

Godliness With Contentment Is Great Gain Great Gain.

Text: 1 Tim 6:6-10

1) That This Is So

Suggested Hymns:

2) Why It Is So

407, 323, 415, 153, 579

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is 1 Timothy 6:6-10, *⁶ Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰ For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Many people today despise the religious training of children. Many children in our country are growing up without even attending a Sunday-School. The majority of young people are growing up in lamentable ignorance of even the most elementary religious truths.

They learn to curse, but not to pray. They can easily recite the names of the movie stars, but not the Ten Commandments. Many parents pay little attention to the Christian training of their children.

But at the same time they are very much concerned about their children's getting along in a worldly way, above all, about their getting good jobs, and becoming rich. In many cases the parents commit the same folly regarding themselves. They treat religion and the care of their souls as a side-line. Their main concern is to get rich.

To all such people, Paul has a very earnest word to say in our text. Oh, that we all might heed his words! He emphasises that "*Godliness with Contentment Is Great Gain.*" May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Godliness With Contentment Is Great Gain That This Is So

“Godliness with contentment is great gain,” says St. Paul in our text. What does he mean by *“godliness?”* Who is a *“godly”* person? A godly person is one who is God-like, who has the Spirit of God in him. When God created Adam and Eve, they were *“godly,”* reflecting God’s image.

They knew the true God, they knew God as their dear heavenly Father, and feared and loved Him and trusted in Him above all things. Since they loved God, they willingly served Him and showed forth His virtues in their lives.

But on that terrible day when they yielded to the temptation of Satan, they became ungodly. They lost their blissful knowledge of God. They had an evil conscience because of their sinfulness. They stood in terror of God, hated Him, and no longer were able or willing to serve Him. That is a picture of man as he is born into the world today; man by nature is ungodly.

But God has made provision for our becoming godly again. He sent His Son Jesus Christ to atone for our sin and disobedience. Through Christ He has reconciled us to Himself. He also sends us His Holy Spirit to lead us to know this and to believe this through the Gospel. Thus we learn truly to know God again. We learn to know Him as our dear Father for Jesus’ sake. We are moved to love Him who has so loved us.

And because of this love which we now have to God we want to become like Him in every respect, just as a dear child wishes to become like his father. We aim to avoid everything that displeases our dear heavenly Father and strive to do the things that please Him. And that is *“godliness.”*

A godly person, then, is one who has come to know God and to trust in Him as his dear heavenly Father for Jesus’ sake, as St. Paul says in Galatians 3:26, ²⁶*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus* and who because of this faith loves God and willingly serves Him in his life.

With this *“godliness”* the apostle combines *“contentment,”* that is, being satisfied with one’s earthly lot. A godly person is content with whatever it pleases his heavenly Father to give him in response to his faithful prayer, diligent

labour, and a wise administration of his earthly resources, whether it be much or little in the eyes of the world.

He follows the admonition of the apostle, as written in Hebrews 13:5, ⁵ *Let 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."*

Whereas the covetous man is never satisfied with what he has but wants more and more. The contented godly man prays with Solomon, as written in Proverbs 30:8, *Give me neither poverty nor riches— Feed me with the food allotted to me.* That does not, of course, imply that the godly and contented man will be a careless loafer, or that he will not try to improve his earthly condition.

Oh, no; he will work faithfully in the sweat of his brow, as God commands him to do. He will faithfully strive to provide honestly for himself and his family and *that he may have something to give him who has need.*¹ But with it all he will keep first things first. He will *"seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"*² and will not worry if his earthly labours do not yield him riches or fame but be satisfied with whatever measure of earthly success it pleases the Lord to mete out to him.

He will say with the apostle in our text, ⁸ *And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.* Such a godly, contented man was Paul himself. He declares in Philippians 4:11–12, *I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: ¹² I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound.*

Now, concerning such *"godliness with contentment"* the apostle affirms that it is *"great gain."* Such a person has what he needs for true happiness in this life and for meeting successfully the inevitable hour of death. As Paul says in 1 Timothy 4:8, ⁸ *For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.*

Man's greatest desire in this life is for happiness. Now, happiness does not lie in our surroundings, neither can we carry it in our pocket or deposit it in a bank. It is in our soul. It is a soul condition.

