

[Deep voice] Virtues (indistinct) morning.

Priest: The text is taken from the epistle of Paul to the Philippians in the fourth chapter at the 11th verse. I have learned to be content wherever I am. Contentment is a virtue an attractive and an engaging virtue. It's praise has been sung by poets in every age and its practice is repeatedly urged on us in the Bible. It is one of the minor virtues. Few of us would rate it as high as courage or integrity, loyalty or magnanimity, but those who possess it, help in no small measure to reduce the streams and tensions of existence, and they make life easier and sweeter for their neighbors and acquaintances. I have been rereading David Grayson's "Adventures in Contentment." If he lived does he wrote, Greece must have been a benediction to a whole community. And a friend in a thousand for his book is a running commentary on the seeing of Socrates. Contentment is natural wealth. luxury is artificial poverty. Now just how attractive and engaging a virtual contentment is. We see, as soon as we take into account, the person who lacks it. The individual who would rather air a grievance, then acknowledge or kindness. The individual who is consumed by petty trivial discontent. All of us are familiar with the inveterate grumbler complaining of the weather or food or of the conditions under which he has to work. All of the people with whom he has to work. Complaining of what goes on in his church or his fraternity or Washington. The root of all such discontent is self-centeredness. Somehow the more the self is indulged the more it demands. Did you ever know a selfish person, who wasn't also a chronic grumbler? On the other hand, you have a great soul, like the apostle Paul writing from a prison cell, "I have learned to be content wherever I am." It was something however that he had to learn. And his letters one by one show how the lesson was mastered by denying himself, by saying no to himself there sternest of disciplines. And by teaching himself to think about other people to care for them. A woman who had lost the son became hard and bitter and inconsolable so that her health failed and her mind weak. Her husband took her to a famous French neurologist, who attempted an unexpected, but direct method of cure, for he went with her for a long drive through villages that had born the fear and fire and devastation of the war. Madame said, "In nearly all these little humble homes, there is a poor woman who has lost a son and some of them that are mothers who have lost two or three sons is your grief greater than theirs? Go home and bear your sorrow with courage and patience." But though an attractive and engaging virtues, there are times when content is anything but a virtue. And saying that I'm thinking of a vivid striking passage in the book of the prophet Jeremiah. Moab from the thirst has to lean at ease. Never known exile afar. Lean like wine left on the leaves, never pour from jar to jar, the taste the same as ever. And it's Saint mellows never, but the day comes, says the eternal, when I saying men to move him, tilting him up and over, emptying out his casks and breaking up his flasks. Well, hundreds of years have passed since those words when I first uttered? But isn't there meaning crystal clear that are wrong, that cry out to high heaven to be right. There are injustices that must either be ended or mended. There are situations so intolerable that silence in regard to them is not merely culpable but criminal And they are inconsistent the offense of the man of Moab. They were easy going and complete. They tolerantly accepted the status quo. They acquiesced in conditions as they were in conditions against which they should have raise that voice and that arm in spirited, defiant protest. You see contentment is always in danger of settling into

