

Contentment Between Worlds

Cultivating Contentment

Philippians 1:19-26

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I. Introduction

We live between _____. This is the fundamental standing point of every Christian on this side of death. We are members of the Church militant, and we await the day we join the ranks of the Church triumphant (Phil. 3:20-21). Since this is the case, the sort of contentment we are called to is a contentment between worlds; it is an eschatologically oriented contentment, oriented around an ending yet to be revealed.

II. Text: Philippians 1:19-26

19 For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. 24 Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. 25 And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, 26 that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

III. A Man Between Worlds

Paul's overarching desire is to see Christ _____ in his body, whether by life—in fruitful labor (v. 22)—or else by death, for death meant more _____ (v. 23). Paul understands himself to be a man between worlds. He eagerly looked to the glories to be revealed, and yet he labored. He invested deeply in this world, faithfully carrying out the work entrusted to him which was the work Christ Himself by His Spirit was carrying out through him.

IV. The Ditch of Worldliness

Christians veer into the ditch of worldliness gradually. We, like Paul, get busy. We apply ourselves to good, fruitful labor. We work hard, put our hand to the plow. We invest in this world as we should, and Christ is magnified by our life. But then we begin to _____ here. We begin to make this our home—our present possession. And we forget that we are on _____. At this point, we have become worldly. We begin to think of this place as our lasting portion and our lot when it's not; for "here we have no lasting city: (Heb. 13:14). This is mission _____ writ large.

We are laborers in the vineyard of the Lord, and our shift will come to an end. We will certainly return here and enjoy the fruits of our labors, for we have a _____ in all of this. But before we get to do that, we have to be crowned with Christ with the crown of _____. We have to lose all things, for we can take none of it with us. This is the path paved by our Elder Brother Christ, through death to glory. The saints who have come before us have departed to be with the Lord until the dawning of that seventh and final day which has no evening.

V. The Ditch of World-Escapism

In avoiding the ditch of worldliness, the church has often fallen into another ditch, the ditch of escapism. We think back to the early proto-monks, the desert hermits. These early Christian monks were Christians who heard Jesus say to them in the Gospels to sell all they had and follow after Him. To their credit, many of these men did obey the Lord, on the first part at least. Some were quite wealthy, but they nevertheless sold all that they had. But then they went off into the middle of nowhere and took up a contemplative life, removed from the world, which in their view was the great enemy. But was this is what Jesus meant by selling all their things and _____ Him? Is this what it looks like to follow the One who took on flesh and came into the world in order to dwell among men? Not at all.

We can't just wait around for Christ to come and make all things new. Why? For Christ is even *now* making all things new. And He's doing so through the faithful labors of the Church, which continually upset the world and turn it upside down.

VI. Contentment Between Worlds

In order to cultivate this contentment between worlds we need to be renewed in the way we view every part of our life. In every area, we need to so think and act that Paul's words are heard in echo: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

1. Contentment between worlds impacts how we view our _____. We are to be content with what we have. We are to consider how to utilize what we have to further and assist our work for Christ—whether that means sharing, extending hospitality, equipping us for literal work, and so on. If our life is Christ's, then that means all our things are Christ's. And we, like Paul, should have the overarching goal of seeing Christ magnified in our lives—which includes in the way we use the things He's entrusted to our care.

- Prov. 13:2; Phil. 4:12

2. Contentment between worlds impacts how we view our _____. Children are a heritage from the Lord (Psa. 127:3). When raised well they are a great blessing, not only to ourselves but to the _____. In order to raise them to be a blessing to the world, we need to think of them as part of our mission.

- Eph. 6:4; Mal. 2:15; Psa. 127

- Jim Eliot: "Children are arrows in a quiver, and they are to be trained as missionaries and shot at the devil."

3. Contentment between worlds impacts how we view our _____. A large part of being content between worlds is being content serving at the station God has given us, whatever that might be. Some stations are less desirable than others. Some work is less glorious, less exciting, less appealing. But if you lift your head up, you can see the bigger picture—that glory awaits all those who faithfully serve the Lord in their various capacities.

- Luke 19:17

VII. Conclusion