

Without covetousness: ... be content ... I will never leave thee ... the Lord is my helper. (ii) (Quality very good)

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Preacher: Farley, Vernon (1912-1984)

[0 : 00] If the Lord will mercifully help me, I would ask your attention to Hebrews chapter 13 verses 5 and 6.

The Epistle to Hebrews 13 verses 5 and 6. Let your conversation be without covetousness and be content with such things as ye have.

For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Quite apart from peculiar temptations and lusts of the world, which assail men in general, and are likely to make them discontented and extremely covetous of another portion, there are peculiar trials which fall upon the Church of God.

And in these, they are greatly exposed to this sin, this double sin, first of discontent, then an overdesire, a covetousness of another, an easier, more congenial lot.

[2 : 11] This is the weak spot of God's people. This is where it seems they're most vulnerable when they come into manifold afflictions, along with them manifold temptations.

Thus seems in the context where Paul urges this contentedness in view of what man may do unto these Hebrews.

At that time, they were very greatly exposed to afflictions, persecutions, and crosses for Christ's sake.

Some of them, as you read in the fifth chapter, were as yet babes in grace. Very likely and prone to be tossed to and fro, to show as yet their instability.

Greatly disposed to this spirit of discontentedness. And as yet their knowledge of God and interest in Him was slender, so there's a greater disposition to covetousness, longing for and hankering after an easier road, a way round, a way to evade or avoid the troubles that were then assailing the church.

[4 : 13] We live in other days, happily not exposed to the sword, nor prison, nor that kind of persecution for truth's sake.

But still it is true, many are the afflictions of the righteous. That is inevitable. Yes, under the best circumstances, in a welfare state, there is no way to avoid every affliction, and so they come apace.

To some young in years, to those advancing in middle life, and when ages are ripe, they multiply.

And all along, is there this great tendency toward a restlessness under the dispensations of God.

that greatly various, often mysterious, deep in unfathomable minds, we find, so that poor sinners cannot trace, nor always reconcile, nor understand this way.

[5 : 46] For want of this, there is a tendency to fret, fret on various accounts.

So comes the precept. First, the precept, let your conversation, beloved, believers, notwithstanding all your seeming complaints, your injuries, and your complaints, which you think to justify, let not, let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have.

Now the things of God are right above and contrary to nature. To expect that we should be content without a murmur under painful, distressing circumstances is quite beyond nature.

And to attain to perfection in this is quite impossible. No man yet, with all the benefits arising from the grace of God, did ever attain to a perfect contentment wherein he says have no more to complain of.

He may attain to it for a season and for a time. One did, that we read of, who said, I have learned in whatsoever state I am in therewith to be content.

[7 : 59] But even that, you see, was with some measure of reserve, how can a man be content with a body of sin and death?

Hence he cries, O wretched man, O wretched state, who shall deliver me from it?

This conflict, this state of imperfection, this war in my members, captivity, this captivity, I feel, to not be content with that.

those principles which ward in his members were rebellious principles. That which I would, I do not.

That which I do, I would not. So it goes on. I longed for, prayed for, strove after, this contentment, but still it eludes me at times.

[9 : 11] Precepts still applies. And although all believers must acknowledge it is too high, I cannot attain to it, not in its fullness, not in its perfection, I cannot attain to the resignation of the dear Son of God, without a murmur, without a sinful reserve, who said, Father, thy will be done.

Can't attain to that. But, because we cannot attain to perfection, as yet, it does not release us from the precept.

So you find the prophets and apostles, under the happy influence of grace, were men of a purpose. Men of one purpose.

One thing that I desire. That will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

to behold the beauty of the Lord, to inquire in his holy temple, the same spirit obtains in Paul, I have not yet attained, I am not already perfect, but this one thing I do, I follow after, I press toward, I forget things behind, I am reaching forward, here is the burden of the precept.

[11 : 04] We might strenuously seek to conform to it. And why? On several accounts.

First, because it is pleasing to God, because of him who is so commanded, where the word of a king is, there is power, authority, because infinite wisdom is in this precept, because it is a most reasonable and rational thing so to do, because it is not unjust, nor unequal, and because too, so far as we attain, to be greatly for our benefit, and our peace, and our usefulness, and the composure of our souls.

Well, has it been entitled a rare jewel of Christian contentment? experience shows, both in the word and in your hearts, that this is a very, very difficult thing, extremely so.

For our poor hearts, for our proud wisdom, for our rebelliousness, for our self-will, self-pity, self-love, to be graciously allayed, lowered, moulded, submissive, resigned into the will and way of God, is a very difficult thing, and it is the very fight of faith, to attain there too.

And to see the force, to see the difficulty of it, you might consider that law and terrors do but harden.

[13 : 28] All the time, they work alone. All the precepts, all the rods, all the sore afflictions, all the fiery trials, all the deep waters, those alone, do not bring the heart into this frame, to be without covetousness, to fall sweetly into our lot, with godly contentment.

They will not do it alone. Isn't that so? You take a rebellious child, all the while it is in its natural state.

