

# “Shaped For Contentment”

*Transcribed using turboscribe.ai*

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*Location: St Peter's Lutheran Church, Loxton*

*Sermon Text: [1 Timothy 6:6-19](#)*

My friends, grace, mercy and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Let me pray. Heavenly Father, as we gather around your word here this morning, may your Holy Spirit transform our hearts to grow us more in the likeness of your Son Jesus, our Lord.

Holy Spirit, come and be in the words that I speak, may they be pleasing to you. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

Have you ever dreamt of winning the Lotto or Powerball or something similar? There are lots of stories of how winning the Lotto has changed people's lives, both positively and negatively.

Now, I've never bought a Lotto ticket before, but my Dad used to. And one Saturday evening, I thought I'd play a trick on him. See, on Saturday, Dad would still be out at tennis in the evening and we were in the habit of writing down the numbers as they appeared up on the TV screen.

Now, there was no internet in those days and if you missed the numbers, you had to wait for them to randomly pop up again on the TV screen or wait till the morning to get them from the Sunday mail. So Dad kept his Lotto ticket in a special folder. So I found this ticket and wrote down his winning numbers.

And when he got home, he eventually went to check his ticket and slowly he went down the list of numbers. And he stopped. His face changed.

I probably gave it away by trying to look at it, yeah. It was a shock, a disbelief. For a moment, he thought he'd won.

But then he looked up and he said, these aren't the numbers, are they? And we all burst out laughing. Now the dream of getting rich, it's woven into our culture. Even among faithful Christians, it's easy to fall into believing that if I just had more money, my life would fall into place or I'd be secure, I'd be happy, I'd feel better about myself.

Life would be easier. Money will solve all my problems. Perhaps money was the original cause of those problems, or may have seemed to be a problem.

Our theme today is Gospel-shaped living, shaped for contentment. And we're reflecting on Paul's teaching instruction to Timothy, where he gives the church teaching about money. And he says three things in what we're going to cover today.

The love of money is a trap. The Gospel sets us free through contentment. And Gospel-shaped contentment leads to generosity.

And so we'll start just at verse 9. I'll put it up here. It says, those who long to be rich, however, stumble into temptation and a trap, and many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils.

Some people in reaching for it have strayed from the faith and stabbed themselves with many pains. Those who long to be rich stumble into a trap. Those who are obsessed about being rich stumble into a trap.

The word trap was used to describe a noose that was used to catch birds and animals in the ancient world. For example, we still see it today in a TV show alone that we know Ben was on. Survivors would come along the tracks of rabbits or other small animals, and then they would set up this noose-type thing, device, on that track, hoping that the animal would come through again and then get caught.

Longing to be rich is like running unaware into a trap. So the problem isn't money itself. It's when our hearts begin to love money, depend on money, and chase money as if it can save us and make everything better.

So what happens when the love of money traps us? We can say it blinds us to who we are. It blinds us to how much we actually have, and it blinds us to our own greed. It blinds us of who we are.

And the love of money, the pursuit of wealth, will cause us to stray away from Christ and the security of our identity in Him. Because we're placing our trust in something else. And getting trapped is like plunging into the depths of the sea and sinking deeper and deeper into spiritual ruin and destruction.

So what I hear Paul saying is that when success comes, whether through wealth, promotion, or good investments, it feeds a dangerous instinct in our human heart. That one of self-justification. That first sin in Genesis.

And so we begin to believe, I did this, I earned this, I deserve this. And this breeds arrogance. You plunge deeper into thinking, I'm better than others.

It blinds your self-awareness. It blinds your emotional awareness. It stops you from being teachable and agreeable, and it stops you growing as a person.

There's a Catholic monk, I think it was a monk, called, his name was Bernard Octavoy, and he once said, to see a man humbled under prosperity is the greatest rarity in the world. To see a man humbled under prosperity is the greatest rarity in the world. So money blinds us to who we are.

But it also blinds us to how much we actually have. See, the more money we have, the more it feels like we don't have enough. And Paul warns us in verse 9 about foolish and harmful desires.

Just think about it, what happens when you earn more money? Or put it this way, when you were maybe a younger person, you finally got your job, you got your first paycheck, you celebrated. You can finally buy the things you have longed for. Or if you get a pay increase at work, I can finally now get this new toy that I've been wanting for ages.

You can upgrade existing items in the house, or you can shop at the swankier places and fill your home and wardrobes with the nicer things. In fact, these finally I can buy items are luxuries. They're luxuries because you were able to live without them before.

Just think about how the smartphone has changed our lives. Ten years ago, the more we didn't think it was an essential item. Now if we leave it at home, we feel lost.

And see, luxuries gradually become necessities. And these necessities contribute to our standard of living rising. So we want more and more and more.

We want our standard of living to increase and get better and better and better. And so our expectations and justifications shift. We start thinking, I need this to be happy.

Or I need this to be light. I need this to be cool. I even need this so I can make more money.

I think what happens is we become more desensitized to what we actually have. And what once satisfied us, no longer does. Again, we plunge into the depths and we can keep sinking deeper.

