



Sermon
Rev. Dr. Lang Yang

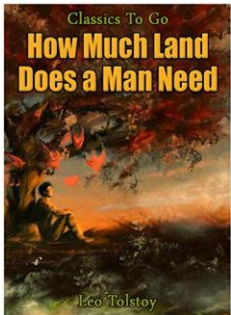
"Be Content"

Sixteenth Sunday of Easter
St. Paul Lutheran Church - Caro, MI
9-25-2022

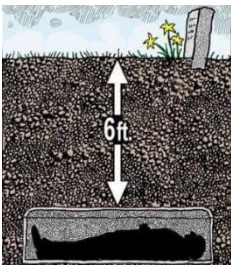
Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

1 Timothy 6:8 "But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that." (NIV). This is the Word of God. (Cross-reference – Genesis 28:20, Proverbs 30:8, Philippians 4:11)

Illustration "How Much Land Does a Man Need" (Show How much land does a man need)



Leo Tolstoy once wrote a story about a successful peasant farmer unsatisfied with his lot. He wanted more of everything. One day received an offer. For 1000 rubles, he could buy all the land he could walk around in a day. The only catch in the deal was that he had to be back at his starting point by sundown. Early the following day, he started out walking at a fast pace. By midday, he was exhausted, but he kept going, covering more and more ground. Well into the afternoon, he realized that his greed had taken him far from the starting point. He quickened his pace, and as the sun began to sink low in the sky, he began to run, knowing that if he did not make it back by sundown, the opportunity to own more considerable land would be lost. (Show six feet under)



As the sun began to sink below the horizon, he came within sight of the finish line. The farmer gasped for breath, his heart pounding; he called upon every bit of strength left in his body and staggered across the line just before the sun disappeared. He immediately collapsed, blood streaming from his mouth. In a few minutes, he was dead. Afterward, his servants dug a grave. It was not much over six feet long and three feet wide. The title of Tolstoy's story was: How Much Land Does a Man Need? (Bits and Pieces, November 1991). <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/m/materialiam.htm>

I. Brothers and sisters in Christ, there have been times in our lives when we have said, "If I only had a little more money, then I would be happy. (Show money)



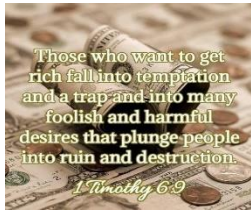
Just a little more, and I will have all I need. Then everything will be perfect." And if we get just a little more, we quickly find that it's still not enough. And we say, "If I had just a little more, then that would be enough. Just a little more." Instead of always wanting more and thinking that happiness will come with the next raise or commodity increase, that is why the Apostle Paul points us in a different direction. (Show contentment)



He tells us that happiness may not be found in getting just a little more; instead, happiness is found in being content with what we have. He said, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that." (1 Timothy 6:8). "Be content with that," those words clash with the materialistic world in which we live. The world will say that "You don't

have enough. You need more. You can't be happy until you get more." Because of our sinful nature, we fall victim to this thinking. A child is happy with his toy until he sees the toy another child has. We are content – until we see our friend, our neighbor's new car, his new house, and his new clothes. Then we're not happy anymore. We're not satisfied until we get one just like his – or maybe a little better.

(Show 1 Timothy 6:9)



Our world encourages covetousness but discourages contentment. Our world promises happiness in pursuing money, but that promise is broken by those who seek it. The chasing after money and material goods in search of happiness often yield the exact opposite. The Apostle Paul warned, "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction." (1 Timothy 6:9).

II. Often, we hear a story that a man will kill his wife for insurance money and then plan to run away with another woman. (Show Man behind bars)

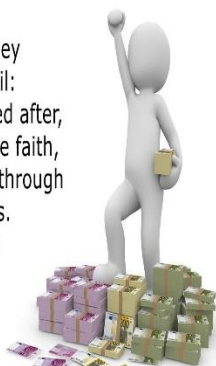


But what did he get when he got caught and sent to jail for life without chances for parole? Did he think that money and love affairs would bring him more happiness? When he gambled away all their money and fraudulently lost all the house back to the bank, he ended up serving time behind bars for his crimes. As you can see, the Apostle Paul's warnings are lived out in today's society. He said, "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction." (1 Timothy 6:9).

Perhaps we should stop for a moment and clarify what Paul is saying. He's not saying wanting to do better in life is wrong. There's nothing wrong with furthering your education or seeking a higher-paying job. There's nothing wrong with expanding your farm operation or buying a new house. Neither does Paul speak against those who are wealthy? Many prominent men of the Bible were rich – Abraham, Zacchaeus, Joseph of Arimathea. But God's Word does condemn the unchecked desire to get more and more. (Show 1 Timothy 6:10)

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

1 Timothy 6:10



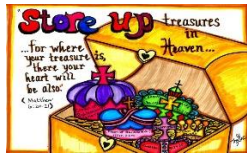
The Bible condemns greed and lust for wealth, especially when that becomes more important than anything else. The Apostle Paul warned against looking for happiness in getting just a little more. Others will not respect greed. A millionaire cheated on his income tax, as a poor man spends all his welfare money on lottery tickets. Paul said, "For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." (1 Timothy 6:10). Remember that it is not to gain but the "love of it – will lose your sight of God."

