

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church



Weekly Sermon Series

Taking Root: The Gospel Rules ...Living Contentment Exodus 20:17; Philippians 4:10-13

Paul writes the letter to the Philippians while he is in prison in Rome. He had received a monetary gift from them and thanked them for their generosity.

In today's text he shares with them the contentment he has in Christ which enables him to live victoriously both in times of poverty and times of abundance.

It is this same contentment which enables us to live without coveting—wanting that which we cannot have. It is important to God that we live content without coveting; so important that God spoke to it in the Ninth and Tenth Commandments which God gave to Moses as recorded in our Exodus text. Wanting what our neighbor has could lead us to thoughts and actions far from God's plan for us.

Do you find that living in contentment is difficult in our world? Where is the line between wanting a better life for yourself and your family and coveting? Many of our grandparents came to this country to find more opportunity and that better life. They left the security of what they had known for the unknown; risked an uncomfortable at best journey; endured hardship and hard work to secure a foothold in this country. Was that not being content with what they had in the "old country"? Could this lead to coveting? Why or why not? Is the difference in achieving

opportunity, progress or possessions without it being at the expense or sacrifice of someone or something that belongs to someone else or that God has created?

Many of our parents worked very hard for their educations and risked much to start new endeavors during the depression years. Was this betterment of self God pleasing? Why or why not?

Many of us are satisfied to see our children successful in their achievements. Are we equally as happy seeing them content with what they have rather than in achieving or securing more and more? Have we exemplified lives of contentment? Do our lives depict Paul's model of being content during times of much and times of less? We have seen much change in this past year. We perhaps recognize for the first time that that for which we have worked and saved for can quickly disappear.

To live like Paul, we must base our contentment on far more than these and put our trust in Christ and example that trust. The commandments even give us the pattern for doing so. Our faith in Christ is evidenced in our willingness to share with our neighbor in his time of need. This is most certainly true.

May God give us the grace to do so.

-- Week of July 12, 2009