



PLAINS PRESBYTERIAN

28TH FEBRUARY 2021



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An Important Lesson

¹¹ I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

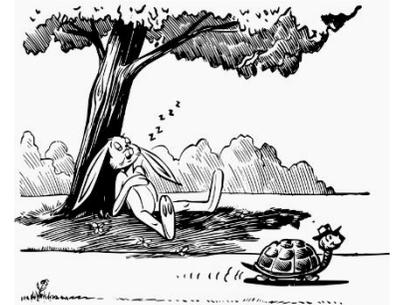
Philippians 4:11-12, NIV

The above verse has been on my mind quite a bit over the last few days and how I would love to be able to say this is true in my life. However, it is true that I want to learn to be content in any and every situation. I believe I am learning this lesson gradually. I guess the fact that the apostle Paul mentions the word 'learned' implies he went through a process to achieve this reality in his life, rather than it happening immediately after his conversion to Christ. I find this encouraging.

It is a huge challenge to be content in any and every circumstance in life, especially when my human nature wants only good things to happen according to my desires rather than God's desires. Simply put, I often want things to go exactly how I want them to and end up discontented when they don't. Perhaps you can identify with me here.

I have to confess, there are things in my life which cause me to be discontented, particularly during this current pandemic, with the many restrictions and loss of freedom affecting every aspect of normal life. I keep reminding myself of today's verse and pray God will help me to learn this lesson really well. As with all things in the Christian life, change can take time, and some people progress much more quickly than others. Some people can run a marathon whereas some, like me, would struggle to run even a short distance.

I think of the children's story about the race between a hare and a tortoise. The hare set off on the race with great gusto, then sat back and relaxed part way through the race. The tortoise slowly passed the hare as he was no doubt snoozing by the roadside. The tortoise reached the finishing line ahead of the hare, much to his horror. Although the pace of the tortoise was slow, he was determined to get to the finishing line. God loves the tortoises just as much as He loves the hares!



God understands we all vary in pace and He is more interested in us getting to where He wants us to be, rather than in how fast we get there. The end result is what counts. So long as we are willing to change, He will keep on working in our lives, transforming us from the inside out. It is only by the strength Jesus gives us that we are able to change. *'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'* (Philippians 4:13). He will never stop working in our lives. 'Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus' (Philippians 1:6).

As we learn to become contented in every circumstance in life, we actually begin to live more as God intends us to live. 'Godliness with contentment is great gain' (1 Timothy 1:6). In Christ we have everything we need to live a contented and godly life.

- Judith Whitehead | *Seeds of the Kingdom*

Alpine Presbytery Gathering

19-21 March, at St David's in Ashburton

Registrations are now open for the Gathering. Please follow this link to access the registration form:
<https://forms.gle/4Gi8BtEXCP4W5qrA7>

A Prayer for Lent.

Last Sunday, 21st February at St Andrews Rev. John reflected on the bible reading Matthew 3: 13-4:1, The Temptation of Jesus and "What are you Giving up for Lent" {Sugar for John}

This Prayer is a reflection on the temptations.

Forty days alone, a wilderness of thoughts, tempting and inviting thoughts, which could so easily have distracted you from your task, your mission, your vision. Yet you emerged, stronger and more attuned to all that had to be done, despite a time of constraint that to our eyes would have seemed hopeless, We to live in stressful times. Demands are made of our time, that leave so little for the important things of life. We are easily distracted in the wilderness of our lives, by every call to go this way or that, to turn stone to bread, leap from mountains, and do all that would keep us from the truth. We listen to the voices of this world, and ignore the one who endured all this and so much more, and emerged triumphant, that we might not have to suffer so. Forgive us, Father, when we get distracted from our task. Forgive us those times when we try to be all things to all people, and fail to be anything to anyone.

From Lent reflections from the Canterbury Lay Preachers Association. The Season of Lent

Sadness

Prayers and deepest sympathy extended to the family and friends of Shirley and Tony Thomas. A tragic accident last Thursday happened near Southbridge resulting in the death of Tony, a loyal St Andrew's mission team member and also major injuries to Shirley. We send lots of recovery prayers to Shirley as she progresses in Christchurch Hospital. Tony will be missed by many. God's blessing to all.



St. Andrew's Rakaia

Tuesday 2nd March

10:30 am | Rakaia Fit Kids | A time for friendship, fun, and support. Welcome to all pre-school children.

1:00 pm | Steady As You Go | Balance, strengthening and gentle exercises for senior folk's health and well-being..
St Andrew's Grocery box in the church foyer. Donations welcomed, thankyou.

Tuesday 9th March

11:30 am | Rakaia Friendship Gathering at St Andrew's Hall.

"Theme" An early St Patrick's Day Celebration. Jokes Welcomed. Social time, stall and raffle, Dinner and entertainment with Natalie, Karen, and Irene. Sing a Long to some Irish Songs. Welcome all.



World Day of Prayer Services

Rakaia Combined Churches | St Ita's Church | Friday 5th March at 5.00pm
Methven Combined Churches | All Saints Church | Friday 5th March 7.00pm
Country of Study. Vanuatu. "Build on a Strong Foundation"
prepared by the WDP Committee of Vanuatu.

All welcome to attend, folk finishing work in Rakaia, just come as you are.

		Sunday Services	
28 th Feb	9:30 am	St. Andrew's Rakaia	Rev. Neville Burns
	10:00 am	Trinity Mayfield	Pastor Paul Eden
	10:30 am	St. John's Methven	Rev. John Titlow
7 th Mar	10:30 am	St. John's Methven	Rev. Arii; Communion Parish Service

I ask You, Lord, to enable me to be contented, despite any difficult circumstances I may be experiencing right now. Thank You that You are always with me, teaching me and guiding me and forgiving me each and every time I fail. You know my human frailty, but you also see my heart's desire to live a life that brings glory to You. Amen.

- Judith Whitehead | [Seeds of the Kingdom](#)

