

## SERMON – PASTOR GREG

25/09/2022

CONTENTMENT. 1 Timothy 6:6-19. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I have two questions for you: Do you want to be what God wants you to be? Do you faithfully and quietly accept all that God allows to come to you? Let us pray.

The apostle Paul had instructed Timothy to care for the church at Ephesus while he went to Macedonia. While he was away he wrote two letters to Timothy. His first letter encouraged Timothy to keep the teaching of the Gospel pure and also to call the early church to be what God had called them to be. Our words this day focus on the way Christians are to live. Then and now.

Are you content with your life? I often think about this question. I wonder what it means to be content. I wonder what human life would be like if we were content to live as nomads or cave men or trying to survive on whatever food we could grow. Human society has developed because we are not content- we want change- we want more- we want peace- we want security- we want love- we want hope- we want a future- we want our children to be safe- the list goes on and on. And so we have created the world in which we live. But are we content? Some of you will remember a song I mentioned a few years ago- sung by the Sensitive New Age Cow persons: I STILL HAVEN'T FOUND WHAT I AM LOOKING FOR. In many ways I am now content but not completely. I am still searching. And God knows this.

God knows what is in our hearts and so He constantly challenges us to remember what is of ultimate importance. And so he inspired Paul to write:

*Godliness with contentment is great gain...We brought nothing into this world and we take nothing out of it...Be content with the basic necessities of life...The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.* In other words- living a God pleasing life brings its own reward- contentment with who we are and what we have.

Most of us have or are spending so much of our time and effort and getting the things that the world and our hearts tell us we need. How much time do we spend on getting the things that God wants us to have and to keep? God tells us to FLEE FROM THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE WORLD AND OUR OWN HEARTS and instead CHASE THE THINGS OF GOD: *You- people of God- flee from all this and instead chase/pursue/hunger for righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.*

As I say these words I am reminded of the words of Jesus in his sermon on the mount in the Gospel according to Matthew: *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.*

Living the Christian life will not be easy. easy. The cost of discipleship is high. Jesus says that we are to give up everything to follow him. It will be a constant battle- it will be a fight to the very end: *Fight the good fight. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made the good confession.* Many of us were baptised as infants and then and there our parents and sponsors made the good confession on our behalf. But when we were Confirmed- we made the good confession for ourselves. We confessed that we believe in God- Father, Son and holy Spirit.

There we promised to hear God's word and to strive daily to lead the holy life even as Christ has made us holy.

In my first parish there was an old farmer who had never married. He had worked hard all his life and was renowned for his physical strength. But when I met him he was laid up in hospital with gangrene in his toes. He was 87. The doctor wanted to operate on him to take his leg off- so he could continue to live. Laurie said no. "No way, are you going to cut my leg off". I was asked to visit him and to listen to him. Laurie told me his confirmation text: 2 Timothy 4:7: *I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith.* The words go on: *Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge will give to me on that day- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

And in those last words is the GOSPEL. We are called to do the good works which God prepared in advance for us to do (Eph 2:10) but in the end- eternal life is given to all those who simply long to see Jesus face to face.

I long to be all that God wants me to be. I long to be content in whatever God allows to come to me. I long to see Jesus. But it will continue to be a battle. Our sinful hearts and the world are ever before us tempting us. The fight is ever with us. But we are not alone.

Tomorrow morning you might like to read Ephesians 6 and put on the armour of God. Or you might simply like to pray: Lord Jesus Christ, be with me this day in all my thoughts, words and deeds. Into your hands I commit my body and soul and that is mine. Amen.