All the while it is moved by its own passions. You may chasten, you may thrash, you may scourge, but you will not drive in the spirit of a filial obedience and resignation to your father's will.

Some of us know that. Oh, the devilishness that's in the heart. Oh, the spirit of naughtiness that is there.

And rods will not drive it out. but other things can't roll it and bring it down and bring it under.

[15 : 01] Which leads us on to this grand method and remedy suggested in the text. for he has said I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.

What terrors and rods of themselves will not do this when this doctrine drops as the rain and distills as the dew in the soul that will do it.

That will soften that will melt that will bring down high looks that will silence fretting that will mortify and mutilate covetous lusting after other things for he hath said and mark this by the apostle is laid as it were over and against the disease let your conversation be without covetousness be content for here's the argument here's a doctrine seek to hear it meditate inwardly digest it God God blessing it to your soul you shall find it a sovereign remedy for the risings of discontent and evil covetousness for he hath said it is extremely important here to link it up with

Genesis 28 Paul is quoting he's applying that wondrous promise made to Jacob he's applying it to these godly Hebrews us and in so doing he gives us the authority permission and right to appropriate the promises made to our fathers to show us they are not of private interpretation to remind us that God's love to Jacob is of equal dimension to all his believing seed take note of that it's of great value it is not to Jacob alone is his promise given but was to him in a personal way but for you you

Hebrews for me the apostle Paul and for all a Jacob seed who shall yet arise and shall trust in Jacob's God see that for he hath said I I will never leave thee nor forsake thee as if Paul would say now you weigh well this doctrine lay it alongside of your trouble and see then if you can complain see then if you have anything to fret about at all when you seek to assess the height and depth length and breadth of this wondrous statement I will never leave thee nor forsake thee who are the characters what is their name have you reason to believe you are included you might say it very nice to read promises of this nature how do they embrace my case how shall

[19 : 34] I find an entrance into them well as said they were made to Jacob and to Jacob's seed spiritual sense take it this way art thou become a pilgrim like Jacob was called out and called in leaving this world behind seeking a city out of sight art thou a stranger and a sojourner in this world art thou seeking a better country which is unheavenly for Jacob was art thou made to see thy unworthiness Jacob was I'm unworthy says he of the least of all thy mercies not worthy of the least of them a poor sinner once a deceiver yet

God hath called me out out of darkness into his marvelous light thou is a pilgrim willing to endure hardness forsaking all things casting off the works of darkness seeking that city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God not thou one of these people this was his character a separated one this was his character a humbled one once more this good man Jacob was a wrestler he had power with God he is a man great at prayer a man who was compelled to pray

God saw to it and trials made the promises sweet to him trials gave new life to prayer in Jacob's case do you find it so then again dear Jacob one of his characteristics was a worm for very weakness fear not says God thou worm Jacob ye men of Israel I will hold thy hand have you grown in grace to that extent as yet consider yourself to be a worm very easily said some refute it I've heard it said

I'll not sing that first hymn of yours great God how infinite art thou what worthless worms are we let the whole race of creatures bell and pay their praise to thee no you won't sing that until you are taught by Jacob's God this is growing in grace worm Jacob think of the expression and its meaning weakness in the extreme weakness when I'm weak then I'm strong think of it in this light contemptuousness oh you sperm the creature it is revolting to you a worm contemptible in the sight of men and in your own sight too behold

I'm vile said one a worm crawling in and out the earth at last is my nature will be my home forever if grace did not prevent well he has said to such a character I will never leave thee nor forsake thee heart thou one be be Jacob's poor needy in thine own eyes contemptible yet clinging and cleaving to Jacob's God I will not leave thee said Jacob I will not let thee go except thou bless me what a marvelous reciprocation there is there not

[25 : 11] God saith I will never leave thee Jacob saith I will not let thee go blessed mutuality which God is the author of and which he will reciprocate God saith then to Jacob and to his seed I will never leave thee nor forsake thee you will see at once that the promise holds two things in it which are mentioned in the full in the chapter we read it means this first I am with thee secondly I will not forsake thee while we touch upon a little of the preciousness of this word do you in your mind link it and associate it with your conversation being without covetousness and being content associated with those words first then

I will never leave thee think think of it as the father God the father speaking to his child I will never leave thee because I am with thee in an indissoluble bond I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction I have chosen thee in Christ Jesus from before the foundation of the world I am the God of Jacob wonderful condescension that the Lord should associate his great high and lofty name with a sinner and that not in a temporary way it is an ineffable and most blessed relationship father to

Jacob it is indissoluble for its strength it is everlasting as to its time and it is beneficial in the highest sense in its character I'm with thee Jacob as thy father when thy earthly father and mother forsake thee I will not and thy loving father I've loved thee with an everlasting love therefore will with loving kindness have I drawn thee and this fatherhood is no common blessing God is the father of his people he's the father of mercies he's the

