you can find the contentment of a weaned child resting in its mother's arms. We set aside what we want. We subordinate those things. We subordinate, we make them secondary to a greater recognition which is this: because God is a God who is in perfect providential control of everything that happens, because God has ordered your circumstances in life as you sit here today, he has ordered your circumstances exactly the way he wants them to be, because that is true, what Psalm 131 beckons you to do is this, instead of grumbling inside no matter how great a face you put

on to other people, instead of grumbling inside or being disappointed inside because you don't have what your earthly goals were, instead of that realize this, beloved, and we've said this multiple times from this pulpit, realize that you have the life that a good, wise, gracious, sovereign God has given to you. You have the life that a good and gracious, sovereign God has given to you. Trust him for that. Even though it is different from what you originally wanted, trust him for that and be content in it. Trust him for that and trust him for the way that that works out in the future and what the ultimate outcome is.

I realize very well, I realize very well that mentally if not physically for some of us that means that we go and we stare at the headstone of that lost loved one perhaps who never professed faith in Christ and therefore is enduring eternal judgment even as we speak. I realize that. Believe me, I know. But it means that we go and we look even at that headstone under the big old oak tree and we can say in our hearts, "Okay, God, this is what You ordained. You are wise. This was not the outcome I prayed for. This is not what I wanted. But God, I trust You. I trust You even for this." And it's okay, it's okay as you're saying that if the granite is being moistened by the tears that are dropping down upon it from your eyes. That's okay. But to be content even with that because we don't know, we don't know the full purpose of God. We don't know what he has but we know this, we know that he's wise, we know that he's good, as the song says, he's too wise to be mistaken and he's too good to be unkind and so, "Lord, I'm going to view this heartache through the prism of Your goodness, Your faithfulness, and Your wisdom, I'm going to view it through the prism of that and though I don't understand I'm going to trust You and rest in who You are and what You do despite my broken heart. I'm going to be content even without the fulfillment of a desire that in and of itself was good. I'm going to be content, Lord. I'm going to be like a weaned child. My life no longer revolves around my mother's milk, in other words, my life no longer revolves around the earthly circumstances upon which I used to base my contentment. Rather my contentment is grounded entirely vertically, it's entirely upon who You are. I rest and trust in You and You're enough for my soul. You're enough for my soul. You satisfy my deepest longings just by who You are. It's enough for my soul, it's enough for my soul to know the God who created it. It's enough for me to know the goodness of God in the land of the living. That's all I need."

And I wouldn't mind, I wouldn't be surprised if someone is hearing this and saying, "Oh, that's a tall mountain to climb." I know it is. I know it is. That is a very tall mountain to climb but, beloved, think about it this way: those of you that profess the name of Christ and you've genuinely been born again by the Spirit of God and the Spirit of God has imparted new life to you, you have faith in Christ and you're assured of your salvation and you're trusting Christ to deliver you safely through death and into heaven, okay? You're not a Christian if that's not true about you. Think about it this way: you are trusting the Lord Jesus Christ with the most precious thing that you have, your eternal soul. To put your faith in Christ is to say, "I'm putting my soul in Your hands, poor and sinful though it may be, I commit my soul to You based on Your promise of forgiveness offered to me in the gospel, and I give my soul to You." It's the most important thing that you have. It's the one aspect of your existence that is eternal and will not die. Now beloved, think about it this way: if you're trusting Christ for the greater thing, the greater



thing being your eternal soul, then isn't it obvious that you can trust him for everything else that is of lesser consequence? It means that you can trust him with every sad relationship. You can trust him with every broken heart. You can trust him for the lost job, for the wayward child, for the failing health, for the lost investments. You can trust him for all of that because all of those things are lesser things compared to your eternal soul. If you're a Christian you're saying, "My soul is committed to the safekeeping of Christ." Well, just apply that logic and take it to everything else in life and say, "Lord, I'm trusting You with my eternal soul. Do You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to trust You for everything else too. I'm just going to trust You for everything, Lord."

And in that context, you know, what Psalm 131 invites you to do is to take all of that which agitates you, all of it, to take all of it, and Psalm 131 just whispers gently to your soul, "Let it go. Let it go and trust the Lord for what He's going to do through it." If you've trusted him with your salvation, then trust him for everything else. And if you're looking at the headstone, I'm going to make this hard on myself to get through if I'm not careful, if you're looking at that headstone of that loved one that died without Christ, in that moment say, "Lord, I'm trusting You for my soul and I'm just going to trust You for whatever You do with their soul too." Shall not the God who is the Judge of all the living do what is right? Do we believe that enough to be content when the outcome on an earthly perspective is not what we wanted? Do we trust him like that? If we don't, then we need to just come back to a prior question and say, "Well, do I really trust Him at all, then?"

