

Text: Luke 22:24-27. Midweek Lent, 2016 Ninth and tenth commandments.

Grace and peace are yours through our suffering Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Contentment. This is really a tough one, isn't it? Contentment. To just be content with what God has given you, to just be fine with your station in life. Man, when we moved here, I never thought that in my entire life I would live in a house, let alone buy a house so new, so nice, so expensive! But it doesn't take long and I look up the hill and see houses nicer, newer, much more expensive. Fourteen years ago, I bought a new car. Don't judge my financial acumen. We thought it through and crunched the numbers. For a while I had people stopping me at gas stations and saying, "That is a sweet car. What kind of car is that?" But a few years go by, have some minor incidents with deer, no one stops me at gas stations anymore. It's just an old car. Contentment, difficult to have, and more precious than any house or any car.

Jesus' disciples had a struggle with contentment, just like we do. The struggle we see here is more about the lack of contentment with their position. Think of who these guys were and are. They were the closest followers of Jesus, the Savior of the world. They got to walk with Jesus, on a daily basis, listen to Jesus, day after day. They literally got to hug Jesus! But they weren't content. They had a dispute as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Literally the word for dispute means they loved to argue about this. It wasn't the first time they argued. And it probably wasn't the last. They loved this argument. Instead of being content that they were all in the top twelve, they had to argue, "Who seems to be the greatest? Who looks like number one?" Notice, the thing they loved to argue about was only who was considered to be greatest, who seemed most important.

What's so shocking is that the verses right before this are the account of the Lord's Supper! They had just received the most personal assurance of forgiveness, directly from Jesus. They were as close to Jesus as anyone could ever be, and still they were not content with their position. Like children on the way home from church who argue about who gets which seat in the car. Like the devil himself, who was not content with his position and rebelled against God.

So Jesus had to show them the error of their ways. The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them. Gentiles? Jesus, we ain't no Gentiles! We ain't no pork eatin', Saturday workin', no true God believin' Gentiles! That's a low blow, Jesus! But that's how they were acting. The Gentiles like to call themselves Benefactors. You see this word is capitalized. It was a special title for a prince, or a person who had done some great work for the state. It was like Member of the British Empire, or getting your name in stone on the front of city hall because you were so great. It was usually more of an honorary title than an indication of actual work. It was about who seemed to be the greatest. And notice, people called themselves, they call themselves, Benefactors.

We shake our heads and scoff, but aren't we just the same? Not content with our position, not content with what God has given us. Whether it's the house or the car or the boss' position or just the ability to boss people around, we always want the next thing, the higher status, the more.

But you are not to be like that! You! Not so! You are not to be like that. You are to be different! Why? Because you have Jesus. Jesus served you, every day, with his perfect life, that he counts as your own. Who would be content with perfect? And you are perfect. In God's eyes. Yes, you heard me. You heard me perfectly. You are perfect in God's eyes. Jesus gave you the perfect life that he lived for you. Jesus

has already given you a perfect status before God. His perfection is your perfection. That's the meaning of Lent. Jesus was whipped to be the perfect sacrifice for you. Jesus was crucified so your perfect standing is perfected. Jesus was raised so your perfection is rock solid, rock solid as his tomb is empty.

You are going to be different. You are not to be like that, always wanting the next thing. Never content with what God has given you. Never happy because the nicer house, the newer car, the better position is always gnawing your mind. Now, make no mistake. It's not wrong to buy a nicer house. Your family situation may require it. It's not wrong to have a newer car. At some point my Echo ain't gonna be around any more. It's the attitude that Jesus is addressing. It's the arguing, the love of arguing, the boasting, the calling yourself by this title that Jesus came to rid from us. Jesus lived a perfect life to give you a new attitude, an attitude of content. This attitude won't be easy. You won't see a lot of it. You won't hear people bragging and boasting, "Look at me. I'm so content!" That's not what content people do.

Here's what content people do. They are like the youngest. Happy to be at the kid's table. Happy to have others go first, because I'm already perfect. You can't take that away. I'm already forgiven. Letting someone else be first won't change that. Even when I am the one who rules, I will be the one who serves. Now that's weird and sounds all backward. Even the word for rules is more often translated, "leads." Maybe you've heard the phrase, "servant leadership." You probably haven't heard it at work. The idea of servant leadership comes from Jesus. Jesus was the leader of this group, but he bent down and washed their feet, the job of the lowest servant. None of the disciples would touch that job, but Jesus gladly did it, while they shamefully watched. The leaders in our church are not the bosses who push to get their way. The leaders are the servants, who spend hours in Bible study, prayer, meetings, longing to serve the congregation. Most positions in the church if you are so arrogant you want them, you aren't the right person for them. This is not about worldly leadership where I try to get my way. This is about servant leadership, working so others can have their way.

Jesus asks us, "Think about this, ok? Who is greater, the one who is at the table, or the one who serves?" The answer is so obvious. You walk into Applebees, you sit down. Some person comes to your table. "I'll be your server." He is going to fill your water glass. She is going to go to the kitchen. He's going to stop back and bring you ketchup or lemon or anything Applebees has. It's the one at the table. And the situation Jesus was describing wasn't no Applebees. It was a fine, fancy meal that would last all night, with a special invitation to eat for free from a generous host. Now who seems or is considered to be greater?

But now, look at Jesus. He was among you as one who serves. He was the servant. He washed the feet. He made himself nothing. He humbled himself. Jesus went out of his way to say, "I, me, myself, I am right here among you as the servant." And yes, Jesus was our model, our example in this service. But he was so much more. He was our perfect Substitute. He lived a perfect life not just to show us that we should be perfect, but so that we are perfect in his eyes. Jesus walked to the cross not just to show us that we will have to bear crosses in this life, but to carry the cross of sin in our place, to bear the burden of our sins on his shoulders. Jesus was content to serve us with his perfect life. Jesus was content with his place, to suffer in our place and be our Savior. Jesus is content and loves nothing more, than to have you in heaven with him for all eternity. That's contentment. Amen.