God of all comfort to them so that this relationship is filled with inexhaustible fullness and blessing which God the father begins in time and continues throughout eternity to give out of his fatherly love goodwill and pleasure I the father will not leave thee nor forsake thee what this means in glory we cannot say fully what it means in time we have some clear indication such as this your heavenly father knoweth what things ye have need of to sit against your being over anxious for the morrow again your father he chastens for profit he knows what he have need of in that sense his aim and design is that ye might be partakers of his holiness your heavenly father he will dwell with you as sweetly Jesus said if a man keep my words I will love him my father will love him and we will make her abode with him see that so once more in the Corinthians you read this I will be a father unto you and ye shall be my son and daughter saith the Lord God Almighty I will dwell with them I will walk up and down in them saith the Lord oh wondrous thought that this relationship is as good as it is true and it is eternal in its nature I will never I will never undo this I will never dissolve it not on any considerations whatever Jacob has here immutable securities in which it is impossible to lie contemplate that blessing and see believer if you have anything to be discontented about with this God for your father view it in this way the love of the father to the son that the love said Jesus wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them ineffable supremely glorious everlasting above all affection is this the love of God the father secondly I will never leave thee nor forsake thee saith the Lord Jesus

christ oh in that infinite work of his taking position as a savior of men he hath out of his wondrous love condescended to take into union with himself innumerable poor sinners such as those in the text i will never leave thee nor forsake thee for i have accepted this union before time began a covenant union it was my father gave them me thine they were and thou gavest them me they're mine by gift they're mine by covenant i'm joined unto my people in that eternal bond now he is come we know says john the son of god is come verily god verily man his name shall be called immanuel god with us mortals with joy behold his face the eternal father's only son oh full of truth oh full of grace when through his eyes the god head shone i will never leave thee i will never repent of this union and come said he in the days of his flesh to demonstrate it they might have life they might have it more abundantly and though now he has ascended up where he was before having finished the work his father gave him to do having made an end of sin brought in everlasting righteousness nevertheless promise holds true i will never leave thee nor forsake thee he established in his rich mercy the covenant and sweet and loving relationship of savior to sinners and the great one shepherd the shepherd of the sheep no shepherd like this great and chief and good a husband to the bride i espel the shepherd who does he unto me in righteousness in judgment in faithfulness thou shalt know the lord i be with thee as thy guest if any man hear my voice behold I stand at the door and knock if any man hear my voice open to me

[36 : 24] I will come into him and stop with him and he with me I will never leave thee saith the saviour of sinners and before he ascended up on high he leaves this precious word low I am with you always even unto the end I am with you in that brotherly covenant bone of our bone flesh of our flesh I am with you in that marriage covenant the bridegroom of your soul I am with you as your king to reign in Zion set up my kingdom there write my laws in your heart dispose you to receive them

I have come down to reign in your heart that presently you shall come up to me and reign with me in my father's kingdom I will never leave thee nor forsake thee is equally applicable to the eternal spirit of the living God who dwelleth in the hearts of all believers by this says John by this we know that we dwell in him and he dwelleth in us because he hath given us the grace of his spirit through the agency through the work through the teaching of this blessed spirit doth the whole trinity dwell with and dwell in every believer wondrous truth does God dwell in me

Father Son and Spirit so blessed is that benediction we use which contains all this the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ dwelling with you dwelling in you that forever the love of God the Father O infinite unsearchable sovereign everlasting behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God the love of God and thirdly the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all and he is yes undoubtedly for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance he'll never revoke them not in the least no not in the weakest believer he's there well no these great and precious things are to be laid as it were against the tendency to discontentedness for on this account he has said

I will never leave thee nor forsake thee but Paul goes on here to lead believers into a holy confidence to help them in this fight this good fight of faith so that we may boldly say the Lord is my helper I will not fear what man shall do unto me my helper a very blessed word I couldn't help thinking along these lines that the word does furnish great encouragement for the weak you may not be able to say God is my father blissful name but you may be able to say

God is my helper some might not be able to claim that glorious and wondrous relationship to the redeemer and say my Lord my God my Jesus my Saviour my Redeemer but they can think of him as the Lord their helper they might not be able to contemplate that third blessed person as one who has healed them unto the day of redemption yet not yet witness with thy spirit thou art a child a son a daughter of the living God but she may be able to say the Lord is my helper a wonderful word well has he been your helper in any measure has he helped you to confess your sin forsake the world come out from among them helped you to pray helped you to hold on sustained your head and heart in affliction brought you through a fiery trial and through the waters as he kept your face

[43 : 02] Zion ward how is it today this moment you obtained help sufficient for this Lord to whom shall we go thou hast the words of eternal life we believe in the shore thou art the son of a living God has he wrought in thy soul this much for I determined not to know anything among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified why then he has been thy helper you cannot rise to great heights you may boldly say what you have proved may help you then with that confidence to go on and say I will not fear I will not give way to it readily I will seek to fight a good fight and to maintain this godly contentment oh that

I might see it clearly that the Lord is my portion like Jeremiah the Lord the Father is my portion Christ Jesus at pearl of great price he is my portion the Holy Spirit with all his gracious saving operations here's my portion therefore will I hope in him nothing less than this portion will tend or serve to mortify and keep under this inveterate foe we have of a discontent lusting after other things God grant us more and more of this until we shall be satisfied when we awake in his likeness amen was to the have come to thearna was bad they said they can