

Contentment in Christ

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[0 : 0 0] All right. Maybe you'll please go with me to Philippians chapter 4.

! I'm going to read verses 1 to 14. Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved, and long for my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

I beseech Iodias and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, true yoke fellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men, for the Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

[1 : 5 3] Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now, at the least, at the last, your care of me hath flourished again, wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

Not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound.

Everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ, which strengthened me.

Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit, that may abound to your account.

But I have all, and abound, I am, full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice, acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

[3 : 0 6] But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches, in glory by Christ Jesus. And before I continue, let's please pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we just thank you, God, for this day you've given us. Lord, we know that it's cloudy and foggy, or just kind of seems dreary, Lord.

But God, we know that you are good. God, you're good all the time. Father, we know that today that you have made, Lord, so we pray you'd help us to be glad and rejoice in it.

God, and we just thank you, and I praise you, God, for everybody that's here. Father, Lord, you know my heart. You know, Lord, I'm not here to preach at your church, but to preach to those that are listening right now online, Lord.

But Father, here to preach with them. Not all of us may have the opportunity, the blessed opportunity, to stand behind a pulpit and to preach, or to be in a prison and to preach your word.

[4 : 07] But Father, in some form or another, you do ask us to preach your word, God. And we just pray you'd give us the boldness and the courage as we go out and wherever we are in our workplaces, in our homes, wherever we are, Lord.

May your Holy Spirit just be with us and move in hearts and lives and in our hearts and lives as well. Lord, that you would give us the courage to tell people the wonderful truth of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The truth that will truly only set people free. The truth that will only help people to realize that they can be forgiven, Lord, and to know that they have a home in heaven.

Lord, just pray that you would use me, Lord, use us right now. That we would connect, Lord, with one another, Lord, and you would just speak through me. Father, for we know that you are the charging source to this connection.

Help me to speak the words that come directly from you and not from myself, Lord. Humble us, Lord, I pray. In the name of Jesus, amen.

[5 : 10] So for me, it's funny because as I was studying this and preparing for this, it really convicted me greatly because I find myself not being, struggling, I should say, struggling to be content.

If you don't believe me, you can ask my wife, Angela. She'll tell you right off the gate that I struggle with contentment. Okay, you don't need to agree that quickly. I mean, give it some time. Like, let me rebound here.

So anyways, we might have discussed that later. But anyways, no, she's right. I do. I do struggle with contentment. But like Paul, I'm learning.

And of course, I didn't go through the same things that he went through. He went through some horrific things. And we will talk about that later. But I am... Something's going on. Lift it up.

You hear me now? Okay, that's good. It's good to be heard. All right. But I do. If those of you that follow basketball, I've always loved basketball.

[6 : 22] It's my whole life I've loved it. I've played ever since I was a kid. But if those that follow basketball mention the name of Cooper Flagg, he is just a very talented and a very blessed kid to have just that ability athletically.

He's also a nice kid as well. And I think about it. And I watch him. And it's... I'm like, wow. Like, he is literally living my life dream. Playing the sport that he loves.

I'm going to start making quite a bit of a deal of doing it. But just the fact of all those people, just what a platform it would be if one was on the team of Christ.

Right? So I'm learning that God's will is way back. It's way back. It's way back. The label, if you will.

So I'm not saying that those things are bad because God can use those for good, of course. And what I mean by still learning to be content, another thing that happened too is, well, we made...

[7 : 36] And of course, I'm not saying that you shouldn't. Well, I'm kind of saying you shouldn't. Made the unwise choice to have a lease on a vehicle. So instead of just being content with what we had at the time and just allowing for the Lord to reveal what he wanted for us, we kind of went and we got a lease.

That was just another example of just not being content. And so instead of not being content, I come up to being paying more than I really wanted to.

But again, we learn. And the day that we're not learning is the day that we're not living. So contentment is a state of being satisfied, at peace, and emotionally fulfilled with what we have or the circumstances that we find ourselves in.

It is an attitude of gratitude of the heart and mind that is not dependent on eternal possessions, wealth, or circumstances. Today, we live in a very discontented world.

So we want what we don't have, and we want more than what we have already. And sometimes we get hurt or hurt others going after those things that we want.

[9 : 02] We look for the next better thing. We want a better job, a better boss, pay. We want a better house with a better vehicle. We want a better spouse or family and friends.

