12-2-2018 – Message – Contentment

VIDEO

 This video is titled *Contentment the inexhaustible treasure.*

 Contentment is defined as “satisfied with what one is or has.”

 What does it mean to be content, satisfied with who you are and what you have?

 *Contentment doesn’t mean you are happy in all circumstances, good or bad. It means you are satisfied and, at peace with life because you know that God is in control.*

 We all have things in our lives that cannot be changed. I will never be 25 again, but in Christ's strength I can fulfill His plan and purpose in His Kingdom no matter my age, gender, or physical condition.

 In the video dissatisfaction caused discontent and a desire for what others have, are, or can do. The results were not what the little boy expected, all he was focused on were the new shoes.

 Not realizing the reason the shoes looked so clean and new was because they were never used.

 Advent is the season of watching, waiting, hope, peace, and love not over indulgence, our family calls it the orgy of greed, everyone is frantically searching for the perfect gift or waiting with excited anticipation to receive the perfect gift.

 Satan enjoys watching us, especially at this time of year, when we are searching for all the meaningless stuff. He wants you to **want, even think you need** anything and everything but Jesus.

 It is all an attempt by Satan to keep you worldly minded, focused on what you think you want and not focused on the eternal value of a love relationship with Christ Jesus.

 Instead let's take a step back, inhale deeply, refuse to be sucked into the frenzy of the secular celebration, and focus on the perfect gift from God. His Son our Savior and Lord Christ Jesus.

 Patiently waiting for anything is hard, David learned patience from his relationship with God, Psalm 61: 1 *I wait quietly before God, for my victory comes from Him. 2 He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will never be shaken.*

 Placing all hope in God. Knowing that God is in control allows us to wait patiently for Him to rescue us.

 Today's Scripture passage is *Luke 12: 15 Then He said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."*

 Jesus is painting a clear picture of our urgent need to pay attention to what we are paying attention to and think about what we are thinking about.

 Being content is a proactive choice that you and I can make in every single situation or circumstance. Firstly, we need to hear and heed Jesus' warning.

 **1. Listen and Obey Jesus' Warning**

 In the first part of Luke 12: 15 *Then He said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard"*

 How would you respond if law enforcement or fire dept personnel said these words to you? Maybe that your life depended on a quick response to the following instructions.

 This warning from Jesus concerns your eternal life in God's Kingdom.

 In the different translations of the Scripture there are a variety of words used in this passage, NKJ "Take heed and beware", ESV "Take care and be on your guard", several others "Watch out and be on guard", The Message "Take care, protect yourself" and NLT " Beware".

 A. It is obvious Jesus wants us to listen closely to the warning against a life of greed and covetousness.

In Isaiah 26:3, Isaiah is singing a song of praise to God *– “You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in You, all whose thoughts are fixed on You!*

 If you genuinely and whole-heartedly trust in the Lord, you will feel at peace in all situations because God is in control.

 This doesn’t necessarily mean that you will be full of laughter and happiness all the time, but you will experience Joy in Christ. You will be at peace, satisfied, and content because the will of the Father is being done and not your own.

 In 1 Timothy 6: 6 – 8 Paul writes *6 Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. 7 After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can’t take anything with us when we leave it. 8 So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content.*

 Most of us are blessed far beyond the necessities of food and clothing and there is nothing wrong with cars and homes, as long as they are not your focus before your relationship with Christ Jesus and are used to further His Kingdom in the world.

 I am sure you have all heard the worldly philosophy "who ever dies with the most \_\_Stuff\_\_

wins, but they still die and as Paul writes, you can't take it with you. So, what's the point.

 B. In Mathew 6 25 – 27, Jesus talks about worry, being anxious about life, another opposite attitude to contentment. God loves us. He will take care of us. When you worry about things, you are not fully trusting in God at all.

 Just as Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 12: 9 – 10 after praying for relief from the physical ailment of the thorn in his side. 9 Each time He said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. 10 That’s why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

 This is the reason why we all can be content.

Christ left perfection in Heaven to come down to this disorderly unruly place. He chose to come, knowing that men would lead Him to a horrific death on a cross, so that we could be saved and made holy before God.

 Christ loved us enough to die for us all, then being content is nothing compared to the gift we have been given.  We can be thankful in all things because Christ loved us all the way to the cross.

 As we recognize our limitations, we will depend more on God for our effectiveness rather than on our own energy, effort, or talent.

