

## Beautiful Twins

*1 Timothy 6:6*

Hello again dear listeners:

Are you content with your lot, your life with your husband, your wife, your work, your possessions? And can you say, can you sing in all honesty, “*It is well, it is well with my soul*”? Horatio Spafford, a prominent American lawyer and Presbyterian elder could. He wrote the hymn “*It is well with my soul.*”

He did so though in quick succession he and his wife Anna, lost their four year old son to scarlet fever, as well as their four daughters. The latter perishing when the ship they were on while crossing the Atlantic was rammed by an iron sailing vessel. In the accident 226 people lost their lives.

This was not the end of the tragedy the family underwent as only a few years later another son, as a three-year old, lost his life due to scarlet fever.

Yet this father could say and sing,

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Amazing, and unusual, for contentment is often an elusive pursuit. While we may wonder at Horatio Spafford’s contentment while faced with so much tragedy in his family, yet the general discontent in our society today, does not seem to affect us a great deal.

After all “ *Everyone seems to be doing it*” as the saying goes. So many of us go after the things that we think will make us happy only to find out the whole search was but an illusion. Who is content to live within his or her means today? Even those who won a large sum in a lawsuit or a lottery admit they are not much happier than before they got their hands on the winning ticket.

There is general dissatisfaction with one’s boss, one’s income, the government etc. Marriage counsellors can’t keep up with trying to mediate between couples on the point of saying goodbye to their marriages.

Yet here, ( in 1 Timothy 6), is a record of a man in prison awaiting execution because of a false charge who nevertheless professed to be content.

No, not because he stoically brushed off the malicious intent of his persecutors. Not because he was some kind of a superman, whose emotions resisted being ruffled at the most miserable of accusations.

On the contrary, he was a person who had experienced a great deal of grief and pain in his life. He’d felt the lash more than once, had been beaten, shipwrecked and had been in constant danger during his travels in what is known as the Middle East or Asia Minor. We can read all about the dangers and the sleepless night he underwent in his letter known as II Corinthians ch. 11.

The man’s name, Paul, a apostle of the LORD Jesus Christ, a Christian missionary called to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom and kingship of Christ, the Savior of the world, risen from the dead.

In another letter, that of 1 Timothy chapter 6 we find him publicly opposing those who equate contentment with material gain received on the pretext of practicing a so-called godliness that was really a coverup for one's real motive, namely greed. Those who held to that way of life were bent on a show of worship and godliness as the quickest way to get rich.

It is a way of life not unknown in our own days as during the years not a few pretending to be godly preachers have been exposed as being far more interested in gaining dollars than in gaining souls, for Christ!

Yet what did Paul say? “ *But godliness with contentment is great gain.* Though he was well aware of those who treated Christ's teaching “ As if it was merchandize” <sup>1</sup> Paul understood godliness rightly. He trusted it was, and is a great and abundant gain. For, as the Reformed John Calvin wrote, “ *It brings full and abundant blessings to people.*”

It is the way of leading a godly life, so living by faith in Jesus Christ we become the heirs not only of the world but we are free to enjoy Christ and all his riches.

One of those is contentment, true satisfaction with one's possessions. “For”, says Paul, only consider this: “*We brought nothing into the world and we can take nothing out of it.*” ( 1 Timothy 6:7)

Christians know of this wonderful comfort expressed by David in a song he wrote after he had been on the run from king Saul who had sought to kill him. He had sought refuge with a king named Achish pretending to be insane so that this king would allow him to live. David came to his senses realizing that his refuge lay with the Lord rather than looking to a ruse, a scheme for self-preservation. In Psalm 34 he says,

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<sup>1</sup> John Calvin in his commentary on 1 Timothy.

*I will praise the Lord at all times.... This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.*

( verses 1, 4, 6, 7 )

There you have what is at the heart of true contentment. It must be coupled with godliness to be lasting and real. It is, as someone has said,

An inner sense of rest or peace that comes from being right with God and knowing that He is in control of all that happens to us. It means having our focus on the *kingdom of God* and serving Him.

That kingdom is not the selfish rule of a pile of stuff and adding more stuff to it, as long as you live. That kingdom, also called the kingdom of heaven in the bible, is *the rule of an eternal, sovereign God over all the universe*. The psalmist says, "*The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all*" ([Psalm 103:19](#)). Even a heathen king such as Nebuchadnezzar cried out, "*His kingdom is an eternal kingdom*" ([Daniel 4:3](#)).

A kingdom must surely have a king and this Kingdom has King Jesus Christ as its Head. When we focus our lives on Him and cling to his Word in true humility and piety we may be said to live godly lives. *He is the Savior whom I must serve; the Sufficient One whom I must trust*. If I know Him in these ways as Paul did, I will know contentment.

Dear listeners, Do you know this Savior and King? Is your life and mine devoted to him? A beautiful hymn says,

In Christ alone my hope is found."  
He is my light, my strength, my song

This cornerstone, this solid ground,  
 Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.....<sup>2</sup>

In another letter, “ *To all the believers ( or saints) in Christ Jesus at Philippi*” Paul first thanked them for their gifts while he was under house arrest in Rome. But then he wrote, “ *I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*” *Philippians 4: 11*. He repeated it so as to leave no doubt he had “ *learned the secret of being content*” ( *v. 12b*)

It is clear that this inner peace and contentment didn't come naturally but was a gift of God, the Holy Spirit, to him. It was a process and something that we too may learn from walking with God every day. Paul knew that God would meet his every need for Jesus himself had promised, “ *Seek first the kingdom and His ( God's) kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*” ( *Matthew 6: 33*)

David, Paul, and so many more people yesterday and today were and are faced with tragedies and disappointments of many kinds. Even if the devil should take a momentary break from hounding us, ( does he ever?) and all in your family and your church appears to be at peace, there *you are* , you and I, with our sinful human natures, having to radically break with sin and evil every day of our lives.

But it is not hopeless, dear listeners. Far from it. For Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners. he poured out his Holy Spirit on the church that we might always know of the great comfort of His loving care.

Well then, let us embrace these two sparkling twins with deep devotion to God. Let us show the way to others, that they too might be embraced by Jesus Christ and receive rest and contentment for this life and the one to

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<sup>2</sup> The words and music are by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend

come. For His is the kingdom and the power and the glory, now and  
forever, Amen. Till next time, have a wonderful week.