complacency or what is even worse into apathy into indifference. You may have heard of the farmer who said, "Don't tell me how to farm any better. I don't farm as good now as I know how." And in all walks of life that are men there women who might well make the same sort of confession in the realm of personal character, for instance, there are those who are far too readily and easily come to terms with themselves and with the limitation. Now I know that psychologists insist and rightly insist on the need of self-acceptance, but let us remember that there is a self-acceptance that is all together to indolent and supine. If you imposed on yourself a stricter discipline, you could be a finer person and you could turn into the classroom, a finer quality of work. Few things are said than to see men and women deliberately sentencing themselves to low levels of living and achievement. Listen to what G.J. Nith the dramatic critic says about himself in his book, "Living Philosophies." "To me, pleasure, and my own personal happiness, only infrequently collaborating with others, at all I deem worth a hoot. It would make me out to much finer that and nobler person. I duly, appreciate to see that the happiness and welfare of all mankind were close to my heart. As a matter of fact, the happiness and welfare of all mankind are not my profession. I have all the time I can do to look out for my own happiness and welfare that I am selfish and to a very considerable degree possibly or offensive. Is that more and more regrettably obvious. All that I am able to offer in extenuation is that so are most other men, if you dig down into them and pay no attention to their altruistic pretentious get up a heart of them." I have yet to find a man who did not think of himself first and foremost, as one type of self-acceptance for you, does anyone really want to get up and defend it? Should we be content with a philosophy of self-interest even of enlightened self-interest. If everybody adopted that sort of philosophy, pleasure and our own personal happiness, or we deemed worth a hoot, what a crazy chaotic world, this would be. Yes. And some people have to quickly come to terms not only with themselves and their limitations, but with the world and its limitations. In adolescence, the status quo, anger them. They could hardly wait until college days were over. So we got to where they took it into the free, they were free men crusaders for every good cause. And for every overdue and unpopular reform, they participated in debates, they passed resolutions. They join societies and they went home in the vacations to shock the parents by their radicalism and their extremism. Where are they today? What has become of the social passion of the resolve to change the face of the world and hand down the millennium? Alas in the case of the majority, time, further time has had his way with, the years have tamed them Some of them are prudent and cautious and calculating. Some of them have given up their aspirations for possessions they don't fight anymore. Takes a great deal to arouse or stair them. Next time you're in New York, all that you have to do, is make four fifth avenue, cross to the fifth avenue where the university club is situated, cross to the front window of Elizabeth Arden shop and watch the big front windows of the university club. See the pot bellied man sitting there, in those big windows. It takes a very great deal to move them, to stir them. The tumultuous, enthusiasms of youth have died down and just like many of them, just like Dr. Samuel Johnson at the time of the American revolution. Bossewel, "If I were in parliament, I should be vexed if things went wrong." Johnson, "That can't, sir. Public affairs vex no man." Bossewel, "Have they not fixed you a little sir? Have you not yourself been vexed by all the turbulence of this reign?" Johnson, "Sir, I have never slept an hour less nor an ounce less meat." So shooting Samuel Johnson and I time him of public calamity have been as equable as philosophical, would it not have been for the general good, if when king George The Third, was making such disastrous decisions, the leading man in England, because of their concern over what was going on had lost some sleep and found the age going off their appetite, public affairs, vex no man. A story that came out of China during the war illustrates how wide of the mark their generalization can be. Story

