

Margin Through Contentment
November 6 and 13, 2016
Lynn Haven UMC

Introduction

How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have the chance to help me. Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. 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. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. Even so, you have done well to share with me in my present difficulty. (Philippians 4:10-14 NLT)

The definition of contentment from a biblical perspective is: "An internal satisfaction which does not demand changes in external circumstances"—*Holman Bible Dictionary*. Contentment is a choice we all have to make. Our attitude towards this subject is often persuaded by what society tells us we need in order to be happy. This week we will talk about how a Gospel mindset differs from an American mindset and how we can use God's guidance to experience contentment in every situation.

Digging Deeper

American Mindset:

I am content with who I am. I am not content with what I have.

- Theodore Roosevelt once said that "comparison is the thief of joy." It's foolish to assume that someone else's life is better because they seemingly have more. But that's exactly what we think when we are faced with everyone else's highlight reels compared to the truth we know of ourselves. What are some ways in which you have heard the message of "more is more" preached in the world today?
- Contentment can be found when we start to desire the things that God desires. Only then can we find joy in our lives and in all circumstances. Would you describe yourself as contented? Why or why not?
- Do you think a lack of contentment could be considered a sign of not knowing God?

Gospel Mindset:

I am content with what I have. I am not content with who I am.

- "I'm good enough, smart enough and doggone it, people like me!" (Stuart Smalley, SNL) A healthy dose of self-affirmation can be good for the soul. The problem is we use these words without the integral addition of (in Christ) which leads to inflated egos and a sense of entitlement for more. Have you ever tried reading 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (NIV) and replacing the word love with Jesus? Try it. Jesus is the only one who can live up to all of those statements. Now try adding Jesus into how you describe yourself by saying the words "in Christ" after any of your attributes or achievements. Ex. I am a good mother - in Christ. I am a hard worker - in

Christ. To know who you are in Christ can free you from the trappings of this world. How can giving credit to God for who we are and all that we have be helpful in achieving contentment?

- What do you think it means to live life with a gospel mindset?
- How can we find the kind of contentment Paul describes in Philippians 4:10-14?

Conclusion

I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead! I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. (Philippians 3:10-14 NLT)

We will wake up Wednesday morning with a new President. The good news is no matter how we feel about the victor, we will wake up Wednesday morning with the same King. "The One who is, who always was, and who is still to come" (Revelation 1:8b NLT) delivers a far greater promise for contentment than any man or woman who will serve as president for the next 4-8 years.