

Godliness with Contentment is Great Gain

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Date: 11 February 2024

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[0:00] Welcome to our service this morning. We come before God to worship and we pray that he would bless us as we hear his word.

We can begin by singing some verses from Psalm 112. Psalm 112, the first four verses. Praise ye the Lord, the man is blessed that fears the Lord aright.

He who in his commandments doth greatly take the light. His seed and offspring powerful shall be the earth upon of upright men.

Blessed shall be the generation. Riches and wealth shall ever be within his house in store.
And his unspotted righteousness endures for evermore.

And to the upright light doth rise, though he in darkness be compassionate and merciful
and righteous is he.

[1:05] And so on. These verses, Psalm 112, from the beginning. Praise ye the Lord. The man is blessed that fears the Lord aright.

Is ye the Lord the man is blessed that fears the Lord aright?

He who in his home of the man doth greatly take the light.

His seed and all-spin' earth upon shall be the earth upon.

Of the upright men. Blessed shall be the generation.

[2 : 37] Ji- llama. Be it. Gottes■. He if ■■■■■■■■■isiy controllers. By the earth upon do that fear
the Lord aright has less ■■■■■m. ■ acted Pare. He if parcwide. By the world aright has
worse, he his soul of Christ, and his normal Luigi.

For the righteousness Endures forevermore And to Thee A bright light of Christ Though
He in darkness be Compassionate and merciful And bright yet with me Let us join
together in prayer. Let us pray.

O Lord, O God, as we come before You at this morning hour of worship, we give thanks that we can sing Your praises and that the words that we have upon our lips while they are compositions that belong to a generation that has long passed, nevertheless the sentiments expressed we can follow, we can identify with to a degree, and the same spirit that directed the heart and mind of Your servant, the composer, to set these words in order. It's the same spirit that is at work in this world, in the hearts and minds of Your people.

And we bless You and thank You that we can attribute any light that we may gain upon Your word from that leading of the Holy Spirit.

While we acknowledge that the word of God is a closed book, that what lies within the borders of the first words of the book of Genesis and the final words of the book of Revelation, they are the final words of the Most High God that we can call Holy Writ.

[5 : 57] Nevertheless, You do speak to us outside of these words to great effect, while the wisdom of man cannot be trusted in or relied upon.

And that light is not inspirational in the sense in which Your word that we call the Bible is inspirational yet.

We trust that through the word that we trust that through the word that is inspired, You further give us insights into that truth, so that we can meaningfully reflect upon it and apply it in our lives.

We thank You for that. The great mystery of the power of the Almighty God that is operational with great effect here in this world to this day.

And while we desire that we see evidences of that within our own lives and within the lives of those that we know, we do see and hear of great works wrought by Your hand in different places and on different occasions.

[7 : 20] And we bless You for that. We pray that Your blessing would be imparted to us today as we gather in Your name here in this place.

This is what is of greatest input to ourselves, that the God who is the great God would visit us in our need. And that You would bless us as a congregation, as a community, that You would visit every home and household that we belong to, from the youngest to the oldest, that we would be able to reckon that God is God indeed.

And that Christ, the Son of the Most High God has come. And the work wrought by Him is efficacious in the saving of souls.

And it matters not whether we come to a knowledge of that in infancy or in old age. The truth will set us free.

And we give thanks for that. We pray for the needs that are before you here in this place, remembering all that are concerned for their own welfare or the welfare of others.

[8 : 43] We know that there are some who are housebound, hospitalised, those who are undergoing medical care of different kinds.

We remember them to You and ask that You would sanctify these dealings with them. That Your name would be writ large over their providence, so that they would know the wisdom of seeking Your face and Your favour.

We remember to You those who are sorrowing, those whose hearts are heavy, an ongoing process for many, even though the days pass, and they pass in two months, maybe even years.

And the loss that they have experienced by reason of death is something that is ever with them. May such thoughts that are heavy to bear bring them, that will cast their burden upon the Lord who is able to sustain them.

Why a lot of things felt that way, may such anutorily, very■.

