

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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Series: Philippians
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Finding Contentment
Philippians 4:10-13

"I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 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. I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

Good morning, Harris Creek. It's good to be with you guys. It's good to open up the Word of God. Let me pray.

Father, we're going to turn to an ancient letter a couple of thousand years old. Would you prepare our hearts for what you want to do this morning? Would you open our hearts? Would you give us a deep satisfying peace, even happiness, even joy this morning as it's raining outside? There's a lot going on in our world. I just pray we would cling to you in this time. Protect us in this place from evil always. Protect these people from evil always. Fix their hearts and their minds on you and the things of your kingdom, the things above. In Jesus' name, amen.

The other day, all was right in my world. It was a beautiful day in December. It was actually warm, which is rare and nice. I was at my house. I had to leave for a meeting, and I had given myself just enough time to depart and get to that meeting. Meaning, I had waited until the very last minute when I needed to leave. All was right. Deep abiding peace.

I'm walking out to my truck, and I walk by the counter where I set my keys down, and they aren't there. No big deal. "Monica! Babe, where'd you put my keys?" To which she says, "Oh, maybe I put them on the hook by the door to the garage." Great. I go to the hook by the door to the garage. "Babe! They're not there." "Oh, maybe I put them by the coffeepot." I go over to the coffeepot. They're not there.

I'm like, "Where are my keys? I'm going to be late. I don't have time to look for my keys." I go to all of the usual spots...the vanity by the sink, the nightstand beside my bed. I start going through pockets. Then I go to her. I'm like, "Hey, love, when I set something down, you mind just leaving it there? Don't move my stuff, because when you move it, it's like an Easter egg hunt. So can you just not do that?"

She's like, "Well, I don't think I did. I don't think I did move your keys. I don't remember..." I'm like, "Babe, you did, because I set them on the countertop, and now they're not on the countertop, and they didn't just disappear." She's like, "I really don't think I did." She goes, "Let me ask you

a question." Then she proceeds to ask me the most obnoxious question in all the land of looking for things. Do you know what it is? "Where's the last place you had them?"

"If I knew the last place I had them, that's the only place I'd look. We'd save all this time. I'd just go to the last place I had them, and that's where they would be, but that's not where they are right now." And then I have this light bulb. I'm like, "Oh, I have one of those Tiles." You know, those things. This is technology. So I go in my phone. It's a new phone. I go to the Tile app. I search for it. Then it asks me for a login. I'm running late, and I'm like, "Login. Username. Is it username or email? Which email?"

I'm trying, and I'm experimenting, and then five minutes of messing with that, I just give up. Then you kind of lose your mind. You start going back to all of those places you've already looked, like it's going to materialize. I go back to the hook by the door. Not there. Back to the coffeepot. Still not there. Back to the island. Not there. Back to the nightstand. Not there. Back through the pockets. Still not there.

Back through the backpack. Not there. Back to the vanity. Still not there. The keys are still not there. They're still missing. Then I think, in a last-ditch resort... I'm completely frustrated at this point, and I think I remember my username and password, so I go back to my phone. I'm like, "Okay. Let's give this a shot." Sure enough, I'm able to log in. I push that little button that's supposed to... Oh, they were in my pocket. Oh. They were in my pocket the whole time.

If we replay the series of events... One moment, all is right in the world. There's a deep abiding peace. The sun is shining. The house is at peace. Relationships are in order. One half a second later, I realize I do not have what I need, and all is chaos. I'm running through the home, looking for it. You could say I went from extreme contentment to extreme discontentment. Discontentment is when I believe I need something that's not available to me.

But here's what I want you to realize. What I thought I needed for contentment was with me the entire time. That's really the message from the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul to the people in Philippi and to the people at Harris Creek today: what you need for contentment was with you the whole time. We're going to talk about where contentment is found, and as we talk about where contentment is found, we're going to talk about where it is *not* found.

This is so applicable for us. I'll define contentment for you as Webster's does: a state of peaceful happiness; being satisfied. There's so much we're not content about right now, be it politics, be it decisions made at a national level: to wear masks, to not wear masks, corona, to vaccine, anti-vax. Whatever camp you're in, wherever you're at, you can certainly find something to be discontent about.

Family coming in, to see them, to not see them, those you want to see who don't want to see you, those you don't want to see who want to see you, Christmas and how Christmas has changed, and it's going to be different... Even as I say this, hopefully there's something you can grab. Let me do something. I don't know that we've ever been so bold as to do this. If you don't struggle with discontentment, I want to give you an out. I don't want to waste your time this morning.