It is not often that you meet someone that is truly content with the condition in that person's life. We or someone we know would stop at nothing to get to the next thing.

It could be the next day, the next weekend, the next thing you buy, the next experience. It seems as if we are truly never satisfied, are truly thankful, and we are jealous, are envious, are others that have what we don't have and want what others have.

A poem from Benjamin Disraeli, As a rule, man's a fool. When it's hot, he wants it cool. And when it's cool, he wants it hot.

Always wanting what is not. So my first point this morning is, in order to talk about contentment, we need to understand contentment, if we're going to have the contentment in Christ for all circumstances.

[10 : 20] So when the Apostle Paul was writing in the Philippian church, and to us as believers in the church today, Paul was writing in Philippians 4.11, Not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

Paul was a man with Christ-like champion-sized contentment. And before we talk about a life with Christ-like contentment that conquers all circumstances in life, we need to know what contentment is not, and what true contentment is.

What contentment is not, it is not complacent, it is not ignorant, it is not inconsistent, what contentment truly is, is contentment is a true peace that offers calm, conquering battles as we walk in the battlefield of spiritual warfare that can only be done as we walk in and with Christ that holds our contentment.

It is true hope in the midst of horror. It is true joy in the midst of a journey. And when I think of that word joy, it makes me think about the fact if we don't have Jesus in everything that we're doing, and if we're not doing it for Jesus, and we don't have Jesus first, there's really no joy in it from the beginning.

But if we have Jesus, and we're putting him first, and having him in everything that we do, well, part of the thing that Jesus does, and he did and he does now, is that he served others.

[12 : 07] There's certainly joy in serving others. And for yourself, instead of thinking serving yourself, you're having joy yourself, let alone, and Jesus is having joy for you, because you are serving Jesus and others.

That's where the true joy comes from. I've been so blessed to have so many opportunities to help and to serve others, and there's really no other feeling like it except for that moment that you first put your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is true grace in the midst of grief. And we go through these things, these horrible things, or in the journey, or we grieve or a loss of someone, or whatever it is that we're going through, we have God's grace.

And I've heard it many ways, but the one I like the most is when I think of grace, I think of God's redemption at Christ's exchange.

He took our place, and even right now, we certainly have that grace, no matter what it is that we go through.

[13 : 20] Like Paul, we too can go through circumstances and learn from them, and grow stronger physically, and most importantly, spiritually. In 2 Corinthians 11, we read some of the things that Paul went through and learned.

Verse 23 to 31. In 2 Corinthians 11, 23 to 31, are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool. I am more in laborious, more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep.

In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness, in painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger, in thirst, in fastings often, in cold, in nakedness, beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? If I must need glory, I will glory of the things which concern me, and mine infirmities.

[14 : 51] The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed forevermore, knoweth that I lie not. See, Paul understood what it was like, and what it was to face extreme circumstances, in his life for Christ.

I think it's safe to say that a lot of us, have not gone through what Paul went through. Right? So, even though his life was very hard, it was harsh and horrific, just him existing, put him in danger each day that he woke up.

And looking at the letter that Paul was writing to the Philippian church, he's in prison, and whereas in prison, it's not like today.

I remember it was my first day. I work at the Hancock County Jail here right in town in Ellsworth. I remember during my first tour of the facility, and I was looking around, and I don't know how it got to the conversation, but I was talking to the lieutenant over there, and he's like, oh yeah, the inmates have tablets, and they have TVs.

And I said, come again? He's like, yes, they have tablets and TVs. I'm like, okay, interesting. So, I mean, I'm learning now more that it's really good that they're definitely occupied with that tablet and TV, because if not, everything kind of just goes haywire.

[16 : 11] But, I just thought it was very interesting. You're thinking about the things that Paul went through, and being chained, being chained to the prison of guard at the time, and he's praising God for it, and I think about the inmates within the jail, they're not praising God.

If anything, they're complaining, and it's just, it's not at all like it used to be. They have it a whole lot easier, a whole lot better. So, I try to encourage them.

I say, look, praise God, it could have been a whole lot worse. A lot of them are in there because, well, they very well should have died if God didn't intervene. There are a lot of them in there because, of course, most importantly because of choices.

We should ask ourselves, do we really have it that hard? I honestly hate it when someone says living in America is hard, but most people in other countries wish they could live here because even our worst days are someone's best days in other countries.

