

# ST. SIMEON ANGLICAN CHURCH, OFF FUTA ROAD, AKURE

## BIBLE STUDY, 17/06/2009

### STUDY 11

## CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT

Philippians 4:11

Despite our boasted progress, the vast increase of wealth, the time and money expended daily in pleasure, discontent is everywhere. No class is exempt. Everything is in a state of flux, and almost everybody is dissatisfied. Many even among God's own people are affected with the evil spirit of this age. The force of the apostle's statement will be better appreciated if his condition and circumstances at the time he made it be kept in mind. When the apostle wrote the words, he was not luxuriating in a special suite in the emperor's palace, nor was he being entertained in some exceptional Christian household. Instead, he was *"in bonds"* (Philippians 1:13, 14); *"a prisoner"* (Ephesians 4:1), as he says in another epistle. And yet, notwithstanding, he declared he was content.

Contentment is being satisfied with the sovereign dispensations of God's providence. It is the opposite of murmuring, which is the spirit of rebellion—the clay saying to the Potter, *"Why hast Thou made me thus?"* Instead of complaining at his lot, a contented man is thankful that his condition and circumstances are no worse than they are. Instead of greedily desiring something more than the supply of his present need, he rejoices that God still cares for him. Such an individual is "content" with such as he has (Hebrew 13:5). Contentment is the product of a heart resting in God. It is the soul's enjoyment of that peace which passeth all understanding. It is the outcome of my will being brought into subjection to the Divine will. It is the blessed assurance that God doeth all things well, and is, even now, making all things work together for my ultimate good. This experience has to be *"learned"* by *"proving what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"* (Romans 12:2). Contentment is possible only as we cultivate and maintain that attitude of accepting everything which enters our lives as coming from the Hand of Him who is too wise to err, and too loving to cause one of His children a needless tear.

### Questions for discussion

1. What is contentment?
2. How did Paul enter into contentment experience? Philippians 4:11
3. Is contentment realisable and attainable on earth?
4. How is it that no man is contented?
5. How will contentment make a Christian life comfortable?
6. What are the divine motives for contentment?
7. What are the hindrances to contentment? Luke 12:5; I Timothy 6:8; Colossians 3:5; Luke 3:14
8. What are the consequences of discontentment?
9. What are the gains of godliness with contentment? I Timothy 6:6, 9-10
10. How can the discontented person be cheerful? I Corinthians 10:10; Matthew 6:24, 34

### Conclusion

Real contentment is only possible by being much in the presence of the Lord Jesus. This comes out clearly in the verses which follow our opening text; *"I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens*

*me*" (Philippians 4:12, 13). It is only by cultivating intimacy with that One who was never discontent that we shall be delivered from the sin of complaining. It is only by daily fellowship with Him who ever delighted in the Father's will that we shall learn the secret of contentment. May we so behold in the mirror of the Word the glory of the Lord that we shall be "*changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*" (II Corinthians 3:18).