[10 : 06] For their glory... Can you hear us? May thisökelijk,■ äénesley, we pray for God... Thisö quadratic... May... May, May he, through these dealings, know the wisdom of looking beyond the many skilful physicians that are at his disposal to the great physician, the one who is able to bring remedial work to bear upon his soul as well as his body.

We pray for the nation as it is reflected in the governance of it, in the various parliaments, our own council and those who serve within its boundaries.

May an eye be upon the wisdom that God has set before us. Your word is there so that we may glorify you by it and that you may direct us through the word that is the word of life.

We pray for the world as a whole and we are conscious of the many injustices that are in evidence throughout. Where there is war and play for peace, where there is iniquity rising out of the sinfulness of man's inclinations, we ask that you would suppress it, that you would bear your arm in power and deflect the purposes of those who are oppressors, those who are interested in self-elevation and whose expansionist policies are simply a manifestation of their own wickedness.

We pray for you to work in their lives so that they would be turned from their wickedness. We ask, Lord, that you would prosper the work of the gospel even in a day and a generation that is so inclined to suppressing the truth and who deny it at every opportunity.

- [12 : 27] But we acknowledge that it is the truth that we love. And even those who have been seen to orchestrate for their own ends seemingly safe and harmless laws to serve their own ends, but they will not only answer to the populace but to the God who is God overall.

There is no rush with your exercise of justice and judgment. We sometimes believe that if God is God, then you will execute righteous judgment instantly, just because we decided.

And yet we do not decide it in all areas of our life. We do not demand it for ourselves when we are wrong. We do not demand it for ourselves when we know that we have been found out.

Yet we at that point seek mercy and we seek for recovery. But you are wise beyond the wisdom of man.

And may we trust in that and realise that the day will come when all must answer to you alone.

- [14 : 13] For the deeds done in the flesh, be they good or bad. So hear our prayers on our own behalf and on behalf of others. May your name be blessed to us.

And may we know that you are God indeed. Forgive sin in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Boys and girls, before you go out to Sunday school this morning, just a quick word.

Today you are looking at the tenth commandment. The last of these commandments is, Thou shalt not covet.

Thou shalt not covet. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife. Not his man's servant. Not his maid's servant. Not his ox.

Not his ass. Not anything that is thy neighbour's. And as I've said, I think before, one thing becomes obvious.

- [15 : 20] When we look at the commandments of God, they may be able to stand alone. They have something to say that is directly relevant to what is stated.

But very often they interlink with the other commandments of God. They are bolstering or showing the wonder of God in the wisdom of his law.

It is one law, although it is explained in different ways. So it wouldn't be a surprise to us if we look at the word covet and understand that it has something to say to us about the wrongness of stealing somebody else's property or the wrongness of seeking to acquire the place that belongs to God alone and decide it for ourselves.

So covetousness is something we might not use the word often, but it is something we find in the Bible. But I want you to imagine just now two boys, and these two boys are very privileged boys.

We will call one David and we will call the other Donald. David and Donald have both been given a gift. A gift of a lovely bright red fire engine.

- [17 : 12] Bright red with a ladder and with a blue lamp on top. And they are both very pleased with being given this gift.

But all of a sudden, David puts his finger under the bottom of his fire engine and he finds a wee switch there.

And he switches this switch on and the blue light begins to flash. And the fire engine begins to make a noise.

And David, or was it Donald, whichever one, didn't do that, he looks under his fire engine and there is no switch.

And his fire engine doesn't make this noise. And his blue light doesn't flash. First of all, they look exactly the same.

[18 : 14] But then, because of this one thing, one fire engine has a battery, the other doesn't. One fire engine makes a noise and the other doesn't.

One fire engine lights a blue lamp and the other doesn't. And, well, that is the one that's to be desired. The noisy one.

Not if you're the dad or the mother. Certainly not. But if you've experienced something like that in the house, you would take the battery out as soon as possible. But it's lovely to possess.

And the thing is that sometimes when we see somebody have something that we don't, we decide it for ourselves. And we want it for ourselves.

And when we think like that, we want for ourselves what the other person has, even if it means that other person not having what he has.

[19 : 14] And very often that's how the experience, how the feeling of this desire expresses itself.

