

INTRO: A pastor wrote these words; a contented pastor. To be contented means to be satisfied, not desiring anything more or different. One wonders how many people in the USA are truly contented on a Day of Thanksgiving. Too many seek a full stomach and a TV football game. Such will never find the key to contentment. That comes only from a proper perspective which Pastor Paul affords. (A proper perspective toward God, toward others, and toward things.)

## I. A PROPER PERSPECTIVE TOWARD GOD

### A. He is God, and not we ourselves

1. Pastor Paul regarded himself to be chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15)
2. educated, privileged Roman citizen, honored by divine revelations
3. never in the Bible boasting of his own achievements
4. always giving credit and glory to God
5. aware of need for forgiveness; struggling with Old Adam (1 Cor. 7)
6. 'we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment'
7. God owes us no good thing; rather, owes us punishment

### B. God shows grace toward believers

1. first, in loving an entire sinful world and sending His Son
2. allowing Jesus to bear all our punishment (Is. 53)
3. Holy Ghost comes to us with message of God's good will
4. desiring only the salvation of all mankind
5. if His grace is not accepted, God cannot be blamed
6. God can be the source of **no** evil
7. and **if** evil comes, God is not to be blamed

### C. His wisdom exceeds our understanding

1. as Isaiah 55:8 clearly teaches (My ways/thoughts)
2. and as Job and all critics of God find out
3. contentment comes by letting God be in charge (repeat that!)
4. conforming **all** of one's live to all of God's will
5. unlike some who'd pick and choose what from the Bible to observe
6. 'Thy will be done' brings contentment
7. God's way is **always** best, esp. WRT Jesus and forgiveness

## II. A PROPER PERSPECTIVE TOWARD OTHERS

### A. In the way in which we esteem, regard others

1. fellow sinners, w/o doubt, from birth

(continued)

2. redeemed by Christ, believer or not! terrorist or Tim King
3. hence, in need of message of forgiveness, for the world
4. loved by God, even as are we
5. and also as Pastor Paul especially loved the Philippian congregation
6. first and foremost, sharing a mutual confession of faith
7. as also among us, and the ELCG; Swedish Mission Province

B. In the way in which we treat others

1. Paul put His affection into writing; expressing gratitude to them
2. having first brought Word to them; teaching (Acts 16 Lydia)
3. causing Philippians to 'give themselves first to the Lord'
4. financially supporting Paul, beyond their means (2 Cor.8)
5. wanting Paul to bring the blessed message to others; esp. atonement
6. including even Paul's jailers; one of whom read this letter!
7. loved by God, and thus able even to love his enemies

### III. A PROPER PERSPECTIVE TOWARD THINGS

A. All things belong to God

1. hence Paul has learned how to be content; **He** is God's possession
2. He had been abased, persecuted for Christ; unjustly jailed (Jan.6)
3. suffering need while proclaiming the Gospel of forgiveness
4. even abounding as the Philippians sent money to him
5. always acknowledging God as master, and not we ourselves
6. God remains God and not we; who are mere stewards
7. washing my car, I remembered ELCG student washing w/o chamois

B. Things are to be used in service to God

1. a steward manages the master's assets; **nothing** is his
2. manage, according to that which God outlined in His Word
3. contentment comes from God-pleasing management
4. knowing that God's will, and not ours, is being done
5. like Philippians, giving to the missionary pastor in need
6. a special joy if for the proclamation of the Gospel
7. a special joy for both Paul and for the Philippians, receiver and giver

CONCLUSION: Contentment does not come from an abundance of possessions or earthly blessings. True contentment comes from a proper relationship toward God, a proper relationship toward others, and a proper relationship toward things. That is the key to contentment for Pastor Paul, Pastor Goetz, and for every one of you. Have a happy, contented Thanksgiving. Amen.