

The Most Profitable Gain.

Text: 1 Tim 6:6-11

Suggested Hymns:

417, 329, 562, 414, 408

- 1) Christian Faith Produces Contentment
- 2) Covetousness
- 3) Our Heavenly Father Knows Our Needs
- 4) The Lasting Goals
- 5) Christian Faith In Action
- 6) The Evidence Of Christian Faith

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 6:6-11, *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 a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

¹¹ But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. (NKJV)

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Everywhere — on the streets, in the shops, in the offices, in homes, and even in churches — we find people restless, worried, and dissatisfied.

They give themselves over to self-pity, always thinking that all others have pastures which are greener and more luscious than theirs. Such people live in the house of Discontent.

Even those who “*strike it rich*” too often are “*jittery and nervous*” and remain poor amid their abundance, worse off than ever before, because they do not know how to use their riches.

Observing this, Jesus once said, as recorded in Mark 8:36, ³⁶ *“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”* Jesus calls the rich farmer a fool because he said to his soul, *“you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry”*¹ as he built bigger and larger barns to take care of his bumper crops. The farmer had laid up treasures for this life and forgot that he had an immortal soul. Such people are to be pitied for they have lost all sense of real values.

On the other hand, some people *“never get into the money,”* yet find life rich and full and rewarding in the contentment which grows out of their Christian faith. Paul had been beaten, stoned, jailed, yet writes from prison, *“I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.”*² There is no greater gain than contentment with godliness.

Therefore the theme of our sermon is *“The most profitable gain.”* May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Christian Faith Produces Contentment

We gain this contentment through our Christian faith, created and maintained through the Gospel of the redemption in Christ’s blood.

This Christian faith directs our eyes to the imperishables of life. The perishable things are food, clothing, and shelter. Food spoils, garments wear out, and houses deteriorate.

If we think of these as the all-important needs of life, worry and uneasiness will take hold of us. Food, clothing, and shelter are at times hard to get, especially as we grow older and can no longer work. So we begin to ask in our declining years, *“Shall we have enough till our journey’s end?”* So we worry and rob ourselves of contentment of mind.

Even if at the present moment we have the necessities of life, we are dissatisfied. We want more. We feel we are entitled to as much as have the Joneses and the Smiths. We want to show off in the community and surpass our neighbours. All this makes for discontent and dissatisfaction.

Paul, however, in this letter to his friend Timothy, reminds us of the fact that *“we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.”* Helpless and penniless we came into life and on earth, and yet food,

clothing, and protection were provided for us. Those around us were concerned about our well-being. Daily we received the necessary food and the needed care as we grew up. Therefore we are not to make eating and drinking and life on earth the chief concern of our existence.

These perishable things — so says Paul — also become a real menace in life if we place them first on our program. These tangibles we covet, always grasping for more yet never satisfied. Our text says, ***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.***

2. Covetousness

Covetousness makes us envious of those who have and enjoy more than we have and enjoy. Covetousness is an all too often hidden sin, which makes us ruthless and heartless as we scheme and plot to take from others those things which are rightfully theirs. This may even include popularity. Often men and women are envious of those who are popular in the community and do everything and anything to undermine their reputation by slandering them and lying.

It was covetousness which prompted King Ahab and his wife Jezebel to plot against Naboth, having him accused of blaspheming God and the king. As a result the innocent Naboth was pronounced guilty and stoned to death, and his vineyard was confiscated by the king. However, the ultimate outcome was disastrous both to the king and to the queen. Ahab was killed in battle, and Jezebel was plunged out of an upper window to her death.

Covetousness always endangers our spiritual life and brings destruction to our soul and its eternal welfare. We are tempted by it into dishonest dealings, deceitful practices, and loveless bartering. We want our pound of flesh without any consideration for others. These temptations blind us to the real values of life. As our text says, ***For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.***

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus the rich man has but one interest: to clothe himself in purple and fine linen and to fare sumptuously every day. His life's history can be summed up in the proverbial motto "*Eat, drink, and be merry.*" The needs of his soul were altogether overlooked. Consideration for

others was ruled out. Eternity was put out of his mind. He was living for today. In these ways his very being was sold to Satan, who made the present hour attractive and bewitching.

Again Covetousness causes people *“to stray from the faith.”* Such was the story of Demas, a co-worker of Paul. With a heavy heart the apostle tells the tragic story in one sentence, *“Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed.”*³ The love of money and the alluring pleasures of sin take from us all that is precious and eternal.

This sin makes us jealous, anxious, and grasping. These coveted possessions, once obtained, make us restless and cause us endless worries. There are too many thieves in the world who are plotting against us to take from us what we have gained. There are too many possibilities of our investments losing their values and our possessions being taken from us through fire, floods, and storms.

All this — if we live for this world only — robs us of peace of mind and a restful sleep.

3. Our Heavenly Father Knows Our Needs

Our text says, *“having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.”* Our heavenly Father *“knows that you need all these things.”*⁴ He has promised to provide us with the things we need for this life if we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. Jesus stresses that our Father in heaven feeds the ravens and the sparrows and gives pasture to the sheep.

And we are far more important than sheep, for God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son to die for our sins. Jesus therefore chides those who eat their bread worrying. God will take care of us.

Shall we, then, live in a fool’s paradise and do nothing? Not at all. Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12, *“If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.”*¹¹ *“For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.”*¹² *“Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.”*

And you recall that Jesus, having fed the 5,000 and likewise the 4,000, urged them to gather up the leftovers and not waste them. However, to worry and fret, to covetously be envious, is sinful and displeasing to God.