It is a desire to covet. A desire for something that is not your own, to become your own, even if it means it's not that person's anymore.

It's not the same as stealing. It's just a desire. And sometimes that desire, if it is allowed to become overstrong, it then can become something that leads us to steal.

Because we might go away with that person. But the thought itself is a covetous thought. And the thing that the Lord tells us in the Bible is that our hearts are full of such covetousness.

And it doesn't necessarily have to be little boys and little girls. It can be dads and moms and grannies and grandpas who find something that somebody else has and they would like for themselves.

[20 : 38] And they know that they have something themselves that is perfectly adequate, that works perfectly, that looks the part.

But then when they see somebody else have something slightly better, maybe more expensive, they decide it for themselves. That's covetousness.

Just one other story. There's a little boy and he used to go and visit his grandfather. And his grandfather was an old sailor and he had been all around the world.

And he used to tell his little grandson stories about the world that he was in. And they were very, sometimes tall stories, but they were stories about what he saw and what he did and the kind of people that he met.

Then one day he said to his grandson, how much do you think it would require for you to be rich?

[21 : 44] And the little boy, when he was asked such a question, it didn't really, he just didn't know, how am I going to answer this question? And he said, a thousand pounds.

And the grandfather said, no, two thousand. No. I thought, well, I'll try a big number, ten thousand pounds. No, the grandfather said, no.

And he went up and up and eventually he said to himself, well, I don't know the answer to this question. You'll have to tell me what it is that I have to have before I become rich.

And the grandfather says, well, whatever it is, it'll always be a little bit more than you have. A little bit more than you have.

And the richest person in the world, that is how they have lived their lives, always wanting a little bit more, never satisfied with what they have.

[22 : 52] And what's behind that? The spirit of covetousness. The desire to possess what is not your own. Not being satisfied with what God gives.

When you recognize it, when you understand something of it, always be alert to it. Because what God has given to us, it is wise for us to be content with it.

And I hope these thoughts make sense to you. We do. Sing the final part of Psalm 112. As you go out to Psalm 112.

And verses 5 to 10. A good man doth his favour show and doth to others lend. He with discretion his affairs will guide up to the end.

Surely there is not anything that ever shall him move. The righteous man's memorial shall everlasting prove. When he shall evil tidings hear, he shall not be afraid.

[24 : 03] His heart his heart is fixed, his confidence upon the Lord is state. His heart is firmly established, afraid he shall not be, until upon his enemies he his desire shall see.

He hath dispersed, given to the poor. His righteousness shall be to age us all. With honour shall his horn be raised high.

The wicked shall it see and fret his teeth. Now smelt away what wicked men do most decide shall utterly decay. These verses 5 to 10.

Psalm 112. A good man doth his favour show and doth to others lend. He with his affection his affairs will guide unto the end.

Truly there is not anything that ever shall improve the righteous man's memory shall ever love sing through.

[26 : 07] When he shall leave the dying zeal he shall not be afraid his heart is tuned he together his heart is firmly Humbly established a pretty shall not be

Until upon his enemies me whose desire shall see He hath dispatched him to the pit His righteousness shall be To each as always on earth shall His horn be raised to die

The wicked shall live sea unfathed Let the sea be harshment away What wicked men do most desire Shall utterly be king I'm going to hear God's word as we find it in the first epistle of Paul to Timothy And reading chapter 6 1 Timothy chapter 6 From the beginning

Let us many servants as are under the yoke Count their own masters worthy of all honour That the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed And they that have believing masters Let them not despise them Because they are brethren But rather do them service Because they are faithful and beloved Partakers of the benefit These things teach and exhort If any man teach otherwise And consent not to wholesome words Even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ And to the doctrine which is according to godliness He is proud, knowing nothing But doping about questions and strifes of words Whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings Perverse disputings of men Of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth

Supposing that gain is godliness From such withdraw thyself 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 therewith content But they that will be rich Fall into temptation and a snare And into many foolish and hurtful lusts Which drown men in destruction and perdition For the love of money is the root of all evil Which while some coveted after They have erred from the faith And pierced themselves through with many sorrows But thou, O man of God Flee these things And follow after righteousness Godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness Fight the good fight of faith

