

On Covetousness & Contentment

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[0 : 00] You're listening to a sermon recorded at Providence Community Church, Truth and Beauty in Community. If you are in the Kansas City area, please consider joining us in person next Sunday.

We meet in Lenexa, Kansas at 10 a.m. every Lord's Day. Until then, we pray that as you open your Bibles, the Lord will open your heart to receive His Word.

Well, our text today is Exodus 20, verse 17, and it's a real simple text. It just says, You shall not covet your neighbor's house, you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.

You could go wrong in a couple ways with this text, misinterpreting it. You could emphasize, like, a really dumb way to handle this text would be like, well, I don't want an ox, so I'm good, right?

So you could have some sort of lack of elasticity in your interpretation on that end, where you think that only the things listed here, you know. No, it's anything that is your neighbor's.

[1 : 06] And then you could also make the mistake on the front end and think that this is mostly about wanting things that your neighbor has, as if you super, you know, really craving a new car that was on the dealership wasn't, you know, a potential way of coveting, because it's not your neighbor's.

No, it's not, don't tighten it like that. Actually, the whole idea here is just an explicit rejection of covetousness. Covetousness could be defined as an inordinate, ungoverned, or selfish desire for something.

Someone once said that all too often we want the wrong thing in the wrong way, at the wrong time, for the wrong reason, and that's kind of related to the 10th commandment.

I'm really mostly interested this morning, though, not in what it forbids, but in what it sort of commands implicitly, and that is I want to talk about contentment. And I want to talk about contentment this week and next week.

I want to hit pause on our sermon schedule and just really focus on what Thomas Watson referred to as the art of divine contentment.

[2 : 16] I have a number of reasons for doing that. First of all, as I referenced the Westminster Catechism about the 10th commandment, it gives contentment a key role in fulfilling and obeying the 10th commandment.

It says, The duties required in the 10th commandment are such a full contentment with our own condition and such a charitable frame of the whole soul toward our neighbor that all our inward motions and affections touching him tend unto and further all that is good, which is his.

What are the sins forbidden in the 10th commandment? The catechism asks, Answer, The sins forbidden in the 10th commandment are discontentment with our own estate.

That's what I want to focus on today. Envy and grieving at the good of our neighbor together with all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.

I want to focus on contentment for two weeks for probably four main reasons. The first one is personal. As I studied this subject over the last few weeks, I just could see the Lord showing me some of the mistakes that I'll reference today, showing me that I have room to grow on contentment.

[3 : 29] And every once in a while, I have this sense that the Lord is like, It's okay, you can be selfish. Like, if you need to preach two sermons on this to everyone, to preach two sermons on this to yourself, you can do that. God gives me license to do that every once in a while.

So one reason is personal. I want to grow in contentment. Another is pastoral. I know the story that you're living, many of you, and I know your situations and know that there are various reasons and various ways that you yourselves need to grow in contentment.

Some of you need it now because you're facing a situation in which discontentment is ever tempting you. And some of you will just need it later. So pastorally, I think it's wise to just hit pause on our

series and spend a little bit of extra time on contentment.

There's also a cultural reason. The truth is, is that we live in a world that is basically fueled by consumerism. Sometimes to fall asleep, I listen to novels that I don't really care about.

They can't be well written. They can't be interesting in any way. They have to be just this sort of beige level of literature. And my favorite beige level of literature is a post-apocalyptic EMP fiction.

[4 : 43] It's like a whole genre. Believe it or not, I didn't go looking for this. It found me. But there's this whole genre of stories about society after solar flares, EMPs, and so on and so forth, and how the whole United States grinds to a halt.

And they're all the exact same story, so they're really easy to fall asleep to. If you wanted to slam the brakes on the American economy, you could simply have a religious revival in which every citizen felt content with what they had.

And our entire economy would come crashing to a halt. That's how important covetousness is to our actual economic structure.

It's essential that no one, not many people anyway, grow fully content with what they have. Truth is, is that if there's one society that should be happy, if materiality, if pleasure, if comfort were to produce happiness, we, the American people living in 2024, ought to be the happiest people on the planet.

John Gardner wrote in a book called *Self-Renewal*, that if happiness could be found in the comforts and pleasures money can buy, then the large number of Americans who have been able to indulge their whims on a scale unprecedented in history would be deliriously happy.