about two men who succeeded in escaping from a prison camp. After arduous travel and desperate hazards, they made their way to the threshold of safety. They had been associated for years in the service of China. The one as a worker, the other as a publicist. Insight of freedom, the worker stopped. "You go on." He said, "And with your brilliant gifts. Tell the world what we are fighting for. I'm going back, so that when you write, you can dip your pen in my blood. And the world will know that we mean what we say." There was a man whom the years have not tamed and back of every movement for reform in history. Of every one of them, you can trace a deep, I would say, I divide this content. Moses, for example, he was by adoption a prince of the Royal house of Egypt. But there was Israelitish blood in his veins. How could he be content his brethren were treated like beasts of burden. His whole soul rose in revolt at the sight of their suffering. Every decent instinct in the man drove him to renounce the link with the palace and to identify himself with his own Kith and Kin. In the end, at that head determined defiant, he led out of Egypt. Amos was the herdsman in Tacoma, in the eighth century before Christ. If you want to see how ill at ease and impatient, a good man can be in the presence of social wrongs and how zealous for radical thorough going reforms. Read the little track for the times, that is the prophecy of Amos. It is full of tempestuous and withering words, It is full of spiritual dynamite, no soft pleading in it, no gentle persuasion in it, but the wholesome cleansing influence of that little book of nine chapters, it would be very difficult for me to exaggerate. And in the same prophetic succession stands the Lord Jesus Christ. For 30 years, 30 years, he remained in the seclusion of Nazareth. The wonder is that he stayed by the carpenter's bench so long. The wonder is that he was able to keep his patience, or to hold his tongue in these of the situation of Israel, of religion in Israel, at the time, the formality, the unreality, the blight that was lying on what should have been a blessed beneficence thing. But when at length he did speak, there could be no mistaking the righteous indignation that flamed in his words and in his looks. It's strange the generation after generation should persist in thinking about him as a sweetly sentimental soul, insipid, was how a student once described Jesus to me, insipid. He was gracious. He could be gentle as the gentlest woman here, but all through his ministry, there seize the name a divine discontent, why the disciples had only to look at him, to be reminded of the saying in the Bible, "The seal of thine house have devoured him." You see, he came to win the world back to God, it was impossible for him to recline in slipperiness, to stay by the carpenter's bench to take life as he found it. That last freeze, by the way, I borrowed from a verse by Author Clow, "The world load is very ill we see, we cannot comprehend it, but in one point we all agree. God won't and men can't mend it. Being common sensed can be seen to take life as we find it, the pleasure to take pleasure in the pain. Try not to mind it." The sentiment of those lines is anything but christian, measure them against the life and teaching and spirit of Jesus and the contrast becomes stark at once. No one who professes to follow Jesus, should take life as he finds it or subscribe to the view that the ills of this world are beyond repair or cure. Yet, it has with contrition to be acknowledged that the church has sometimes done this very thing at intervals in its history there've been pious people who have suppose that earthly conditions had hardly any importance. Some have said categorically, that it is no part of the duty of the Christian, to seek to make this world a better place. That religion first and foremost is a matter between a man and this maker and the patrons and the structure of society are neither his province nor its concern. As I see it, this is disastrous doctrine. And if I refer to it, it's because it's always raising its head on this continent and on the European continent, one of the troubles about the crisis theology is that it leaves its readers with the impression sometimes that when all is said and done, there's nothing that the Christian can do for that matter, nothing that he should attempt to do about the external order of society, since God alone can save and redeem it. There was a theological student who went from

the United States to Europe, came for a time under the influence of this crisis theology. He was familiar with as you're familiar with W. P. Merralls, great hymn "Rise up, oh man of God, His kingdom tarries long. Bring in the day of brotherhood and end the night of wrong." But coming under this other kind of influence, he parodied that verse and wrote, "Sit down oh man of God, His kingdom, He will bring whenever it may please His will, you cannot do a thing." Believe that and you cut the nerve of Christian social endeavor, you narrow the range and the application of the christian ethic. Yes, and you'll give your support to the abdication of Christianity from the whole field of politics and economics. That way lies the passive acceptance of the status quo. No matter how saturated the status quo may be with injustice and inequality and oppression. Over against this view, is the conviction that you and I are called to the service of God here and now. And that it is our bound and duty to labor for a society that will embody and reflect the principles and the spirit of Jesus Christ. When it comes to the maintenance of the cosmic order, God requires no man's assistance. But when it comes to the establishment of the social order in his providence, He has called us to be His coworkers. We have God in history is through human agent, Moses and Amos and the others Christ towering above them all, who is human and divine. The kingdom of God is the gift of God, but we can forward this coming till the will of God is done on earth, as it is in heaven. That should be in the heart of every Christian, a divine discontent. He should be alert to the presence of evil. His conscience should be tender and sensitive to whatever is unclean or unfair, unjust or unChrist like. These certainly are days when there are situations in plenty to stir up within us, discontent within us stone's throw of the beautiful church, I serve. Housing conditions exist, which are a reproach to the city of New York. And which should be a burden as I take occasion to say, should be a burden and at the same time, a challenge to the conscience of my congregation. Disturbing to any sensitive conscience is the fact that the United States has well over twice, the average amount of food of the rest of mankind, and with 6.2 of the world's population, it has 47% of its income. And when we look abroad, what do we see? The war no longer cold between the west and the east, a fresh feverish race and armaments with four new and awesome feature, the experimentation and atomic vision. What we see in short is a world on the brink of a new hell. And I ask you, who could be content with that for the status quo? But you say, "What can we do?" We mustn't harden ourselves. That's what we must do. We mustn't harden ourselves, we mustn't tell ourselves either that things are not as bad as they seem. We mustn't tell ourselves that in any case, they're not our business. We mustn't allow ourselves to become indifferent to what is going on in the country and to what is going on in the world. Odd Nansen, son of the famous Norwegian Explorer, wrote a day by day chronicle of his life in a Nazi concentration camp. And this is the way in which the book finishes. "Dear reader, I shall stop now. This book has turned out long enough and it may have been heavy going. But when you go to your book seller for a new one, don't say to him as so many do, I have had enough of these retched prison books. Give me some better kind of thing. I can't stand any more of that misery" says Nansen. "Worst crime you can commit today against yourself and against society is to forget what happened and sink back into indifference. What happened was worse than you have any idea off. And it was the indifference of mankind that let it take place" Odd Nansen warning shouldn't go unheeded. If we are going to build a screen, between ourselves and the giant agony of the world We're also going to pave the way to new miseries. We mustn't harden ourselves. We mustn't tell ourselves that things are not really as bad as they seem or at any rate they're not our business anyway. And we must remember, I want now to talk especially to undergraduates, we must remember that the only discontent that is worth anything is discontent that issues in action. I remember when there had been a fresh outbreak of corruption in New York, getting into the subway one morning and sitting down beside a