[31 : 20] Lay hold on eternal life Whereunto thou art also called And hast professed a good profession Before many witnesses I give thee charge in the sight of God Who quickeneth all things And before Christ Jesus Who before Pontius Pilate Witnessed a good confession That thou keep this commandment without spot Unrebukenable Unrebukenable Until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ Which in his times he shall show Who is the blessed and only potentate The King of kings and Lord of lords Who only hath immortality Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto Whom no man hath seen nor can see To whom be honour and power everlasting Amen Charge them that are rich in this world

That they be not high-minded Nor trust in uncertain riches But in the living God Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy That they do good That they be rich in good works Ready to distribute Willing to communicate Laying up in store for themselves A good foundation Against the time to come That they may lay hold on eternal life O Timothy Keep that which is committed to thy trust Avoiding profane and vain babblings And oppositions of science falsely so called Which some professing have erred Concerning the faith Grace be with thee Amen May the Lord add his blessing To a reading of his word And to his name be the praise We can sing again to God's praise

This time verses from Psalm 119 Psalm 119 and Verse 33 to 40 Teach me O Lord The perfect way of thy precepts Divine And to observe it to the end I shall my heart incline Give understanding unto me So keep thy law shall I Yea even with my whole heart I shall observe it carefully In thy law's path Will be to go For I delight therein My heart unto thy testimonies And not to greed incline Turn thou away my sight and eyes From viewing vanity And in thy good and holy way Be pleased to quicken me Confirm to me thy gracious word Which I did gladly hear Even to thy servant Lord Who is devoted to thy fear Turn thou away my feared reproach

For good thy judgments be Lo for thy precepts I have longed And thy truth quicken me This section of Psalm 119 To God's praise Teach me O Lord The perfect way Of thy precepts divine Teach me O Lord The perfect way Of thy precepts divine And to observe it To the end Thy shall my heart Inclined Give understanding

And to me So keep thy law shall I Ye here with my heart I shall observe it Dear God In thy love's path Make me to flow For I delight For I delight For I delight My heart And to thy Desmonies And not to greed

[36 : 30] In time Turn thou away Turn thou away My sight And eyes From you In vanity And in thy good And holy way Be pleased Be pleased To quicken me Confirm To me Thy gracious Word Which I did Gladly hear Thick

God To me inward In Vil Look at his Wert Fear From you In great cross for good thy judgment be no for thy peace and thy love and thy truth quicken me shall we for a short time turn to the portion of scripture that we read from first epistle of Paul to Timothy chapter 6 and we can read at verse 6 but godliness with contentment is great gain for we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out godliness with contentment is great gain

I think it's safe to say that much of what the apostle Paul has to say in his preaching and teaching is not well received if we just think of our own society we could say that much of the teaching that we believe to be biblical teaching that we believe to be God's word to us many rejected in our day and generation out of hand they would argue that nobody has a right to tell them how to think and how to behave they are the final arbiters as to their own behavior they can do pretty much what they like as long as it is within the law of the land that's true in this generation but it was no different in Paul's day but that didn't mean that he shied away from saying to people what they needed to hear it didn't mean that he was silent on issues that needed to be spoken of for example if you look at the beginning of this chapter it's a very difficult thing that he refers to there notice in the very first verse he said let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor that the name of

God and his doctrine be not blasphemed now if you if you take it on face on at face reading face level you're thinking he's just telling those who are working for masters who serve masters who are employed by masters to to be good employees to do what is expected of them but the actual word servant there should be translated slave and he's talking to slaves Christian people who are slaves and even though they are Christians they are still slaves in servitude in chains to masters because in those days there were many such like people who were actually in slavery if you go back in the history books what you find is that at one point anyway in the

