

The Gospel offers True Gain

The Gospel offers us the Good News that in Christ we are enough. We are enough for God to be loved. We are enough to be loved by others.

Paul has devoted time in this letter to Timothy establishing ...

- 1) the truth that those in Christ are a new humanity and a new family- God's family. And each family member is worthy of respect and honor. Their identifiers are not their identity.
- 2) that any theology that leads us away from finding our worth and identity in Christ is dangerous.

I Timothy 6:1-2

"¹ All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. ² Those who have believing masters should not show them disrespect just because they are fellow believers. Instead, they should serve them even better because their masters are dear to them as fellow believers and are devoted to the welfare of their slaves. These are the things to insist upon. "

○ **Question:** Why is Paul commanding slaves to respect their masters why shouldn't he just tell masters to release their slaves?

- Most people in the early church were women and slaves.
- Paul's teaching that we are all one in Christ has created new dynamic in society.
There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)
- No political power to dismantle institutions social revolution would have been crushed
- Deeper revolution through transformation of hearts by the gospel
- Protect the church's witness and sow seeds of the gospel

Paul can't offer slaves the full protection or empowerment that they deserve in that moment. So he asks slaves to live in the reality of their situation to protect the witness of the church and the gospel.

Return to Key Theme of False Teaching/Sound Doctrine.

I Timothy 6:3-5 - *"³ If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, ⁴ they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions ⁵ and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain."*

Note: The specific false teaching is ... **"godliness is a means to financial gain."**

Not primarily about the money... Finances gained a person Status /Value/ Identity

Historical Context: Roman Honor System

- Value=honor
- Honor=status
- Status=wealth

The world was divided into "haves" and "have nots."

The "Haves" had value/dignity

The "Have nots" had to find their value in their "usefulness" to the "Haves."

Religious View: The Cult of Artemis

Artemis was the fertility goddess promising blessing, prosperity, and protection

Your devotion was proven by how much Artemis had blessed you.

Your hope to be enough was that one day Artemis would give you enough.

Paul explicitly says those who teach that godliness is a means to earthly gain are those marked by...

- Conceit, Controversies (conspiracies), Constant friction, Corrupt minds

The Reality: The most basic human question is, "Who am I?" (Am I lovable/valued/wanted)

Every religion and philosophy needs to be able to answer that question in a way that provides people with the assurance that they are "enough" to be loved.

- Popular today to preach in a way that reduces Jesus to a Genie.
A Genie is used to get you the treasure- that which makes you feel "enough"

It is popular today because...

1) Our culture says our value is measured by...

- Our valuables
- Our usefulness
- Our appearance (looks and looking like we have it all together)

2) There is Biblical support for believing that God does reward godliness specifically as it relates to giving with financial blessing.

Luke 6:38 - "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

1 Corinthians 9:8-11 - ⁸ "And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever. ¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."

Note the difference: One person gives to gain. One person gives to give more because they have found their "gain" is God and partnering with Him in bringing Heaven to Earth.

3) Every pastor is tempted to find their identity in things other than Jesus.

But Jesus is not a Genie. Jesus is the treasure. All false teaching cheapens Jesus as a means to a gain. Jesus is the gain. Gain... not the place you go to but the person that you get and get to become.

- Godliness does promise that gain. It is a better gain.

1 Timothy 6:6 - "But godliness with contentment is great gain."

- False teachers taught: godliness → gain
- Paul taught: godliness + contentment = gain

Some people use God to get something else.

The problem is that whatever the "else" is.... That is your god.

Greed is defined as not only living your life to get more money but devoting more of your life to money.

For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. (Ephesians 5:5)

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)

God is the something else.

So if greediness (idol worship) is devoting your life in pursuit of money then godliness is devoting your life in pursuit of God.

It is living to daily enlarge our capacity for Him and living to be conformed to Him.

Godliness is not simply spending less or spending our time wanting less or forcing ourselves to live with less. Godliness is wanting more of God and feeding our hunger by feasting on God.

We redirect our appetites to that which truly satisfies.

- We taste and see that the Lord is good
- We hunger and thirst for righteousness
- We hunger and thirst for God

Contentment isn't about being content with less.

It is being content with not having the things that matter the least.

It is recognizing that you already possess what matters the most.

And in Christ, we already possess all we need to be enough.

Paul shifts to why contentment makes sense in verses 7-10.

1 Timothy 6:7-10 – *"For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. ⁹ Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."*

Note:

The Grave is the great filter (verse 7)

Greed is a trap because then your possessions will possess you (verse 8)

Grief waits for those who "love money" (verse 10)

It is not only blasphemous to treat Jesus like a Genie, it is dangerous- your soul will be pierced with many griefs. Jesus wants to spare you from the grief that comes with greed

Note:

- Our culture tells us our identity is found in what we possess.
- Jesus tells us that our identity is found in what possesses us.
- The statement, "I am enough if I have enough" isn't a falsehood. The lie is that Jesus isn't enough to make you enough. He is.

"For in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power." (Colossians 2:9-10)

Jesus is the "enough" we all long for. He makes us complete/full.

Returning to the basic human question, "Who am I? Am I loved, treasured, important?"

The world answers... you can be enough if you have enough

Jesus answers, "Yes... beyond anything you could measure."
I measured your value... and it was "arms stretched wide" this much!

And as the Family of God we need to remind each other of this. We need to resist measuring the worth of any person with any other measuring device than the cross.

Maybe the restlessness that you are wrestling with today is a gift- it is meant to point you to Jesus.
"We are restless until we find our rest in Him." (St Augustine)

Find your rest in Christ. Find your life in Christ. We don't win the battle over greed and trying to battle greed in our own strength. We can't simply quench our hunger for more. We feed our hunger by feasting on God.
We redirect our appetites to that which truly satisfies.

- We taste and see that the Lord is good
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We no longer live as people enslaved by the endless hunger for "more" when we live more for God. We have gained Christ. And godliness is the pursuit of discovering and cherishing all that we have gained in Christ. And contentment is the proof that we have found Jesus is enough to identify us as enough to be loved.