 Our limitations and weakness not only help develop Christian character but also deepen our worship, because in admitting them, we affirm God’s strength.

 Learning how to walk through all kinds of adversity, believing in and experiencing Christ’s sufficiency grows our faith. We have to choose to rest on God’s promises despite what may be going on in our lives.

 **2. Protect Yourself**

 *"Guard against all kinds of greed;"*

 This is the NLT translation, in other translations the word covetousness is substituted for greed.

 Back on September 30th I lead the adult Sunday morning Bible study, it was about the Ten Commandments. God planted the seed for this message from that lesson.

 This is the excerpt from that lesson;

 "The final instruction of the Ten Commandments takes a different turn from all the others. It moves from talking about outward actions to dealing with our inward attitude—coveting. This attitude motivates the kinds of actions that disrupt our relationship with others and God.

 Coveting, a condition of the heart, leads to murder, adultery, stealing and giving false witness

 Worst of all, coveting expresses dissatisfaction with God’s provision for our lives. It leads us to pursue other things before God, make idols of our desires, disrespect God, and ignore time with Him.

 So, the final commandment reminds us that the condition of the heart remains at the root of the Ten Commandments. A dissatisfied, coveting heart undercuts our relationship with God and other people."

 Covetousness and greed are not only about the stuff, but also gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit that make us who we are, how God calls and uses us to serve in His Kingdom.

 Paul used the illustration of the human body with all it's different parts as how the Body of Christ works as in 1 Corinthians 12 beginning in verse 12.

 God didn’t make us carbon copies of one another. He made us unique in His image. Differing gifts are evidence that God works through all of us differently. Our spiritual gifts may be different, but they are with the same goal and from the same God.

 Greed and covetousness are the opposite of contentment. If jealousy of others pushes you to desiring things that they have then you are missing the point. Jesus said, “life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

 Instead of jealousy and covetousness let's take on a heart of love acceptance and forgiveness and rejoice with others in their good fortune.

 **3. Live Content, Satisfied, and At Peace**

 *"life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."*

 Please don't misunderstand, being content is not a license to sit around and do nothing. Contentment is a gift from God, an awareness that God is in control, and that gift should be shared to further His Kingdom.

 If you are not satisfied with things in your life, it is likely your human desires are getting in the way of God’s desires.

 When you desire what He desires, you will experience contentment to the fullest and as is written in Psalm 37: 4 and He will give you your heart’s desires.

 I am of the opinion that our society lives in a constant state of discontentment. We're not happy with our leaders, with our spouse, our children, or the things that we have.

 Our house is too small, our car is too old, our TV is not smart enough, and our smartphone doesn't have the latest 4G, or 5G technology.

 So what's a person to do in order [to find contentment](https://www.biblemoneymatters.com/consumerism-and-contentment-what-does-it-take-to-be-content-and-happy-in-this-culture/) in such a restless world, and why can't we seem to find the contentment that we're looking for?

 In Philippians 4: 11 – 13 *Paul drives home the main point of contentment. 11 Not that I was ever in need, for I have* ***learned*** *how to be content with whatever I have. 12 I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have* ***learned*** *the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little.* ***13 For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.****"*

 The Bible calls us to **allow our faith and hope in Christ, not our circumstances, to direct our sense of contentment**. True, biblical contentment is confidence that Christ’s power, purpose, and provision is sufficient for every circumstance.

 We are to **learn** how to walk through all kinds of adversity believing in and experiencing Christ’s sufficiency. We have to **choose** to rest on God’s good promises despite what may be going on in our lives.

 Jeremiah 29: 11 is a great example of just how much God loves us. He promises, *11 For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.*

 In this season of Advent, my prayer is that we will hear and do the Word as in Colossians 3: *14 Above all, put on love - the perfect bond of unity* and in Matthew 6: 33 *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.*

Let us Pray

 In this Advent of expectation draw us together in unity, that our praise and worship might echo in these walls and also through our lives.
 In this Advent of expectation draw us together in mission, that the hope within might be the song we sing, and the melody of our lives.
 In this Advent of expectation draw us together in service, that the path we follow might lead us from a stable to a glimpse of eternity.

 Father, I give all praise and glory to Your most Holy name. Help me today as I seek contentment in everything I do. No matter what journey I have to travel, I want to be contented, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. Where I fall short Abba Father, pick me up, and lead me to victory. I choose to walk with you, always.