



# NEW LIFE

## BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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*"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)*

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## THE PRIVILEGE OF CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT

### Introduction

We live our lives in a discontented world of murmuring and complaints and it is all too easy for the Christian to share its spirit. The Bible is the only book that remedies this spiritual disease in practical and effective ways. *"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content"* Philippians 4:11. This text contains a very timely cordial to revive the drooping spirits of the saints in these sad and sinking time. Discontentment is real and has already come upon all the world to try the inhabitants of the earth. The Apostle holds forth experimentally in this Gospel-text the very life and soul of all practical divinity. **Let us enroll in the school of Christ, and learn lesson every Christian should in the power and growth of godliness in his own soul must necessarily learn from him.**

Contentment is the most powerful proof to the truth of our Christian profession. As Christians we profess the glorious truth of the sovereignty of God. Our God reigneth and He rules over everything, and over us.

The proof that our confession is genuine will be found in a life of contentment. A life of contentment in the Lord before your children, the world and your family and friends, is the strongest witness you could ever give of your confession of faith.

Our reaction to how much we are paid; to our house and the things in it; to our looks; how we react to setbacks and disappointments is the confession that we make before the world. Contentment seals our confession. Contentment is seen in our lives when we believe and praise God that we are in the hands of God. In a life of contentment we are showing that we believe the power and the grace of God. Therefore, is to say with the apostle Paul in Philippians 4:13, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* It is expressed in the words of Asaph in Psalm 73:25, *"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."* I have no more desires on earth if I have Thee. *"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want"* (Psalm 23:1). I do not lack for the Lord is my portion (Psalm 119). It is to be truly happy, to be truly content in belonging to the living and true God. Therefore contentment is the mother of all...

*Continued on Page 2...*

graces. For out of the womb of contentment is born thankfulness, joyfulness, love and usefulness in our Christian walk.

Do we possess the grace of Christian contentment, of peace and a satisfaction in our soul? Do we believe that God will meet all our needs and has met our great need in Christ, and that the heavenly Father works all things for our good?

Or do we live a life of discontentment? Are we thankful about our spouse, church, house, our cars, our jobs, pays, weights, looks, children, or clothes, or that we have no or little money, that we are dissatisfied with our wife or husband, that we are dissatisfied with a single life or married life, or with the church or with the elders, or with fellow believers or with ourselves or God?

### **Content in the Grace of God**

Contentment is a very important word in the Scriptures. If depression may be said to be the life in darkness, contentment is the life in the sunshine of God's countenance. **Contentment is the crown of the Christian life.** The word means "to be sufficient, to be enough, to be full." God Himself is the complete and sufficient One. He is full. Contentment, therefore, involves God. Contentment can be found only when the God of the Bible is our God by His grace.

Philippians 4:11 says, *"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."* Again we read in 1 Timothy 6:6-8, *"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."* In Hebrews 13:5 we are exhorted that our *"conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he (God) hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."* We also find the word contentment in the Scripture translated by the word sufficient, for instance, in 2 Corinthians 9:8: *"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."* And again, 2 Corinthians 12:9, God's words to the apostle Paul concerning the thorn in the flesh: *"My grace is sufficient for thee"*.

What is the secret of contentment? Contentment is the confidence of faith in the sufficiency of God's provision for my needs and it is the confidence of the sufficiency of God's grace for every circumstance. The evidence of contentment is to experience the peace of God. It is to say, *"Have Thine own way."* It is the knowledge of God's power and the knowledge of God's grace, a knowledge rooted in the heart of faith. Hebrews 13:5 says, *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."*

**To be content means that one believes God will meet his needs and that God will work all circumstances for his good.** A godly person has found...

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what the envious, greedy and discontented are looking for and never find. He has found satisfaction when he has found rest for his soul in God.

## **Counterfeits of Contentment**

To know what Christian contentment is, we must distinguish it from its counterfeits. We must know what it is not. Christian contentment is placid, easy-going, and matter-of-fact. You may have such a personality or temperament. But you must not confuse that temperament with the grace of contentment. It is not simply about our personal tolerance level as a measure of contentment.

