

Psalm 131.¹⁻³ Contentment

6) Saturday 26th March – contentment

Read [Philippians 4.10-13](#)

“.. I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances ..” (Phil.4.11)

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Psalm 131.¹⁻³ Contentment

6) Saturday 26th March – contentment

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How has the Lord taught you that measure of contentment you presently know?

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Background

This is the third shortest psalms in the whole psalter (Psalm 134, to which we’ll come soon, is the second shortest, and Psalm 117 the shortest).

In terms of the theme of Psalm 131, there’s a certain appropriateness about it being so brief. Contentment has a lot to do with being focussed on the things that really matter – and being free from the multitude of other concerns which plead for our attention, time and energy.

It’s worth noting that this psalm comes towards the end of the ‘songs of ascent’: the 15 psalms which provide what I’ve called a ‘manual on discipleship’ work through what it is to be a follower of Jesus in a deliberately progressive manner.

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That whole letter to the Philippians breathes a remarkable spirit of contentment, and it’s for that reason that alongside the study of the psalm itself the Bible Readings for the week pick up on the second half of the letter.

In the first couple of chapters of the letter Paul highlights the ways in which, and the extent to which, such a spirit of Christ-centred contentment is itself a powerful witness to a world whose lack of such contentment is seen in a multitude of different ways: “you will shine among them like stars in the sky,” he wrote ([Phil.2.15](#)). The last couple of chapters (on which the larger part of this study concentrates) gives an insight into what lay behind the contentment which Paul had learned.

As a proud and ambitious young man he had clearly been riled by the preaching of Stephen, and his persecuting zeal as the sequel to the martyrdom of Stephen surely evidenced the discontent in his own soul. His encounter with the risen Lord Jesus enabled him to see that none of what he’d been aspiring to could ever really satisfy the deepest longings of his heart: and the best that this world could never compare with the satisfaction there was in knowing Christ.

Contentment is a grace hard to learn! Not easy when you’re enjoying plenty because, somehow, you’re always left wanting more. And not easy when you have next to nothing, because you’re always left thinking that if only you had that little bit more then surely you’d be satisfied.

Psalm 131 brings all of that together and sets the thing out very simply. **Day (1)** deals with the psalm itself: along with that I suggest that you use **days (2) and (6)** as fuel for further discussion. I’ve inserted some extra questions on each of these days and hope they’ll prove useful for CG study and discussion.

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The song suggests that ‘All you need is love’: the Scriptures sharpen it up and insist that in truth all you need is the Lord. You need Him: and having Him you have all things. Adventure, love, security, peace, purpose, life. The lot. He Himself satisfies our thirst.

The Rolling Stones made famous the song, ‘(I can’t get no) Satisfaction’ (excuse the grammar!): where do people commonly (and misguidedly) look for that which will satisfy?

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What sort of ‘great matters’ can we be tempted wrongly to concern ourselves with, both as individuals and as a fellowship?

Prayer: You, O God, are my God: earnestly I seek You. I thirst for You, my whole being longs for You in a dry and parched land where there is no water ([Ps.63](#))

2) Tuesday 22nd March – boasting

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“.. the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord ..” (Phil.3.8)

While others boasted about their qualifications or accomplishments, Paul would boast only of the Lord. Knowing Jesus Christ as Lord in his life paled everything else into total insignificance. Since his conversion this was the all-consuming passion of his heart.

What are the things which compete in your affections with the desire you have to know Jesus better?

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How would you describe the ‘one thing’ you do (v.13)?

Should a local church be able similarly to say, ‘one thing we do’? And if so, what would that ‘one thing’ be for ourselves?

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