man who had his paper open at the place where the news was printed there in grave type but he was fuming. He was angry. He was as discontented as anyone could be. I couldn't help wondering whether all of the discontent would ooze out of him and in picturing complete, or if when the next time came to vote, he registered a vote that would do something to secure integrity for his city. People who care, go and do something, those who want democracy work for it. Those who want peace work for it. Those who want a finer juster order roll up their sleeves pitch in and work for it. And finally, forbidding and menacing as the contemporary situation is we mustn't allow ourselves to become panicky and jittery over it. If we are Christians, we must think and talk and act like Christians, that is to say, we must keep our faith in the love and grace and power of God. And we must also keep our faith in the essential greatness and goodness of man. I'm going to conclude now with a story, which as I see it, doesn't contradict, but compliments and maybe sums up what I've been endeavoring to say. In the days of Oliver Cromwell, bulls trod Whitlock. The British ambassador to the Hague, was tossing through the night in anxiety about the condition of his country. And old servant lying in the same room addressed, "Sir, may I ask you a question?" "Certainly" replied the ambassador. "Did God govern the world before you came into?" "Certainly." was the answer. "And Will He govern the world when you've gone out of it?" "Undoubtedly." was the answer. "Then sir, why can you not trust him to govern the world while you're in it?" The tired ambassador turned over on his side and fell fast, asleep. Fell fast to sleep so that the next morning he was able and adequate for the handling of the affairs of his country. Let us pray. Oh, Son of God in whose heart zeal burned like a furnace, save us from weak resignation to the evils we deploy. Stir up within all of us a divine discontent, help us as we have opportunity. And as though dos give us grace and strength to bring in the day of brotherhood and help in the night of wrong. The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ the love of God, the fellowship of the holy spirit, be with us all now and forevermore. Amen. ♪ The Lord bless you and keep you ♪ ♪ The Lord lift his countenance upon you ♪ ♪ And give you peace ♪ ♪ And give you peace ♪ ♪ And give you peace ♪ ♪ And give you peace ♪ ♪ The Lord make his face to shine upon you ♪ ♪ And be gracious unto you ♪ ♪ And be gracious ♪ ♪ The Lord and be gracious ♪ ♪ Gracious unto you ♪ ♪ Amen, Amen ♪ ♪ Amen Amen ♪ ♪ Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen ♪ (bell ringing) (instrument playing)

Baby: Well, I think I'll talk to Heidi first. Well Heidi we went in a car to see Santa, Santa Clause. And I wanna tell all of you, that I have a preset that Peggy gave me, and I hardly can wait to open it up. I can't think of what I wanna say now. I think I'll give you-

Woman: What else did we see besides Santa Clause?