It is not often that a person's cup runs over, can thank God, and be content instead of complaining about the size of their cup. We should be thankful for how much better off we are compared to many people.

[17 : 28] The history books are full of rich or wealthy people who are basically destitute compared to what we have today. We have a giant refrigerator to store our food, but Julius Caesar did not.

There were entire nations that trembled before Alexander the Great, but he couldn't get a great deal on family-sized box of Wheaties in bulk or your favorite cereal or own a Sam's Club card. Napoleon Bonaparte, who led the French Revolution, didn't have a GPS as he led the French Revolution.

Even though we know how much better off we are than so many throughout history, you would think that we could be content. The problem is that we compare what we have with what others have, such as neighbors, friends, the rich, and the famous, over centuries, as we people find things to complain about and covet things, only to realize that it's not wise.

In 1 Corinthians 10, 12 tells us, ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto those dumb idols, even as you were led.

Now, I know we all call them smartphones, those nifty little cellular devices in your pockets or wherever they are, but, and I'll give it to them, yes, they're smart for a lot of things.

[18 : 47] You can ask anything and it will tell you. But while you're typing something, and it just, it's not at all what you're typing. It's a totally, completely different word. It's like it has a mind of its own. But they can also be dumb in the fact that we put it before the things that we're supposed to do, taking time to spend with the Lord and time to be in prayer and time to spend with other believers.

We certainly can get caught up in putting that before what the Lord is calling us to do. And it can be dumb in the fact that it's, it's not praiseworthy.

It's not at all what God has planned for you. I'm not saying that you should just get rid of all your phones because the wonderful thing is, is God can use all things for His good and for His glory.

And to help us as well to see His good and so He can use us for His glory. What if we were to look at things differently? Being thankful for the taxes you pay because it means you're employed.

The clothes that fit you a little tight because you have more than enough to eat. And let's just face it, some of us eat a little too much and they're a little too tight. The lawn that needs mowing and those things that need to be clean or fixed because it means you have a home.

[20 : 12] Your big heating bill because it means you are warm. The complaints you hear about our government because we have freedom of speech. The person behind you during the service singing off key because it means that you can hear.

All the laundry that needs to be done because it means that you have a family. When it comes to happiness, it is merely not a goal that is to be achieved on our own.

But happiness is something we find. But while we are looking to achieve our God-given goals that are for His glory and see that's just it. There's so many people that are just looking for happiness but they're looking for happiness in all the wrong places.

Make it so much more difficult when it's right here and it's faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ. His blood He shed on the cross in His death, burial, and resurrection.

An old dog was watching a young dog chase his tail. The young dog stopped to rest and told the older dog, I believe happiness is in my tail and if I catch it then I will have happiness.

[21 : 23] The older, wiser dog said, I caught mine once and I found out that happiness is not in the catching, it's in the pursuit. Oftentimes it seems like the people who have thought that they caught everything that they were chasing after, when they got to what they were chasing after, they didn't find the joy and happiness in it at all.

Another story is told of a king in Africa who had a close friend with whom he grew up. The friend had a habit of looking at every situation that ever occurred in his life, positive or negative, and remarking, this is good.

One day the king and his friend were out on a hunting expedition. The friend would load and prepare the guns for the king. The friend had apparently done something wrong in preparing one of the guns for after taking the gun from his friend, the king fired it and his thumb was blown off.

Examining the situation, the friend remarked, as usual, this is good. To which the king replied, no, this is not good and proceeded to send his friend to jail. About a year later, the king was hunting in an area that he should have known to stand clear from.

Cannibals captured him and took him to their village. They tied his hands, stacked some wood, set up a stake, and bound him to the stake. As they came near to set fire to the wood, they noticed that the king was missing a thumb.

[22 : 52] Being superstitious, they never ate anyone that was less than whole. So when tying the king, they sent him on his way. It's a really gross story.

What's for dinner? Oh, human tonight. Gross. As he returned home, he was reminded of the event that had taken his thumb and felt remorse for his treatment of his friend.

He went immediately to the jail to speak with his friend. You were right, he said. It was good that my thumb was blown off. And he proceeded to tell the friend that all that had happened. And so, I am very sorry for sending you to jail for so long.

It was bad for me to do this. No, his friend replied. This is good. What do you mean, this is good? How could it be good that I sent my friend to jail for a year?

