

Godliness with Contentment

A message from the Word!

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by

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1 Timothy 6:6-10

⁶But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. ⁹Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for (TP) money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Godliness with contentment! Hmmm.

PRAYER

Father, You know how to come straight to the point, don't You? You hit me where it hurts, but I know it is a pain You desire to use to Your glory, and to my benefit – both now and throughout eternity. Teach me the secret to great gain. Amen.

I was talking to a mentor/friend of mine yesterday. We discussed a wide range of topics over the 45 minutes we spent on the phone. We

discussed where we are as a church with the impending sale of church property; how both of our families were doing, especially through this time of social distancing; and we discussed the new realities that are ours in the time of COVID-19.

Part of that discussion led me to ask him if he'd been to a grocery store lately. He confessed that he and his wife have a habit of going every 7 to 10 days, but that the reality was; they hadn't been in over two weeks at this point. I mentioned to him that I had been to one store or another about 15 times since all of this started.

Not that I told him, but sometimes it was just to pick up a gallon of milk or a forgotten ingredient that I needed for a meal I was making – apple cider for my apple cider beef stew comes to mind. BTW – it was delicious!

Of course he knew that it is difficult to find toilet paper or paper towels these days, but I told him I was surprised to see how many stores were out of chicken – frozen or fresh – just gone (except for chicken wings – man, if you like chicken wings, you're in luck)! As any of you shoppers know, it's been surreal – like something out of a movie on why socialism didn't work in Russian supermarkets back in the 80's – empty shelves everywhere. It's almost like you'll be willing to buy anything, just to go home with groceries. Okay, maybe I'm exaggerating a little bit... - except for the chicken part.

I was taken back by my friend's response. If we have to live on hot dogs and tuna fish, I guess that's what we'll do! To be honest with you – I was humbled. I hadn't been thinking about that during my supermarket trips. Only that I couldn't believe people are so stinking freaked out about the state of our food supply that they are hoarding staples. It's like

a pre-New England snow storm shopping on steroids! Where's all the
milk and bread!! I think people remember the Blizzard of '78 too well.

Pastor, what about the devotional. Yeah, yeah; I know.

***6**But godliness with contentment is great gain.*

***8**But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.*

There's a couple of but's for you!

I'm a pastor, so I'd like to tell you that I've got a measure of godliness.
I hope you and my family would agree with that. If not, well, I've got
some more work to do, don't I.

But what about contentment? How am I doing there? As a matter of
fact, how are you doing there?

Now, I'm sticking with the grocery store motif here, but really, we could
spread this across a great number of "contentment fields", couldn't we.
Are you content with your spouse or significant other? Are you content
with your job? Are you content with your relationships at church, in the
neighborhood, or elsewhere? Or are we discontent somewhere in our
lives?

To be honest with you, I haven't always found the cuts of meat I wanted
to bring home over the last couple of weeks – not all of them, anyway.
And in some measure – I was not content with that. One day I went to
four different stores looking for chicken (there's that again)!

But my friend's words to me yesterday were a bit revealing – at least to
my own mind. If he and his wife have to eat hot dogs and tuna fish until

this pandemic is all over, that's fine with him. He'll be content with that.

Now, truth be told, my family could live quite a while on what we have in our refrigerator and in our large freezer. They are both full. They usually are. We could eat, and eat well for a number of weeks before we actually had to worry about re-stocking. We might not have the meal we desire every evening, but we'd go to bed with full bellies. We date our goods going into the freezer so we can use the FIFO method when reaching in there, but in case you couldn't tell yet – we had run out of chicken!

If I were content with finding something else for dinner, do you think I would have gone to 4 stores looking for chicken? Me either. Folks, pray for your pastor – I've got a contentment issue.

Paul explained to Timothy what a believer's attitude should be in life. ***⁸But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.*** Well, I certainly have food, and although my wife doesn't always like what I put on – I've got clothing (Garanimals for adults might help me with the wife issue.)

Our text told us that *“the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil”* and that *“Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”*

But I'm going to go a step further with you here this morning. When I was 32, I got to go on a mission trip to Kenya, Africa. Most of you didn't know me then, but I assure you, I was one skinny dude back then! It wasn't until my late 40's that I began losing the battle of the bulge. And yet, even at 32, the Kenyan's called me a “fat American.” Seriously!?! Judy cracked up when I told her that!

But it's all about perspective, isn't it? I wonder, you may be perfectly content to eat hot dogs and tuna fish until this COVID-19 thing is in our rear-view mirror, but what about the rest of your life? My life ... your life. Do you have godliness WITH contentment? I certainly hope so. It is my desire to slay that dragon of discontent within my own breast. Oh, I don't think that I'm a monster, but it really isn't about me is it?

How does my heavenly Father feel when He looks at me – his son? Is He giving me an opportunity during this pandemic to look at my whole way of life – YOUR whole way of life? I believe He is. And just like a bargain on boneless chicken breasts (I can make a bunch of great recipes with some BCB) – just like that bargain; I don't want to miss out on this opportunity that our Lord has given me to take inventory – not of the refrigerator this time.

Join me in taking your own inventory in the days ahead. Let's purpose in our hearts to sit down with our Redeemer and ask Him like the psalmist David did three millennia ago.

²³Search me, God, and know my heart;

test me and know my anxious thoughts.

²⁴See if there is any offensive way in me,

and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24)

I love you, church. Pray with me in the days ahead. Let the revival that our world needs so desperately begin within the household of God – yes let it begin in me.