

Living on the provisions of Christ's kingdom (Quality: Good)

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[0 : 0 0] Lord may condescend to help. I will direct your attention to the fourth chapter of Philippians and verse six. The sixth verse of the fourth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Philippians.

Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. I have stepped over verses four and five of this chapter. Verse four is a reiteration of the spirit of chapter 3.1, and we considered that together some time ago. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. Not that I question the wisdom of repetition, because my friends, to consider the Lord and his sufficiency always, in every situation, under every circumstance, this is a constant ground for rejoicing, that the Lord is on the throne, and that he is working out his purposes without let or hindrance, in every dispensation of every person's lot and life. This is a ground for rejoicing. Rejoice in the Lord always, in adversity as well as in prosperity, in age as well as in youth. All the dispensations that make up our lot and life. Each is a specific interpretation of the sufficiency of the Lord to fulfill his promise, to support his people, to sanctify them, and to keep them. So, my friends, I would not pass over this word lightly, but nevertheless, but nevertheless would just leave those few references to suffice this morning, as we would think back upon the all-sufficiency of the Lord to fulfill his people's need in every situation in the variety of circumstances that constitute the lives of the church.

And then he says, let your moderation be known unto all men. Now this is a text we've considered together previously. And I felt that there is no present need of repetition. The margin puts in every one of the things that we've considered. Let your yieldingness, yieldingness, yieldingness, be known unto all men. That your inclination is toward the Lord in everything. Let your yieldingness, yieldingness. And that will moderate from the excesses that are built into our very fallen nature. We're all creatures prone to excess. But as our hearts, by grace, yield toward the Lord, that the Lord's will is, shall I say, the preeminent factor in our approach to any consideration, then, my friends, we shall be moderate.

We shall be moderate in our outlook. We shall be moderate in our interests. We shall be moderate in our dispositions and affections. The will of the Lord will have a subduing effect upon the excesses of our fallen nature. Grace doesn't eliminate nature, but it subdues it. It subdues it. Blessed be God for the moderating influence of grace, so that our nature and its excessive and evil propensities is under a subduing power. And that power, through the sanctifying influence of it, my friends, will bring us to a constant sense of our need of the Lord and his grace at every turn of our wilderness pilgrimage.

Can you live without the Lord? Why can't you live without the Lord? One of the reasons is this. I'm frightened of myself. And I'm only safe as I'm kept. Therefore, I need the Lord to be with me to keep me. And it's only his grace that is sufficient for me. Now that's, I believe, the spirit and sentiment of verse 5. And we've dealt with it, we've considered it in detail on a previous occasion. And therefore, my friends, I'm going to move on as the Lord helps me to verse 6. Be careful for nothing, but in everything. By prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. Naturally speaking, and remember, we're talking about a sovereign and we're talking about a king.

- [6 : 39] But naturally speaking, loyalty to a sovereign is manifest in a person's contribution to the kingdom of which that person forms a part. My friends, let me illustrate what I mean.
- People receive preeminence in our land for the preeminent contribution they make toward the cause of this land, the interest of this land. If I may look back to the years of the war.
- You and I appreciate that we had generals, we had admirals, and we had air marshals that contributed of their God-given wisdom, God-given talent, to the cause and interest of our nation, so that we all felt a sense of indebtedness to those men for the exercise of their gifts in our national interests.
- And my friends, their contributions were acknowledged with our support by our sovereign. And in the, what I might term, disposal of recognition, various honors were given to various persons in acknowledgement of their outstanding contribution to the cause and need of our land.
- So that in natural things, we might say, yes, according to the amount a person can contribute to the benefit of the nation of which that person forms a part, that person is a loyal person.
- [9 : 10] That person is a very useful person in the national context.
- Well now that's naturally speaking. But my friends, we've got to completely reverse the situation in the spiritual realm.
- The most loyal person in the kingdom of Jesus Christ is not the person that contributes the most, but the person that takes out the most, that, shall I say, lives absolutely, depending, entirely depending upon the provisions of the kingdom.
- Not contributing to the kingdom, but unreservedly taking from the kingdom. The most loyal subject of Jesus Christ is the one that lives absolutely upon his bounty.
- That is dispossessed of independence and self-sufficiency. That has nothing to contribute, but needs everything to be given.
- [10 : 50] Now this is the balance of loyalty as far as the kingdom of Jesus Christ is concerned, so distinct and opposed to natural temporal sentiment.
- Do you follow me here? Some of you have been made to follow me. Some of you have been compelled by a sense of your need to realise that it's the kingdom that supports you.
- That you don't support the kingdom because you've got nothing in yourself to support it with. That you're absolutely dispossessed of everything in yourself to contribute the least thing to the cause of Christ.
- If the will of your heart was disposed so to do. And what a wonder of grace.
- My dear friends it is. To think that this kingdom is so self-sufficient in its provision that the need of its every citizen is covered in the provision which God has made in the king of this kingdom, Jesus Christ.
- [12 : 18] It has pleased the Father that in him shall all fullness dwell. If I may convey to you what I see to be the constitution of Christ's kingdom.
- It is a bountiful and all-sufficient sovereign with a kingdom of beggars. With a nation of abject dependence.
- Insufficient in and of themselves to contribute anything, one iota, toward the glory of this kingdom or the furtherance of its cause.
- You know my friends, the glory of the kingdom of Jesus Christ is his glory.
- And the glory of the saints is his glory imparted. If you see the saints of Christ as it were independent of their sovereign Lord, you see the most abject body of people that ever could be conceived.

