

GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN

TEXT: I TIMOTHY 6:1-10

INTRODUCTION:

1. Tonight I will preach about "contentment" (6:6-8).
2. Some soldiers were listening to John the Baptist preach, and they asked him, "And what shall we do?" And John said unto them, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages" (Luke 3:14).
3. Hebrews 13:5 says, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."
4. The apostle Paul said, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11).
5. Notice, Paul had to "learn" to be content. Contentment does not come naturally because by nature man is selfish and greedy and never satisfied.
6. Proverbs 27:20 says, "Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied."
7. Proverbs 30:15 and 16 says, "The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough: The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough."
8. Webster's 1828 Dictionary refers to I Timothy 6:8, and defines "content" this way: "quiet; not disturbed; having a mind at peace; easy; satisfied, so as not to repine, object, or oppose."
9. J.C. Ryle said, "You need to cast away your pride, and know your deserts, in order to be thankful in any condition. If men really knew that they deserve nothing, and are debtors to God's mercy every day-- they would soon cease to complain. Let me tell you why there is so little contentment in the world. The simple answer is, because there is so little grace, and true godliness. Few know their own sin; few feel their desert; and so few are content with such things as they have. Humility, self-knowledge, a clear sight of our own utter vileness and corruption; these are the true roots of contentment."

I. CONTENT WITH OUR EMPLOYMENT (6:1, 2).

1. The word "servants" can refer to any kind of service, whether voluntary or involuntary. However, the addition of the phrase "under the yoke" (6:1) refers to slavery.
2. Christian servants should work hard for their masters. Modern application: substitute "employees" for "servants," and substitute "employers" for "masters."
3. If Christian workers do not respect the people they work for, the name of God and his doctrine are "blasphemed" (6:1).
4. Unsaved employers will conclude that Christian workers are no good, and they may assume that Christianity is no good.
5. I read that in the early days of the Christian era, Christian servants generally commanded a higher price than unsaved servants.
6. First Timothy 6:1 implies that the masters were not saved, but the servants were. Occasionally Christian slaves would work for Christian masters (6:2).
7. Regarding Christians owning slaves, Albert Barnes says, "The passage before us only proves that Paul considered that a man who was a slaveholder might be converted, and be spoken of as a 'believer,' or a Christian. Many have been converted in similar circumstances, as many have in the practice of all other kinds of iniquity. What was their duty after their conversion, was another question and what was the duty of their 'servants' or slaves, was another question still" (*Barnes' Notes*).
8. When Christian slaves worked for Christian masters, they were not to "despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit" (6:2).
9. Paul concludes verse 2 by saying, "These things teach and exhort." He then turns his attention to those who "teach otherwise" (6:3), i.e., false teachers.
10. The marks of a false teacher:
 - He consents not to "wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ" (6:3).
 - He consents not to "the doctrine which is according to godliness" (6:3).
 - "He is proud" (6:4).
 - He "knows nothing" (6:4; cf. 1:6, 7).
 - "Doting about questions and strifes of words" (6:4) means the false teacher makes people sick with his false teachings. The word "doting" means, "to be sick;

ailment of the mind; to be taken with such an interest in a thing as amounts to a disease, to have a morbid fondness for."

- The NKJV says he "is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions."
- He causes envy and strife (6:4).
- He has a "corrupt mind" (6:5). In Romans 1:28, Paul refers to the "reprobate mind." The devil corrupts the minds of proud sinners.
- False teachers are "destitute of the truth" (6:5). Persistent rejection of the truth has led them further and further into darkness.
- "Supposing that gain is godliness" (6:5) means these false teachers are covetous and materialistic. First Timothy 3:3 says a bishop must not be "greedy of filthy lucre," and must not be covetous, but sadly many are.
- Regarding these false teachers, Paul says, "from such withdraw thyself" (6:5). Most of the new Bible translations (NIV, NASV, ESV, etc.) omit this statement. The devil does not like the doctrine of separation. Satan wants to scramble all the churches together into a monstrosity that Revelation 17:5, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

II. GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN

1. Genuine godliness and true contentment go together (6:6-8).
2. "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (6:7).
3. Job said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21).
4. Psalm 49:17 says that when the rich man dies "he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him" (cf. Matt. 6:19-34).