[6 : 11] They would be telling one another of their unparalleled serenity and bliss instead of trading prescriptions. So what we can see, even culturally, is that we have got to learn contentment.

There's really no other way around it. You will not find satisfaction in the accumulation of those very things you think would make you happy. And I'll talk more about that in a moment.

So there's a personal reason, and there's a cultural reason. There's a pastoral reason. There's also a textual reason. It's not super easy to end the book of Exodus as a sermon series because you're not ending with the end of the story.

Do you know that? Like, we're just kind of left hanging out in the desert, you know? We don't really see the end of the story. And so I've thought for a while, like, how are we going to stick the landing ending on the book of Exodus?

Because really, from here, it's a lot of elaboration on the laws and the building of the tabernacle and so on and so forth. Like, how do we end this well? How do we let people know how the story itself ends, which doesn't really end until, I guess you might say, numbers to some extent?

[7 : 22] I think that one key to understanding the Exodus story is to see there's this moment that we just read in Exodus 20, 17, where God says, don't be covetous, implication be content.

What we find out, as the story progresses, is that nearly everyone headed out of Egypt and into the promised land disqualified themselves from entering into the promised land.

What was the sin that disqualified them? Was it murder? Was it adultery? You know, was it false witness? You know, was it dishonoring your father and mother?

And fundamentally, the sin that kept them out of entering the promised land was a lack of contentment. Specifically, the inability to gather their own heart, their own emotions, their own mind when things didn't look great and rest in the Lord.

Their incapacity for that kind of contentment fundamentally disqualified them from entering God's rest. And we could go pretty deep into that if we just wanted to talk about Hebrews.

[8 : 40] In Numbers 14, after yet another instance in which the people responded to hardship with grumbling and disquietude, God says, But truly as I live, as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times, and have not obeyed my voice, shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers.

And none of those who despised me shall see it. So in some sense, spending a little extra time on contentment is a way of kind of wrapping up the basic narrative of Exodus.

Because really what you see at the end of their story is that they were disqualified because of their disquietude. They couldn't calm down.

They couldn't wait on the Lord. They couldn't get themselves put together enough to just trust God. And friends, that's probably the last reason why I think this is so important.

Because I want to be able to frame for you sort of a fundamental narrative for the amount of deconstruction we see in the church and the amount of disqualification we see in the pulpits because it all comes down to a lack of contentment.

[10:10] There's a man that you probably have heard of before, a well-known Reformed writer, a key feature within R.C. Sproul's ministry, within John MacArthur's ministry, a 70-year-old man with multiple public platforms, multiple books written, who was just fully disqualified from all ministry because at the age of 70 and for a number of years prior, he was having what sounds like a text and phone call driven affair with a 20-something girl he had met while on the road.

And what's going on there is that this 70-year-old man couldn't be content being a 70-year-old man and having a 70-year-old wife. And if you don't think that's a thing, wait until you get old and you look in the mirror and you see a face that doesn't look like the face you remember it looking like. And aging can drive all sorts of disquietudes. This man disqualified himself from entering, from finishing well because he couldn't find contentment with the situation that God had given him. So many other leaders and indeed Christians are unable to endure and be content with God's favor. They need the world to like them.

And so when the world pumps the shotgun and says, change your view on same-sex attraction or else we won't like you, these men cannot be content to endure the disfavor of the world.

[11:46] And so they take on false doctrines, which is just another version of an affair, really. Some people can't be content with what they have. And so they take what doesn't belong to him.

In short, all of the scandals we're seeing today have very much to do with this problem we saw that Gardner outlined in his book. We have a problem with contentment.

And as I said, it's not limited only to the pulpit. It's also very much in the pew. I would summarize the vast majority of 20-something deconstruction stories as follows.

I used to be a faithful Christian until God did something I disagreed with. That's the story. There's no capacity to endure the dark cloud of providence any longer.

There's no capacity to simply sit in the discomfort and find joy in the Lord even in those moments when things aren't going our way. I used to be a faithful Christian until God did something I disagreed with.

[12:54] So I freaked out and threw myself down a rabbit hole of internet content custom-built to fan my flames of anger against the Lord.

