

NORTONVILLE NEWS

"Godliness With Contentment"

By Pastor Josh Puett

If you study your American history, you will learn of some key figures whose influence shaped the young country, and gave it a direction which it is still travelling down to this day. One of these important figures was the intellectual named Benjamin Franklin. One of the many witty quips of Franklin to have been passed down to us today, on the topic of contentment, is this: "Content makes poor men rich; discontent makes rich men poor." I agree with this sentiment, though perhaps not in the way that Franklin intended. While Franklin spoke of a worldly contentment, leading to worldly riches, believers who have a godly contentment will find themselves with riches of a far greater sort.

"Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." (1 Timothy 6:6-7)

Do you know what it means to be "content"? To some people, this means to be happy with your lot in life. That is a fine thing. While not necessarily the mainstream, those seeking contentment in the world may learn of minimalism, the belief that life is better with less stuff in it. But, what is the great gain in contentment just for contentment's sake? If we seek contentment in order to please ourselves, for believers, it is no different than seeking after worldly riches, they are both paths that lead to a temporary enjoyment that lasts only on this world. What gain do we experience by pleasing our own flesh? Whether it is little, or much, nothing from this world can be carried with us to the next. If we seek our own pleasure in the flesh, we have already received our reward in full. For believers, we must seek after a different sort of contentment.

(Continued on page two)

Stay Connected

Sunday

9:30 am Sunday School

10:45 am Sunday morning

6:00 pm Sunday night

6:00 pm Sunday Youth Group

Wednesday

Prayer Meeting at 6:30 pm

Olympians at 6:30 pm

Phone: 616-842-4285

Email: Office@nortonvillechapel.org

Check out our website,

www.nortonvillechapel.org

How does the bible define “contentment”? The literal word means to be “self-sufficient”. How are believers to be self-sufficient? In our own strength, we cannot be totally self-sufficient. But, we have One in us who is! One Old Testament name for God is “El Shaddai”, literally “The Self-Sufficient One”! For believers, being content starts with leaning and relying not on ourselves, but on the Self-Sufficient One for our daily needs.

Notice in this passage, this is contentment that is with, or in, godliness. For there to be any “great gain”, our contentment must be based in godliness! For the believer, this means putting the pursuit of God, and His ways, above all other things. There are many things that can command our attention, but have these become distractions that pull us away from the things of God? The love of money, entertainment, possessions, and countless other things in this world seek to place themselves on the throne in your heart. They cry, “More! More!”, as they vainly promise happiness, satisfaction, and joy, if but a little more is given to them. Conversely, Christ promises not joy deferred, but joy and contentment immediate and eternal! It is true that some things must be left behind in order to pursue God with all our hearts. The world is full of pleasures innumerable, but we have been called to pursue something of greater value! Something that will bring true satisfaction, and something that will last for eternity!

Godliness with contentment is great gain. What is this gain? Later in this passage, we learn that part of this “gain” is the saving of many sorrows while on this world. It says that a love of money leads to many foolish and destructive lusts, and concerning those that pursue them, “they have pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Money cannot deliver, cannot love, can give no gain outside of that which is most immediate on the earth. What was promised by the world to bring happiness, leads only to destruction and sorrow.

Not only are we saved sorrows while on this world, but when we have godliness with contentment, we lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. Verses 18 and 19 tells us, **“Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”** Those that pursue God over the things of the world are rich. Not in wealth, but in good works! And in these good works, believers are “storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come”. Compare this to worldly riches, of which “it is certain we can carry nothing out.” Believers are called to do more than to be content with their lot in life, and they are not called to leisurely idleness. They are called to do the work that God has designed for them, and in doing so, earn their wages in heaven!

So, it is true what Benjamin Franklin said, that “Content makes poor men rich; discontent makes rich men poor.” Is your discontentment in the world, and your pursuit of the things of the world, robbing yourself of the chance to be rich in good works? Rather, be content in Christ! Follow after Him, and we have a sure hope of collecting that which we have laid up in heaven, a treasure that lasts for eternity!



Spotlight: Fanny J. Crosby

If you open any hymnal in the United States, you are sure to find a handful of hymns with lyrics credited to Fanny Crosby. “To God Be the Glory”, “Blessed Assurance”, “Near The Cross”, “All The Way My Savior Leads Me”, and countless more favorite hymns were all penned by her hand. She was perhaps the most prolific hymnwriter in American history, and is credited with writing more than 8,000 hymns and gospel songs. Over 100 million copies of Crosby’s hymns exist in print.

