

**Preaching Christ....  
...by the power of the Holy Spirit  
...and the authority of the Word of God**

**Date:** 08 October 2023  
**Services:** *Across the Diocese*  
**Series:** Peace Forgiveness Contentment  
**Title:** Contentment in an age of dissatisfaction  
**Passage:** Philippians 4:8-13

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**INTRODUCTION**

Must be 15 years ago now – a well-known American preacher from America came out to do some ministry in Sydney

He reflected on his time just trying to understand a little of Australian culture

...and after a month in Sydney he reckoned he knew what this nation's idol is.

I wonder what you thought he said?

What is Australia's **idol**?

What do people **live** for? **Work** for? Want above **all else**?

He reckoned it was **COMFORT. Comfort.**

...that everything we do is about trying to make ourselves just that **little bit more comfortable.**

So we might shift house that we might be a little more comfortable.

We might dress for comfort

We might want a little bit more money so that we'll be a little more COMORTABLE!

We might dress in a particular way for all our friends so that when we meet with them, we might find it **comfortable.**

We go along with trends in society so we can be a little more **comfortable.**

**Comfort. COMFORT. //**

I wonder if you can relate to that?

I wonder if you consider that Australians on the whole are looking for **comfort** – and that this is what **you too** are looking for? //

It seems to me that Australians **do** on the whole lack **contentment**...

...and they're looking for it in all **types** of **places**...

Some by trying to build their **career**... some by achieving some sporting **goal** like a **triathlon** or marathon or **similar**...

Some by trying to win **lotto**...

Whatever it **takes**...

Some people try **meditation** or reading **philosophy** or getting into eastern **religions**...

**Anything!** – just to find some **answers**, some **peace**...

...some **answers** to the **confusion** and **hurt** which life has brought along the **way**... //

But you know what?

People are not finding it.

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Contrast this with what the Apostle Paul said: (1 Timothy 6:7-8): *For we brought nothing **into** the world, and we can take nothing **out** of it. But if we have **food and clothing**, we will be **content** with that.*

**THE QUESTIONS IS: WILL WE?**

If only we **were!!** .... We want to say to back to Paul... if **only** that – but we're not feeling it!

**Most** Australians have way **more** than we ever **need!**

We have **MORE** than just **food and clothing...**

Yet... we are not **content**. ///

He went on to say Philippians (4:12) *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*

Well – good on you **Paul...!**

I'm glad you've learnt that.... What is the **secret??**

That is what we **want to know** – that is what we want to **discover**. What is it? //

I want to talk to you today about:

1. **The trap of wanting more**
2. **The joy of knowing Jesus**

**1.THE TRAP OF WANTING MORE**

Yes.... among of the many options for lotto this week was one worth \$70M

That last time that happened it was said that half of all Australians bought a ticket. The time before – despite how many people played – the numbers didn't come up – so the amount jackpotted... that just shows you how small the odds are of winning...

Yet people looking for just **little bit more!**

Next month – Melbourne **cup** – **staggering** amount will be spent in bets... imagine the good you could do for the poor needy with the millions that will be spent on the Melbourne cup!

**Why** do people **do it?**

Because they're looking for just that **little bit more...** it's just a **little bit more** which will make them **content....** or so they **believe...**

Not a **lot!** – just a **LITTLE bit more!**

Survey – said that no matter how much money people already **have...** when asked how much more they'd need to make them content... it was consistently **10%**

So the **millionaire....** Wants just another **\$100,000...** and everything will be **ok**

And the person who has **\$40,000** just wants another **\$4,000** and everything will be **ok....**

Isn't that **staggering?**

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Just that **little bit more**...

We can't **help** it

So people end up on this **endless cycle** – **looking** – **wanting** – **working**... just for **that little bit more**... ///  
which at the present is **escaping them**.

Australians are working hard to be **content**... and then wondering why its slipped through their **hands**...

It's a tragic **situation**.

Not only is it sad to see people on this **cycle**... it is also **dangerous**...

**1 Timothy 6:9-10:** *people who want to get rich fall into temptation and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction*

So it is not a **harmless pursuit** – the pursuit of '**a little bit more**'...

There's a **trap** and **temptation** and there are **foolish** and **harmful** things that **ruin** people along the way...

...and you will know some of the stories of people who have tried to cheat the system and found themselves in trouble...

