

Theme: We are called to shape our souls by putting away greed, embracing contentment, and finding our deepest joy and satisfaction in God.

## I. Intro - Lord of the Rings - Gollum's Greed

- A. The Hobbit Smeagol finds the ring; covets it
- B. He actually kills for it; Ring becomes his 'precious'
- C. The Ring never satisfies but consumes and deforms
- D. This is a picture of the power of greed to deform us
- E. How do we shape a contented rather than greedy soul?

## II. The Call To Contentment

### A. We are called to contentment

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." Hebrews 13:5

- 1. We are told to be content - this is a call for us
- 2. The verbal "be content" is the actual call - don't love money is part of how we get there

### B. Putting off, putting on, being renewed

**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."** <sup>6</sup> So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" Heb 13:5-6

- 1. **Put off greed** - v5
  - a. To shape a contented soul we first put off greed
  - b. The central form of greed is love of money

- c. The love is really for what money brings - possessions, power, fame, people, security
- d. Greed/loving money is a trap and root of evil actions  
People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. <sup>1</sup> Timothy 6:9-10
  - 1. Greed is a root vice (v10) - leads to many other sins
  - 2. This is why the desire to get rich leads us into many temptations, which plunge us into destruction (v9)
  - 3. Greed deforms us like it did Smeagol - it can change us into seemingly different people
  - 4. Greed can never be satisfied - it promises joy and satisfaction but these never come, and we become deformed in the process
- e. The soul shaped by greed will lie, cheat, steal, and sacrifice relationships with other people in the attempt to possess what it thinks will bring joy and satisfaction
- f. The soul shaped by greed is a black hole for joy and contentment - it can never be satisfied

### 2. **Put on contentment** - v5b

- a. After putting off greed, we must put on contentment
- b. This is the opposite of greed's never satisfied desire
- c. Greed and contentment are not based on what things we possess, but on the condition of our soul  
I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. <sup>13</sup> I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:12-13

1. Paul's contentment did not arise from his circumstances, but from His relationship to Christ
2. If we can not be content with little, we will never find true contentment no matter what we possess
- d. The soul shaped by contentment will find joy in God and the gifts He gives us rather than longing for what we do not have

### 3. Renewed knowing God is with us & is enough - v5-6

- a. The writer gives us the basis for contentment - the promises of the Gospel
- b. The secret of contentment is not trying to see what we possess differently, but in seeing that God Himself is with us and is sufficient
- c. Our minds have been renewed when we know that our security and satisfaction lies not in what we possess, but in Who possesses us!
- d. No matter our circumstances, God has not and will not ever abandon us so we can be content in our present
- e. No matter what the future may hold, God will be with us and help us, so we can be content in our future
- f. All of this is secured for us by Christ and given to us in the Gospel
- g. But we will never reach this stage if we do not daily put off greed and its practices, and daily put on contentment and its practices

## III. **Applying the Word: Shaping A Contented Soul**

### A. How can I put off greed and its practices this month?

1. We are entering the high holy days of greed

2. Our entire culture will be calling us to an orgy of dissatisfaction and greed for the coming month
3. Practices to put off greed this month
  - a. Determine to not go into debt in an orgy of spending
  - b. Limit your time looking for sales and shopping
    1. Amazon and the mall are pagan temples, and shopping is the liturgy shaping our souls to worship possessions rather than God
    2. Beware of this false god!
  - c. Limit your time looking for sales and shopping - both total time and also by restricting certain days
  - d. Train our kids to value people more than things

### B. How can I put on contentment this month?

1. It is not enough to try and resist greed - we must positively cultivate contentment
2. Practices to put on contentment this month
  - a. Consciously give thanks to God each day for what He has already given us
  - b. Consciously live in the present moment, rather than focusing on a future time
  - c. Consciously live in the present place, rather than focusing on somewhere else
    1. FOMO - fear of missing out. Research shows that thinking about what others are doing rather than focusing on our present time and place actually reduces our joy and contentment in what we are doing - even if we admit it is better! (Hidden Brain, episode 68)
    2. This is why social media often makes people more unhappy

- d. Focus on the joy of the people God has placed in your life - family, friends, church
  - 1. Focus on giving thanks for who they are - and not focusing on who they are not
  - 2. Express gratitude to them verbally or in writing

C. How can I find my contentment in God rather than things?

- 1. The goal is to have a soul shaped so that it finds its deepest joy and contentment in God
- 2. This is why Paul was content and full of joy though he struggled with poor health, was wrongly accused, placed in jail, and had no possessions.
- 3. Practices to renew our joy and contentment in God
  - a. Confess when our soul is lured by other things, and ask God to give us joy in Him
  - b. Read the devotional Behold the Lamb of God, and let the marvel of the Gospel shape your soul
  - c. Spend extra time listening to worship music, especially songs that related to the coming of Christ
  - d. Spend daily time in God's Presence, and express verbally that He is enough

D. A closing prayer to shape contented souls

The Lord bless you and keep you; <sup>25</sup> the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; <sup>26</sup> the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” Numbers 6:24–26

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.” <sup>6</sup> So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?” Hebrews 13:5–6

### Shaping A Contented Soul

Hebrews 13:5-6  
 November 26, 2017  
 Prayer  
 Hebrews 13:20-21

Teaching keywords: contentment; gratitude and thanksgiving; money and finances; character