

CONTENTMENT

Sunday Morning: August 4, 2002

Text: Hebrews 13:5-6 "Let your **conversation** [style, manor of living] be without **covetousness**; and **be content** [present passive] with such things as ye **have**: for he hath said, **(1) I will never leave thee**, nor **(2) forsake thee**. 6. So that we may boldly say, **(3) The Lord is my helper**, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

ISRAEL FAILED TO ENTER THE LAND

Hebrews 3:10-11 "Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and **they have not known my ways**. 11. So I swear in my wrath, **They shall not enter into my rest.**")

I want to include the following verses in our study. Hebrews 3:10-11 "Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways. 11. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)" One of the things that we have found in our study of the book of Hebrews is that the children of Israel that came out of Egypt failed to enter into the land flowing with milk and honey which is known as the rest of God. This entering into the rest of God is not the common salvation, this is rewards and the inheritance of God's people. They failed to receive God's best for them. Entering into the rest of God is based upon our conversation or way or style of life. The manor of life that we have. What are we doing in our walk with the Lord? Are we murmurers. Are we complainers? Are we telling God that we are not getting what we think we deserve? How are we living? Have we become covetous? Are we wanting things that we don't have to the extent that we do things that we shouldn't to get them? That is easy to do and there are a lot of people doing that to day.

Another passage that is not included in the notes is Numbers 21:4-6.

DISCONTENTMENT

Numbers 21:4-6 "And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much **discouraged** because of the way. 5. And the people spake **against God**, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is **no bread**, neither is there any **water**; and our soul **loatheth this light bread**. 6. And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and **much people of Israel died**."

This has to do with the children of Israel as they journeyed from Hor by the way of the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom, which was Esau's inheritance. Those who died in the wilderness did not enter into the land flowing with milk and honey. This does not mean that they were lost or part of the family of God. These incidents in the Old Testament teach us that if we do not behave ourselves that there is a price to pay. Those who were not content with what the Lord provided perished in the wilderness. What that means for us is that if we do not conform to the plans and purposes of God we will miss the blessing of a better inheritance in His coming kingdom and glory. Everyone is going to want that blessing but not all will be able to enter into that blessing because of disobedience.

What I want to emphasize is the dangers of covetousness and discontentment. Both can cause us to be snake bit and perish losing our preferred inheritance. We need to live satisfied with what the Lord provides us.

When we think about the children of Israel that did not have hot and cold running water in the desert. Water came when God was ready to provide it out of the rock that followed them. The children of Israel were not content with what the Lord provided. God provided them manna. Can

you imagine having someone for dinner and hearing them tell you that they loath what you were serving for dinner. Israel was telling God, that delivered them from the bondage of Egypt, that they loathed what he was providing for them.

Are we living today loathing what God is providing and allowing to happen to us? I know that there are things that I experience that I do not particularly like. As God lead Israel through a hot, dry, and desolate land He also leads us through situations that seem unbearable to us. God had a purpose for the nation of Israel to have that experience and He allows those things to come our way for a purpose. The purpose is for us to learn to trust Him no matter what the circumstances maybe. We need to learn that His thought are better than my thoughts and His ways are better than my ways.

They were discontent and it cost them. They wanted things that they did not have and it cost them. They were covetous. I want us to be aware that will cost dearly to live a life that is discontent and covetous.

COVETOUSNESS OUT OF THE HEART

Mark 7:21-23 "For from within, **out of the heart** of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22. Thefts, **covetousness**, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23. All these evil things come **from within**, and **defile** the man."

Take note that covetousness is a sin that found in a list of some very evil sins. Not many of the Lord's children are living in adultery, fornications, and murders, but there many that are living in covetousness, pride, and foolishness. Covetousness can cause us to steal, or to take another man's wife, or life.

COVET THINGS

Luke 12:15 "And he said unto them, **Take heed**, and **beware** of **covetousness**: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the **things** which he possesseth."

Covetousness has to do with possessions. Wanting more than you have and not what you need. It is not a sin to want a dependable car that will provide needed transportation. In this passage in Luke 12, it was dealing with having more than you need and doing everything you can to keep from losing what you have obtained.

INHERITANCE EFFECTED

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 "Know ye not that the **unrighteous** [unjust] shall **not inherit** the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10. Nor thieves, nor **covetous**, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall **inherit the kingdom** of God."

If we are covetous it will effect our inheritance as it did in the case of the children of Israel. Let's turn to 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 "Know ye not that the unrighteous (unjust) shall **not inherit** the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10. Nor thieves, nor **covetous**, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, **shall inherit the kingdom of God.**" An inheritance in the kingdom of God is seen in the Old Testament type as the land flowing with milk and honey. They were covetous and were denied entrance into the land to posses it.

Covetousness can and will effect our inheritance. The sin of covetousness will cause us to loose our inheritance in the coming kingdom of Heaven.

PLEASURES

James 4:1-3 "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your **lusts** (pertains to pleasure more than passion) that war in your members? 2. Ye **lust**, and have not: ye kill, and **desire** to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye **have not**, because ye **ask not**. 3. Ye ask, and **receive not**, because ye **ask amiss**, that ye may consume it upon your **lusts** (or pleasure)."