Many a family is supremely happy in the humblest house, whereas Adam and Eve, after they had listened to Satan, were not satisfied even in Paradise.

Now, it is only the godly and contented person who can and will be truly happy under all circumstances. Why shouldn't he be? Above all, he has peace in his conscience. He knows that he is reconciled to God by the death of His Son.³ He knows that God, the almighty, all-wise God, loves him, is his dear heavenly Father. He knows that this God has promised to be with him, to provide for him, and to protect him.⁴

Therefore he can confidently say, *If God is for us, who can be against us?*³² *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*⁵

¹ *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*⁶ God says in Hebrews 13:5, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you. So that I may boldly say, The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"*

The hymnist wrote,⁷

Then, O my soul, be ne'er afraid,
But trust in Him who thee hath made;
On Him reliant rest.
Whate'er may come, where'er I go.
My heav'nly Father well doth know
What for my need is best.

In this spirit the godly and contented man is truly happy, whatever his earthly lot may be. If God grants him great material success, he remembers the admonition of the Lord, as written in Psalm 62:10, *If riches increase, Do not set your heart on them.*

He bears in mind the perishable nature of all earthly things;⁸ they are here today, gone tomorrow; and therefore he continues to hold God as his highest Treasure. If he loses what he has, he still has God, whose resources are inexhaustible. If he must struggle to get along, he knows nevertheless: *"God never will forsake in need, The soul that trusts in Him indeed."*⁹ And thus he harbours true happiness in his soul, irrespective of the changing outward scene.

But *"godliness with contentment is great gain"* not only because it confers true happiness upon man in this life, but also because it enables him successfully to meet the inevitable hour of death.

To the worldling, death is a calamity because it robs him of all the things that he treasured,¹⁰ and hurries him unprepared before the judgement-seat of God to receive a sentence of everlasting want and woe.

But to the man of godliness and contentment, death does not appear formidable. It can take nothing essential from him. It rather must lead him into the enjoyment of everlasting wealth and happiness. The godly and contented man does not seriously regret leaving this world.

Since he is not of the world,¹¹ since he did not during his life attach his heart to the things of this world, leaving them causes him no great pain, just as the traveller uses the highway, the petrol-station, the camp site, but sees them fading in the distance with no regrets as he departs homeward bound.

Nor does the contented Christian fear to enter eternity. He knows: *“And I have peace with God.”*¹² The God who is to be my Judge, is my Friend, my Father; therefore I shall not come into condemnation, but shall pass from death to life,¹³ into real living, into perfect, eternal life in the presence of God, where I shall have fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore at His right hand.

Indeed, then, *“godliness with contentment is great gain,”* having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

2. Godliness With Contentment Is Great Gain

Why It Is So

To make this lesson stand out all the more, the apostle not only states that it is so, but also shows why it is so, contrasting the godly and contented man with those *“who desire to be rich.”*

He says, *⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.*

“Those who desire to be rich,” he says; not those who are rich. There have been very rich men who were godly and content at the same time, like Abraham, Job, and David. And there are such people today; although it is true that the possession of great wealth entails special temptations and dangers.¹⁴

But here the apostle is speaking of *“those who desire to be rich,”* who are not satisfied with having *food and clothing*, who are not satisfied with the

measure of earthly goods which God metes out to them, but who want more and more and are determined to get more and more.

That such covetousness, the greed for gain, to get more and more, is the spirit of our age and of our country who will deny? The demand for ever finer belongings in the home, for more modern cars, “to keep up with the Joneses,” is becoming more insistent.

Now, concerning *those who desire to be rich*” the apostle says that they “*fall into temptation and a snare.*” Indeed, how many temptations and pitfalls of Satan lie in the path of those who desire to be rich.

There are temptations to lie and deceive, to steal and defraud, to envy and hate, to rob and kill, to become guilty of perjury, to despair, and to commit suicide! As our text says, and “*Many foolish and harmful lusts.*”

Once the desire to become rich has been kindled in a man’s heart, it will arouse all sorts of lusts within him. They are “*foolish*” lusts; for they cause him to forfeit the spiritual for the physical, the heavenly for the earthly, the eternal for the temporal.