**Christian contentment is not indifference or complacency.** For while one can be easy-going over setbacks and complacent about problems, one can also then be easy-going over sin and complacent about God. Contentment is the spiritual transforming grace as a result of the life of the Spirit of God working in our hearts.

**Contentment is not self-righteousness or to be self-satisfied.** When God gives us the grace of Christian contentment it does not mean that we do not do our best. Christian contentment is not self-satisfaction, of the brand of the Pharisees who felt no guilt, no sense of failure, before the holy God. That is something that is rooted in the conceit of self. That is blindness, spiritual ignorance, and folly before the thrice Holy God, who calls us to be holy and to serve Him with a wholehearted obedience. Contentment is not simply a matter of temperament, it is not simply a matter of self satisfaction, it is not simply that we do not complain. All of those things do not add up to Christian contentment. 1 Timothy 6:6 says it all, *"But godliness with contentment is great gain."*

**Christian contentment is not inner repression.** It is not when all of our desires and ambitions are firmly repressed within us. Christian contentment is not the ability simply to hold things down. Christian contentment is a gracious work in the heart. It is a giving all things over to the hand of God. It is submitting to the hand of the Lord and believing that what He does He does well. Contentment is when the grace of God is rooted in the heart, it is inward. It transcends the physical and the material. The apostle Paul said, *"I am content in whatsoever state I am."* That is the difference between being content with the world and being content in the world. We may be content in the world, in the world of things; but we are not contented with it. Our contentment is not due to our possessions, to the things that God has given to us in this world. We are content in the world temporarily but what gives us contentment is not the physical, not the material, but it is God Himself.

Christian contentment is a present possession, we cannot plan our contentment because we are presently sinful, rebellious, and discontent. So often we say, "Well, when I get to this certain point and when we have this and that in my life, then I will be contented." And that is present discontentment and covetousness in action.

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The Word of God teaches contentment (1 Timothy 6:6). The psalmist says, "*I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.*" (Psalm 4:8). It is the present possession of Christ. It is the present knowledge of faith that God rules over all. **Contentment is a present possession, not only a future hope.**

Be alert and fight against all that becomes an obstacle to Christian contentment. There is always the temptation and danger of covetousness. The Lord warned, Beware of covetousness. A man's life consists not in the abundance of the things that he possesses (Luke 12:15). Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt and where thieves break through and steal (Matthew 6:21-33). Remember that it is harder for those who have riches to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Let the grace of God transform us in our life toward money and toward worldly things and possessions in a very profound way. We must be aware of the deceitfulness of riches that is spoken by our Lord in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13). Happiness, personal worth and success are not found in one's possessions, or achievements. That is worldly paganism in action. True religion is a complete trust in God. Covetousness dulls our spiritual senses and debases us and turns our minds into a mind of physical pleasure and personal gain.

### **Spiritual Joy and Satisfaction**

**Contentment, therefore, is the grace of God to make God's value judgments concerning what is truly rich.** True richness is to have a clear conscience before God and a joy in serving God with whatever he has given us (Acts 23:1, 24:16). True richness is to have fellowship with the living God through faith in Jesus Christ. True richness is the peace of God in my heart. True richness is the assurance that we are accepted in the beloved Son of God.

Learn to be content in the Lord and avoid practical avarice or covetousness which is rebellion against the will of God.

Discontentment and rebellion before God will do two things. It will, first of all, make us blind to the gifts that God has given to us in our wives or husbands, church, talents and possessions because we become too obsessed with what they are not than with what God wants us to be. So we can become blind to the gifts that God has given. Secondly, it will make you unable to appreciate Him and murmur and complain against Him instead just like the Israelites in the wilderness (Numbers 11:1-10).

**Discontentment is basically rooted in discontentment with God, with the truth of His sovereignty or the lack of understanding of it.** That must come down to our hearts. Our lives are marked out with His gracious care.

**Contentment gives us peace and strength and an eagerness and...**

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**readiness to serve Him.** It is an inner calm with the grace of God so that we become a devoted worker. We become energetic unto every good work. The contented person is the person who has a spiritual sensitivity. He believes that God is with him and he is content to persevere in obedience. Hear the word of God: *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee"* (Isaiah 26:3). Let us trust in the Lord Jehovah, for in the Lord is everlasting strength.