That's the deconstruction story. God did something I disagreed with. He took something I wanted or he refused to give me something that I wanted. You see, this contentment is really a prerequisite for finishing well.

Just off the notes for a minute, we have this phenomenon in the Exodus where they crave things that are stupid. You know what I'm talking about?

They're like, man, we really miss the onions in Egypt. It's like, what's going on there? Is it because the onions were amazing? Is it because they had a deep, heartfelt need for onions? No. If you don't get contentment figured out, the way you'd say it in mid-Missouri is, is that if you're hungry enough, that possum on the side of the road will start looking like a porterhouse.

Why do people do stupid things? Often because in their discontentment, they feel they must do something. Sin enters through this desire spectrum.

[14:09] This is what James talks about. So that the heart just looks at something and sees it as better than it is, mostly because you can't just sit still. Just chill out and trust the Lord.

We got to have contentment. That's my point. It really is a prerequisite for finishing well. So I want to spend some time today just thinking about Christian contentment. And next week, walk you through a number of the ways that we see Paul learning, learning the secret to contentment.

That's going to be our main text for the next two weeks. It's Philippians 4.10. Do you want to turn there? Philippians 4.10 through 12. One of the funniest things about Philippians, this is pretty cool, is that to this day, when a pastor reads Philippians to the congregation, or when a Christian reads Philippians at their kitchen table, at some point, someone must remind the reader that Paul is writing this from prison.

That's cool. Why is that cool? Because you can't tell based on how he's talking. So he's going to talk about contentment here, but the letter itself screams, this is a man who's figured something out that we haven't figured out and that would be really good for us and necessary for us to figure out.

Philippians 4.10, I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.

[15 : 44] Not that I'm speaking of being in need, for I've learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low.

I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned, this is important, underline it, underline it please. I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. A lesson that you should see here, the language that you should note here is that this was a difficult lesson.

Learning contentment is not an easy thing. The Greek word for learned has this idea of initiation or graduation as if he was enrolled in a school, a degree program for contentment.

Friends, we do want to learn contentment, but let's also understand that contentment is not a class you take. It's a program full of many classes that all work together to teach you how to grow in contentment.

[16 : 54] I'm not going to present this to you next week as like 10 easy things you can do to become content. I'm going to show you the classes that you have to enroll in and that God over time will use those classes to further your education so that you could one day say with Paul, I've learned the secret.

The word secret, of course, itself further emphasizes that this lesson is not an easy one. And then look at verse 12. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

That's not the kind of thing you say when you've just done something relatively easy. We excel at Bible jokes in my marriage. This is the whole, we misquote Bible verses constantly.

So this is a lot of fun for us. And so this would be kind of a Chris and Ange inside joke. You know, Ange does something super easy. Like she folds a pair of like pants or something and I say, good job.

And she'll say, I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength. That's not, Paul's not saying, I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength because he just did something easy.

[18 : 01] He's saying that this was so difficult. Maybe next week I'll show you evidence for this struggle throughout his writings, but he did something so difficult that he had to say, like I only did this through Christ.

Now, if you can remember that, that'll be key at the end of the sermon as well. So this is a hard thing. It's a very important thing, but it's a hard thing. And I thought as a way of describing Christian contentment, I might just compare it to other versions of contentment that exist both formally and informally.

So let me do that. Let me just talk about Christian contentment in comparison to other forms of contentment that have been kind of pushed on us. I think there's just various natural versions of contentment that exist.

For example, one of the things that, and this is one of the things that I've wondered about myself, there are certain people who, well, I say everybody, cares about some things more than they care about others, and that can be wildly diverse.

Some of us just do not care about money. We have other, we care about something like productivity or something. If you wanted to just absolutely devastate me, make me unproductive.

[19 : 17] Give me a disease that allows me no freedom to do. If you want to, you're not going to get there. Take my money. Now you have extra \$20. Good job. It's just not a motivation for me.

For others, it would not be the same at all. It would be that that would be the primary thing. Here's what I'm getting at. If you have the things you really care about, you might think you're content because you don't worry about a bunch of other things that other people care about.

But that doesn't mean you're content. That just means you have favorable circumstances right now. A lot of people struggle in the early years of their marriage because of this.

