

Are You Satisfied?

Luke 9:10-17

Introduction

Food: What is the best meal you've ever had? All of them (don't get a body like this by being picky; potluck is my spiritual gift). Really hard test (Theological German). Future in the program required I pass. I studied so hard that I actually got physically sick (pneumonia). If I pass, we'll go to a fancy restaurant for a steak dinner (Vintage Tavern). My meal was amazing. I'm not sure you could have a better steak (rare, mooing at the table).

- It was the most **delicious** and **expensive** meal I'd had (to that point). And guess what, **I was still hungry the next morning.**

You may have had this same thing happen (e.g., a great experience, winning a goal, passing the test, a once-in-a-lifetime trip, buying the dream car, etc.). But before long, you're looking for the next affirmation, the next experience, the next accomplishment, the next high.

- That person or thing you put all your hope in, **didn't actually satisfy.** Mark, you're putting too much pressure on a fancy steak, it's just food! And you're right. But isn't this what we do? We look for satisfaction in things that cannot satisfy.

True satisfaction is only found in Jesus. The question: **are you satisfied?** I keep coming back to this because it is the fuel for discipleship. It is the fuel for obedience. It is the fuel for worship.

So let's look at a familiar story in Luke 9:10-17. It's the only miracle of Jesus recorded in all four gospels. It's the story of Jesus **feeding the 5000** (though the estimate was 5,000 men so it could have easily been upwards of 15,000 when you include women and children).

- It's a story about food (but it's not about food).
- What I hope you'll see is that Jesus is the one that your soul has been looking for. He's the only one that offers true and lasting satisfaction.

¹⁰ On their return the apostles told him all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida. ¹¹ When the crowds learned it, they followed him, and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing. ¹² Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place." ¹³ But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people." ¹⁴ For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." ¹⁵ And they did so, and had them all sit down. ¹⁶ And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. ¹⁷ And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.¹

¹ ¹⁰ Καὶ ὑποστρέψαντες οἱ ἀπόστολοι διηγήσαντο αὐτῷ ὅσα ἐποίησαν. καὶ παραλαβὼν αὐτοὺς ὑπεχώρησεν κατ' ἰδίαν εἰς πόλιν καλουμένην Βηθσαιῶν. ¹¹ οἱ δὲ ὄχλοι γινόντες ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ· καὶ ἀποδεξάμενος αὐτοὺς ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς

1. Jesus Welcomes the Weary (vv. 10-11)

¹⁰ On their return the apostles told him all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida. ¹¹ When the crowds learned it, they followed him, and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing.

Recap and Retreat: ¹⁰ On their return the apostles told him all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida.

- The disciples return from their first commissioned ministry experience (9:1-6) and so are now called apostles (“sent ones”).
- They tell Jesus about all they did and they need a break. When you’re going house to house, town to town, relying on the generosity of others and facing lots of spiritual and physical resistance, you need to refresh (#truth #feelthat).

Crowds: ¹¹ When the crowds learned it, they followed him, and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing.

- The break would never come. Jesus consistently prioritizes the well-being of others over his own needed rest (tension between rest and sacrifice).
- They are not an interruption (there are no interruptions to a sovereign God). Rather than send them away, he welcomes them (ἀποδέχομαι). He received them and accepted them. “Come on in” (hospitality). Are people interruptions (calls to be screened)?
 - These are a people desperate for the time and touch of Jesus (need of healing).
 - Matthew says Jesus had “compassion” on the crowd (Matt 14:14). One of Matthew’s favorite words to describe the character of Jesus is “compassionate.” Jesus sees us, and has a tender heart of love for us. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (Matt 9:36).
 - He knows our sin and our suffering and he cares for us.

Compassion: His compassionate response requires a sacrifice of his comfort and his time (and he’s happy to do it).

- His compassion costs him something (his comfort, time, etc.). Grace is *free* but it’s not *cheap* (Bonhoeffer). It always costs somebody something. So don’t trivialize it (it costs Jesus’ his life).

περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ τοὺς χρεῖαν ἔχοντας θεραπείας ἴατο. ¹² Ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤρξατο κλίνειν· προσελθόντες δὲ οἱ δώδεκα εἶπαν αὐτῷ, Ἀπόλυσον τὸν ὄχλον, ἵνα πορευθέντες εἰς τὰς κύκλῳ κώμας καὶ ἀγροὺς καταλύσωσιν καὶ εὕρωσιν ἐπισιτισμόν, ὅτι ὡδε ἐν ἐρήμῳ τόπῳ ἐσμέν. ¹³ εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς, Δότε αὐτοῖς ὑμεῖς φαγεῖν. οἱ δὲ εἶπαν, Οὐκ εἰσὶν ἡμῖν πλεῖον ἢ ἄρτοι πέντε καὶ ἰχθύες δύο, εἰ μήτι πορευθέντες ἡμεῖς ἀγοράσωμεν εἰς πάντα τὸν λαὸν τοῦτον βρώματα. ¹⁴ ἦσαν γὰρ ὡσεὶ ἄνδρες πεντακισχίλιοι. εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ, Κατακλίνατε αὐτοὺς κλισίας [ὡσεὶ] ἀνά πενήκοντα. ¹⁵ καὶ ἐποίησαν οὕτως καὶ κατέκλιναν ἅπαντας. ¹⁶ λαβὼν δὲ τοὺς πέντε ἄρτους καὶ τοὺς δύο ἰχθύας ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εὐλόγησεν αὐτοὺς καὶ κατέκλασεν καὶ ἐδίδου τοῖς μαθηταῖς παραθεῖναι τῷ ὄχλῳ. ¹⁷ καὶ ἔφαγον καὶ ἐχορτάσθησαν πάντες, καὶ ἦρθη τὸ περισσεῦσαν αὐτοῖς κλασμάτων κόφινοι δώδεκα.

- If you are going to demonstrate the gospel it will cost you something (e.g., forgiveness, interruption, comfort). You are rarely more like Jesus than when you sacrifice yourself for the benefit of others (e.g., Phil 2).

Known and Loved: Think about your own life. Jesus sees the ways you suffer that no one else sees (the thoughts you harbor, the anxieties you hold onto, the fear you live with, the temptation you battle).

- “To be loved but not known [feels comforting at first] but is superficial (fake). To be known and not loved is our greatest fear” (if they really knew me they wouldn’t love me). But to be fully known and truly loved is the good news of the gospel. It’s what [you] need more than anything. It is a gloriously liberating. It frees you from arrogance and self-righteousness, and it anchors you in the midst of any of life’s trials.”
- **God knows, welcomes, and loves you.** He is not disinterested or disconnected. He is not annoyed that you messed up again. He is not bothered that you have come asking for help again (e.g., doctor loves to see sick people).

2. Jesus Exposes Our Limitations (vv. 12-14a)

¹² Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to him, “Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place.” ¹³ But he said to them, “You give them something to eat.” They said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.” ¹⁴ For there were about five thousand men.

Into the Wilderness: ¹² Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to him, “Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place.”

- They are in a desolate place, a dry land, dessert, wilderness (ἐρήμω).
 - God often reveals himself in the wilderness (#testimony). Cf. John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness (Matt 3:1) or Jesus tempted in the wilderness (Matt 4:1, Lk 4:1).
 - It is in the wilderness where God refines us and where we must depending completely on him for provision (e.g., manna).

A Picture of Discipleship: This crowd followed Jesus into the wilderness even though they didn’t have provision. If Jesus calls you, your job is to obey. If you wait until you understand *exactly* how it is going to work out, you are not trusting him. **The obedience of a true disciple outpaces understanding.** I am called to obey even when I don’t fully understand.

- These people either (1) trusted Jesus to provide -or- (2) figured following him was worth missing a few meals. They’re in a position where God will provide or they’re going without. What’s clear is that they thought Jesus was important enough to follow *even into the wilderness*. Jesus was worth sacrificing security and provision.
- This is a good example of child-like faith. My kids don’t usually pack their own food (especially my youngest). They don’t know how to cook dinner. They *trust* that their

parents (mom) are going to take care of them. That's why Jesus calls us to child-like faith (not childishness): "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 18:3).

- Faith is not poor planning or dumb decisions; it's confidence that if God calls you to something, he will provide what you need.
 - We don't follow God because we have it all together, we follow him because he has it all together. We don't follow him because we're good enough or strong enough but because he is. **This is faith.**

Force the Issue: ¹³ But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people."

- Jesus forces the disciples to come face to face with their finitude (limitations). Your limitations are not a sin, but acting like you don't have them is! "I should not fear the weakness that drives me to Jesus. I should fear the delusion of strength that tempts me to live independently of my Savior" (Walton).
- Disciples have to acknowledge their finitude (cf. parenting; can't control them).
- He knows they can't feed them.
- "When God calls us to do something for his sake, he provides us with what we need, with what we do not have in ourselves."
- Do we run to or send people to worldly provision instead of Jesus? Do we try to solve a problem that can only be solved by Jesus?

3. Jesus Completely Satisfies (vv. 14b-17)

And he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each."² ¹⁵ And they did so, and had them all sit down. ¹⁶ And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. ¹⁷ And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

Jesus Feeds Them: ¹⁶ And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd.