[13 : 40] They're poor, helpless, sinful, unworthy wretches. And that's no violation.

That's no exaggeration. That's a true assessment of their natural condition. There they are, from the crown of their head to the sole of their foot, nothing but wounds and bruises and putrefying swords.

There they are, so robbed and spoiled, that they've ever been going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, in the very bent of their natural spirit, and they've fallen among thieves, and those thieves have cast them into the ditch, and they're in absolute beggary and poverty, and my friends, they're sinking to destruction.

Now, these are scriptural delineations of the true condition of the citizens of Christ's kingdom, naturally considered.

I hope none of you ever enter this chapel in hope that I'm going to say something to you which will contribute to your natural pride.

[15 : 07] My friends, I cannot do it. Now, I can't do it. Because there's nothing in man to glory.

Nothing in man to glory. The glory is the Lord's. Well, now we come to consider this sovereign Lord and his subjects.

And in the text, we have a condition of loyalty to Christ, which I might say is the penultimate of sanctification.

Because the more sanctified we are, the more dependent we shall be. The more we know Christ, the more we shall live upon Christ in the desire of our hearts.

Oh, my friends, if Christ means little to you, you know little of him. But if Christ means much to you, the Lord has favoured you with a gracious understanding of yourself and of himself.

[16 : 40] Now he says, and this is in reference to the Lord's people as they live here below, surrounded with the world and surrounded with necessity as it appertains to our natural constitution and our natural position in this present time state.

Care as it appertains to the necessities of this present life is very natural and it's very real.

Care. How can we be careless about that which is so vital to life?

You know the panic that can soon intrude if a necessity of life is denied to a community.

Just to illustrate, if we were involved in some mishap in a tunnel, we were on an underground train and suddenly a mechanical fault occurred and we realised that the oxygen supply was limited and that if we didn't act speedily in a reasonable or a brief space of time we should all suffer from asphyxia because of the lack of oxygen or lack of air.

[18 : 47] Now my friends, the need would impel our whole constitution to remedy the situation.

We should exercise our efforts to the limit to get out of that situation into a more congenial environment where there's a reasonable prospect for life or of life.

So it's natural to us in a wider context to consider the necessities of life and to apply ourselves to these things.

And my friends, it is perfectly lawful that we should be exercised with regard to the necessities of life, both personally and relatively.

I don't want you to go away from this service thinking that the gospel inclines to indifference with regard to the necessities of life.

[20 : 16] My friends, that is an excessive interpretation of gospel truth. that what the apostle by the Holy Ghost is saying here is that the things of this life must not dominate, must not captivate our thought, our interest, our affection, so that we become earthbound in our way of life, what I might term citizens of earth, as opposed to citizens of heaven and the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

I have no need to spend time this morning describing to you the captivity of millions spiritually considered as it appertains to this present life.

They're in bondage to this present life. Their whole interest is involved in this time state, its pleasures, its interests, many and various, never rise above it, they never think beyond it, and their whole exercise centers in it, this world, this life.

life, the more they can get out of life, the more they consider that they are gaining towards satisfaction.

all the misappropriated effort, all the misapplied ambition that centers in this present world.

[22 : 35] life, because life is vanity, it's but a bubble, it's like the grass of the field which today is, and tomorrow shall be cast into the oven.

My friends, to be solely engaged in the things of this present time state is like, as it were, the blind groping for the wall.

I hope, especially my young people that are launching out into life, will not be deceived by the promise of this life, because it's a fleeting promise, it's a vain hope, it's something that soon passes away, and is not.

So, my friends, you see, there are millions of witnesses to the point I make, that some are in bondage to the things of this life, the things of this world, those things that perish with the using.

Now, the Lord is saying through his servant Paul to these Philippians and to us, that we should not be in captivity, that we are by his grace delivered from this ignorance and consequent captivity which binds millions, that, if I may use this expression humbly, our horizon is not this time state, but through grace we are looking beyond this time state, to an eternal world, a better world, a world that has promise which is undaunted and undiminished, oh, a world, my friends, that so eclipses this world as to make this world's promise but a candle compared with the radiant glory of the sun in the world that is to come.