Here's how this plays out. They wanted a spouse and God gave them one. But they didn't learn contentment. They just got what they wanted.

Because they didn't learn contentment, over time, that lack of lesson learned will bring new waves of discontent and it won't just be I want a spouse.

[20 : 25] It will be I want a better spouse or I want my spouse to be better. So this is like, you know, year two to year seven Chris marriage counseling conversations are something like this.

You wanted this thing. God gave it to you. He didn't insist that you learn contentment before he gave it to you. It's his prerogative. Sometimes he does that. Sometimes he doesn't. He just gave it to you. So for a while, the thing you wanted, you have.

But that discontent is a problem. It's a cancer. And you didn't deal with it. And so you're going to have to. Your spouse that you were happy for, you know, two years ago will suddenly not be great to you any longer.

And it won't be because suddenly they've become a worse person. It will be because you never grew out of this discontentment phase. This is really true, young men of sexual sin.

I know 1 Corinthians 7 says that if you burn with lust, it's better to get married. But marriage is not the solution to sexual sin. Ultimately, men who struggle greatly with lust and then get married will typically find a short reprieve but not a permanent one because the root of sexual lust is discontent. [21 : 37] It's covetousness. That's what it is, by the way. It's covetousness. And so you didn't learn the lesson of contentment. And so you get married. And for a while, you have, you know, essentially like sex on demand.

And so like you're okay. But then as time moves on, that lack of learning, this lesson, will make that old problem resurface again. So contentment is not just getting what you want.

That is really actually just going to make you want more. Ben Franklin once said, who is wealthy? He who is content. Who is content?

Nobody. Contentment is important to learn for its own sake. And sometimes you might think that you've learned it when you didn't. You just got what you wanted. And, you know.

And by the way, God doesn't force you to learn it. Always. Sometimes he just gives you what you want and then he teaches you later. But we're all going to have to learn it. If we're getting to the promised land, we're all going to have to learn it.

[22 : 39] Now let me talk about some of the more formal versions of contentment, some of the formal alternative visions for contentment that exist. And I'll start with Buddhism. When you talk to adult converts about Buddhism, to Buddhism, they will often tell you that the main feature, the main thing that drew them into Buddhism was this idea that nothing really matters.

Buddhism is a theology of resignation. Buddhism teaches that nothing in the universe is essential, that everything is in a constant state of change and impermanence.

This concept is called sunyata and it means that all things are empty of extrinsic, intrinsic existence. It's because everything's constantly changing, so nothing exists really.

You can catch these sorts of things in a lot of what gets passed off as physics in movies. It's actually just Buddhism. Lots of string theory and multiverse type stuff is actually just meant to portray this sort of lack of anything being anything because everything is everything, something like that.

Those who understand, Buddhism teaches, those who understand impermanence detach themselves from all that exists and stop seeking anything. So this would be a Buddhist contentment. It is a detachment.

[23 : 53] Nothing matters. I'm fine. I'm not going to be worried about anything. But that's not Christian contentment. One of the keys to Christian contentment is a hunger for God.

The same Paul who wrote, I have learned the secret to contentment, also wrote in the previous chapter, Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

A Buddhist would never say, I have learned contentment and therefore I strain. I've learned contentment and therefore I yearn. Thomas Watson says it this way, A true Christian is a wonder. He is the most contented and yet the least satisfied. Let that sink in. A true Christian is a wonder. He is the most contented and yet the least satisfied. He is contented with a morsel of bread and a little water in the cruise, yet never satisfied with his grace.

[24 : 59] He pants and breathes after more. Indeed, you will actually not be able to grow in Christian contentment without a significant appetite for God. The two go hand in hand.

Take the book of James, for instance, in chapter 1, where he says, Count it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various kinds of trials. Why? Why are trials good?

Why should I count trials as joy? Because when you meet trials of various kinds, you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness and steadfastness has its full effect that you may be

perfect and complete and lacking in nothing.

So the only way, according to James, to find joy in trials is to be convinced that they're bringing you good, specifically, more of God and more of godliness. So if you don't want more of God and more of godliness, you can't become content.

Buddhism would say, don't want anything. That's the solution. Christianity would say, want the right things. Want God. Want godliness. Again from Watson, every man complains that his estate is not better, though he seldom complains that his heart is not better.