If I had not been in jail, I would have been with you. Praise the Lord.

[24 : 01] This plan's way better. Corrie ten Boom, who suffered the loss of her family and was imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp, said, If you look at the world, you will be distressed.

If you look within, you will be depressed. If you look at Christ, you will be at rest. In Philippians 4, 12, Paul tells us, I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound.

Everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. One could possibly ask, how in the world can Apostle Paul could make such a bold statement?

It's because he knew by learning that true contentment is not in what he has and who he is, but in whose he is. When one comes into a relationship with God, that is through his son, Jesus Christ, we understand whose we are and what we have when a person lacks contentment.

They are saying that they don't have enough as in not truly trusting God, who is always enough. A man once went to a minister for counseling.

[25 : 16] He was in the midst of a financial collapse. I've lost everything, he bemoaned. Oh, I'm so sorry to hear that you've lost your faith. No, the man corrected him.

I haven't lost my faith. Well, then I'm sad to hear that you've lost your character. I didn't say that, he corrected him. I still have my character. Father, I'm sorry to hear that you've lost your salvation.

That's not what I said, the man objected. I haven't lost my salvation. Well, you have your faith, your character, your salvation.

It seems to me, the minister observed, that you've lost none of the things that really matter. We as the church that believe Jesus Christ have not lost anything that truly matters either.

What we should be saying is that we have all of this and Jesus too. For believers and followers of Jesus, we know that true contentment is knowing that Jesus is sufficient for everything.

- [26 : 14] So my second point this morning is how can one be content? True contentment comes when we can honestly say with the Apostle Paul in Philippians 4.13, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Doug McKnight could say those words at the age of 32 that's only a year younger than me. He was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Over the next 16 years, it would cost him his career, his mobility, and eventually his life.

Because of MS, he couldn't feed himself or walk. He battled depression and fear. But through it all, Doug never lost his sense of gratitude. Evidence of this was seen in his prayer list.

Friends in his congregation asked him to compile a list of requests so that they could intercede for him. His response included 18 blessings for which to be grateful and six concerns for which to be prayful.

His blessings outweighed his needs by three times. Doug McKnight had learned to be content. So had the leper on the island of Tobago, a short-term missionary, met her on a missionary trip.

- [27 : 26] On the final day, he was leading worship in a leper colony. He asked if anyone had a favorite song. When he did, a woman turned around and he saw the most disfigured face he'd ever seen.

She had no ears and no nose. Her lips were gone. But she raised a fingerless hand and asked, Could we sing Count Your Many Blessings? The missionary started the song but couldn't finish.

Someone later commented, I suppose you'll never be able to sing the song again. He answered, No, I'll sing it again. Just never the same way. True contentment is learned over time.

It is not natural. It doesn't just appear one day. We are not born with it. It is not some gift you were given. In the world today, we look for things that we think will make us content.

Looking for those things that are better or those events that are coming up next. Instead, deliberately take the time to put in the effort to learn how to be content where you are in the moment.

- [28 : 32] Because becoming content takes the willingness and effort. We can't just have anything that we want in our lives to just come to exist. And there is no difference when someone wants to be content. In life, it must be earned.

I would like to ask this question for us. What is the one thing or maybe more than one thing separating or keeping us apart from having true joy in our lives?

How would you fill in the empty void or place in your life? I would have true joy in my life if or when I am healed, when I am promoted, when I am married, when I am single, when I am rich.

Ask yourself how you would finish the statement, the void that is missing in our life. Now that you have your answer in mind, answer yourself this. Excuse me.

If your dream never comes true, if your circumstances never change, could you truly be happy? If not, then you are living in the depths of discontentment.

- [29 : 41] And my third point this morning is where does contentment reside? And letter A, is contentment is of the heart. Contentment is not denying the fact that one's feelings that one has about wanting and desiring what they don't have and can't have.

But rather, it's freedom from being controlled by the feelings. True contentment is pretending things are all right when things are not. But rather, it proves that true peace only comes from knowing God and that knowing that God is bigger than the biggest problem and that God works them all out for our good and God's glory.

Contentment is not a feeling of well-being and doing your best by keeping circumstances under control, but rather, it promotes a true joy in spite of the journey of circumstances and looking to God who never changes.

True contentment is not based on external circumstances, but rather on the eternal and the internal source. O taste and see that the Lord is good.