Baby: What?

Woman: What else did we see besides Santa Clause,

Baby: I don't know.

Woman: That's nice? Did we see some pretty Christmas trees?

Baby: Yes' I will tell them about the manger.

Woman: Oh, all right, you tell them about the manger.

Baby: Well, not even grandmother, I'll tell all the the girls about it.

Woman: Go ahead and do it.

Baby: Not even grandmother and Heidi, we saw a manger scene and some pretty Christmas trees, beside Santa Clause and over aunt Teresa's house, It just lay in a Santa Claus. ♪ Up on the house stop reindeer pause ♪ ♪ Out jumps good old Santa Clause ♪ ♪ Down through the chimney with lots of toys. ♪ ♪ All of the little ones Christmas joy ♪ ♪ Hoo, hoo, hoo, who wouldn't go ♪ ♪ Hoo, hoo, hoo, who wouldn't go ♪ ♪ Up on the house stop click click click ♪ ♪ Down through the chimney with the good Saint Nick ♪ ♪ First comes the stocking of little Nail ♪ ♪ Oh dear Santa fill it well ♪ ♪ Give her a dollar that last and cross ♪ ♪ One that the local man shut her eyes ♪ ♪ Hoo, hoo, hoo, who wouldn't go ♪ ♪ Hoo, hoo, hoo, who wouldn't go ♪ ♪ Up on my house stop click, click, click ♪ ♪ Down through the chimney with the good Saint Nick ♪ ♪ Next comes the stoking of little Will ♪ ♪ Oh just see what a glorious bill ♪ ♪ Here is a hammer and lots of texts ♪ ♪ Also a ball and a whip that cracks ♪ ♪ Hoo, hoo, hoo, ♪

Boy: Your not singing the right tune. ♪ Hoo, hoo, hoo, who wouldn't go ♪ ♪ Up on the house stop click, click, click ♪ ♪ Down through the chimney with the good Saint Nick ♪ ♪ Jolly old Saint Nicholas new year this way. ♪ ♪ Don't you tell us single soul what I'm going to say. ♪ ♪ Christmas Eve is coming soon now you dear old man. ♪ ♪ Whisper what you bring to me, tell me if you can. ♪ ♪ When the clock is striking 12, when I'm fast asleep ♪ ♪ Down the chimney brown and black, with your pack of three ♪ ♪ Stockings, you will find hanging in a row. ♪ ♪ Mine will be the shortest one, you'll be sure to know. ♪ ♪ Johnny wants a pair of skates, Susie wants a Dolly ♪ ♪ Nellie wants a story book ♪ ♪ She thinks dolls are folly ♪ ♪ As for me, my little brain, isn't very bright ♪ ♪ Choose for me oh Santa Claus, watch you think is right. ♪ ♪ Way down upon the Swanee river far, far away ♪ ♪ That's where my heart is turning ever ♪ ♪ That's where the old folks stay ♪ ♪ Oh, my heart is sad and dreary everywhere I roam ♪ ♪ Oh, brothers how my heart grows weary ♪ ♪ Far from the old folks at home ♪

Woman: I've been trying very hard to get Walter to say Merry Christmas to you. And he agrees that he will. And then when we hand him a little microphone, he's just a silent as a little mouse, but he's sitting here with us and he's thinking about all of you up in Bridgehampton and looking forward to another summer with you next year. Now we want to say a last Merry Christmas to all of you. ♪ Merry Christmas to you ♪ ♪ Merry Christmas to you ♪ ♪ Merry Christmas dear family ♪ ♪ Merry Christmas ♪