

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

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Proper 21 - Hebrews 13:1-6

September 22, 2019

Check your contentment quotient. Inhabit God's promises.

- How did this text make you feel?
 - ♦ Uncomfortable? Dealing with strangers, prisoners, and the mistreated
- Burdened? Frustrated? More rules!
- Sounds like the *wah wah* of Charlie Brown's teacher, Miss Othmar?
- All these rules - then one more: **Be content!**
- Context: *Therefore, since we are going to receive an unshakeable kingdom, let us be thankful. This is how we serve God in an acceptable way, with reverence and awe.* Hebrews 12:28
- Not rules. Grateful service consistent with our permanent gifts from God
- An invitation from your gracious God to...

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❖ Symptoms of discontentment

- Frustrated with these instructions. *Throwing me off my groove.*
- Grumpiness, unhappiness, irritability, tendency to be angry and lash out
- Resigned to a negative fate: *Bad luck is my lot. - Nothing works out.*
- Blaming others for your circumstances. - *If it wasn't for them....*
- Contentment isn't found in changing your circumstances.
 - ♦ It comes with changing **you** - where your mind & heart dwell.
 - ♦ It comes with no longer living in and for yourself.
 - ♦ It's found exclusively and eternally in inhabiting God's promises.

...*be content with what you have. For God has said: I will never leave you, and I will never forsake you.* ⁶ *So then we say with confidence: The Lord is my helper, and I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?*

- ♦ This is not a bribing bone. It's a **rich unshakable reality.**

❖ Permanent Contentment is only found living in God's promises

- How do I know God will **never** forsake me? **I know:**
 - ♦ He paid for my adoption with the blood of his Son, Jesus! Invested!
 - ♦ He personally promised to be my God at my Baptism. I am his!
 - ♦ His record of faithfulness zeal - he will never forsake me
- **Faith rests on and inhabits** God's faithful saving love.
 - ♦ Paid for! Proven! Permanent! = no worries! **Content in Christ.**
 - ♦ Trials are God's tools to enrich: *a harvest of righteousness & peace* ^{12:11} *I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.* ¹³ *I can do all this through him who gives me strength.* Philippians 4:11b-13

When God's promises are the air you breathe - the light that fills your eyes, mind, and heart - the shelter where you take refuge - life is good. **Contentment rules.**

- ❖ Watch out for the false promises of satisfaction and contentment!
 - Detectives say virtually every crime is committed for sex or money
 - ♦ Both are false gods pretending to offer satisfaction and fulfillment
 - ♦ Last week's sermon exposed wealth as a weak and disastrous god.
 - ⁴ **Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.**
 - ♦ God's design: physical intimacy exclusively belongs to a marriage of 1 man and 1 woman. All other sexual intimacy dishonors marriage
 - Yes, including dating couples or even engaged couples.
 - The marriage bed is a blessing in the context of lifelong commitment
 - Living together or sleeping together before marriage despises God and marriage itself. (Marriages of people who live together before marriage have a lower success rate.) You can't *test-drive commitment.*
 - ♦ Physical intimacy outside marriage offers *fake and fleeting satisfaction* that breeds discontentment - wanting more or looking elsewhere.
 - This applies to pornography - false fantasies that enslave.
 - **Conquerors through Christ** - WELS resource - confidential
 - ♦ People who treat their appetite for physical intimacy like their appetite for chocolate don't understand how profoundly every encounter impacts and damages their present or future marriages.
 - ♦ God's people: Don't listen to a world view under God's judgment.
 - Listen to the Creator of marriage and the marriage bed. He knows!
- ❖ Contentment in our calling to care in Christ
 - God made humans to be humane and social beings - community
 - Finding our contentment in Christ's love for us - we're content loving
 - Care for strangers, prisoners, mistreated - seems fleeting - an imposition
 - ♦ Jesus lists these on Judgment day (Mt. 25) - as loving him - live relationship
 - ♦ Purposely remembering the hidden, shows Christ, grows in Christ
 - ♦ The church's care for strangers and prisons brought people to Jesus
 - Those busy serving others in Christ find satisfaction:
 - ♦ in helping others - in the spirit of his promises - letting his light shine
 - ♦ being liberated from the self-centered ways of sin
 - ♦ being transformed in character, identity, purpose, mindset with God's permanent truths and realities. **Contentment abounds.**
 - Many who serve on missions speak of how it changes them

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