Blessed is a man that trusts in Him in Psalm 34, 8. In our society today, a lot of people suffer from a fake or temporary happiness that goes away very quickly.

[30 : 57] People hope the next superficial thing that comes their way satisfies them and lasts a lifetime. But external happiness is like your favorite dessert. You have a fork ready to eat your favorite dessert and with each bite that you eat, you say to yourself, this is good.

And you keep taking more bites until it's all gone. And after it's gone, you have the delicious aftertaste still left in your mouth. After a while, you either have stomach issues or you feel tired from all the sugar and carbs.

That might be just me, I don't know. So you take a nap and at some point, after you have enjoyed that favorite dessert, when you crave it again, you will come back for more because it does not last.

A person is so happy because that person is on a vacation on a tropical island who has only three days to be in the sun and to swim in the beautiful clear water. But a person who has learned throughout their life to be content in their heart will be truly happy and joyful no matter where they are.

Most people want what the Apostle Paul had. I know, I know I want that for myself. Enduring deep down, soul satisfying contentment. True contentment can only come from within. Contentment is always an undercover job on the inside.

[32 : 13] All the work that's being done is inside of you. Not what is being done on the outside. There is only one source and that one source is found in a soul satisfying relationship with the Heavenly Father that cares for each and every single one of us and promises to meet us and save us as we are through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Contentment is of the Father's will. Letter B. Contentment is of the Father's will. James 1.17 says, If every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh from the Father of light with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning.

True contentment is accepting from God's hand what He puts in our hands because we know that God is good and all the time we know that God is good all the time and wants to give good gifts to His children.

If we do accept that which God gives all that is needful in our lives He will supply. Even all the pain and suffering that seems like it can't be corrected or changed He can redeem and restore.

Romans 8.18 says, For I have reckoned that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.

[33 : 33] It can be sometimes in our lives that we feel like things are just going completely out of haywire things that are just not going as we planned or it's even funny to even say we planned because most of the time if we plan anything I feel like God kind of smiles and says yeah no that's not my plan I have for you so He shows us a different plan and we find out that that plan is so much better so much better because He knows what's best for us and makes me think about His commandments He doesn't have His commandments in place just so He can tell us what to do it's not a suggestion it's not an idea of His it's a command because He loves us and He knows what's best for us I think a lot of the times people look at the believer in Christ and they say oh well He's very very judgmental that person just goes lives their life by rules but if they had known who it was that whom we serve and who it is that holds our commandments they would do the very same thing Psalm 147 3

He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds it's pretty amazing because as I was studying this preparing for this and I saw that I come across that verse and anytime that I feel about I think about somebody that's broken and somebody that completely changed not let alone was their life changed and healed but most importantly their soul for Jesus Christ is a gentleman I don't remember his name it's actually one of the things I tell myself that I won't mention names and places because it doesn't matter as much as what God's doing and there was a gentleman that came into the jail and I talked with him and he came in for a triple homicide he had killed his girlfriend his girlfriend's sister and his girlfriend's mother and talking with him and getting to know him a little more I knew when he came in he was very distraught but he wasn't he certainly was not happy obviously with what he did because there are times that people make decisions and they do those horrific things that it's like they don't even have remorse they don't almost like no feeling but he certainly did and over time as I watched him as I would be because part of me working at the jail one of the things I did when I was a correctional officer and not a sergeant like I am today

I would go to each and every single block and I would check on the inmates because that's one of our policy procedures to make sure everybody's safe and secure and every time I think it was a month or a week after I can't remember exactly but when I go by his cell I would see him either he would be reading the Bible or he would be on his knees praying or when I see him he would say Officer Young I'm praying for you today and a lot of the times when he would say I'm praying for you it's because I was having a really hard time and I just I love how God works and talking with him I looked into his eyes I said look you've changed and he's like I have I was like can you please tell me why you've changed and I said well that's because of Christ because you took the time to tell me that I am forgiven if I put my faith in Christ that I don't need to look at myself as a murderer but I can look at myself as a role model for Christ and that's exactly what he did he goes hands down as the best convert