5. Alexander the Great said, "When I am dead, carry me forth on my bier, with my hands not wrapped in cloth, but laid outside, so that all may see that they are empty."
6. Alexander the Great died at the age of 33-years-old. He conquered most of the world, and then he drank himself to death. He died in Babylon.
7. We should be content with "food and raiment" (6:8), i.e., the basic necessities of life. "But..." (6:9) indicates that many people are not content with the basic necessities of life.
8. They are determined, one way or another, to get rich. No matter what. Proverbs 28:20 says, "He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent."
9. Proverbs 28:22 says, "He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him."
10. In their eagerness to get rich, many "fall into temptation and a snare" (6:9). They neglect the highest interests of the soul in order to gain wealth.
11. Our Lord gave many warnings about this.
12. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).
13. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).
14. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).
15. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).
16. Some people will do anything for money: lie, steal, kill, gamble, etc. Women become prostitutes. Men sell drugs.
17. This devilish craving to be rich leads people "into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (6:9).
18. Money is not evil, but "the love of money is the root of all evil" (6:10).

19. The love of money is behind all wars, political corruption, the drug traffic, pornography, the abortion business, the wicked entertainment industry, false religion, and many of the other sins that are dragging people into "perdition" (6:9, 10).
20. People are so busy chasing after money they have no time for God. "They have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (6:10).
21. These "sorrows" include losing their children to the world, having unscrupulous business associates cheat them, getting in trouble with the law for tax evasion and other crimes, etc.
22. Howard Hughes (1905-1976) was the richest man in the world, and at one time owned oil wells, refineries, tankers, and pipelines; as well as hotels, a life insurance company, a finance company, and aircraft companies. In 1966 he sold his Trans World Airlines (TWA) shares for more than \$500 billion.
23. But he surrounded his 700-acre estate with bodyguards, vicious dogs, steel bars, searchlights, bells, and sirens. In his final years, he abruptly moved his residence from one place to another (Bahamas, Nicaragua, Canada, England, Las Vegas, Mexico), arriving at each destination unnoticed, taking elaborate precautions to ensure absolute privacy in a luxury hotel, and rarely being seen.
24. He became emaciated and deranged from the effects of an inadequate diet and drugs.
25. He was very lonely and gloomy, and admitted that money could not buy him happiness. Howard Hughes' father was a womanizer, and he followed his father's example.
26. People who knew him said that Hughes "saw women as possessions. He had to have total control. They were under his command like prisoners."

27. In the divorce petition by his first wife Ella Hughes, she called Hughes "irritable, cross, cruelly critical, and inconsiderate, rendering living together inappropriate."
28. Kathryn Grayson, one of Hughes' movie star mistresses, said that Hughes seemed to be "the loneliest man in the world" (cf. I Tim. 6:9, 10).

III. CONTENT TO SHARE WITH OTHERS (6:17-19)

1. The words "distribute" and "communicate" (6:18) mean "to share."
2. Galatians 6:6 says, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."
3. By sharing their wealth, "they do good," may be "rich in good works," and "lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come" (6:18, 19).
4. "Laying up in store for themselves" (6:19) means "laying up treasure in heaven."
5. Our Lord said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).
6. "That they may lay hold on eternal life" (6:21) means to truly live the way God wants us to live.
7. The Scofield Study Bible says it means to lay hold "on what is really life" (margin).
8. This charge (6:17) implies that there were wealthy people in Timothy's congregation at that time. The Bible admonishes rich people to make proper use of their riches.
9. Oftentimes wealthy people are "high-minded" (6:17), that is -- proud. Some think wealth is a sign of God's blessings, but this is not necessarily true for many wicked people are very wealthy.
10. First Samuel 25:2 tells us that Nabal "was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats." In other words, he was very rich.
11. But we are also told "the man was churlish and evil in his doings" (25:3).
12. Wealthy people tend to "trust in uncertain riches," rather than "in the living God" (6:17).

CONCLUSION:

"Money, in truth, is one of the most unsatisfying of possessions. It takes away some cares, no doubt; but it brings with it quite as many cares as it takes away. There is trouble in the getting of it. There is anxiety in the keeping of it. There are temptations in the use of it. There is guilt in the abuse of it. There is sorrow in the losing of it. There is perplexity in the disposing of it. Two-thirds of all the strifes, quarrels, and lawsuits in the world arise from one simple cause -- money!" -- J.C. Ryle.