

Text: Hebrews 13:6; Phil 4:11

Theme: Finding the Keys to Contentment

August 28, 2016

How many of you have multiple keys to multiple buildings or vehicles? Anyone with a driver's license and even some without a license have a key to something. Our lives depend on having the right keys at the right moment. So, let me ask you one other question about your keys, "How many of you have ever lost your keys or had to go looking because they weren't where you expected?" In our text, we find brief words about an important topic. As we consider these words, we focus on our theme: Finding the Keys to Contentment.

I. Our God has instructed us to be content with what we have. A. Even so, we struggle to find the keys to contentment. 1. We struggle because more looks better. Have you noticed? Is it possible not to notice? Commercial after commercial, advertisement after advertisement, sale after sale all insist that we need more. According to the world, you and I will never have enough; we will always need more. Why? Because someone else has more and the world has taught us well that if he has it, we need it. Contentment and more can't function together. One will always win and if the world has any input, more will always come out ahead.

2. We struggle to find the keys because we live in a competitive world. According to our world we not only need more but we also need to win. It doesn't matter what the competition may be. Our world says, "You must not lose; winning is everything." The age old cliché, "It's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game," has been tossed out of the game of life. It doesn't matter how we play the game, what rules we break so long as we win. As long as winning remains our life-goal, contentment will remain hidden in the closet because contentment and competition cannot co-exist in the same place at the same time.

3. We struggle to find those keys to contentment because we've stopped looking. How many of you expect to wake up one morning and suddenly discover that you're a genius or that one night while you are sleeping you'll suddenly be sprinkled with wealth dust? It's never going to happen. Likewise, contentment will never happen unless we are committed to searching and learning. Those keys remain hidden so often because we fail to realize that contentment is learned. Paul makes it clear for us, "I have learned to be content in any and every situation." As great as Paul was, he, too, had to learn contentment in the same way we have to learn the keys to contentment.

B. How, then, do we find the keys to contentment? 1. We find the keys by realizing that God will never leave us. Do you realize the significance of that statement? God is saying to you and to me, "All you need to be content is Me at your side. As long as I am with you, you can be content in any situation." Each of those five years that I journeyed to Peru, I was always amazed by a stark reality. They have so little; they wonder where their next meal will come from and yet, they are more content with life than we are. How is that possible? Because their lives aren't attached to things. They have learned to depend on their God in every situation.

2. We find the keys by realizing that God will satisfy our needs. In the past thirty years, assuming you are over thirty, how many days have gone by where God didn't provide what you needed in that day? Whether you are ten or fifty or ninety, God

has never and will never miss a day. What you need in every day that follows this day, God will provide. Never will He deprive you. Never will He turn His back because He is mad at you or having a bad day. To find those critical keys, we acknowledge as each new day begins that God will give us all we need today to be and to do whatever He needs us to be and do in that day.

3. We find the keys by running the race marked out for us. Back in chapter 12, we find the words, "Let us run with endurance the race marked out for us." Did you hear those important words - the race marked out for us? All around us, there's a race going on. We know all about that race, perhaps too much about that proverbial rat race. To discover contentment, our God says, "Run My race, the race I carefully designed just for you. Don't look at the other guy's race or compare races. Focus on your race, run it to the finish line and while you are running My race, you will run with contentment in your back pocket."

4. We find the keys by believing God will help us. We heard the words in our text, "The Lord is my helper." But what do those words mean as we struggle to find the keys to contentment? Those words tell us that, as long as we know in our hearts that God will come through for us, that God will step in at just the right time, that He will do what He has promised to do, all is well for us on planet earth. If God is our helper, what are we lacking? What does he or she have that we actually need? If God is always going to come through for us, does all the stuff around us matter any more? As long as we believe God will help us, contentment is ours for the taking.

5. We find the keys by attaching our value to God not things. What has our world taught us since we were little kids? Things make the person; who you are is based on what you have and how much you have, right? But would God agree with that logic? In the beginning, what did God create? He created a beautiful world to be enjoyed and then He created people. Not more things than our neighbor has, not more stores filled with more things that we think we need. All Adam and Eve needed was God because their value was based on their attachment to their God. Thousands of years later, all we need is God because our value depends entirely on God's assessment.

6. We find the keys by choosing to learn. Is it possible for a single day to pass by without learning something? We may not notice it or be able to define precisely what we learned, but not a single day passes by without us learning something. Contentment is learned, not infused into us while we sleep or sprinkled on us like magic dust. It's learned and the more effort we put into learning contentment, the more content we will be. Think about people you know who appear to be content, who act like they are satisfied and comfortable with life. Now, I encourage you to learn from their example, to teach yourself contentment because if they can do it, you can do it.

7. Maybe you never lose your keys or are always misplacing your keys. Either way, the keys that matter most aren't those found in your pocket or purse, but the keys that lead you where you need to be, the keys to contentment. Amen.