...like that con artist **Melissa Caddick**... //

4 years ago I officiated at a wedding of a man named Dave. There was kind of a hurry for the wedding as he was about to go to jail and he wanted to get married before he went in. He had been working for one of the top four banks, and he'd worked out a way of syphoning money from the bank's account into his... to the tune of around \$600,000 – so not heaps – and he was caught and after it had gone to trial, was sentenced to 3-4 years in jail.

Susan and I could tell you about story of Bill – lovely family – beautiful twin girls... Bill had a gambling problem. He had a good job with a big IT company... he was earning good money... but couldn't help himself. He lost his job and his marriage. Lost his family, his home, was declared bankrupt. And now earns whatever he can doing handy man work. And yes, he's still gambling.

It's **tragic** isn't it?

You would know many **more** stories.

Wanting more – takes its **toll**

- Stay back at work to get ahead – takes toll on marriage and relationship with children – thinking that climbing the corporate ladder with attended monetary benefits will lead to contentment
- Could have had a job at this level – but wanted one up here... because they wanted that little bit extra... and now this job means they don't get home to see the kids, rarely see the extended family. The difference between a job and this higher level compared to one at a lower level is the cost to family!!
- Maybe even on the land, wanting just that little bit more property to produce just that little bit more income... but in the end, what it costs, is way more than the investment!

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- Or people invest money in the stock market – not that there’s anything wrong with that – but if you make it your goal and your god and it goes pear shaped – you lose the lot!
- Or people who have moved overseas trying to find contentment in this place or that... or plenty of people moved to Noosa when I was there looking for that little more – ah when I move to Noosa – when I’m in the warmth – when I’m at the beach or playing golf... then I’ll be happy!!
- But guess what? You bring all your troubles with you... After moving day when you’ve arrived – you’re still **you**.... With all the same issues... and contentment escapes you **again** somehow.

It was Hugh Mackay – the social **commentator** – full of great insight into Australians who said – sooner or later baby boomers after the kids have **left**, after they’ve **made** it at **work**; after they’ve **purchased** their **dream home**... they are somehow left with that **nagging mid-life question “IS THIS ALL THERE IS?”**

They achieved **all** that they set out to **achieve** – they’ve done it all – they’ve **made** it... and yet now they’re asking, **“What’s this about?”** Is this **actually** all **there is**? And they’re **disappointed** in the end result – because they’re not **satisfied** in their **heart**.

Is this you? //

**Dissatisfied?** Looking for the next **answer**?

And the toll that has been left in its wake when people go after these as their end goals... it you’re **family’s well-being**... your wider set of **relationships**... the toll it takes is **enormous!** ///

Well – to the question ‘IS this all **there is**?’ I want to say **‘no!’**

The answer to ‘is this all there is?’ is a resounding **‘no’**.

I’m here to tell you, that there **IS more** and it is found in

## **2. The joy of knowing Jesus**

... that is where the **more** is to be found...

Paul says, “I learned to be content – whatever the circumstances” “I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation”.

And we think – imagine what that must be like.... Whatever your situation is... he’s learnt to be **content**.

How do you do that Paul; what is the secret Paul? ///

And he says the secret is a **relationship**

Not just **any** relationship

Not just any **human** relationship

Not a **relationship** like a **friend** or a **spouse**

But a relationship with the **God** who made him and loves him – the God who cares for him – and who will never leave him.

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Paul said – I can do **anything** – through him who gives me **strength!**

When he says '**anything**' he doesn't mean he can leap tall buildings in a single bound, he means, I can be **content**, no matter what the circumstance.

I can be **content** when I have plenty and when I have nothing.

I can do **anything** through him... who gives me strength.

So can you **imagine...** ?

When he's **lost and lonely**. It's **God** who gives him **strength...** and he finds **contentment**.

When he's **hungry and cold**; it's God who gives him **strength** and he can be **content ///**

And for us **friends** – so matter what your life situation is - whether you're living the high life – or feeling that your life is quite empty – you can be **content** because God **strengthens** you.

Whether you're looking for an **answer** to that question on whether there's more to life, you can be **content** because God's strengthens you

When you're feeling **alone** or **lost**? You can be **content** because God **strengthens** you

Whether **employed** or **not**. **Content** because God **strengthens** you.

Whether we're heading for another round of dry weather and cracked grounds and emptying dams... you can be content because God strengthens you...