That's what we're talking about. I'm telling you up front. So, you can do something else with the next 45 minutes. Feel free to go on your phone, check Facebook or Instagram, catch up on SportsCenter, if you don't struggle with discontentment. But I will tell you something: I've never met the person. In fact, there are people who hear me right now, either in your living room or in this room, and you'll never find contentment. You'll never have it.

You'll go your whole life searching for it, that which is readily available to you, but you won't learn the secret that the Scripture talks about. Hold on to that phrase: *learn the secret*. So many of us are looking for contentment, thinking, "Well, if I only made more... If my boss would just... If my kids would just... If my spouse would just... If God wasn't silent... Why does my family have to be so different? Why can't I be more like *that*?" You're going to see in the Scriptures today that everything you need for contentment is available to you right now.

So, by way of review, Paul is writing this from prison in Rome. He has been arrested. He's writing a church that he planted 10 years prior. He's writing for these reasons. There are several reasons. First, to express his joy for these people he loves very much. Secondly, because there's opposition to the church in Philippi. There are people who are opposing them, against them, so he writes them to strengthen them.

Thirdly, there's some disunity happening in that church, some infighting. We see a specific situation where two women are not getting along. They have differing opinions, and he addresses them directly in this letter. There's disunity. But his fourth reason and the biggest reason he writes this letter... It's a thank you letter. He's responding to them for a gift they sent him through Epaphroditus. He says, "Hey, thank you. I'm writing a thank you letter."

There are these things that go through here, but the biggest one is joy, that he has a great joy for these people. So, as we move through Philippians 4 this morning, we're going to look at what it means to search for contentment in others, to search for contentment in circumstances, to search for contentment in stuff, and ultimately, where contentment is found. We're going to see that in these four verses.

Verse 10: **"I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content..."** He says, "Hey, I have a great joy in you, but my joy in you is not rooted in what you can do for me. I'm not loving you because of what you can do for me." Just that idea alone is so powerful and applicable to us in 2020.

Just as a reminder, 10 years have passed, and he receives a gift from them. He says, "I rejoiced that at last you renewed your concern." That word *renewed* is a word from horticulture. It means to bloom again. "I see it again. You have had an opportunity to express it. But I don't want you to think that in the absence of the gift for the past 10 years I was thinking you didn't love me, because I know you love me. Whether you give me a gift or not, I know you care about me, and I want you to know that I care about you and that my care for you is not rooted in what you can do for me."

He writes the whole church. He says, "To the church in Philippi, thank you for this gift." I don't know. Maybe it was five people in the church who brought money together to give this gift. Maybe it was just Epaphroditus, but when he thanks them, he thanks the whole church. This is why... And I'm passionate about this, and I think it's probably a new idea for most of you, that we would do things together.

I've been on the inside of the church for a while now, and I know we love to feel good about ourselves by these rogue, maverick, pioneering gifts that we see and respond to. We take this out of context: the right and the left hand, don't want to know what they're giving. I always think it's best when we can come together as a church and meet a need.

So, the first option would be together, as a church, we would identify a need and meet it as a church, and they would say, "Oh, that's those people at Harris Creek." Not a person, but those people. I always think that's best. Second is if we had some way of knowing what you were doing by yourself so we could celebrate it corporately.

"Did you know we gave *X* number of dollars to Cru last year? Did you know we gave *X* number of dollars to missionaries last year? Did you know we...?" And when I say *we*, who do I mean? The church of Harris Creek. Who do I mean? *You!* And we can celebrate that corporately. That's what he's doing. I believe this is a biblical idea and, unfortunately, lost at some point along the journey.

He's saying, "Thank you, church in Philippi, for this gift. Thank you all for this gift." This would be like Mission Waco reaching out and saying, "Harris Creek, I want to thank you all that you allowed over 1,000 children...1,603 to be exact...to open Christmas presents this year; that you met the needs of 470 households in Waco, Harris Creek." Some of you may not have brought a gift. Life may have been hectic. But they're thanking the church.

I told the staff when I got here that there's always this challenge in ministry: How do you thank somebody for their service? Through the years, it's like, "Should we give our parking team some journals or maybe give them some \$5 gift cards to Starbucks?" I'm like, "No, that's insulting." For two reasons. First, what they've done is worth so much more than \$5 of coffee. I'm so much more grateful than \$5 of coffee would express.