Fanny Crosby was born March 24, 1820, in Southeast New York. When she was six weeks old, she lost her eyesight from an infection, and from improper treatment from a doctor. When Fanny was six months old, her father passed away, and she was raised by her mother and grandmother. Throughout her life, Fanny faithfully attended St. John’s Methodist Episcopal Church of New York City, and was a strong believer.

Between 1835 and 1843, Fanny attended school at the New York Institution for the Blind. While there, she would be encouraged to learn to write poetry. Fanny was examined by a Scottish phrenologist who, after measuring the shape of her skull, determined that she was going to be an excellent poet! While his methods were questionable at best, the doctor would indeed be supplied with ample evidence to verify his conclusion.

Throughout her time in school, Fanny wrote many verses of poetry. His poems were eventually compiled into her first book in 1844, and a second book in 1851. Later In 1851, Fanny would begin writing lyrics to be set to music, which were likewise extremely successful. She wrote popular songs like “There’s Music in the Air”, and “Rosalie, the Prairie Flower,” The latter song brought her nearly \$3,000 in royalties, or nearly \$120,000 today. During this time, Fanny was also politically active, joining a lobbyist group arguing for the support of education for the blind. She spoke before Congress, and the President of the United States, advocating for the blind.



While her secular activities brought Fanny both fame and success, these activities left her spiritually unfulfilled. According to the biographer Bernard Ruffin, “Fanny became increasingly introspective over her soul’s welfare. She began to realize that something was lacking in her spiritual life. She knew that she had gotten wrapped up in social, political, and educational reform, and did not have a true love for God in her heart.” In 1850, while attending a revival meeting, Fanny rededicated herself to Christ.

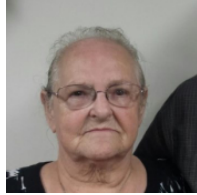
Fanny’s greatest works would still lie before her. A well known church musician, W. B. Bradbury, encouraged her to use her gifts for the Lord. During her forties, Fanny fully directed her gift toward writing hymns and Christian poetry. These times spent in hymn writing, she wrote, made her the “happiest creature in all the land”.

Crosby’s hymns have been disseminated all over the world, and have touched countless lives through their beautiful expressions of the truth of the gospel. We praise God for the great work He was able to accomplish through the obedience of His servant, Fanny Crosby.

February Birthdays



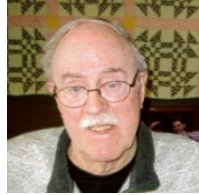
February 1
Rob Marshall



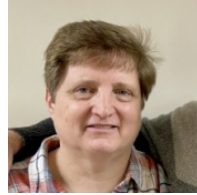
February 2
Betty Holman



February 7
Jerry VanEizenga



February 10
J. Paul King



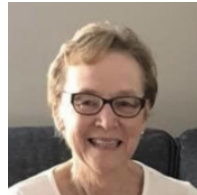
February 13
Dawn Vink



February 14
Joan Thompson



February 15
Tricia Barnes



February 17
Joann Chittenden



February 28
Pam Walker



February 28
Pete Pellegrom

February Anniversaries



February 28
J. Paul & Dawn King

Calendar

2/12	24/7 Day of Prayer.	2/20	Small Group, 10:30 am.
	Small Group, 6:30 pm.	2/21	Olympians and Prayer Meeting, 6:30 pm.
2/13	Small Group, 10:30 am.	2/22	Ladies Bible Study Zoom, 7:30 pm.
2/14	Ladies Mission Circle, 9:30 am.	2/26	Small Group, 6:30 pm.
	Robbinswood Church Service, 1:30 pm.	2/27	Small Group, 10:30 am.
	Olympians and Prayer Meeting, 6:30 pm.	2/28	Robbinswood Church Service, 1:30 pm.
2/15	Ladies Bible Study Zoom, 7:30 pm.		Olympians and Prayer Meeting, 6:30 pm.
2/17	Sisters of Sarah Painting Party, 1:00 pm.	2/29	Ladies Bible Story Zoom, 7:30 pm.
2/19	Small Group 6:30 pm.	3/1 - 3/2	Church Ministries Conference