From this passage we will see that dissatisfaction can cause us trouble. These war are not between nations but among saved people. Covetousness is an emotion stimulated by the flesh. The flesh stirs us to have more and more and even to have things that we are not to have. We often pray for things that we want to satisfy the flesh and the Lord denies these prayers because we want to consume what we are asking for upon our own pleasure.

CONTENTMENT IS HAVING ENOUGH

Matthew 25:9 "But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not **enough** for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves."

Being content is a state of mind of having enough. If you have enough you will be satisfied. In this passage in Matthew 25:9 we find the use of the word "content" translated with a different way. The word content is translated "enough". The thought behind the word *contentment* is: I have enough. I have what God has provided and that is enough. What is the answer to the question "What will it take to make you satisfied?" and the answer is just a little bit more. We are always wanting more that we have. God wants us to be able to say that I have plenty. I like the promise that Lord has given us in Proverbs 3:9-10 "Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: 10. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty (enough), and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

CONTENTMENT IS HAVING SUFFICIENT

John 6:7 "Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not **sufficient** for them, that every one of them may take a little."

Here in John 6:7 we find another way that the Greek word for contentment is translated. It is translated *sufficient*. What the Lord provides is sufficient and we need to be content with what He provides. When you fill a glass to the brim, you can not put more in the glass, that is sufficient or enough.

The passage in Luke 3 is where John is baptizing those of the nation of Israel that are interested in entrance into the kingdom of the heavens.

EVIDENCE OF CONTENTMENT

Luke 3:10-14 "And **the people** asked him, saying, What shall we do then (to be baptized)? 11. He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath **two coats**, let him **impart** (give, share) to him that hath **none**; and he that hath **meat**, let him do **likewise**. 12. Then came also publicans [tax collectors] to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? 13. And he said unto them, **Exact** no more than that which is **appointed** you (honesty). 14. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and **be content with your wages**."

To the people John said that you need to be content to have one coat. If you have more than enough food for yourself, you need to share what you have with those that do not have enough.

John continues when the tax collectors come asking what they must do. John responded by saying they should only collect the taxes that were due and no more. The Roman government

wanted X number of dollars and the tax collector was given a portion of the X number of dollars collected. What the tax collectors were doing was collecting the tax and then tacking on additional taxes for their own pockets. John told them not to collect more than was appointed for the tax payer to pay. Be honest in your dealing with the public as far as taxes were concerned. Contentment will help us to be honest in our dealing with other people.

There were those who were in the Roman army and they wanted to know what they should do. John told them to be fair in the treatment of citizens. Do not trump up false charges nor treat their prisoners violently. One significant thing that John told them that we can all apply is "be content with your wages." Who do we believe is supply our needs. Is the company or the Lord. When we convince ourselves it is the Lord that is providing our need according to his riches then we can be content. The Lord is rich and his resources are unlimited, so He can provide more than any employer can provide. Remember, if you don't think you are getting paid what you are worth, you can change jobs.

CONTENTMENT EFFECTS GIVING

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 "But this I say, He which **soweth sparingly** shall reap also sparingly; and he which **soweth bountifully** shall reap also bountifully. 7. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a **cheerfull** [hilarious] **giver**. 8. And God is able to make all **grace abound** toward you; that ye, always having all **sufficiency** [contentment] in all things, may abound to every good work."

Our giving is a good indicator of our contentment. If we do not give cheerfully or hilariously, then we are not content or "having all sufficiency in all things," Another factor in contentment is the grace of God. If we are short on grace we will be short on giving. If grace abounds then we will be more content and able to abound to every good work that may cost us financially. Covetousness will cause us to rob God by holding on to what we have rather than giving to the Lord.

GRACE IS ENOUGH

2 Corinthians 12:9 "And he said unto me, My **grace** is **sufficient** (brings contentment) for thee: for my **strength** is made perfect in **weakness**. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my **infirmities** (needs), that the **power** of Christ may rest upon me."

The Lord told Paul that His grace would provide contentment. Grace is the power of Christ. It is not easy to be content, it takes the power of Christ. This contentment in this verse deals with contentment in weakness and infirmities. If the Lord does not change our infirmities, then we are to rely on His grace which is his power.

PAUL LEARNED

Philippians 4:11-13 "Not that I speak in respect of want: for **I have learned**, in whatsoever state I am, therewith **to be content**. 12. I know **both** how to be **abased**, and I know how to **abound**: every where and in all things I am **instructed** [initiated] both to be **full** and to be **hungry**, both to **abound** and to **suffer need**. 13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Notice that contentment is not natural. We have to learn contentment just like Paul learned to be content in what ever state he found him self in. When you give hilariously there will be times that you find out that you have given more than you should. That is when you find out that you can learn to be content with less than what you have been use to having.

Paul said that I learned how to be content when I am broke. Paul said that I know how to handle times when I have plenty of money. I know what it is like to be full and I also know what it is like to be hungry. I know how to abound and to suffer need. Paul was under control when it came to having much and having little. He did not panic when he was poor and he did not over indulge when he had much.