[26 : 11] You have to want your heart to be better in order to enjoy, experience, develop Christian contentment. You have to have a desire.

You have to have a desire to be more like Christ. One way to think about contentment, Christian contentment, is to describe it as the self-conscious participation in the accomplishment of God's promises.

Here's what I mean. Romans 8, 28 says, all things work together for the good of those who love him. That's true whether you feel it or not. Right? What contentment might be thought of, Christian contentment, is the experience of knowing that and seeing it and experiencing it in real time in the midst of trials.

so that even as things are difficult, you're like, God's working on me. I'm getting more of God. It's the recognition, it's the experiencing, I think you might say, of the Romans 8, 28 promise.

Or 2 Corinthians 4, these light and momentary troubles are creating for us the eternal weight of glory. Well, that's true no matter what. So what's contentment? Well, contentment's probably something like knowing that and seeing that and able to count the trials all joy because they're producing for me an eternal weight of glory, something like that.

[27 : 31] Christian contentment is not the dispatching of desire, it's just the cultivation of good desires over and above those that are lesser. So that's Buddhist contentment in comparison to Christian contentment.

Let's talk about Stoicism, which is making a great resurgence and I gotta tell you, I ain't angry about it. Stoicism is not Christianity. Stoicism will lead a lot of people to hell but at the same time, I'm not too troubled by the fact that a bunch of people are trying to take responsibility for themselves because I think in the end, people who take responsibility for themselves must face certain realities that lead them to the need for a savior, at least many.

So the Stoic view of contentment is also dominant, predominant in the view, in Stoicism itself. It's an important aspect of Stoicism. People believe that Stoics believe that you can find happiness by living a virtuous life.

The four virtues are courage, justice, moderation, and wisdom. And so they would have, in a certain way, a very James 1-like view of hardship because they would be able to say that these difficulties are producing these four cardinal virtues.

So Stoicism has more in common with Christianity than Buddhism does. Marcus Aurelius, well worth reading, Marcus Aurelius, wrote this, Begin each day by telling yourself, Today I shall be meeting with interference, ingratitude, insolence, disloyalty, ill will, and selfishness, all of them due to the offender's ignorance of what is good and evil.

[29 : 14] So how is Marcus Aurelius preparing himself for another day as a good Stoic? He is recognizing that he will meet people who are difficult. And he is recognizing that he has to guard himself against overreacting, guard himself against complaining, and simply be grateful to be in the world with these people.

So this is not a problem. The problem with Stoicism is that it is all self-talk. And I can just tell you straight up, self-talk is not fundamentally the way to self-improvement.

There may be an aspect where self-talk does help you in self-improvement in one way or another. Fundamentally, the difference between Christian contentment and Stoicism is that Christian contentment is fundamentally conversational.

fundamentally conversational. Look at Psalm 131, shortest Psalm in the book of Psalms, three verses. We'll just read two.

Oh Lord, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high, I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me, but I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.

[30 : 33] Now there's some potential translation vagaries here. One way of understanding this is that the word weaned is not the appropriate translation, it's just the word satiated.

So what we could be looking at here really is like a child who has just fed, a child who is full of his mother's milk.

That could be what it's saying or it could mean weaned like it's translated here in the ESV, in which case this is a child who has gone beyond seeing their mom as a mere vending machine and seeing their mom as someone that they love and delight in beyond mere provision.

So one of those two is true, we don't know which one it is exactly. Both of them communicate the same idea. A person who is trusting in God is like a child with his mother who is not worried about things.

He feels like he is in a sweet space. He feels secure. That's what David is getting at. He is finding contentment in the presence of God. Stoicism is finding contentment in the presence of your own thoughts.

[31 : 46] Christianity is finding contentment in the presence of God's thoughts. Christianity and Christian contentment is really prayerful. It really is relational.

It's really all about the presence of God. To wrap up, I think we have an answer for why we saw at the beginning why the Exodus generation couldn't get it done.

Why did they become disqualified because of their own discontentment? Well, if you'll go back to Exodus 20, look at verse 18. This is immediately after the command against coveting is given.

We see this in verse 18. Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled.

They stood far off and said to Moses, You speak to us and we will listen, but do not let God speak to us lest we die. Moses said to the people, Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.