I guess if you will or change of the heart that I've seen thus far in the jail working in the jail and being so blessed and having the opportunity to work there but I asked him before he came into the jail I said you didn't know Christ did you and he said no I absolutely did not and I'm not I'm not proud of what I did but I am proud of my God that I know that he will forgive me for what I did and he was so humbled and he humbled me as well to say I know that I did was wrong he admitted it to everyone the court the judge everybody and I'm willing to do the time I'm willing to do whatever time it is it takes that man I can't tell you exactly how much time he got but it was not that long not as long as it should have so I praise the Lord for that Matthew 16 24 to 26 then said Jesus unto his disciples if any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me for whosoever will save his life shall lose it and whosoever will lose his life his own his life excuse me for my sake shall find it for what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul in 1st Timothy 6 6 to 8 but godliness with contentment is great gain for we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out and having food and raiment let us be there with content so you can do all these amazing things let me rephrase that because it's not about what we do but it's about what god does through us right so god can do all these amazing things through you all these amazing things through you but if you're not doing it with contentment in christ to begin with you will you won't gain as much as you would if you were content as you did those things for god and as he does them through you contentment is very very important and I think a lot of times it is easily overlooked and I think a lot of us do struggle with it but it's certainly as it says and Timothy tells us but godliness with contentment is great gain but most importantly he's the one that gains the increase if we fail to surrender to the savior we will not be free of our discontentment we will be in bondage to our belongings and we will be in destitute with our desires not just materialistically but spiritually as well the personal relationships we have will be poisoned with competitiveness and jealousy personal potential blessings will be lost or sacrificed personal discontentment has the potential to destroy or replace true peace and robs us of true joy makes anyone miserable or unhappy and wipes out our witness we displease or dishonor god if we preach or proclaim a perfect savior who satisfies a soul and then lives a life filled with discontentment due to desires of our own and the fourth point this morning is what is the secret of true contentment all the things that we actually believe bring us contentment actually does not give anyone true contentment at all we can just be sitting we can't just be sitting still and just hope and pray that one day that contentment will fall from the sky on our laps from education money or status because true contentment comes from the divine source that all the material possessions and money can't purchase and my fifth point is what about the church when he

says going back when Paul says not that I speak in speck of want for I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content again with us as believers in Christ we are supposed to be content with everything are we content with our pastor and I'm not talking about just here in Bible Baptist church I'm talking about churches abroad those that are listening online are we content with the person that's at the pulpit speaking are we content with the person that comes in your life that God brings into your life to help you to be more like Christ to help you to do the right thing are we content enough to go to each other in the hard times and the good times and say hey I see this and I see you're struggling instead of sitting there and judging them for what they're doing instead we should say how can I help you how can I pray for you what is it that you need

[42 : 24] I want to help you be there for them in my line of work in my profession it's very easy to judge very quickly but I praise God that he puts on my heart to not judge them but to tell them that they can be justified through Jesus Christ and that with the church can we be content with his word be content with the scriptures I think so often we as believers take the scriptures and we kind of twist them to make them mean something absolutely not and therefore it causes discord it causes just problems instead of going to God's word and allowing it to giving you the divine discernment and what it says and helping you to understand why we go through what we do or how we can better be better servants for him can we be content with the fact that we can agree with something and we can disagree but we can do it agreeably now I'm not talking about doctrine that's not what I'm talking about doctrine is very sacred that is something that it definitely should be from the word and the word alone but little petty things that really like we talked about before outside of

God it really just doesn't matter I think it's so important for us to get back to the scriptures and allow it to speak to us but allow us to speak to others as it's speaking to us and in that it really can cause a lot of issues like I talked about before with twisting the scriptures we don't sometimes we don't truly understand how important it is to not follow on our higher morals but truly what the sanctifying scriptures say because sometimes we can think higher of ourselves than we ought or we think of situations and things higher than we should are we content enough to just talk about things you know it's like okay you have a problem with someone or a situation or you don't agree with them are we content enough just to say hey let's discuss this let's talk about this but we really should be going to the word and seeing what it says and if it's not in there that's okay because

God is the answer if the answer is not in there we need to remember the cross letter a remember we need to remember the cross Ephesians 2 7-10 that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus for by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them and going back to being content with the scriptures I think about a lot of the guys that I talk to as well in the jail they have scripture and things like that they tattooed on them and the tattoos now please don't get me wrong

I'm not saying that I have anything against people that have tattoos that's not what I'm saying I don't like them that's not what I'm saying I have a lot of love for people that have tattoos but we're not even content with the fact of what the scriptures say and content with just the Bible itself we feel like we have to put it on ourselves as if taking the time to read it in its full context and what the word says and allowing it to speak to flesh that God has given us so we have to have surgeries or do this or do that to change the way that we look not being content with how God made us it's contentment goes so much deeper than on the outside appearance and even on the skin but within I remember