Roman Empire and in Rome itself which was probably why they insisted upon having an army situated in Rome that as many as a third of the people who lived in Rome at the time were actually slaves now you can imagine the fear that was in the heart of many who lived within that society because they were always sensitive to uprising it wasn't just when you're looking at our society and the unions are powerful and if they galvanize the workforce to behave so that they withdraw labour you know it's very very sensitive area but it's not just a withdrawal of labour that Roman authorities were afraid of because the slaves were actually as a unit if they behaved as a unit they had the potential to usurp the government and to wreak havoc within society so the laws that they enacted at some point for example if a slave rose up against a master or a mistress and took their life the law insisted that every other slave who belonged to that household would be put to death that was the law if one slave took the life of their master or mistress not only was he or she put to death but every other slave within that household were also put to death draconian measures and history records that at one point there was as many in a family a large prosperous family that took place and there was over a hundred slaves put to death because of that one act so it's a sensitive area that's the point

[44 : 37] I want to make it's a sensitive area and Paul is not shying away from it because he is speaking to people who are actually Christians but who are also actually slaves and he has to bring God's word to bear upon how they live their lives as slaves who are Christians and how they should behave within that context sometimes he has to speak to slave owners who are Christians and tell them how to treat their slaves and how to behave towards them now we live in a society that that wants to rub out the history of this world and pretend that slavery was something that didn't happen or want to obliterate anything that arises out of a person's life even down the road centuries down the road because that person supposedly made his money on the back of slavery so the answer to modern society to that history is to obliterate all mention of it and anything that elevates or aggrandizes the background to that dismiss it or blotted out now that's not what

Paul does Paul realizes that this is something that has to be dealt with sensitively it has to be dealt with wisely and he doesn't preach to them and say slavery is wrong he doesn't say to them that slavery is right he doesn't say to them that he wishes it never happened he probably thinks that it is because he himself you remember was treated on occasion as a slave in chains and in bondage not because of anything he did wrong but because of the enmity that is in the world towards his testimony well if you read carefully through the letters of Paul you'll find that he deals with issues that like that under the direction of the Holy Spirit we believe in a way that requires the slave who is a Christian to behave in a

Christ-like way and not to usurp the authority that providentially they are required to to submit to and likewise he reminds the slave owner who is a Christian that they are under God's instruction and God requires them to behave in a way that befits their profession as believers now what does that have to do with how he moves on well he moves on to deal with a subject that is equally contentious and he deals with the wealth of the wealthy and how they are to use it and treat it and how they are to understand the way that riches work in pervers ways in the heart and mind of those who are affected by it.

And when we see how he works here, he reminds us of our obligations as wealth owners and our obligations to ensure that we do not allow our inclinations to get the better of us.

If our obligations, the commandment that we looked at this morning with the children was a commandment that speaks of wanting more for ourselves of possessions in order to...

[49 : 01] Well, I suppose we're just wanting to satisfy selfish inclinations and longings. And what he does in the following words here is he draws attention to the fact that some are misguided in their thinking in believing that true contentment within this world is derived from the possessions that we have that are entirely belonging to the world.

The conviction that true contentment depends on outward or external circumstances and specifically the material aspect of such circumstances.

Now this again is a contentious thing. I don't think many people like to be told how they should make a living or having made a living, how they should use their wealth.

You know, what's mine is my own. And nobody has arrived to tell me what to do with my money where it goes and who gets it and how I spend it.

It's mine if I want to spend it on myself so be it. And who has arrived to tell me that it's not proper?

[50 : 37] You know, you might already have decided to put a bid in on Elton John's shoes because of Elton John's shoes.

I heard that on the news yesterday. That his shoes are going to be auctioned to make millions. And maybe your wealth allows you to think about well, it would be nice to possess his shoes or his glasses or whatever it is that's going to be auctioned.

But if I say to you, no, don't do that. You might say, what right have you to tell me what to do with my money? Why should you decide it's right for me or wrong for me to use my money?

It's mine to use as I choose. Well, what Paul is doing is he wants us to get under. under the thought processes that encourage us to live our lives without actually examining what are we doing?

What are we expecting to accomplish by what we're doing? What is it that I will gain as a result of this?

[51 : 57] So there's three things, very briefly, I want us to think of. First of all, notice the condition that he attaches to contentment in this world.

He says, godliness with contentment is great gain. Secondly, the acknowledgement that it is of benefit.

