

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XVI

November 11, 2007

No.45

The Meaning Of Contentment

Jerry Fite

Paul reminds us that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And, in order to avoid many sorrows and more importantly, the falling away from the faith, we are to cultivate the attitude of godliness with contentment. Money is not our gain, but “*godliness with contentment is great gain*” (1 Timothy 6:6).

Contentment is experiencing the events of life with the attitude that we are “*sufficient*” for the occasion. Paul says “*having food and covering, we shall therewith be content*” (1 Timothy 6:8). What this means, is that I look at my situation and see that my basic needs are being supplied. I have a roof over my head, and food in my stomach. Therefore, I am good for another day. But wonder if that roof over my head is a cardboard box, and the food is just half a sandwich. Must I feel sufficient for the moment? Yes, I need to *content*, but this does not mean I must *like* my present situation.

Some will equate “contentment” and “like”. But they are not the same. One, in order to be content, must not necessarily like the situation he or

she is in. I do not have to like the fact that my covering is a box and my meal for the day is half of a sandwich, but I am to think that for this moment, I have food and covering and will be content.

The soldiers in John’s day were to be “content with their wages.” This does not mean they had to like what they were making, and never ask for a raise, but that they were to be sufficient for the moment. They were not to allow greed to move them to use their position of power and “extort” from others “by force” or “accuse any one wrongfully” in order to satisfy discontent with their wages. They did not have to like their wages, but they were to be content with their wages.

Paul was in prison when he wrote about his contentment. “*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content*” (Philippians 2:11). Surely, Paul did not like the fact that he was in prison, and not able to be free to spread the gospel, but he was content. He was sufficient for the moment and even was able to teach those he was around in prison (Philippians 1:13, 4:22, Ephesians 6:19-20).

Contentment was not about how much Paul had, for he learned how to be content regardless if he was “abased” or living in “abundance” (Philippians 4:12). It was about “sufficiency.” He was sufficient for any occasion because he lived in the Lord. Paul says, “*I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me*” (Philippians 4:13). Regardless of how much or how little, Paul had the Lord with him to make him sufficient for the moment.

Life can be difficult when you are facing financial issues, or health issues. You are pinching pennies here and cutting back there. It is not a pleasant experience, and sometimes very difficult. When you have lost some of your health, and the remedial treatments make you weak and sick, it is often demoralizing. Contentment does not mean that you have to like the fact that you have lower wages or that you are not enjoying the health you once had, but it is about looking on your present situation and knowing you have the Lord with you strengthening you along the way. He is here with you. With him you can be sufficient for anything, even those things you do not like.