

Parson to Person
Contentment – Hebrews 13:5-6
Pastor Jeff Gambrino – Youth Pastor

⁵Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." ⁶So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

For God so loved the world—in our sin and depravity—that he sent His only begotten son, the image of the invisible God, the word made flesh, by whom and through whom the worlds were made, born of a virgin, raised as a God-fearing and perfect law-abiding Jew, learning and growing while fulfilling the perfect will of the father that whosoever might believe in Him (in his atoning work on the cross, where he died as the propitiation of our sins, rose again on the third day, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father awaiting His triumphal return) might not perish (in a lasting and literal judgment in actual Hell) but have eternal life (with renewed mind and body, present with the Lord, and one with Jesus).

This is the Gospel. We, who were once far off, enemies of God and slaves of sin have now been made righteous by the saving work of Jesus the Christ. The bible says that we are now God's children, co-heirs with Christ, forgiven, and FREE. The question I pose today is, "Is that enough?"

Of course we say yes. Our God has saved us. We love Him. We are humbled that He, the Most High God, saw us in our sin, and loved us enough to sacrifice everything to give us an opportunity for forgiveness. But as much as we know that, and as much as that truth is in our hearts, we always have need to be reminded and drawn back to the Lord. Today I want to encourage you in just that: Be satisfied in Christ.

The above verses come at the end of a long letter to a group of Jews who seem to be on the precipice of accepting Jesus as their messiah (Hebrews 10:32-39). The writer of Hebrews has built an ironclad apologetic defending the "new and better covenant" and the reality of Jesus of Nazareth as the true heavenly high priest and promised Messiah. These verses come after all the theology and apologetics, with a final exhortation pushing them towards good works and right living as a response to the reality of the gospel. After accepting the truth, the believer must begin the sanctification (maturing) process of putting off the old man and putting on the new. This includes the good works that we are each called to as believers (Eph. 2:10), but it also includes a change in the way we think and respond to the world (Rom. 12:2). I bring you these verses as an exhortation to do just that: be transformed by the "rest" that we have in Jesus. Be content or better stated, be *satisfied* in Christ.

In an extension of the good works discussed in verses 1-4, the writer urges the conduct to exist "without covetousness". The word here is specifically to do with coveting material goods or monetary gain; however, the reciprocal exhortation has broader application. Good works are a sweet smelling aroma and worship to God, but only if they are done with a proper heart. When we act out of selfish ambition, or covetousness, our work is not worship but self-serving. This includes work done to make us feel or look better, work done to receive a blessing, and can even include work done out of guilt and fear. When we are afraid of the consequence, we respond, not out of love, but out of a self-serving motive to avoid punishment, again coveting what you want (in that case, peace). Instead, the author encourages us to be *content*, and the reason for the contentment is what I want to exhort us in today. We are to be content because the Lord, our very savior, helper, friend, and Father, will never leave you and never forsake you. You have everything you will ever need in the saving and atoning work of Jesus. Despite circumstance or internal

heartache, we are recipients of the greatest and truest gift we could ever receive. So all our works should exist and stem from this heart condition.

Now, I want to remind us that contentment here is better understood as being satisfied. Contentment has an air of “happiness” about it; I don’t think the writer is saying we are to be happy, bubbly people all the time, and I am not encouraging that either. Job was grief stricken; Paul was often moved to tears (both in sadness and righteous anger); and Jesus wept and was known to flip tables on occasion. What is in view here is less emotion and more foundation. I think the writer is speaking of a heart condition. The born again believer has been made new, has been transformed from death to life, and is filled with and sealed by (as a guarantee) the Spirit of God! “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). And, “we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” (Rom. 8:28). We still suffer, are all allowed to suffer, and (I assume) even expected to weep and be angry over these things. The bible tells us to pray, pray, pray making petition to the Lord, and this is, of course, good. But at the end of the day, at the end of the heartache, we know in the depths of our souls that we are okay and even good because we are loved by God. It is this foundational principle that we need to fall back on at every turn. Let it fill our minds, inform our thoughts, and be the backstop of our emotions. I don’t think that God intends every specific hardship that we endure, but I know he uses them and that he holds us and keeps us through every single one of them.

Let this foundational principle fill you up. Let it be the foundation that gets you through darkness. Let it be the heart condition that transforms your works into worshipful acts of service rather than self-serving actions. And let it be the core of your being:

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine
Heir of salvation, purchase of God
Born of his Spirit, washed in His blood

I love you all,
Pastor Jeff G.