Certainly, there is a great benefit benefit from the contentment that is derived by the godly. And thirdly, why it has to be so.

Why it can't but be like that. And three thoughts, and we'll think about them as best we can.

Notice with the children the tenth commandment warns against covetousness. And as I said, there's, in these passages of the scripture where we're brought face to face with the moral law, God's commandments, there are many things that we are warned against.

[53 : 09] And the things that we are warned against we find when we begin to examine or peel away the surfaces that belong to such things that there are associated sins attached to them.

For example, when you think of covetousness, as I explained to the children, desiring something that belongs to someone else because you simply desire it for yourself, even though your desire of it for yourself will deprive them of it.

that very often such a desire will be accompanied by the other desires that are equally sinful.

Immorality, the desire for somebody else's property if that property includes your husband or wife or whatever. Idolatry, asking, wanting something that is entirely the prerogative of God for you to have the authority over it and to have it for yourself.

laziness, just an aside, you might think, well, laziness, why would you put that alongside, say, idolatry or immorality?

[54 : 40] we know plenty lazy people, but the laziness that the Bible speaks of has to do with its connection with this covetousness where a person is desiring something for themselves without willingness to strive for it.

For example, if you were to read the writings of the Puritans, many of them would warn against the danger of gambling, for example.

And in their day, gambling meant going into card schools or places where this kind of gambling involved chance.

And they would say that is a tributary of a lazy person because that person wants wealth without striving for it, without doing anything for it, simply using the least bit of endeavor to secure the greatest return.

So that this is how the Puritans thought it is really at the heart of that is this sinful desire for something without wanting to work for it.

[56 : 17] And at the back of that, or underneath that, there is this understanding that you are discontented with what you have.

You don't believe that what you have is sufficient. You don't believe that what you have is ample. You want more. And the way for you to secure more is not by working harder or doing something different, but by having a shortcut towards that.

God. So, it is a way in which at the head of that queue, if you like, is the sin of covetousness.

Now, the Lord Jesus is the one who is, I suppose you might disagree with us, but he is often outspoken with regard to the sin of covetousness.

for example, he sometimes teaches with subtle nuances, various parables that teach us how certain sins work.

[57 : 33] For example, the first thing we notice about what Jesus says is how he identifies the connections that exist between certain sins that we might not immediately be alert to.

You know, we probably think of a sin standing in splendid isolation with absolutely nothing to do with others. But that's not the way Jesus sees things.

In chapter 7 of the Gospel of Luke, he tells us there, or he speaks there of of how Mark's Gospel rather, he sees there how various sins come from within, from the heart.

He says, that which cometh out of the man, that is what defiles the man. From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

All these evils come from within and defile the man. Now, they're different sins, but in the train of thought of the Lord, he sees them all coming from the same well, as it were, from the evil that lies within our hearts.

[59 : 17] And he doesn't differentiate, although they are different sins, they all come from the one source. And for the reason that he outlines, they're all to be identified and guarded against because of the damage that is done.

Now, much of so-called religion in the day of Christ was religion of the outer man. You know, do this and do that and live.

Keep the commandments and keep them outwardly. And as long as everything that was done was done as far as the eye could see, then that was all that was to be done.

People were happy with the religion as long as it was the religion of the outer man. But Jesus says, no, your religion has to be the religion of the heart.

And if it's not the religion of the heart, whatever the man does outwardly, it will ultimately be disclosed because the depth of iniquity that is in the heart will be exposed at some point.

[60 : 38] One of these, it's like you're trying to suppress something and you've all seen some of the games that children have there's a container into which something is placed.

And yet, no matter how much the lid is pushed down upon this container, there's things inside the container that push their way out. And the heart is a bit like that.

And it affects everyone. And if we don't understand that, if we don't understand the mechanics of it, we don't understand the spirituality of sin, we won't understand how covetousness affects ourselves.

We may think that we're not prone to, that we're not affected by it, but are we so sure? Are there not instances in our experience where our inclinations towards getting something for ourselves is really entirely to do, not with need, but want, not with the necessity of possessing something, but the desire of possessing it simply for the reason that possession of it is everything.