The Lord Jesus Christ by his death and resurrection, by his perfect deity and his perfect humanity, the Lord Jesus Christ calls us to deny ourselves and to pick up our cross and follow after him. You know, to deny as irrelevant in comparison to the joy, the privilege, the duty of following him so that we have this clear understanding in our mind that our priority is Christ, that he is our love, and that if he is with us, then we just trust him for everything else. You don't love your loved ones less by trusting Christ like this. You know, we don't diminish earthly relationships by loving Christ more and trusting him even if they're sideways and not going the way that we want. Beloved, you have the life that the Lord has given to you and because it comes from a God who is good, gracious, wise and sovereign, then you can rest upon him.

I want to quote a few different commentators here just to give you perspective on these things. One said this, he said, "David is quiet and satisfied with what God has given him. No cause for restlessness remains in his relationship to his Maker." Another one from the 19<sup>th</sup> century said this, "The soul is weaned from all discontented thoughts, from all fretful desires for earthly good, waiting in stillness upon God, finding its satisfaction in His presence, resting peacefully in His arms." One final one from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, "David is saying he had learned that he did not have to understand everything God was doing in his life or know when He would do it, all he really had to do was trust God."

God is God. God is who he is. Beloved, that is enough to satisfy your soul. God established his eternal purpose before the beginning of time, he is working it out perfectly on a precise time-table that cannot fail. That, my friends, that is the starting point of all of

your thinking, that is the starting point of your entire worldview, that is where you start interpreting everything else that's happening in your life. If you don't start there, you can't possibly come out in the right place spiritually. You can't possibly reach the right conclusions if you don't start with the first principles that govern the operation of the universe. Scripture says the secret things belong to the Lord. What's been revealed belongs to us, the secret things belong to the Lord, and all of these seeming mysteries pertaining to our earthly affections, those are matters that God hasn't revealed to us. What he has revealed is who he is, what he does, and the fact that it's enough for the believing heart.

So it's a tough one. I get it, it's a tough one, but contentment, biblical contentment, biblical resting in God like a weaned child on its mother's arms, biblical contentment becomes the supreme measure of our spiritual attainment. It becomes the great test of our sanctification. Are you, my friend, are you satisfied in Christ? Can you find contentment in him no matter what is happening around you? And ultimately all of this gives us a picture in a different way of what saving faith in Christ looks like in these first two verses because what does true faith do? What is a true, repentant, saving faith in Christ, what does it do? Well, it rejects pride because it has to come and say, "Lord, I'm helpless. I need You to save me." It rejects all of our works, you say, "Lord, my works are like filthy rags before You. I know I have no righteousness of my own. I come not on my merit but on Yours alone." It sets aside self-seeking. With the Apostle Paul saving faith says, "Lord, what would You have me to do? What would You have me to do?" Utter submission to the Lordship of Christ, content in him and recognizing in him the satisfaction of everything that God requires and putting faith in him, true faith, resting in Christ alone and finding perfect peace in his person and in his work. That's what saving faith does. I rest in the person and work of Jesus Christ for my salvation from sin and to be reconciled to a holy God.

Then that principle at work in justification carries itself out in the believer's sanctification as well. "Lord, in Christ is everything I need. Everything I needed for salvation from sin I found in Christ. Everything that I need for contentment in this earthly life until You call me home, it's there in Christ. In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Colossians says. And as we contemplate these things, the superior majesty and glory of Christ just rises up higher and higher and higher. It's not simply that he's God incarnate. That's enough, I mean, that's glory on an infinite measure but, beloved, understand that the glory of Christ is revealed by the fact that he is enough to keep your soul content, and you don't need the other stuff. You can be content in poverty. You can be content in a bad marriage. You can be content with unbelieving loved ones around you. You can be content because of who Christ is. If he's not enough for contentment, let's put it this way, don't you see that if we do not believe that he's enough for our contentment, we are detracting from the glory of who he is. We're saying, "You're not enough." And Scripture responds and says, "Oh, yes He is enough." The problem is not an inadequacy of Christ, it's that you haven't realized the richness and appropriated it and found your satisfaction in him. Your heart is still set on earthly things more than on the things above.