I know they don't do it for the \$5 gift card, and (this is the controversial part) there's an aspect of what they're doing where they should be thanking *you*, church staff, because you gave them the opportunity to use their God-given gifts within the body. That's our job: to help you identify your gifts and unleash those gifts in the body. When you do that, you feel alive.

In fact, a couple of guys grabbed all of the bikes. They got trucks. They took the bikes and the presents down to Mission Waco, took off a day of work to make it happen, and then afterward, we got a thank you letter. "Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to do that." I read that and was like, "He gets it. The Holy Spirit is at work there. The brother gets it." That's what Paul is doing here. "Hey, I'm thankful for you, but don't think I love you more because of what you've done for me. God is going to meet all of my needs. But I do have gratitude, and I rejoice."

1. *Contentment is not found in others.* This can look like a number of things. It can look like the need for approval, being a slave to what others think of you. It can look like expectations you put on people because you think... You have all of these expectations for them: to be at Christmas, to not be at Christmas, to write you, to thank you, to wish you happy birthday. When they don't meet those expectations, you're devastated, because you have made your expectations of them a god.

Or thirdly (and I see this clearest in the text), you use people. Relationships are just a bargaining chip. You like someone because of what they can do for you. In 2020, this is called *networking*, but I think networking has crept into our faith, where we've been professionally trained to meet someone and place value on them based on what they can do for us. That's satanic. When it plays into your faith, that's the work of the Devil.

Those are strong words, but it's what James calls it in chapter 2. It's what he says. We don't use people and love stuff; we use stuff and love people. He says in Galatians 1:10, "Am I now trying to win the approval of God or of people? Am I trying to please people? If I were trying to please people, I would not be..." This is the strong language. "If I'm trying to please people, I wouldn't be a bondservant of Jesus." If I become the slave to what others think of me, then I'm serving the wrong master.

It concerns me in the church how often I hear, "Well, this is just who I am. I've always cared way too much what my father thinks about me. That's just always going to be the way. I have given him a throttle to my emotions, and how he feels affects how I feel, which affects how everybody else feels." Maybe it's your father, maybe it's your mother, your boss, a sibling, someone you work with or something. When you give someone the control to your emotions, you've made them a god. You don't have to embrace that identity for the rest of your life.

You can say, "You know what? I'm going to stop, and I'm going to work on that. I'm going to let the Holy Spirit change that. I'm going to surrender that in me to God." I think so many of us are so disappointed when people don't meet our expectations. I just want you to know people are going to let you down consistently until Jesus returns. They are, and that's okay. Jesus is going to fulfill and meet all of your expectations.

We can stop seeking contentment in relationships from our parents, from our children, from our spouses, from a pastor, from a boss. We can have the freedom to live from the approval of Jesus. Paul here is showing gratitude for their gift, but he wants them to know his contentment is not wrapped up in needing their approval or giving them his.

I'll just finish that little section by asking: Who controls your contentment, and what should you do about it? You can answer that. He says in verse 11, "**I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.**" This word *learned* shows up twice in these four verses about being content. It's something we learn. The word for contentment there is *autarkes* in the Greek. It doesn't show up anywhere else in the New Testament. It shows up often in ancient Greek.

It's interesting that he chooses that word, because it means this utter self-sufficiency. "I am completely and totally self-reliant." Now, we know Paul is not saying that, because he goes on in context to say, "God has met my needs. I'm God-reliant. I'm not self-sufficient; I'm God-sufficient." But he uses this word that they would know to say, "I have enough. My needs are met. I'm satisfied."

Now, granted, the brother is in prison. He's chained up to some soldier. If he can say this, we learn something in this. He's saying contentment is learned. So, if you're looking for contentment, which we all are... Everyone who hears me right now is looking for contentment. You need to know it's not something you're going to find like your keys. It's something you learn. It's knowledge. There's an awareness. There's some information that we lack.

2. *Contentment is not found in circumstances.* Directly from the text. This is one of those things... There are a couple of lessons out there that I just can't learn, because there's something deep in me that, in my worst moments, I think, "You know what? Nothing is going right. All is wrong. I have so much to do. The work is piled up. I know what I need. I just need a vacation. I just need my circumstances to change. I just have to get out and get some breathing room."

I think in error often that all of my problems would be solved if I were just sitting on a white sandy beach looking at some turquoise clear water, hearing seagulls, with the spray of the ocean on my face. If I were just in a Corona commercial right now, all would be right. I've realized firsthand what happens when you make your circumstances your god. Even recently... It's embarrassing.