### **Present Reality in Christ**

God has supplied all our needs all these years and we have lacked nothing. He has always faithfully provided, and we thank Him and those who were His agents to help us in times of need.

Are we unshakably content in Christ? Our greatest need is to know that we are all sinners and God is the only Saviour and Lord and know that He is with us when we repent and believe in Him. That is all we want as Psalm 23:1 says, *"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."*

Are we truly content in the Lord today? Are we united with Jesus Christ by saving faith in him alone? Can we rest in God completely, no matter what happens? Our Lord says *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* (Matthew 11:28)

### **Conclusion**

Let us dare to believe and trust in the promises of God's word. We are able to do all things in him who gives us strength constantly. Our life does not consist in the abundance of things, Jesus said. Our life consists in our vital union with Jesus Christ, and he can cause us to be content always. Therefore, let us not be anxious with anything (Philippians 4:6). He is with us, and he shall never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5), He will be with us, strengthening us, even in the hour of our death and when we die, God will send his angels to carry us into the very presence of God. He who has started the wonderful saving work in our souls will continue and finish it till the very end, and make us victorious and glorious at His soon coming and that is our greatest contentment.

*Rev Jack Sin, Maranatha B-P Church, S'pore  
(adapted from Maranatha Messenger dated 9 March 2008)*

**WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON**  
**CHURCH THEME: WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR**  
**AND TREMBLING. (Philippians 2:12)**

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm.**

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
<b>Morning</b>	<i>Today: 30/03/2008</i>	<i>Next Week: 06/04/2008</i>	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome Daniel Price, I Hawkins and Marie Oswald to our morning worship service last Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Rev Jack Sin	
<i>Message:</i>	The Full Extent of Christ's Obedience	Divine Requirements for Every Believer	
<i>Text:</i>	Philippians 2:5-11	Deuteronomy 10:1-21	
<i>Organist:</i>	Pr Mark	Anthony	
<b>Evening</b>			
<i>Chairman:</i>	John Poh	Jonathan Kin	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Rev Jack Sin	
<i>Message:</i>	The Heart of Wisdom	Managing Depression – God's Way	
<i>Text:</i>	Proverbs 2		
<i>Pianist:</i>	Joy	Hubert	
Other Duties			NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
	<i>Today: 30/03/2008</i>	<i>Next Week: 06/04/2008</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lord's Supper:</b> Next Lord's Day, we will be observing the Lord's Supper. Please come with your hearts prepared.</li> <li>• <b>Seminar on 12 Apr (3:30pm):</b> Rev Jack Sin will be conducting a seminar, "<i>Lessons in Bible Interpretations and Application,</i>" in place of the Saturday Bible Study.</li> <li>• <b>Sabbath School:</b> Please note that class is held at the Library after the morning worship. You are encouraged to bring children of ages 6-12 for the lessons.</li> <li>• <b>Book Table:</b> Please feel free to browse the book table for materials that are of interest to you.</li> <li>• <b>Annual Congregational Meeting (ACM) 2008:</b> Please note that the ACM will be held on 6 April after the morning worship service. All members are required to attend.</li> <li>• <b>Corrigendum:</b> Please note that the article printed in last week's (23 Mar) bulletin was adapted from Rev Jack Sin's message preached at Grace BP Church during their Easter service and not adapted from their weekly. We apologise for the mistake.</li> </ul>
<i>Ushers</i>	Josiah / Sharon	Daniel / Joyce	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Esmeralda	Carol	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Maureen	Constance	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>Bible Study:</i>	No DHW Class	No DHW Class	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 4 Apr	7:30pm	<b>Young Adults Fellowship:</b> Prayer Meeting	
Sat 5 Apr	3:30pm	<b>Seminar: Perils of Compromised Psychological Counselling</b> – Rev Jack Sin	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
<b>Offering:</b> £292.54		<b>Book Sale:</b> £2.60	
<u>Memory Verse</u>			
<p><i>Last Week (Mar 08 Wk 4): Psalm 121:4</i>                      Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.</p> <p><i>This Week (Apr 08 Wk 1): Psalm 121:5</i>                      The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.</p>			