- Jesus' compassion and his power come together in this moment as he multiplies this tiny meal to provide for all these people.
- Jesus is loving enough to care and powerful enough to help.
 - Lots of people care (but can't do anything about your situation), and often there are lots of people who can help your problem but don't care. **But not Jesus** (he sees, he cares, and he acts).

Miracle: How did he multiply food? We don't know the mechanism. The story is not concerned with the method of multiplication but the meaning of it.³

² 100 groups (50 x 100 = 5000). Not sure why. The term is a *hapex legommenon* (*klisia*; *proto-ekklesia*?).

³ Augustine assumed the food multiplied in Jesus' hand and Calvin thought it did so in the disciples' possession.

- As long as miracles are questioned, this has been questioned (Bock, 833). It is a case study to look at the interpretive gymnastics skeptical scholars have gone through to explain away this miracle. “It is without doubt a fascinating business to investigate how human ingenuity reaches new heights in its efforts to eliminate the supernatural from the story of the feeding” (Van Der Loos).
 - A rich patron provided food.
 - People shared their food.
 - It was symbolic that they *felt* satisfied.
 - Jesus hypnotized the crowd into believing they were full.
- If God can take on flesh, if Jesus can be raised from the dead, then he can miraculously multiply supper for this crowd. It’s not some magic trick but a miraculous demonstration of Jesus’ compassionate power (e.g., passion plays with hidden food, etc.).

Eucharist: The language of this miracle is not accidental⁴ and all of it mirrors the language of the Lord’s Supper.

- Here he takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to his disciples. At the Last Supper: He took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me” (Lk 22:19).
 - The phrase “said a blessing” is the same Greek term we see in the Last Supper: “when he had given thanks” (Lk 22:19); εὐχαριστέω. This is where the term “eucharist comes from.”⁵
- In the fourth Gospel, after this miracle, John records Jesus’ words “on the next day” (6:22). New people show up looking for this miraculous meal and Jesus says: Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life (Jn 6:26-27)... Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst (Jn 6:35).

Manna: After God rescued the Israelites from slavery he led them through the wilderness to meet him at the mountain. After a while they started exercising their spiritual gift of complaining basically saying it would have been better die with full bellies as slaves in Egypt than starving as free people in the dessert (Ex 15:3). “You’ve brought us into the wilderness to starve to death!”

- God *has not brought you to the wilderness to let you perish*. And he proved it to Israel by feeding the bread from heaven!
- Manna was an object lesson in trust. The very word is Hebrew for whatchamacallit” (i.e., “what is it”). They don’t know what it is, they can’t store it for the future, they simply receive God’s provision day by day.
- As Moses explains, “And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the

⁴ All of the gospel writers recount this miracle after the fact. They are looking back at what Jesus did after his resurrection, ascension, and the birth of the church.

⁵ Transliteration rant: βαπτίζω, ἀπόστολος, ἄγγελος, Χριστός, διάκονος, σάββατον, συναγωγή, παράδεισος, etc.

mouth of the LORD” (Deut 8:3). *Jesus quotes this same passage in rebuffing the temptations of Satan in the Wilderness (cf. Mt 4:4, Lk 4:4).

- In the discussion of manna and God’s provision, Jesus makes it clear: “The bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (Jn 6:33).

Provision: All of this is pointing to the beautiful truth that **Jesus satisfies us**.¹⁷ And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces. How does he satisfy us? With himself.

- The bread that is broken to nourish us is the body of Christ on the cross.
- Every week when we take the Lord’s Supper as a gathering of believers we remember many things. It’s a reminder of the great wedding feast we will partake in for eternity. “One day we will no longer be hungry in this broken world but satisfied in a renewed one.”
- In Genesis, the serpent told Adam and Eve to “take and eat.” They listened to the lie of Satan and disobeyed God. But, in Jesus, God has reversed the curse. He says “take and eat, this is my body given for you.” In Adam and Eve, “take and eat” are verbs of disobedience and death, in Jesus they are “verbs of salvation” and generosity (Kidner).
- All the other gods of the ancient world required their worshippers to feed them. Only the true God feeds us.
- “At every [Lord’s Supper], Jesus welcomes us to the table. He invites his enemies to become his friends. He is the host and we are his guests. ‘We’re invited to slide our knees up under the table of God?’. Every Communion meal is a chance to hear God’s grace in the words that are spoken and to see it, touch it, and taste it in the bread and wine.”
- “He is the heavenly bread that feeds and nourishes us for eternal life” (Calvin).

Overflowing: And how much did he give to them? Did he give them enough to hold them over until they got back? Did he give them just enough so they wouldn’t starve (e.g., granola bars and goldfish)? Did he split what little they had evenly among the crowd?

