# Congregational-Presbyterian Church

 **“Contentment”**

**1 Timothy 6:6-10**

 **March 27, 2022**

I invite you to join me in Paul’s first letter to Timothy, chapter six, verses six to ten. The background to this passage is the false teachers in the church who have become discontented in their faith because their so-called godliness has not led to God blessing them with financial wealth. They were, if you will, the first century manifestation of the modern health and wealth gospel which claims that if you have enough faith, God will make you healthy and wealthy. In response to this false teaching Paul says:

Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can’t take anything with us when we leave it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

There are some who long to be rich, and they have fallen into the temptation of using religion as a means to financial wealth. But, the purpose of godliness, that is, living a life that is pleasing to God, is not to become rich. God does not promise that if we follow Christ he will make us affluent. What he does promise is that he will take care of us and provide all that we need, but not necessarily all that we desire.

If godliness is living a life that is pleasing to God, what is godliness with contentment? It is being *satisfied* with living a life that is pleasing to God. It means that we are pleased with how God is taking care of us, how he is guiding and helping us, comforting and cheering us, as we make our way through this life.

This does not mean that it is wrong to desire something that we don’t have. Only don’t begin to long for it – don’t fall in love with it. When Lauri and I were first married we owned an old, beat-up, undependable car. In fact, when Lauri was well along in her pregnancy with our first son, she was alone in the car when it stalled right in the middle of one of the busiest intersection in Boulder. It was not wrong for us to desire a better car. But to practice godliness with contentment meant that we waited patiently for God to provide, and he did. And, as we waited, we reminded ourselves to thank God for what we had. “Don’t be anxious about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition *with thanksgiving,* let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” Contentment!

There are many things that money can buy, but it can’t provide the most important things in life. As the Beatles, who had more money than they knew what to do with, famously sang, “Money can’t buy me love.” Money can buy a house, but not a loving home; it can buy entertainment, but not happiness; it can buy a bed, but not a peaceful night’s sleep; it can buy a good life, but it can’t buy eternal life.

But, let’s be honest about this. It is hard to live God’s way. The reason is, primarily, because we are bombarded ceaselessly with powerful appeals to buy this, send for that, and to borrow from the future to live in the present. We are told that we all deserve more than what we have. How do we resist the worldly obsession with having more? Perhaps it will help if we consider Paul’s warning in verses nine and ten.

What happens to those who long to be rich? They fall into temptation, they are trapped by their desires, and they experience ruin and destruction. Some even wander from the true faith, and find themselves pierced with many sorrows. Is it really worth it to fulfill a desire to be rich, to love money so much that you are willing to sell your soul to have it?

One day we will all stand before God. We may have lived this life in a multi-million dollar mansion, or we may have lived in a tent under the bridge. But on that day no one will be able to tell the difference between the millionaire and the poor person, for they will not have been able to bring their home with them. What will matter for them, what will matter for each one of us, is how we lived with what God provided. Were we content? Were we satisfied with living a life that was pleasing to God? In such contentment there is great wealth.