

Worship August 27/28, 2022 Message by Ken King

Scripture: Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16 (NIV2011)

*“Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering. Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. 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.” So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?” Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”*

SERMON - Happy and Content

Wouldn't it be great if all the people you met were “Happy and Content?” Wouldn't it be great if you were “Happy and Content?” I assume those answers would be “YES, tell me more tell me more.” So if you are Happy and Content, listen to see if I miss anything, if you aren't happy and content listen to the suggestions given to us in today's Scriptures.

Six easy Steps to contentment and happiness. Now all of these are all actions steps - that means you have to do or practice them if you want to be “Happy and Content.” So here we go.

First: Keep loving each other as brother and sister (the whole family). Now that is a pretty big order. Obviously, the author had both a brother and sister. I have both and loving them is a different kind of love. Of course you realize that there are some people that are easy to love and others that we have to love intentionally.

Without love everything else is irrelevant. This love has little to do with affection or romantic love, but is a love which is true and reveals itself in action. It is a pure love. That means we have to accept them and all of their faults. We accept them regardless of how they treat us. We love them even if they have the wrong views on politics, or raising their family. We love them no matter how they treat us. We love them regardless of any thing or any action. So the

first step in contentment is accepting and loving everyone - PERIOD!

By the way, I love all of you, just as Jesus loves you. Unconditionally, with all your little quirks that bug me, I still love you.

Second: Hospitality. "Hospitality" literally comes from two words which means "lover of strangers." In Biblical times travel was different. No Hotels with free breakfast. So as a Christian traveling, you would look for others who shared your faith and welcomed them in to your home. Now that is kind of a cool idea.

You have to admit that when you invite someone into your home, you are doing something special. You are exhibiting hospitality. You open your door or home to someone. Now we are hesitant to do that today. You have to be special to be invited into someone's home.

However, when we do that many times people come as strangers but leave as dear friends. The hospitality of opening up ourselves, our minds and our hearts. Think of the times you have offered to meet with someone, or volunteer. You leave yourself open to being a "lover of strangers." We have had several exchange student and foreign visitors over the years and I can say they have come as strangers but have left as friends and part of our family. A part of them still lives with us in our minds and hearts.

Hospitality builds bonds. By sharing our hearts, we can have an openness to others, a concern for others, a desire to love others as they are.

We never know who the strangers we offer hospitality might be. Hospitality is its own reward. We may never know who may benefit from what we do. Many times we look at hospitality to those less fortunate. But we should show hospitality to all.

Thirty-eight years ago, I was in the lobby of the Sheraton Hotel in San Francisco, when a man approached me and asked if I could lend him \$10.00. My response was "no." His response

was, “you could but you chose not to. That was your choice. “You can imagine the impact that had on me or I would not remember that today. Hospitality should be to everyone.

As a member of this church what is our hospitality? We do have our community meal and share an opportunity to be a friend to those who attend. What about worship? Why haven’t you invited someone into this house with you? You never know whose life might change because of your hospitality.

THIRD: Empathy - putting yourself in a position to understand someone’s issues and struggles. Hebrews mentions those in prison, again at that time Christians were being put in prison because of their faith, but think of the number of people PAUL touched and converted while he was in Jail.

In Sheboygan we are so blessed with a Chaplin and volunteers who go into the prisons and detention center to share the story and love of Christ. But there are other people fighting issues every day. Those addicted to drugs, those recovering from drug use, human trafficking victims, the homeless, the mentally and emotionally challenged, they need our empathy and prayers. There are Christians being challenged every day in other countries and in some cases even in our country.

Christian empathy and love is caring for, and watching out for those who are facing the challenges of life. WE need not only to be empathetic, but provide encouragement for those facing the challenges of their daily life.

FOURTH: Christian Marriage - honor it, celebrate it, put up with it. Marriage is dedication to each other, compromising, sacrificing, caring, loving and the mutual love and devotion to Christ. There is a saying that if the Queen is Happy, there is peace in the kingdom.

But it is the mutual love of Christ that makes a marriage thrive. There is the story of a

Pastor getting up at a 50th anniversary celebration and saying “Mary and Joe have had 50 years of wedded bliss.” Then Mary and Joe stepped up to the microphone and said. “Well it was more like 20 years of wedded bliss, the other 30 we really had to work at.”