I remember when I was a young Christian going to communion services and somebody, an older Christian there warned against the Christian who was holier than thou when he was at the communion, but when he returned home, that person was a devil in his home and in his community.

[62 : 24] That's pretty extreme. But what the point of the parable was that in a certain context you're able to keep the lid on what you are by nature.

in a certain context you can hide away your true inclinations. But if the circumstances are right, then what lies at the heart of that person will come out.

And if one failing that we have is the failing of covetousness, we may veil it, we may cover it, we may pretend it's not there, but it does come to the fore.

And the apostle is here linking godliness with contentment. And we may say that we are content for all the wrong reasons.

And if our contentment is not attributed to godliness, to an understanding of what true contentment is, then that will expose what we are by nature.

[63 : 44] I was thinking in the morning before I came out, I was thinking, if I said to you, mothers or fathers, I covered your son or your daughter, if I said that to you, how would you understand what I said?

I covered your child, your grandchild for myself. You would probably look at me as guns. And there was something far wrong with that person.

But if I said, I covered your son and your daughter for the Lord. I covered your son or your daughter for the Lord. I don't want them for myself.

I want them for the Lord. I want them to be the Lord Jesus' followers. I want them to be Christians. I want them to be believers.

I want them to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for the saving of their souls from their youth. Maybe you don't want them to be believers from their youth. Maybe you're saying, I don't trust the person who comes to faith as a child.

[64 : 49] I don't trust that person because they have had their mind influenced in a bad way. I would much rather than become adults and then come to their own decision about faith and about things that matter.

Well, you ask a Christian, is there anything that has happened in their life from the time they were children until the time that they were adults and came to faith that they regret?

And I would be surprised if there was anyone there who would say there are so many things that I did in my life that I would have not done if I had been a Christian, if I would have had the trust and the belief in Christ as a saviour, that I could have avoided.

Many tears come today because of the wrongs that were in their life. Well, if I covered your children for Christ, surely I do a good thing.

But, you know, covetousness can manifest there in different ways. I can covet your children so that they come to faith as children here in this congregation.

[66 : 12] Think of the reputation I have them in the presbytery. Here, the minister in Kalanish, he's got 10, 20 little children who have come to faith in the congregation and they talk about me in presbytery.

is that covetousness, is it right? Is it genuine? Is it the result of godliness? No. We have to have the ability to recognise where this insidious sin filters its way into our thinking so that even Christians who should be rid of it, who should be on top of it, would recognise that in all the forums it manifests itself in our thinking.

Maybe these things are beyond you. Think of what Jesus says again. He had a man in a parable. He called this man, or the Bible calls this man the rich fool.

And we are told the man was a successful farmer and he desired on the basis of his success to expand his business, to build barns, this will I do, he says, I will pull down my barns and build greater.

You know, this guy would have been happy on the programme Fall and Sugar, he would commend him for his entrepreneurship. Build bigger barns, better barns, greater barns, on the basis of his success.

[67 : 49] But you see, this man, for all his wisdom and prudence, was doing it on the wrong basis. Because he said later on, I will say to my soul, you have much goods laid up for many years, take your easy, drink and be merry.

you know, what appears on the face of it, to be prudence and to be wise and to be something that is perfectly in order.

It was based on the wrong motives. And I think that what he coveted, what this man, although it's not a parable about covetousness as much as a parable about the wrong place that we give to wealth and property in this life, without considering the future life.

That is what Jesus was talking about. That it is something that tells us to have a right relationship with the possessions that we have in this world because they only belong to this world.

They are not things that will continue beyond this world, which is why Paul goes on to say you brought nothing into this world and it is certain you can carry nothing out.

[69 : 15] You remember Solomon. Solomon, we are told, was a wise man. He was also somebody who was probably one of the wealthiest men who ever lived.

He had possessions. He had wealth without the ability to measure it. Gold from all over the world and he built the temple using the wealth that he had.

But he warns against it. You go to the book of Proverbs and you'll find him there telling those who are his own contemporaries.

They'll think he should know better than to speak in that way. But he does. The words of Solomon, a wise son maketh a glad father, a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

Treasures of wickedness profit nothing but righteousness delivereth from death. The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish but he cast away the substance of the wicked.