Whether in your **family** – you are **estranged** from them or they are **away** from you – or you've sadly **lost** someone tragically – yet **content** because God **strengthens** you

When you're **struggling** to pay the **bills**, yet **content** because God **strengthens** you

It's all because of **relationship** with **God** who is **alongside** you and is **with** you. **That** is where contentment is to be **found**.

**Relationship with God!**

Because you **know** you are **deeply loved**... because you know he will never **leave** you... because you know you are **significant**... because you **realise** that you **matter** to **him**...

Because you realise that there is a **plan** and **purpose** for you... because you understand that there is a **future promised** to you...

Resting in those plans even if you're **confused** about what's **happening**... resting **content** in his plans and purposes for you...

**Content** – because of that **relationship**...

Let me tell you about Cath and Adrian.

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Brought up in another denomination. Grew up going to church and church schools.

Landed on their feet. Adrian a successful lawyer. Cath a busy mum.

Yet – there was a feeling something was missing in life.

Susan and Cath met – read Bible together. Began to have some questions and find some answers.

Cath started coming to our church in Roseville

Adrian followed

They both loved that when it came time for the sermon, everyone opened the Bible and the minister explained.

Cath became a Christian

Adrian followed a little later...

Within a few years, Cath began studying theology with Susan and became our children's minister

Adrian helped run the lawyers Christian fellowship and goes to Africa teaching the Bible to pastors who have had little education.

In relationship with God, they found the **contentment** which had eluded them despite their **worldly success**.

They found it in **relationship** with **God** – they found it in Jesus.

What they hadn't found in **church** – or **career** – or **parenthood** – they found in **Jesus** in a real and powerful way that changed their **life** and gave them **contentment**.

Heb 13:5 *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."*

You can be content with what you have because you'll always have **God**. No matter what else he has given you, you'll always have **him** – because *never will I leave you or forsake you...*

Many of us here have been **hurt** in other relationships because people have **left** us – or they've been **disloyal** or betrayed our **trust**...

That will **never** happen with **Jesus** – he will never leave our side... he will never turn his **back** on us...

That is why we can be **content** with whatever we have.

...because we'll always have our **relationship** with the Lord Jesus.

Because friends let me remind you – Christianity is all about **relationship**.

We're not on about **religion here!** I'm not into religion!

I'm not into religion that is devoid of any meaning or depth... or that plays dress-ups... any plies you with

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rules and regulations or has you go through certain rituals...

No no no - it is not all about what you must do for **God** to pass the mark... that is not what the Christian faith is all about... that is not what the Anglican church is on about.

No - what we're on about here is **real relationship** with **God** where you know you're **loved**, you know that you've been **forgiven**, you know you have **eternal life**, you know that you **matter**.

A real relationship with God which of course begins then to shape and mould and transform your life...

A real relationship which gives you **hope** and **meaning** and **purpose** and **significance**... that is what we're on about here....

**THAT** is where you'll find **contentment** and **no-where else**.

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SO: in this series we've been looking at?

How can you find **peace** in an age of **anxiety**?

It's found in relationship with the God as you trust him to lead you around as the sheep follows the shepherd... as you trust him to point you in the right direction... he will lead you beside still waters; to put you in green pastures... to be with you in the valley of the shadow of death; to pursue you with love and mercy... **that's** where you'll find **peace**...

How will you find **forgiveness** in an age of **revenge**?

You'll find it in God because he freely offers it through his **Son** the **Lord Jesus Christ** who **died** for you – he can offer you forgiveness no matter what you've **done**; no matter how far you've **strayed**; no matter what your **history** holds... /// he offers **free and full forgiveness** /// and once you've found **forgiveness** through **him** you are then enabled – empowered – inspired – to **forgive others**... ///

And where will you find **contentment** in an age of **dissatisfaction**?

In **relationship** with the **God** who loves you and will never leave your **side** and will **always** be with **you**.... And he will strengthen you – no matter what your physical, immediate circumstances – will strengthen you so you can find contentment in Him ////

So friends // no matter whether you've been with us for a long time, or only just watching these part three weeks... my prayer for you is that increasingly, you WILL find peace /// forgiveness /// and contentment // in relationship with the God who made **you, with the God** who **loves you**; with the God who gives peace, makes forgiveness possible, and allows us the joy of contentment. Amen.