I was talking with an inmate that actually got out a few months ago and I asked her a lot of times I'll ask an inmate I'll say as they're getting out of the jail I'll ask them what is your plan they look at me like what do you mean plan you must have a plan if you don't have a plan coming out of this place you'll be just right back in this place so I was like well I don't know I'm not really sure I said well I encourage you to find a good teaching Bible believing church you know and I'll go on and tell them what they should do and put your faith in Christ follow him and they'll say I was like well I was baptized when I was this age I was like okay when were you baptized and he's like well because of course you should hear I put my faith in Christ and then I was baptized that comes first of course and so I'll talk to them and they say oh when I was a baby

[48 : 16] I was like oh I was too when I had a bath when I was a baby and I don't say that lightly to make fun of them that's not it I say it because it's the truth and yes it is funny but it's also so very sad at the same time that again you take the scriptures and you twist them for what you want them to say when really you should just allow the good Lord to say what he's always said since the beginning Ephesians 2 19 to 21 now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord the cornerstone of true contentment is the cross of Christ and because the cross of Christ we can boldly say with the apostle

Paul in Philippians 1 21 for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain we need to remember what Jesus did for us on the cross 1 Peter 2 24 who his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness by whose stripes ye were healed Galatians 2 20 I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me you see the cross made it possible to be free from the shackles of sin the cross made it possible for our salvation to be secure the cross made it possible to have fellowship with God the cross made it possible to be free from the everlasting fire in hell and to have a guaranteed future in heaven having fellowship with God and all that have ever believed in Jesus

Christ is that not enough what else is there that truly matters God truly has taken care of everything that truly matters and letter B leave the past behind and I have a story true story in my story I was of course with me like I mentioned before working at the jail I also learned alongside with the bail commissioners and I was on my break scrolling through my phone yes I was on my break I wasn't just taking up the work time I was on my phone scrolling through and I saw this old truck it was a sweet looking truck very sweet looking truck in 2009 it was a Toyota Tacoma SR5 had wanted four grand for it very nice didn't look like there was a speck of rust on it I'm looking at it and it's like oh man so going back to I learned if I was just content when we went and got that vehicle we have now

I could have gotten a truck a whole lot cheaper because I've always wanted a truck I've always wanted it but again there I go back to I when we get so caught up into what I want it really does get us in trouble is that not what Satan said himself said I will be the most I I will be this I I it can get dangerous so that being said I was telling the bail commissioner about it and he was like look you can't go back there's no point to go back and I said you're right but I can learn from going back so it's not about you shouldn't just forget completely about the past because that's how you learn as well but to remember that in the past the things that you did was wrong God's already forgiven you and forgotten about those that's why I think it's okay to go back and say oh well this happened here oh I learned from it in

Philippians 3 13 to 14 brethren I count not myself to have apprehended but this one thing I do forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus and it makes you think of to me I of course I really enjoy sports and I really enjoy exercising and working out one of the things at the jail is what they provide and I'm so blessed is free membership at the YMCA but other places have like these really cool machines like one of them not a machine but it has it's like a weighted sled and it has these poles sticking up and you can add weight to it and you push it it's like a push cart and it's got weights on it and as you push it and you get stronger you can keep putting weights on it and you push it and you get stronger and stronger it made me think of as believers we keep pushing and keep pushing but if we keep looking at what's behind the weight of those choices or those mistakes or whatever it is that happened in the past they keep getting pushed on you as you're trying to push forward and as that weight keeps going on and on and on you're not going to be able to keep pushing because you're going to be left behind in order to move forward we need to let those things go take that weight off think about the time when you first put your faith in

[54 : 07] Jesus Christ think about that weight that came off of you the feeling of being forgiven but not just the feeling but the fact of knowing you're forgiven there is no feeling in the world we can't expect to learn how to be truly content if we are still holding on to the failures and mistakes we have made in the past that others have made or others we made ourselves there is a big difference between ignoring past mistakes you have made or I have made or others have done to you and forgetting them forgetting means that God works through us and in us as we go through the process of forgiveness not just to others but to ourselves allowing the forgiveness of God to cover us we also need to leave behind or avoid such statements that we say that begin with I should have done this or should have said that or they should have done this or should have done that if only