The believer, then, has the right and privilege to live an un-worried life. If he, by the grace of God, conquers this sin of covetousness, he will be truly content and has made a most profitable gain. We Christians can live one day at a time, and that trustingly, for we know that our heavenly Father is mindful of our every need.

We do not always get away from poverty, problems, and illness, but we live unworried lives. We Christians have greater and more important things to think about: our redemption in Christ, through which we have everything we need. This makes for contentment, the most profitable gain in life.

4. The Lasting Goals

Our Christian faith directs our thoughts to the lasting goals. We read in our text, "*But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.*" Our Christian faith turns our thoughts to those things which do not rust and thieves cannot take from us: salvation with its forgiveness, peace, and the hope of heaven.

This salvation is ours by the gift of God's infinite grace through Christ Jesus. At a tremendous price Jesus redeemed us and set us free from the shackles of sin and made us heirs of life eternal. This salvation no one can take from us except we ourselves by spurning the Gospel of reconciliation. Thieves, burglars, gangsters, and swindlers cannot take these treasures from us.

Nor do they depreciate or lose their value. Still more, as we enjoy to the full this Gospel of the crucified Saviour, we do not deprive others of receiving the glad news in its completeness. As others enjoy this peace, which passes all human understanding, and this hope, which makes us unafraid of God's judgment, we need not begrudge them their spiritual contentment. It takes nothing away from us.

Jesus therefore said to His disciples in the Upper Room, as we read in John 15:11, "*These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.*" Through faith in Christ we have a

blessedness of heart and a contentment of mind which is complete. This enables us believers to put food, clothing, and possessions in their proper place.

Unless we find this contentment in Christ we shall never be rich. Only our Christian faith allows us to enjoy the perishable things without worry and to bask in the sunshine of God's love. As Christians we accept these earthly gifts with thanks and praise God for all and whatever He gives us.

As believers in Christ we know that our heavenly Father alone can and does retain for us our earthly possessions and our physical health, all of which we enjoy to the glory of God and with thanksgiving in our hearts. Our Christian faith, then, cures us of covetousness, because by faith we have riches which go beyond the reach of tomorrow. Even death does not shake these out of our dying hands. Truly, godliness with contentment is great gain.

5. Christian Faith In Action

Our text says, *But you, O man of God, ... pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.* This Christian faith transforms our whole being and changes our outlook completely. We are made over in the inner man.

This compels us to pursue righteousness and faith. Paul is speaking of that righteousness which places us into the proper relationship with God. This righteousness is not of our own making, our own goodness and integrity, which makes us respected men and women in the courts of man as law-abiding citizens. The righteousness of which Paul speaks here is of Christ.

By faith we put on Christ's *righteousness*, which covers our sinfulness and makes us acceptable to God. Looking at us through this sacrificial act of His Son, God regards us as *"whiter than snow."* Wearing this robe of Christ does something to us. It creates in us nobility of character. It makes us honourable, transparently sincere, and trustworthy. As a result we treat others with respect, recognising them as fellow redeemed.

Paul continues, *"pursue faith."* This faith stakes its all upon Christ and His cross. This faith makes us loyal followers and disciples of Jesus. We strive to keep His Word and hold fast to His promises. Jesus says, in John 8:31-32 ³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, *"If you [continue] in My word, you are My disciples indeed.* ³² *"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall*

make you free.” And in Revelation 2:10, *Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

6. The Evidence Of Christian Faith

This Christian faith develops in us outside interests; it moves us to practice the Christian virtues, which are the fruit and the evidence of our faith. Paul mentions *“love, patience, gentleness.”*

Love does not seek its own, but always endeavours to do to others what we want them to do to us. This love sees in every human being a soul for whom Christ died and wants others to come to the cross and be forgiven and saved. This love is even kind and thoughtful to those who are unlovable, at times irritating us by the things they do.

Patience is ready to wait. It enables us to place ourselves trustingly into the hands of God, and wait, when things do not go our way. As we look through a glass darkly and do not understand why we have certain problems and griefs, we nevertheless wait patiently, knowing that God has all things in His hands and under His control.

When people around us are unkind, thoughtless, and even mean to us, this Christian virtue prompts us to go to the heart of God, praying, *“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”*

Gentleness or meekness is a much misunderstood virtue. The Christian humbly takes his place in life, seeking sincerely and honestly to do the will of God. Each believer knows that by the grace of God he is what he is. Therefore he does not *“look down”* at other people, strutting through life and singing his own praises and thanking God that he is not like the tax-collector and his kind.

This is the kind of contentment which is most profitable. Christians live in God’s presence with the serene satisfaction that the Lord always does all things to the glory of His name and our well-being. Even though God moves in His own mysterious ways we are certain that we shall still praise Him when the last song is sung. He does all things well.

With Paul we can say, *“I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.”*⁵ And why? Because as Christians we can enjoy the perishable things

of life without worry and possess the imperishable treasures of God world without end.

Truly, the Christian "*strikes it rich*"; God lives in him and he with God in Christ Jesus. You and I will never be rich if we have only money.

However, if we have the peace of God in our hearts through the forgiveness of all our sins; if we have the hope of heaven in our lives, guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus, then we are the most blessed and the richest people in this world. After the pilgrimage of life comes heaven with its eternal glory. Amen.

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

¹ Luke 12:19

² Philippians 4:11

³ 2 Timothy 4:10

⁴ Matthew 6:32

⁵ Philippians 4:11