They often make him reckless of the consequences. They frequently render him ridiculous in the eyes of his fellow-men. And they are “*harmful*” lusts. They bring about the demise of his health through overwork or worry, the ruin of his conscience, his family, his good name, his happiness, and his soul! Yes, “*drown men in destruction and perdition.*”

Indeed, what pictures of woe and destruction would we have to paint were we to portray all those whom the desire to get rich has plunged into destruction!

Look at the despair written on the face of the man staggering away from the gambling-table, where he has lost his last cent. Look at the ruin of the dishonest banker or business man who by greed has destroyed his business, his fortune, and his good name.

Look at the despair of the man who has been caught in fraudulent practises and is now learning literally in the prison that *those who desire to be rich fall into a snare.*”

Look at the disgraced and forsaken wives and the unfortunate children whom foolish, money-mad men have dragged with them into destruction. Look at the

many unhappy homes and marriages, rendered so by nothing but greed and unwillingness to be content with the things that they have.

Also, there are many hearts and consciences that are utterly without peace or rest because of their greed for profit, for gain, for riches.

If they only looked into eternity and see the wrath, the woe, the eternal perdition, which such slaves of Mammon have heaped up for themselves against the day of wrath and the revelation of the just judgement of God, how these words would burn into your soul, *foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition!*

Our text concludes, ¹⁰ *For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

“The love of money is the root of all evil.” There is not a single commandment of the Ten which the love of money does not recklessly disregard and trample under foot.

There is the first, **“You shall have no other gods.”** But the covetous man makes money his god. He fears its loss more than God, loves it more than God, and trusts in it more than in God.

There is the second, **“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.”** But how many curses arise from the greedy, envious soul; how much perjury is committed by him to get money!

There is the third, **“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”** But how often are churchgoing, prayer, and Bible-study neglected in the chase after the dollar!

There is the fourth, **“Honour your father and your mother.”** How often can a son hardly wait for his parents to die so that he may get the inheritance! How often is the Government defrauded of its taxes!

The fifth, **“You shall not kill.”** We need only mention robbery, kidnapping, murder, for the sake of money.

The sixth, **“You shall not commit adultery.”** For filthy profit’s sake people publish improper literature, produce unchaste movies and stage plays, operate houses of prostitution, and seek a rich spouse instead of a godly one.

The seventh, “**You shall not steal.**” How much theft and robbery, dishonesty and fraud, results from the love of money! How people rob God!¹⁵

The eighth, “**You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.**” How much lying, betraying, slandering, defaming, false testimony in court, for the sake of gain!

The ninth and tenth, “**You shall not covet.**” But the love of money fills the heart to the brim with covetousness! Indeed, “*the love of money is the root of all evil.*”

As our text says, “*for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*” Perhaps at first the love of money did not seem so dangerous to them; but the more they cultivated it, the more it smothered their faith and destroyed their love of God and their neighbour.

As Jesus says in the parable, ¹⁴ *Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.*¹⁶

Think of Judas and his thirty pieces of silver; think of Ananias and Sapphira and their sad end. Indeed, they *strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* Sorrows, worries, troubles here, eternal sorrows in the hereafter.

Oh, how fervently we ought to pray in view of the devastating power of the love of money, ²³ *Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;* ²⁴ *And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.*¹⁷ Make me truly godly and truly content.

Let us always realise,¹⁸

One thing needful: this one treasure
Teach me, Saviour, to esteem;
Other things may promise pleasure,
But are never what they seem;
They prove to be burdens that hinder and chafe us,
And true lasting happiness never vouchsafe us;
This one precious treasure, that all else exceeds,

Gives joy above measure and fills all my needs. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Ephesians 4:28

² Matthew 6:33

³ Rom. 5:1, 10

⁴ Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5; Matt. 10:29, 30

⁵ Romans 8:31–32

⁶ Psalm 23:1

⁷ Hymn 579 v 6

⁸ Matthew 6:19

⁹ Hymn 407 v7

¹⁰ Luke 12:20

¹¹ John 15:19

¹² Hymn 473 v3

¹³ John 5:24

¹⁴ Matt. 19:23-24

¹⁵ Mal 3:8

¹⁶ Luke 8:14

¹⁷ Psalm 139:23–24

¹⁸ Hymn 153