[25 : 32] Now, the apostle Paul is saying this, be careful for nothing, be careful for nothing, don't be over anxious about the things of this present world, don't let all your attentions and all your affections centre in these perishing vanities, be careful for nothing.

Martha, she strayed from the mark when favoured with the immediate presence of Jesus Christ in company with her sister Mary at Bethany.

She justly received the reproof at her Lord and Master's hand. Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

How many times you and I have felt the import of that reproof in our own spirits? We can't look at Martha with centrist and self-righteous condemnation.

We have to look at Martha with a sense of understanding, but appreciating that Martha can't be justified, and that the reproof of Christ was justified in as much as the reproof of Christ also applies to our own case and spirit.

[27 : 23] Be careful for nothing. Be careful for nothing. Christ's kingdom in its completeness appertains to his people in this world as well as in the world that is to come.

Christ doesn't just promise heaven. Now, Christ's promise is not limited to the next world.

Christ's promise covers this world and the next. And my friends, Christ's power supports his promises.

What he has promised, he is able also to perform. He will not give you a sense of security as to this, your needs in time, and then prove unfaithful or insufficient to those promises.

Christ's kingdom is a complete kingdom. And Christ's engagement as king covers the whole existence kingdom's of his church.

[29 : 02] From the womb to the tomb and on to all eternity, thy bread shall be given thee and thy water shall be sure.

The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruise of oil fail. my friends, there are great and precious promises appertaining to the need of the church in this present time state that manifest the absolute sovereignty of Christ, that if necessity requires a miracle to the support of his people, he will perform that miracle rather than his word and promise should fail.

What a wonderful word that is in Romans 8. I've repeated it in your hearing before, but it's a word that lays very near to my heart.

And I repeat it again. he that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

He that saw the need of his people and in recognition of that need, spared not his own son.

[30 : 46] If he would go to that limit to part with, so to speak, the only begotten son of his love, is there any need that he will turn away from?

Is there any need that he can deny not one? Be careful for nothing. Be careful for nothing.

My friends, there's nothing to worry about. What a manifestation of the depth of our unbelief is the anxiety of our heart.

Isn't it? What a fearful spectacle. The anxiety of our heart must appear before this all sufficient, promise giving, covenant Jehovah God.

Don't you feel ashamed of yourself? be careful for nothing. Why those fears, behold, tis Jesus holds the helm and guides the ship.

[32 : 16] Why those fears? Why those fears? Fear not, little flock. We read in our lesson, fear not, little flock.

It's your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Yes. Consider the lilies, how they grow. Look at the birds.

Not one falls upon the ground without your father. Look at the ravens, the unclean birds.

Does he deny them their supply? my friends, and so Christ in his teaching brings before us the all-sufficiency of God in the exercise of his kingdom to supply the temporal as well as the spiritual needs of his people.

Be careful for nothing. Be careful for nothing. You know, in much of our care regarding the things of this life, there is a proud independence in exercise and evidence.

[33 : 39] We want to be something. We want to be something. That's our trouble. That's our trouble.

God. But oh, he says, be careful for nothing. Nothing at all. But in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known under God.

In everything. Live dependently. Live dependently. Acknowledge this sovereign in every instance of life.

Acknowledge him. Nothing you ever have, and nothing you ever can have can be yours apart from his sovereignty.

nothing. Nothing. Nothing. If we're possessed of anything, he's given it to us.

[34 : 56] Nothing had an existence without him. Without him was not anything made that was made.

Look at the exclusive and inclusive application of that doctrine. It is truly in him we live and move and have our being.

For any person to think that their life is sustained without Christ is a travesty of truth and fact. Nothing lives independently of Christ.

Nothing. The lilies don't, the ravens don't, the sparrows don't, you and I don't. He's the giver and maintainer of all life.

Oh, what a declaration of the sufficiency of God in nature that is to faith, to quieten and subdue the unbelieving anxiety of our fallen nature.

[36 : 10] Such is the depth of unbelief that my friends, with this declaration of God's all sufficiency, we're still anxious as if it all depended upon us. There is a sense in which nothing depends upon us.

Blessed be his holy name. Well, now, be careful for nothing but in everything, by prayer and supplication, God is honoured by our acknowledgement of his absolute sovereignty and benefaction in everything.

The one that lives most to the glory of God lives most dependently upon him and in constant acknowledgement of him. My friends, where does our loyalty come in?

Where does our loyalty come in? Everything that saves us of an independence of this Christ is derogatory to his glory, but everything that is an acknowledgement of this Christ proceeds to his glory.

In everything, let your requests and thanksgivings be unto our sovereign Lord.

[37 : 39] May the Lord bless his own word. Amen.