

The Problem of Satisfaction PART 3

The Longing in Our Souls

II Corinthians 12:7-9 *To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.* ^(NIV)

SUMMARY REVIEW

- Obtaining satisfaction is a fundamental frustration of the human experience. However, a fundamental principle of life is that man cannot achieve lasting satisfaction. Such satisfaction is a gift.
- The main theme of our study is comprised by these three principles:
 - *God's grace is always enough in every situation.*
 - *We should be content with that grace.*
 - *The world cannot understand this satisfaction because we live a life of paradox.*
- Our present satisfaction is a matter of faith. We do not live by sight nor for temporal gratification.
- For fallen humanity, present contentment is always beset by promises of new and greater levels of satisfaction. This pervasive problem of satisfaction is evident in humanity's insatiable appetite.
- The biblical definition of satisfaction is basic. Aside from metaphorical uses, the two basic meanings are the satiation of hunger or thirst. At its root, it refers to that good feeling of having enough.
- There are several principles one may observe from the biblical meaning of satisfaction.
 - *Satisfaction is a temporal sensation, evident in the natural cycle of hunger and satisfaction.*
 - *This cycle of hunger and satisfaction teaches us about our need.*
 - *Satisfaction is not intended to be the goal but the reward of pursuing life.*
 - *Feelings of satisfaction are not always synonymous with objectively having enough.*
 - *Sensations of satisfaction are self-focused, centering on personal gratification and contentment.*
- The problem of satisfaction is that fallen humanity makes satisfaction the goal. No one will ever know true happiness with eyes selfishly focused on self. We must have an objective perspective.
- For fallen humanity, whatever he has is never enough. Fallen man is displeased with his possessions, discontent with circumstances, and disappointed by his relationships.
- Fallen man has an insatiable appetite that cannot be satisfied. From Scripture we see:
 - *A full life of great and grand experiences is empty and cannot satisfy.*
 - *Pleasing oneself, money, achievements, and attainments are all empty and cannot satisfy.*
- Those who chase after satisfaction, making it the aim of their pursuits we will never know genuine, objective satisfaction. The quest for satisfaction is nothing less than idolatry.

THE PARADOXICAL PROBLEM OF SATISFACTION

While there is a sense in which Christians may enjoy a certain satisfaction here and now, there is also a sense in which we will never be satisfied in this life. This is a part of the paradoxical life to which we have been called. Despite this fact, too many Christians are content where they ought to be dissatisfied and dissatisfied with the things with which they ought to be content.

Why the Confusion?

- Christians today are often confused about the issue of satisfaction because they have adopted the world's approach to the problem.
- The world is:
 - *satisfied with exalting themselves as God.*
 - *dissatisfied with God's gracious gifts of life, breath, food and clothing.*
- The world is not satisfied with God as God, preferring idolatry instead.
- While the world utilizes God's good gifts, they refuse to be thankful and take credit themselves for such things as if they were responsible for these blessings of creation.
- According to Scripture, everything exists for God's good pleasure and to bring Him glory.
- Human beings assume God's place and behave as if everything exists for his own pleasure
 - *Instead of seeking to please God, man makes his own pleasure his primary objective.*
 - *Man amasses as many of God's gifts as he is able. He then squanders them on himself only to find that such things cannot satisfy the deepest longings in his soul.*
- Here we find a simple yet profound principle: One who does not find his satisfaction in God will not be satisfied with anything else.
- If we were designed to find satisfaction in God, nothing less will satiate the longing in our souls.

"We were made for Thee, O God, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in thee." ~ Augustine

The Quest for Perfect Satisfaction

- Genuine satisfaction is not a pursuit but the reward of living our lives to the glory of the God who made us.
- Perfect satisfaction is not attained from creation for nothing in creation is perfect.
- Only satisfaction in God produces the fullness of true satisfaction.

The Unfulfilled Longing in Our Souls

Because of our present state of existence, there is an appropriate kind of dissatisfaction for Christians in this present age.

The Present Compared With Eternity

- An appropriate aspect of dissatisfaction is brought about by the tension between the already and the not yet.
- It is appropriate to be dissatisfied with our present state of sanctification.
- As Christians, we should never be satisfied with merely maintaining.
- And those who belong to the age to come, we will never be satisfied with anything the world has to offer.
- As Christians, we are dissatisfied in this life because true satisfaction awaits us in the life to come (1 Cor 15:19).
- One difference between Christians and the world is that our insatiable hunger does not drive to futile pursuits but keeps us longing for the age to come.

Phil 3:8-14 *What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ-- the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.¹⁰ I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,¹¹ and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.¹³ Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.^(NIV)*

1 Cor 15:19 *If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.^(NIV)*

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world." ~ C.S. Lewis