- No, they had leftovers (a lot of leftovers!). Everyone ate until they were **satisfied** (until they were full). 12 apostles, 12 tribes, 12 baskets.⁶
- God is not stingy with his love and grace and compassion. He is not measured with his care, He provides abundantly and generously to his children.

Conclusion:

Dual Ordinances: Baptism is a lot of things. It’s a public proclamation of your faith in Christ, it’s a picture of your death to sin and new life in Jesus. And it’s a simple but profound step of **obedience** (in fact, it’s hard to say you’re obeying Jesus if you won’t get baptized). We ask every person who gets baptized: (1) Have you turned from your sin and placed your faith in Jesus Christ, your only hope in life or death? -and- (2) “Will you do whatever he calls you to do and go wherever he calls you to go?”

⁶ Cf. 2 Kgs 4:42-44.

- We should trust Christ enough to follow him wherever, even into the wilderness. **How many of you are hedging your bets when it comes to trusting Jesus?**
 - You'll call him Lord on Sunday but start packing your own lunch just in case he doesn't come through.
 - You say you love him but you hold back on sharing your faith because you don't trust him with your reputation.
 - You're in a bad relationship and you know better but you don't trust him with your love life.
 - You'll give him a few hours at Bible Study or a week at camp but there's no way you can give him your search history or your entertainment choices.
- We'll claim that he's a good father but make out back up plans in case he doesn't come through. We hold back because we don't trust Jesus to **truly** satisfy.
 - We think that we need food, relationships, healthy families, a thriving social life, money, academic success, cool clothes, etc. So we compromise. We hold on to our back up plans and keep eating bread that leaves us hungry. **This never gives life** (e.g., like gum; you feel like you're eating but you're still hungry).

False Saviors: You might say, "Pastor Mark, I've tried to be happy. But it hasn't worked. I've tried to find contentment, but haven't found it. I've worked myself to the bone, and I'm tired. Good, stop trying to find elsewhere what can only be found in Jesus. Jesus is calling you to rest in him." The prophet Jeremiah describes this kind of idolatry as "drinking from a broken cistern": "For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jer 2:13).

- **What is a broken cistern?** It's a water container with a hole in it. You keep putting water in it, but it keeps leaking out. One writer calls these idols "**functional saviors**." Those things (sometimes good things) we place our hope or identity in, that can't bear the weight of those hopes. We keep putting more and more time and energy thinking that one day we'll be satisfied and it never comes, it keeps leaking out. **Can you identify the idol in your heart? If I just had _____, I'd be happy.** Everything you put in that blank that isn't Jesus will let you down. *Even if it is a good thing:* when we ask something to do what only God can do, we are putting too much hope in a false idol.
- When we place the weight of Godhood on lesser things they warp and break.
 - **How many marriages have ended because someone thought their spouse was supposed to be their savior?**
 - **How many parents have chased off their children because they forced them to carry all their hopes and dreams?**
 - **How many careers have become slavery because someone thought that they could provide real satisfaction?**
- At the pinnacles of human success we still realize it's not enough. Two of the richest men in the world (Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates) got divorced. The money, the family, the success wasn't enough. Tom Brady, after winning three Super Bowls, married to a supermodel famously said this: "Why do I have three Super Bowl rings, and still think there's something greater out there for me? I mean, maybe a lot of people would say, 'Hey man, this is what is.' I reached my goal, my dream, my life. Me, I think: It's gotta be

more than this. I mean this can't be what it's all cracked up to be. I mean I've done it. I'm 27. And what else is there for me?"⁷

- Jim Carrey (famous comedian and actor; *Dumb and Dumber*, and underrated as Dr. Robotnik in *Sonic the Hedgehog*) said: "I hope everybody could get rich and famous and will have everything they ever dreamed of, so they will know that it's not the answer."

Real satisfaction can only come from Christ. It can't be bought. It can't be earned. It can't be discovered. It is a gift we receive when we turn from ourselves and trust Christ. **Only knowing Jesus will ever be enough.**

- This story is about food, but it's not about food. Just like the story of the woman at the well (Jn 4) is about water but it's not about water:
- A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (Jn 4:7, 9-11, 13-14).

Follow Him:

- He sees with compassion so we can trust him to care. We can follow him into the wilderness because he will provide for all our needs.
- Are you satisfied in Jesus? Or are you looking for satisfaction in something that will only let you down. Come to Jesus!
- How should you think and behave if you are truly satisfied in Jesus? How would your priorities, relationships, finances, goals, and hopes change?

⁷ 60 Minutes, June 2005