Yesterday was Bob and Jamie Finks 55th year of marriage. Last week they shared a memory of their marriage when Jamie threw a package of frozen bologna at Bob. Interesting they remembered the event but not the why or what had provoked the action. A great lesson: Forgiveness and Forget it is a good thing in marriage.

FIFTH: Set your priorities? It is so very easy to get what we want and what we need confused. Know what is important and make sure you have your priorities in order.

We are told to beware of the Love of Money, coveting, greed, and immorality. Nothing can destroy a man or woman, or a church, like money and material things. It subtly takes our focus from God and makes us worry and think about other things.

I remember someone telling me that money wasn't everything, but it sure is a close second. Material things will never satisfy us.

On my first trip to Haiti and New Missions I saw a sign in the cafeteria. The sign read: THERE ARE TWO WAYS OF GETTING EVERYTHING YOU WANT OUT OF LIFE: 1- Keep accumulating and 2 - Desire less. That helped to change my outlook on things. Once I started desiring less, I was surprised how much more I had than I needed.

That was reinforced a few days later. Charlie was a Haitian boy who I became attached to. One day I gave him 2 baseball hats. The next day, I saw him wearing one of the hats and a boy he was playing with had the other one on. It occurred to me that his action was to share what he didn't need with others. After all, he only needed one. If you have a relationship with Jesus and are content, you are rich beyond measure.

Here is the Priority List:

GOD - First

OTHERS - Second

I AM Third

So the Question is: What gets in the way of us being content? Simply put: FEAR.

FEAR that we might not have what we need. Fear of what might happen if we give of ourselves unselfishly. Fear that we won't have enough. Fear that someone might take advantage of us. Fear, Fear, Fear.

Do you know what FEAR is? False Evidence Appearing Real.

We often fear because we feel our needs will not be met. Fear that we won't have enough, fear of not being loved, fear we might do something wrong, FEAR of loving someone and not getting love back, fear of caring too much, of giving too much of our self.

Have you ever been afraid of doing something, and then afterwards, wondered why you were afraid at all. I remember a story of an insurance salesman who was making a sales call. He was sure he couldn't make the sale. After all he was sure the people didn't need life insurance. I was sure they didn't have the money to pay the premium. He kept convincing himself of why he couldn't make the sale. He then walked up to the door. Knocked on it. When the people came to the door he said. "I am sure you don't need any life insurance and couldn't afford it anyway." He turned around and left. His FEAR lead to never knowing if someone needed what he had to offer.

Let me ask you a question? How many birds have been killed by a scarecrow? NONE that I am aware of. One of my favorite images was a bird sitting on a Scarecrow, pulling a piece of straw out to build a nest. The bird had overcome the fear, had taken the fear factor out of its

life. Because the bird had overcome the fear, it was able to get what it needed to build a nest.  
A life free from fear comes from a life that is fully satisfied in Christ!

So here is the moment you have been waiting for: The Sixth Step to happiness and Contentment - Realizing that Jesus is our helper. Jesus is and should be the constant in our lives. He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He will never leave you or forsake you.”

It is this promise of God’s faithfulness that carries our worries, calms our fears, and lightens our depression. Discontentment is a disease that will steal your joy and take away your peace.

#### The result of Contentment

- 1) Love without limits – let brotherly love continue
- 2) Hospitality to others
- 3) Empathy for others
- 4) Commitment to your marriage
- 5) Setting our priorities - God first, Others second and I am third
- 6) Realize that Jesus is our helper, the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Fear is a reality in our lives but with Jesus, our helper, it doesn’t have to rule our lives.

As we walk in our journey of contentment with Christ there will be issues, situations and frustrations with family, friends and foes. However, you can remain content, calm and you will conquer your fears with God as your helper. We will never find ourselves abandoned and deserted. No matter what we face in life, we can say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.”

When we are content in Jesus our fears fade and our faith reinforced. Find out what amazing results happen when we learn to be satisfied with Jesus! **HAPPY AND CONTENT.**

Let us Pray. Dear Lord we want to sing the Sacrifices of Praise you have given us. We ask for your help in dealing with and eliminating the fears we have. We ask for your help in striving for the contentment we can have in knowing you as our Lord and Savior and that you are always there for us. We pray that we can be an action people, putting you first and others second ahead of our concerns, knowing that you will take care of all of our needs. We ask this all in your name and for your glory. Amen.