I did this or did that or maybe if they did this or did that if they or I hadn't done this or done that or said that or said this we can't go back true forgiveness is when we see the wrongs clearly and not that we search for them like a spy we learn from them leave them with God and move forward leaving can take time sometimes longer and sometimes shorter and sometimes with help but without the correct connection and proper process one will never be never have a contented heart letter c live one moment at a time ecclesiastes 3 1 tells us to everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven so we can be so encouraged that what you're going through right now God has a purpose and a plan for it no we don't always know what it is right then and there but can we not have the faith to trust

God that he knows what's best for us and that his plan is better right because his ways are certainly not our ways definitely not I would not be standing right here preaching with you church if my plans were his plans that's that's for sure but we could be so thankful that he does know what's best for us Philippians 4 19 but God shall supply all your need according to his riches and glory by Christ Jesus each and every moment that the Lord allows we should be waiting on God we need to give God our time and plans for our future to know over time what his future is for us and his perfect timing one becomes discontent because the focus is on the wrong thing if we find ourselves focusing on things and others we will continue to be discontent but if we focus on God who does give you everything you need by Christ Jesus living as the light of the Lord each moment of each day in the light of God's glory the things of this world will grow dim in comparison letter d find sufficiency in the

Savior in 2nd Corinthians 3:5 not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves but our sufficiency is of God true contentment is not being self sufficient in the contents of this text context context of this text it's meaning it's being at peace with Christ sufficiency where you are when God's powerful presence abides within us we have the power and strength to do all things because he does not give us limited strength physically but he continually gives of his supernatural strength and our own human determination might aid us to deal with adversity and pain the emotional strength will help us get through a loss of a job and hardships financially but it is only the Christ who can make possible a contented heart or spirit in us even with whatever is going on around us Tim Vanderveen from

Spring Lake Michigan was a great student at Hope College Holland Michigan tall broad shouldered curly hair smile as broad as the dawn as handsome as they come in the early 90s after graduating from college he took a job at Johnson Controls scurried up the ladder of success as quickly as anyone can on a raw boned wind whipped November afternoon I like that that was pretty cool Tim called his good friend and former professor Tim Brown Professor Brown said hey Tim how are you doing a weak trembling voice said I'm doing so good I'm not doing so good Professor Brown said what's up with you Tim said I'm in the hospital in Grand Rapids I got the flu or something my folks are out of the country Professor Brown said I'm going to be in Grand Rapids later today maybe I can stop by and see you would that be okay

[59 : 30] Tim said I'd like that a lot by the time Professor Brown visited Tim the doctors had already been there it wasn't the flu began a three year arduous battle that he would lose or win maybe now come to room 5255 in Spectrum Hospital three years later Professor Brown walked into Tim's room his mother was sitting in the corner crying you can't blame her Tim is lying on his side they had positioned the pillows between his skinny little legs his hair wasn't curly anymore there wasn't enough energy for him to look at the professor so he got down on one knee so he could look him eyeball to eyeball he said hi Tim Tim said hi professor there was a long awkward pause Professor Brown had been a pastor for 20 years and still didn't know what to say Tim broke the silence

I've learned something the professor knew this much at least you don't trifle with the words of the person who is about to die you just listen carefully so the professor said tell me partner what have you learned Tim said I've learned that life is not like a VCR the professor didn't get any more than you guys are getting it right now so the professor said I don't get it what do you mean Tim said it's not like a VCR you can't fast forward through the bad parts long pause the professor is thinking to himself where does he get this stuff then Tim interrupts the silence again to say but I have learned that Jesus Christ is in every frame and right now that's just enough you see contentment is a lesson you learn that Jesus is sufficient in everything if you know and have Jesus you have the solid rock the firm foundation you have the God who hears you the power of love is the

Holy Spirit in you you have grace for every sin direction for each turn taken a candle lit for each corner the anchor for each storm in heaven to look forward to in the Lord Jesus Christ can any disease infect your salvation can bankruptcy drain your prayers someone may be able to take your belongings and even take your earthly house but can anyone touch your heavenly home you have everything you need and can truly be content in everything in life because the cross of Christ holds true contentment in all things I believe we're going to sing a song right and to and to to to to to to!

happy happy happy happy happy! happy!! happy happy happy! happy!