We've talked about 2020 so much from here. Global pandemic hits. Things start closing down. You're wading through leadership waters you've never waded in before. It's not something they teach you in college. "Here's how you respond in a global pandemic when you're running a church but the church can't meet." You have to make decisions every day, and you just get decision fatigue, next-level decision fatigue.

Then you're figuring out navigating the school stuff, the virtual learning. Which one do we do? We have to make a choice. It feels so important. It's our children's education. Then my parents get COVID. I'm checking on them. "Are you guys doing okay? Okay. You're doing well. All right." Then my father passes away. I didn't see that coming. So, I'm carrying all this, dealing with some grief. I've still got to lead, still got to show up on Monday, still got to encourage the staff, still got to encourage the body.

I've got to keep going, but it's okay. I've got this vacation. It's there. There's the finish line. I just have to get to that finish line. If I can just lean through that finish line and we can get there, then I'll give myself seven days to grieve, to be right with the Lord, to get some really sweet time in there, and then I'll come back okay, and we can just keep sprinting. It's almost there. It's the day before. Oh, I've got COVID now. Got to cancel that.

It sent me to a bad place. The word I would use to describe it is *despair*, because I'd placed all my hope on my circumstances changing. God, throughout the Scripture, Genesis to Revelation, rarely changes circumstances. He changes people *in* circumstances. God often won't change your

circumstance. He's seeking to change you *in* your circumstance, to teach you that your contentment does not come from your circumstance changing, but you have everything you need to endure the circumstance you have.

Let me say something incredibly unpopular but absolutely biblical and true. God is sovereign over COVID. He could remove it this moment. He could make it vanish. So I'm left to think there's something he wants us to learn. What is he teaching us? Christmas is going to look different. Relationships are different. Work looks different right now. What does he want us to learn as his church?

I think so often we think if our circumstances changed... "If I just had a different job... If I just lived in a different neighborhood... If I just went to a different school or moved to a new city, then, finally, I would be happy." But the call in the Scripture for us is to bloom where we're planted. God has strategically and sovereignly placed us in environments to use us in those environments and not just run when they get difficult, but to find contentment in those circumstances.

I have met with people in their 40s, 50s, and 60s, that when they look in the rearview mirror, their life is one long running from. Not running *to* but running from circumstances, trying to change them. Paul is in prison. His circumstances are not good, and he's telling you... The Holy Spirit preserved this so that you would see he's content. What has he learned that we haven't learned? He's going to call it a *secret*. Let me show you.

Verse 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."** He says, "I've been in so many different situations," which is true. We know this from history. It's true of this man.

He has been very wealthy. He has been very, very poor. He has been in palaces. He has been in prison. He has been in positions of power, and he has been a pauper, in need, relying on God's provision through people. He has been in all of those places, and he says contentment is not just something you learn; it's a secret. It's unveiled.

People ask me all the time how we handle Santa Claus in our home. I'm going to tell you, a little parenting aside now if helpful for you. Santa comes and sees us every year. We go big with Santa. We're good with Santa. We love Santa. We celebrate that aspect of Christmas in a big and fun way.

I sit my children down early on and say, "Hey, you need to know I'm always going to be completely honest with you. I want you to know there's a secret about Santa. You need to know that. There's a secret about Santa. You're going to learn the secret one day. Jesus? All mysteries are being revealed through his Word. We can trust Jesus all the time, that everything the Scripture says about him is true. This Santa guy who we enjoy... There's a secret about him."

And they wear me out. "What's the secret about Santa?" Now your kids are going to wear *you* out, anybody who's listening. "What's the secret about Santa? I've got to find out the secret. I've

got to learn the secret." That's what he's saying. "Hey, there's a secret about contentment." What that should do in our hearts is "Well, I don't want the sun to set until I learn that secret, until I figure that out. I will not be at peace until I understand. There's something to figure out."

3. *Contentment is not found in stuff.* He says, "Whether well fed or hungry, whether having plenty or nothing..." Contentment is not found in what I have. Contentment is not found in stuff. He says, "Whether in need or having plenty, whether well fed or hungry..." How can you be content and hungry? This is an impossibility. Like, the essence of hunger is that you don't have everything you need. Hunger in its essence is discontentment, or at least an aspect of discontentment, yet he says, "No, I've learned a secret of being content and hungry." "Well, what's the secret, Paul? What is it? Tell us." I will, in just a minute.