We compare ourselves with others and constantly feel like we don't have enough. We become envious of what other people have and start thinking life isn't fair. We question, why don't I have enough money to be like my neighbor or my friends? And see, this is the lie that is so easy to believe.

And that is that we've been conditioned to believe the more money we have, the better my quality of life will be. And so gaining, building wealthy wealth becomes an addiction. That can be so easily ignored, so easily missed.

Because you can still have more than enough and still feel strapped for cash and want some more. So money blinds us to who we are. It can also blind us to how much we actually have.

But it also blinds us to our own greed. Jesus says in Luke chapter 12, Be on your guard against all kinds of greed. Quite strong words there from Jesus.

Because unlike other sins, greed is almost invisible to us. You know if you've committed adultery, you know if you've stolen. But greed, most people never think they're greedy.

That's why Jesus is so strong in saying, watch out. Pay attention because it can be so easily missed. You don't see it as a problem that funnels into harm and pain.

Other money blinds who we are. It blinds us to how much we actually have. It blinds us to our own greed.

Other money can blind us both by its absence and by its presence as well. It can lead us to believe that we can only find true contentment, joy and security if we have more. What is the cure? How can we escape it? Paul gives us that answer right at the very beginning.

For godliness with contentment is great gain. How's that word gain? Paul's playing with financial language here. He says true wealth, true riches come not from acquiring more, but from contentment with godliness.

Contentment with devotion to God. Contentment with our minds focused on Jesus. How do we understand that word contentment? Would you say it's being completely at peace no matter your circumstances? Or having an inner calm that isn't shaken by what's happening around? I think contentment comes from the understanding of what Paul says.

We brought nothing into the world and we can take nothing out of it. Loving money and chasing after more, it grows from a seed of fear within. A fear that I don't have enough.

So we believe it's the love of money or more money. It promises security. So if I have enough I'll be safe.

But usually the more you have the more anxious you become because you have more to lose. Or people fear that no one will like me. Or if I have money I'll have lots of friends.

So this money promises self-worth. If I have more I'll like myself more. Other people will like me too.

But studies have shown that wealth often increases self-doubt. Not increases it. Wealth often increases self-doubt.

Not increases it. But contentment with godliness on the other hand brings true freedom and security. So where does this contentment come from? Contentment isn't something you just decide to have.

It comes from an attitude. One shaped through generosity. For us as God's people, contentment is shaped ultimately by the gospel.

As I said at the start, by nature our hearts crave self-justification. We want to prove ourselves, be in control, take charge of our lives. Reward our successors.

And grieve. Love of money will fuel these desires even more. Because it makes us feel like we are in control and successful.

However the gospel tells us that our worth, our identity, our security, are not in what we earn but in what Christ has done. Christ died for our sins so that we can live. In him we're sons and daughters of a heavenly father.

This is our sure hope. And when we find true peace and security, regardless of life's circumstances, whether we're rich, whether we're poor, what circumstances are happening around us, we can still experience peace. Paul himself says in Philippians chapter 4, I have learned the secret of being content in and every situation.

I can do all this through him, through his constraint. Talk about Christ. Contentment is not natural.

It's learned. Learned through Christ. When we know Christ, more importantly, when we know that Christ knows us, we have a wealth that cannot be taken away.

That's why Paul can say godly contentment is quite gain. That's the real treasure. There's one more thing that Paul tells Timothy.

And that is gospel-shaped contentment overflows into generosity. Paul said, command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is somewhat certain. But to put their hope in God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

You know, by global standards, the average Australian household is wealthier than the vast majority of people in the world. What Paul says to Timothy is, wealth is uncertain, but God is generous. Don't put your trust in money.

Put it in the God who provides. And then Paul goes on to command them to do good, to be rich in deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. And generosity is a spiritual discipline.

When we give, we declare, my hope is not in my bank balance. My hope is in Christ. John Wesley, the great preacher, he earned a considerable income from all his writings, his published books and stuff.

But he kept his lifestyle and gave the rest away. At one point, he was giving away 90% of his income. And he once said, when I die, if I leave behind more than 10 pounds, you can call me a thief.

He believed generosity was the natural fruit of the gospel. That's where Paul closes with the vision. In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

And that's the irony. We think holding tightly onto money will give us life. But it only makes us anxious.

Letting go of being generous frees us to experience real life. As Jesus said, where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. So what's the attitude of your heart towards money? Do you love it? Do you love it too much? It's hard at this time too, when we're going through such a tough time within our region, through the drought.

We close with a story. A missionary family once moved overseas with very little. They lived simply without many of the comforts they had back home.

Years later, when their children were growing, someone asked them, did you feel deprived? The two of them said, deprived? No, we felt rich. Our home was full of joy, laughter and love.

I think that's the point.

True riches are not found in what we hold in our hands, but in who holds us. Jesus Christ. May we rest in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and his faithfulness, and give thanks for all that he provides us.

May we be generous in all parts of our life, keeping to those within our own communities who we know to be struggling at this time, and others around the world, sharing the love and the peace of Christ in this church and beyond. My friends, may the peace of God which passes our understanding and may it guard your hearts and minds. In Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Amen

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