

I've Had Enough!

Message for Sunday, March 31, 2019
by Bruce Fraser

Scripture: Psalm 23

Children's Message:

I read from Dr. Seuss' book *Yertle the Turtle*. It tells the story of the king of the turtles, who wants to be higher than anyone else. So his subjects—the other turtles—are stacked on top of each other. It's a classic story of pride and greed, which leads to collapse.

Message: "I've had enough!"

Back in the 1930s and 40s, Howard Hughes was one of the wealthiest people in the world. But it was never enough. He wanted fame, so he made movies. He wanted women, but not just one: he had intimate relationships with more than fifty movie stars and socialites. He wanted thrills, so he designed, built and piloted the fastest aircraft in the world. He wanted power, so he dispensed political favors so skillfully that he had two U.S. presidents under his thumb. During the final years of his life, he had no family that wanted anything to do with him, and few if any friends.

Howard Hughes wanted only one thing in life: MORE! He got what he wanted, but lost the most important things.

Compare that with the words of Psalm 23. "The Lord is my shepherd." This is one of the most popular and well known passages in the entire Bible. I wonder how many of us, upon hearing those words, our minds go back to the funeral of a loved one. "The Lord is my shepherd." I expect even the majority of people who don't go to church would recognize those words.

The words in that Psalm bring a sense of peace and calm:

- lying down in green pastures;
- sitting beside quiet waters;
- restoring my soul;
- fear no evil;
- you are with me
- you comfort me
- I will live in your presence forever.

I see you relaxing, your eyelids closing. But before you all fall asleep dreaming of this idyllic life, let's go back to the first line.

Psalm 23:1, New Revised Standard Version:
The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

Can you imagine being in a state of not wanting anything? For our culture, this may be the most revolutionary idea in the entire Bible. Every day we see and hear demands to consume, buy, accumulate, hoard, succeed, and want. More, *more*, MORE! Yet this Bible passage starts with the subversive idea that "I shall not want." Not because I can't afford it. Not because I already have three of them. Not because I already have the best and newest.

I shall not want because "The Lord is my shepherd."

I shall not want because God provides everything I need.

I shall not want because I trust God.
What a radical way of life!

What is the best way to let God guide us to those lovely green pastures of "I shall not want"? I want to suggest the best way to counteract want is by appreciating what you have. Plant seeds of thanksgiving, and grow a harvest of contentment and joy. Have an attitude of gratitude.

Here's the assignment I'd like you to do this week: do an "Appreciation Inventory." Look, touch, smell, remember, and immerse yourself in all the blessings God has given to you. You may choose to physically walk through your home to do this, or you can do it sitting in your favourite spot and walking around with your mind. Either way, as you think of things, pause with each one and appreciate what you have. Do this for physical objects, such as clothes, car, food, money, toys, books, and so on. Do it for non-physical things, such as memory, learning, music, your job, the time you have each day. Do it for your relationships: family, friends, co-workers, others in church, people that support you. Finally, think of God in your life.

After you've gone through everything, sit back and acknowledge just how much you have been blessed. Be grateful. This is how we learn to be content.

Let tell you the story of a man who knew how to be content. An American businessman was walking

along a pier in a small coastal Mexican village when a boat with just one fisherman docked. Inside the boat were several large, yellow-fin tuna. The American complimented the fisherman on the quality of the fish. He asked how long it took to catch them.

The man said, “Only a little while.”

The American then asked why he didn’t stay out longer and catch more fish. The fisherman said he had enough to support his family’s needs.

The American then asked how he spends the rest of his day.

The fisherman replied, “I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take a siesta with my wife, stroll into the village each evening where I play the guitar with my friends. I have a full and busy life, señor.”

The American scoffed, “I’m a Harvard MBA, and I could really help you. The way I see it, you should spend more time fishing and with the proceeds, buy a bigger boat. With the proceeds from the bigger boat, you could buy several boats, and perhaps an entire fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middle-man, you could sell directly to the processor and even open your own cannery. Then you could control the product, processing and distribution. You would leave this small coastal village and move to Mexico City, and then L.A. and eventually New York City, where you’ll run your entire enterprise.”

The fisherman asked, “But señor, how long will all this take?”

The American replied, “15-20 years.”

“But what then?”

The American laughed and said, “That’s the best part! When the time is right, you would announce that your company is going public and sell all your stock and you’d become a rich millionaire.”

“Millions? Then what?” the man said.

The American said, “Then you’d retire, move to a small coastal village where you could sleep late,

fish a little, play with your kids, take a siesta with your wife, stroll to the village in the evenings where you could play your guitar with your friends.”

This theme of being content run throughout the Bible. Jesus certainly modeled it in his life. Paul echoes it in his writing:

1 Timothy 6:6, New International Version:
Godliness with contentment is great gain.

Philippians 4:11-13, Good News Bible:

I have learned to be satisfied with what I have. I know what it is to be in need and what it is to have more than enough. I have learned this secret, so that anywhere, at any time, I am content, whether I am full or hungry, whether I have too much or too little. I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me.

Note the conclusion: “I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me.” It’s the same as “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” It’s our relationship with God that sustains us and satisfies us. Our contentment is with God.

Next Steps:

- Pray: Thank God for your relationship with him. Knowing God makes all the difference in life.
- Do the “Appreciation Inventory.” Go through physical objects in your life, non-physical things, relationships, and God. Pause with each one and appreciate what God has given you.