Every Black Friday, I search the ads. It's tradition. I search the ads, looking for something to need. Did you hear those words? I carefully chose those words. Not looking for something *that* I need...looking for something to need. I don't approach them with an idea of what I'm looking for; I approach them hoping they're going to tell me what it is I need to be looking for. It's this lesson, because somewhere in my heart and mind there is something that believes...it's slow to die..."If I just had X, then all would be right in the world." I've been running this Solomon experiment since I was little, and it's vanity, vanity; all is meaningless.

One of the tremendous benefits of doing ministry in an extremely affluent area for a long time in my past is I have sat with billionaires to find them left wanting. I've heard it well said, "The rich are infinitely better off than the poor, for while the poor think money will bring them happiness, the rich know better." I've found that to be true. I have met billionaires who were miserable, and I've met people with nothing who were marked by elation.

When I was in Haiti, we were doing ministry in this rural area. We got on this truck affectionately called the *saltshaker* because it actually looked like a salt canister. You sit in the back. It's open air. It has a big cage around you. We headed up a mountain for six hours on a road that wasn't really a road. I mean, it was only a road because this truck had enormous tires, huge tread. The other reason it's called a *saltshaker* is because we just shook on the back of this truck as it went up this mountain for six hours.

When we got to the top of this mountain, there was a community of people up there who had poverty like I had never seen firsthand. Like, a tribal form of poverty. Their economic status in this community was whether you had pants or not. Have you ever had that nightmare where you show up to school and you don't have clothes on? In this community of people, there was a school there, and there were children who went to school without clothes on because they didn't have clothes. It was by far the poorest group of people I've ever seen firsthand.

While some of them didn't wear clothes, they all wore this bright, shiny smile. They greeted us so warmly and affectionately. They were so open to sharing their stuff with us. They were giving us fruit and food that was the only food they had. We had such an amazing day with them, talking about Jesus, our Lord and Savior. I got back on that truck, and if I'm completely honest and transparent with you, the emotion I felt was jealousy. I was jealous of them that they could be so happy with so little.

You hear this story a lot. What I don't want to fix in your heart is that people who have nothing don't have need because they're content. That's not what I'm saying. I'm saying they've learned a secret. If we're going to keep following this Jesus, we have to learn the secret. We have to learn what they've learned. Verse 13. Here it is, the secret revealed: **"I can do all this through him who gives me strength."**

Some of the kids in the room just thought, "Wait. Didn't Tim Tebow write that?" No. Your favorite letter jacket verse... I've actually heard recently this verse replaced John 3:16 for the most well-known Scripture in the Bible. I thought, "Isn't that just like the Devil?" That he would replace the clear gospel with this narcissistic cry that we can accomplish anything, which is not what this verse is saying.

This verse is not saying you can make your free throw (Philippians 4:13), that you can hit the home run (Philippians 4:13). That's not what it's saying. It's saying you can endure all suffering. You can endure all hardships. (There's a look of disappointment on some of the kids' faces.) You can endure all challenges. You can learn contentment in all things, because it is Jesus who gives us strength.

4. *Contentment is found in Christ alone.* This is the secret of contentment. The reason that's not satisfying is so many of us have no idea how to love Jesus or to grow our love for Jesus. We've been inoculated with Christianity. We've been vaccinated with it. We have so much that we'll never really have it. We can't catch it, but you can.

Before you start believing that doubt and before you think it's performance, let me give you this warm, snuggly blanket: consider where you're at and what God is doing right now in your life. He wants you to hear something. Contentment is found in Christ alone, and all of the things you know to do to learn to be with Jesus, to grow those affections for Christ, are real.

How can Paul be content and hungry? Because he sees his hunger, his body telling him, "Hey, you're hungry, Paul..." "But I don't have food." But you have Jesus. His hunger pushes him closer to that which is readily available to him. The desires... "Lord, I really want this TV" or this Tesla or this [fill in the blank for yourself].

"God, I know I want this, but I know that desire is really telling me I want more of you. God, how can I have more of you? I have access to all of you through the gospel, through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The veil is torn. We have access to God. Help me foster, grow that relationship with you." It's not preacher talk. At some point in this faith journey, that has to go from head knowledge to heart. They say people miss heaven by 16 inches, the distance from your head to your heart.