I'm on your side as I say these things, beloved. I have to emphasize these things and lay them out so clearly even though I know how convicting and challenging it is for all of us so that you see that the issues that are at stake. You know, I don't know what my life's going to be when I reach older age and when my health starts to fail. I hope, you know, assuming the Lord gives me that time, you know, I hope that I respond to diminished health with dignity and, you know, a cheerful spirit like Martyn Lloyd-Jones does, like my pastor friend a couple hours north of here is doing, bound to a wheelchair after his church disbanded, older than I am. He sent me a beautiful message not long ago, just telling me how content he was in Christ. He's reading. He's realizing that he's walking through a similar path that Martyn Lloyd-Jones walked through at the end of his life and he's content. The church is done. His preacher is done. He's pretty much confined to his room but he's got his Bible, he's got his books, and he's finding that Christ is enough. In fact, he told me in so many words, he said, "I'm finding that this is a place of great spiritual blessing." He's finding out how special Christ is, how sufficient Christ is when everything earthly has been taken away from him.

Well, beloved, imagine, imagine what our lives would be like, imagine what our church would be like, imagine what God would do through us if we, before we get to that point, we find that same contentment now before it's all taken away from us. I'd kind of like to see that happen. I'd kind of like to see people not so agitated over things that are so petty and earthly, so petty and earthly, so ridiculous for a Christian, a professing Christian to be wrapped up in this kind of petty stuff, to take their eyes off of the horizontal plane and to look up vertically and see Christ and say, "How did I miss this?" That would be cool in ministry. You see, the outworking of a Christian heart is contentment.

Turn to the book of Philippians 4. This is exactly what the New Testament teaches as well. This is exactly what the New Testament teaches as well. Paul in Philippians 4:11 says this, "Not that I speak from want, for I have learned," just like David learned, "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 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." And what is that secret, Paul? What is the secret to such contentment? He says it there in verse 13, he says, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." In other words, he's not laying a claim to omnipotence and he can do everything like God can do everything that he wants. That's not what he's saying at all. What he's saying in the context is that, "I can be content in whatever circumstances that God gives to me. I can be content because I'm in Christ and He is enough to satisfy my heart." And beloved, you're to read that and not say, "Oh, well, that was nice for the Apostle Paul." You and I are to read that and to say, "That is the call of God on my life, and to the extent that I fall short, I need to know Christ better than I apparently do." That, beloved, is Paul's assertion of humility. The humble heart is the only heart that can be content in Christ.

Now go back to Psalm 131 as we wrap this up. This is one of those texts that I don't want to end, quite frankly. Your mind enters into this realm and you say, "Ah, ah, I just found gold here. We just struck gold here, spiritual gold." And you want to gather up as much as you can and spiritually prosper from it, but the nature of time and obligations means

that we have to continue to move on. So we see our second point briefly in the third verse: an exhortation to hope. An exhortation to hope and I'm just going to comment on this for a moment here. David, having expressed so much first person singular hope and spiritual reality in the first two verses, now he turns his attention outward. He turns his attention outward and as king, David calls on the entire nation to rest in God in the same way that he does. Having set forth spiritual contentment and composure in the first two verses, having set that forth with that beautiful metaphor of the weaned child, now he says, "O Israel." He goes from looking inside to looking out at the nation and he calls upon the nation that God appointed him king over and he says, "O Israel, respond to what I have just said in this way."

3 O Israel, hope in the LORD From this time forth and forever.

"Trust the Lord just like what I have just described to you." He calls on the nation to hope in the same way that he does.

Now just a little quick glance back. This call to hope in the Lord, it ended Psalm 130 also in verse 7, you can just look up a few verses. In Psalm 130:7 it says, "O Israel, hope in the LORD; For with the LORD there is lovingkindness," there is loyal love, "[In] Him is abundant redemption. He will redeem Israel From all his iniquities." So Psalm 130 ends with this sense of the protection and provision of God, and then from that you launch into Psalm 131 and what the response of the believing heart is, because God is like that and God does this, then my heart is satisfied in him. That's the obedience of faith.

And now David says, "My people, I call on you to hope in the Lord just like I have described to you." That same 19<sup>th</sup> century commentator says this, "David prays that his experience may become the experience of the nation, that they too may learn to lie still, trust, and wait in that hope which abides forever."

So beloved, look at Psalm 131 and then look at your heart. Hope not in yourself but in Christ, in Christ alone, and ask God to wean you from all of your earthly aspirations so that you might rest content in Christ.

*Father, how searching this is. This is the opposite of a covetous heart, a contented heart. So simple to say, Father, and yet we battle with this and we battle with indwelling sin and we battle with our emotions and our desires. Father, how much we need the work of Your Holy Spirit to help us and so we pray, O Spirit of God, that this text might prove to be a pivotal time in each of our lives and a pivotal time in the life of our church. We invite You, we ask You, nay, we beg You, we beg You, O Spirit of God, to so work in our hearts, so work through Your word, so work in our circumstances that You would wean us from all earthly aspirations and finding contentment in what happens on earth. Wean us from all of it that we might have hearts presented to You that are content and more than satisfied in Jesus Christ alone. To His glory we ask this. Amen.*

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