[70 : 13] And so on. Many other passages you could read in the book of Proverbs attributed to wise men who understand that wealth is not all that is made out to be.

Spiritual contentment surely belongs to the godly in this life. And that does not depend upon possessions.

It does not depend upon wealth. It does not depend the most happy people I've ever met were probably destitute of this world's possessions.

They were oblivious to the lack that they had. They had the basics they had what kept body and soul together and the only fear they had was sometimes where demands were made upon them that they could not meet because of their meager resources.

They didn't want to live as dictators. But as long as they had the means to keep body and soul together they were happy. And where did their contentment come from?

[71 : 24] Well their contentment for the most part came from their relationship with God. Their sufficiency did not depend on outward means it was what they possessed inwardly.

And that assessment Paul brings before us again as well. You read on in the epistle to the rest of the Philippians.

chapter 4. He tells us there that what we have in this world is the most important element of it is the spiritual gift that Christ himself is.

You know how he puts it. Not that I speak he says in respect of want for I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.

I know how both to be abased I know how to abound everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full to be hungry to abound and to suffer need.

[72 : 45] he is happy with his lot by God's grace. And the only certain thing that we have in this present life is well we can go to our bank balances we can measure our fiscal wealth and that may change from day to day but the day will come when that will change regardless of what we have or don't have.

As he puts it here we brought nothing into the world and we will bring nothing out of it. I think most acknowledge that. Paul is here referring to the words of Job Job who went through hard times and he confessed naked I came from my mother's womb and naked shall I return through there are no pockets on a shroud.

And this is the thing you see when we are so taken up and besotted with the baubles and the beads and the jewels of this world to gain them to keep them to polish them so that somebody else will one day possess them.

And society tells us that's important that you're living your life for your children so that they may have what you didn't have.

So they may possess what you didn't possess. And that is something you should question. Is that really, is that a good thing?

[74 : 43] Is that a good thing? That we as a society, especially our culture, we are taking a lot of the responsibility from our children for we give them as much and more than we had ourselves.

But are we not depriving them at the same time of appreciation for what is worth, what is worthwhile, what is good?

if there is no struggle to get and to gain, where does the contentment come?

And the contentment, we are told, has to come accompanied by godliness so that we appreciate that what we have is of the Lord. What we have is God given.

What we have truly, genuinely, is the Lord's provision for us. And if we don't acknowledge that, then it wouldn't be a surprise if all the possessions of this world were ours.

[76 : 02] And you see it so often, we'd be as miserable as they come. Well, may God encourage us to think somewhat more deeply about our struggles and strivings, what they all involve, what they all amount to, and to what end.

May God bless these thoughts. Let's pray. Oh, Lord, oh, God, help us to submit to your word and to be found seeking the light that it brings to our life here in this world, a life that we live, but only to the point at which we must relinquish it, and all that we possess will be left behind.

We give thanks for your word that teaches us that there is a kingdom to come, and for the wise and the prudent and for the contented who are godly, they have laid up treasures in store where moth and rust cannot corrupt.

Hear our prayers and forgive sin in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm going to sing from Psalm 145.

Psalm 145, the first version of the Psalm and verse 13. Thy kingdom shall forever stand, thy reign through ages all.

[77 : 40] God raises all that are bowed down and called with all that fall. The eyes of all things wait on thee, the giver of all good, and thou in time convenient bestowst on them their food.

We'll sing to verse 18, four stanzas from verse 13. Thy kingdom shall forever stand. thy kingdom reap them whom shall their reign thru ages all.

O grace is all hymns Her birthday, the poorness of the fall, the eyes of all things wait on thee, the giver of our good.

And thou in time come with me as he shows your faith.

Thine hand thou offers liberally, and of thy birth be given.

[79 : 33] Enough to satisfy the need, of everything that lives.

The Lord is just in all its ways, holy in his works all.

Dear to all that come on him, may the Lord be with you, adorn him God.

May grace, mercy and peace be God, the Father, the Son of the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all over and always. Amen. Amen.

Amen.