At some point, it has to be, "God, I want you. I want more of you. My greatest desire is not for the safety of my children; it's for you. It's not for a better marriage. It's not for more money. It's not for a different job. It's not for a better vacation. It's not for prettier scenery, a bigger house, a faster car. It's you. God, teach me, because I'm struggling. I don't know that I know how. Teach

me to long for you, to grow my affections for you, to seek you. Awaken that in me. Open the eyes of my heart so that I may see you and want you."

Hebrews 13:5 says: "**...be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'**" Be content with what you have because you have God. And it's not enough. Some of us, I know... It's like, "I don't know how to make that real." I'm going to be honest with you. I'm not going to spend a lot of time trying to help you know how to make that real, because that's what we do here every Sunday and throughout the week when you meet with your Life Group.

That's what I hope is the movement and the thrust and the direction of this body of believers. That's what you'll get here. Let me say that a different way. You hang out here long enough, and that's what you're going to have pressed upon your heart by the Holy Spirit week after week after week: you belong to God and God is enough. You have enough.

The verse I skipped earlier is just too relevant not to say. First Timothy 6: "**But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.**" I think for so many of us, we can't be.

I don't think we spend enough time thinking about this narrative we're living in. None of you know your great-great-grandfather. He's close family. Some of you are living on his money. You didn't thank God for him today, and he was alive 50 years ago. Fifty years after you're gone, nobody is driving down the road thanking God Almighty for your existence. To dust you've returned. You've been forgotten. You have to find something greater to live for.

There is another world we were created for. It is his kingdom, and we have to put everything here in right perspective. They're tools to be used to love God and help others love God. Nothing more, nothing less. And how do we use it in that way according to his will? In summary, contentment is not found in others, contentment is not found in circumstances, contentment is not found in stuff; contentment is found in Christ alone. It's not something you look for; it's something you learn to choose because of who you know.

There's a story that Russell Conwell, a Baptist preacher in the 1800s, made well known. To the very best of my ability in trying to confirm this story is true, it's true. You can research it yourself. It's a story I heard some time ago, and it had a tremendous impact on my life because of how relevant it is.

It's a story about a man named Ali Hafed. Ali Hafed was in ancient Persia, now India, and he was a wealthy man. He had an estate. He had an orchard. He had everything he needed. He had land, a beautiful property there. One day, he was visited by a Buddhist monk who was talking to him about diamonds. He told him, "With a diamond the size of the tip of your finger you could own the whole country."

Ali knew nothing about diamonds, but as he heard more about them, he said, "Where do you get these diamonds?" He said, "You have to look for them. They're often found in streams. They're

underground. You dig for them." Ali Hafed went to bed a poor man. Not that he didn't have all that he had before, but he lacked one thing that he wasn't even aware of when the sun came up, but as the sun set, he realized he didn't have it and he longed for it.

When he woke up the next day, he said, "I will find diamonds." So he set out on a journey. He actually sold his farm, and he took the money and set out on a journey looking for diamonds. He went into Africa into Egypt. He went all throughout Europe in search of diamonds. He spent every dollar he had in search of diamonds. He sat there on the shore in Spain, coming up empty, depressed and in despair. Empty-handed, he took his life. He ended his life.

The person who purchased his farm led their camel to a stream on Ali Hafed's farm, and as the camel took a drink of water, he saw a sparkly stone, picked it up, took it inside, and found out later it was a diamond, which was really the first diamond to be discovered in the greatest diamond mine in existence: the mine of Golconda. There's a fort there now. It's a tourist attraction. You can go see it. This is how it was discovered: this man sold his farm. Had Ali just looked where he was, had he just dug deeply where he was, what he was looking for, traveling the world searching for, was beneath him and with him the entire time.

The gospel is not this fire insurance so that you don't go to hell one day. The gospel is the lens through which you see all of life and how you live and how you give and how you speak and how you share and what you do and how you work and how you pursue relationships and how you date and how you're married. It speaks to all of those things. One day, we will inherit glorious riches with God forever and ever and ever and ever. How now shall we live today? Content, realizing that in Christ we have all things. Let me pray that we would.

Father, would you fix that in our hearts? Help us to know it, to believe it, to see it, to hold fast to it, to live it out. Father, thank you for the work you're doing here at Harris Creek, for the ways that you love us and the ways you display that love through your Son Jesus Christ. Help us not to be men and women searching the world high and low, trying to find something that would bring satisfaction to our hearts. Help us to find that now in you. As we sing this song, would you fix that in our hearts even now? In Jesus' name, amen.