The word "instructed" can be translated "initiated." It comes from the Greek word *mu* which means to shut the mouth. When I have plenty, I do not talk about it. When I am broke and in need, I do not talk about it. These thoughts lead me to think of the following verses.

WAIT IN SILENCE

Psalms 62:1 "Truly my soul **waiteth** [in silence] upon God: **from him** cometh my **salvation**."

Psalms 62:5 "My soul, **wait** [in silence] thou only upon God; for my **expectation** [hope] is **from him**."

While we are waiting upon the Lord we are waiting in silence. We are not murmuring to God about our situation or circumstances. We are waiting on Him to see what He is going to do or provide. This waiting in silence is not waiting without prayer. Waiting upon the Lord without murmuring is to wait in hope. Our expectation or hope is in the Lord and we need to wait upon Him till he provides the leadership for us to take the next step. We may have to continue to wait on the ravens or move in with a widow as the prophet Elijah did. There are times that the Lord provide in ways that are not tasteful as in the case of the Gentile widow of Zarephath.

CONTENTMENT IS PROFITABLE

1 Timothy 6:6-11 "But godliness with **contentment** is **great gain**. 7. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8. And having **food** and **raiment** let us be therewith **content**. 9. 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. 10. 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. 11. But thou, O man of God, **flee these things**; and **follow** [pursue] after **righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness**."

Great gain is an expression of profitability. When there is great gain there is much profit. Remember it was the unprofitable servant that lost the blessing of entering into the joy of the Lord. That means that the profitable servant did received the blessing of joy and positions of honor ruling over much as found in Matthew 25. To be a profitable servant requires godliness and contentment.

Paul told Timothy that we came into this world with nothing and we will be leaving this world with nothing, so why pile up stuff that we don't need because you are going to leave everything behind. If all that you have is food and raiment, that is enough to be content.

When it comes to money, it seems that the more that you have the better, so we covet more money. We should not forget that when we have too much money we will too much trouble. Coveting money can cause us to err from the faith. To err from the faith means that we stop pleasing God.

To follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness is not a practice of covetousness. To pursue these virtues is to know the value of these virtues and they will provide us with great gain.

NEED SUPPLIED

Philippians 4:19 "But my God shall **supply** all your **need** (necessity, verse 16) according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

The Lord knows that we have need of money. If he does not provide the money He will provide the food, clothing and shelter by some one else or by some other means. God does have men that have money and He does use them to provide for those in need by either giving of money or providing the material needs.

Those who have riches and desire to be prepared to stand before the Lord and the judgment seat have been given counsel in 1 Timothy 6:17-18 "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; 18. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;"

OUR FATHER KNOWS

Matthew 6:30-33 "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we **eat**? or, What shall we **drink**? or, Wherewithal shall we be **clothed**? 32. (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly **Father knoweth** that ye have **need** of all **these things**."

Do we believe that our heavenly Father knows what we have need of? Yes. We know that He knows and if we don't we need to know that and believe it. He also knows whether or not we are trusting Him for those needs. He told his disciples that were not trusting the heavenly Father for their needs because that little faith. What an indictment and rebuke.

If God can put glad rags on a lily and Jonah in the shade in one day don't you think that he can provide your needs at the proper time. Ye He can and He will.

BEFORE FOOD AND CLOTHES

33. But **seek ye first the kingdom of God**, and his righteousness; and **all these things** shall be added unto you."

Before clothing and food, what should be our priority? Verse 33. You take care of what is important to God and God will take care of what is important to you.

CONTENT, NOT CAREFUL

Philippians 4:5-7 "Let your **moderation** [patience, forbearing] be known unto all men. **The Lord is at hand** (He will not leave us or forsake us). 6. **Be careful for nothing**; but in every thing (be content) **by prayer** (worship) and **supplication** (submission to His will) with **thanksgiving** let your **requests** (petitions) be made known unto God. 7. And the **peace** (part of contentment) of God, which passeth all understanding, shall **keep** [guard] your **hearts** and **minds** through Christ Jesus."

To be careful for nothing is to be content. "In every thing" I believe we are to be content. Being content will allow us to pray which could be applied to worship. By supplication is to submit to His will. In thanksgiving we express our hope in the Lord in supplying our need. Making our request is to present the petitions according to his will. There is nothing wrong with asking the Lord to provide our daily bread. There is nothing wrong with asking the Lord heal us. There is nothing wrong with asking the Lord for leadership and guidance in the things that we are doing or places that we are going.

Verse 7 starts with the peace of God. If we have the peace of God we are going to be content. If

we are ringing our hands over things and circumstance we are not content and the peace of God is in charge in your heart. Remember it is out of the heart that we become discontent and covetous and become defiled. When we become defiled we can defile others by our discontentment and covetousness.

May the Lord help us to appreciate the fact that if we want to enter into the coming kingdom and glory and hear well done that good and faithful servant we are going to have to flee covetousness and pursue contentment through godliness and His grace. We know that trusting the Lord is not a vain thing but a sure thing. Help us to learn the lessons that Paul learned in his walk with you.