[32 : 55] The people stood far off while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was. Again, verse 18, just want you to get this.

When all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the smoking mountain, they were afraid and stood far off and said to Moses, You speak to us and we will listen, but do not let God speak to us lest we die.

This passage is commented on in the New Testament, especially in the book of Hebrews. And the Hebrews writer tells us that the old covenant was lacking.

It was insufficient. It didn't do everything that was needed to save a sinner. And that we needed a new and better covenant and that covenant is through Christ. Friends, if contentment comes through conversation with God, if contentment comes by drawing near to God, the old covenant was an insufficient vehicle for teaching these Hebrews contentment.

They could not draw near to God. The mountain that they approached was smoking and trembling. The God that they approached was an unsatisfied God. What happens in the new covenant?

[34 : 10] What happens in the new covenant is that God has been satisfied. God, the creator and sustainer of the universe is smiling on us because of Christ.

So that now, it is our job to cast cares. This is Thomas Watson. It is our job to cast cares. It is God's job to take cares. And we walk together, day by day, each of us doing our job.

And friends, it is really perfect that God in his providence set it for this Sunday, for Reformation Sunday, to talk about contentment. 507 years ago, on October 31st, Martin Luther nailed the 95 theses to the door.

It's so good that we are talking about contentment today because contentment is the heartbeat of the Protestant Reformation, specifically, the contentment of God.

The contentment of God. Catholicism, along with every other world religion, tells a story of a discontented God who only by repetition of various ceremonies and sacraments and rites, only by doing these things repeatedly, week after week, is God temporarily satisfied and contented.

[35 : 38] That is the message of every other religion, including Roman Catholicism, that God can be temporarily satisfied through the performance of various sacraments and ceremonies.

What God showed us again through the Protestant Reformation is a God who has been fully propitiated, fully satisfied, and fully contented in the offering of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

As old Martin Luther put it himself, now we are sure that Christ pleases God, that he is holy and so on, inasmuch then as Christ pleases God and we are in him, we also please God and are holy.

Although sin still remains in us and although we daily fall and offend, grace is more abundant and stronger than sin. The mercy and truth of the Lord reign over us forever.

Therefore, sin cannot make us afraid or make us doubt God's mercy in us, for Christ, that most mighty giant, has abolished the law, condemned evil, and vanquished death and all evils.

[36 : 52] So long as he is at the right hand of God making intercession for us, we cannot doubt God's grace and favor toward us. And this is the heart of true contentment.

That God himself has been contented toward us through the great sacrifice of the mighty giant, Luther says, Christ Jesus. So let's pray and prepare our hearts for communion.

Lord God, I doubt there's anyone here who has learned the secret of divine contentment as deeply as they need to learn it. I know that I have much to learn in this area.

And Lord, I want to learn more in this area. I see, God, and I pray that my friends here see as well that contentment is a great prize.

And as Watson says, it's a golden shield that deflects many sins. And I know, God, there are some people here today who are right now tempted to judge you more by what you have withheld than by what you have given.

[38 : 09] You are so patient, Lord, with our sin. And that is sin. Thank you for being so patient with us, but help us to sin less, please, Lord.

And then, of course, there are other saints who are mistaking their circumstantial sweetness for contentment. And they don't know that they are lacking in contentment because they kind of have things that they want.

So, Lord, I don't want them to wait to learn contentment in the midst of suffering. would you use this sermon to stir up even those in sweet circumstances to make hay while the sun shines and to lean into this virtue of virtues to inquire how they too might become more content in you.

Lord, we pray that your spirit would give us this great gift. your word says that fathers give gifts all the time. How much more so will the perfect father, who is our perfect father because we're in Christ, give us those things we ask.

We ask that you would give us, teach us how to be content in you. Not merely to endure hardship, but to enjoy you at all times, like Paul is enjoying you as he sits in prison.

[39 : 37] Please bless us, Lord, with this incredible gift. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. For communion, I'll read from Matthew 26 where Jesus says, take, eat, this is my body.

And then it says, he took a cup and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, drink of it, all of you, for this is the blood of my covenant which is poured out for the forgiveness of sins.

Come and partake of the table of the great and contented God. contented through Christ. Thank you.