III. In today's Epistle Lesson, the Apostle Paul encourages us to be contented with what we have in this life and instead look for more from the life of the world. (Show 1 Timothy 6:6)

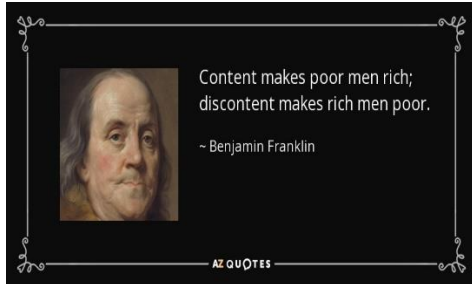


He encourages us to seek heavenly treasure more diligently than the earthly treasurer. He said, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." (1 Timothy 6:6). It is far better to gain forgiveness, grace, mercy, and godliness. A person can

spend his life gaining the riches of this world, but what will it ultimately gain him? God's word said, "For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it." (1 Timothy 6:7). Jesus reminds us, "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?" (Luke 9:25). **(Show store up)**



We are invited to "...store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal." (Matthew 6:20). Be content with what we have and should pursue godliness, righteousness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. **(Show Benjamin Franklin)**

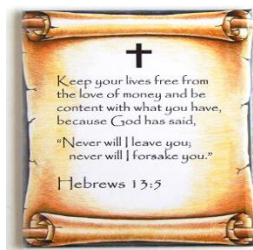


Brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, if we have food or clothing, we will be content with that. Thousands of people all over the world lack food and clothing. We see people searching for something to eat. Many had their last meals and just waiting to die of hunger. If you start feeling discontent with your lot in life, visit a homeless shelter. See the people that have no jobs, no present, no future, and no hope. If you complain that your shoes are not nice enough, wait until you see someone with no shoes. If you complaint that your

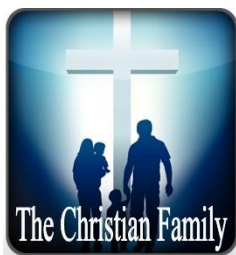
shirt is not lovely; wait until you see someone with no shirt. Be thankful for what you have because you will realize you are content when you look around and see what others don't have. Benjamin Franklin said, "Content makes poor men rich; discontent makes rich men poor." **(Show abound in God's blessing)**



Our land, our money, our possessions – they all belong to God. They are part of his creation and, therefore, part of his possession. God gives them to us as a gift, a blessing, and we should be content with his blessings. Children, think about what your parents gave you as you grew up – food, clothing, toys, a place to live, money to spend, and vacations. What kind of son or daughter would grumble that that wasn't enough? An ungrateful child, right? Yet, we are tempted to complain that God doesn't give us enough. We are sometimes discontent, ungrateful children. God doesn't owe us anything. **(Show Hebres 13:5)**



Yet, as Luther says, "He richly and daily provides me with all I need to support his body and life.... All this he does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me." (Luther Small Catechism – Fourth Petition "Give us our daily bread") (p 189, LSC). The writer to the Hebrews sums it up nicely: "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5). **(Show the Christian family)**

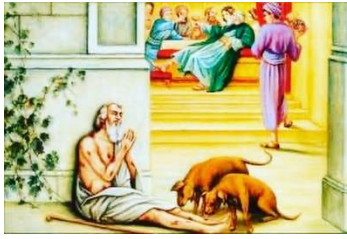


We live in a world where greed is glorified, and the desire for "material gain" is advertised as good. However, the search for just a little more never brings happiness. God calls us to search for grace, and godliness, to pursue heavenly treasurer which brings true contentment. Amen.

Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keeps our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Children Message

"Richman – Poorman"



Theme: The rich man and Lazarus

Object Lesson: A handful of dollars bills

Scripture: "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores." (Luke 16:19-21, (NIV).

Look at all this money! (*Show a handful of dollars*). How many of you would like to be rich when you grow up? What would you do with your money if you were rich? Well, you could dress in the latest style, drive a fancy car, live in a big house with a swimming pool, and fly around the country in your private jet. Does that sound good to you? How many of you would like to be poor when you grow up? I don't see too many of you raising your hand on that one! If you were very poor, you might end up living on the street and sleeping on the sidewalk. You would probably get your clothes from the thrift store, and you might be seen standing on the street corner holding a sign that says, "Will work for food." You would probably walk everywhere you went because you couldn't afford a car. I must say, that doesn't sound too appealing.

There is nothing wrong with being rich and nothing shameful about being poor. Being rich does not guarantee happiness; being poor doesn't necessarily mean you will have an unhappy life. Today's Bible lesson will look at a story that Jesus told, known as "The Rich Man and Lazarus." Jesus said, "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen. He lived in luxury every day. At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus. As Lazarus lay there, he was hoping that he might receive some of the scraps from the rich man's table. Lazarus was covered with sores, and the dogs would come and lick his sores. The rich man never offered to share his wealth with Lazarus. Every day he walked past him as if he was not even there.

In the story Jesus told, Lazarus finally died and was carried by the angels to sit beside Abraham at the heavenly banquet. Even though he had nothing on this earth, he trusted God to take care of him; that is what happened. Lazarus had everything he needed in his heavenly home. The rich man also died and was buried. The place where the rich man went was scorching. I am sure you can guess where that was! He was miserable. The rich man looked into heaven and saw Abraham with Lazarus standing by his side. He cried, "Father Abraham, send Lazarus down and let him dip his finger in water to cool my tongue." Abraham answered, "Don't forget that when you were living, you had all your good things, and Lazarus had nothing. Now he is well cared for, and you are in great pain. And besides, there is a deep ditch between us, and no one from either side can cross over."

There is an essential lesson from the story of the rich man and Lazarus. All the money in the world won't buy our way into heaven. We can only get into heaven by putting our faith in God. When we do that, he will provide everything we need. Maybe we won't be rich on this earth, but we will be in heaven!

Prayer: Our Father, we do not trust in the riches this world has to offer but in the provision of your hand. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Adapted from: Sermon for Kids https://sermons4kids.com/rich_man_poor_man.htm