

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

“Satisfied”

Our Redeemer Dallas 2020

Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And He directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves...And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, He said that these... should be set before them. And they ate and were satisfied. (Mark 8:6-8).

We were *made* to be satisfied.

If we go all the way back to the beginning, back to Genesis 2, we read that after God made Adam, the first man, He put him in a special garden, made just for him. It was in a place called Eden, in the east, and it was paradise. There were rivers there and precious stones. “And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food” (Genesis 2:9a). Just imagine if your backyard were a Whole Foods produce section: apples and oranges, peaches and pomegranates -- Adam, and soon, Eve, would want for nothing. They would eat and be satisfied.

But they weren't. In spite of all that God had given them and the perfect relationship they had with Him,

Adam and Eve Were *Dissatisfied*.

We get hints of it here in Genesis 2. The garden of Eden was paradise, but in the midst of that garden was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and it is of this tree that God commands the man *not* to eat, saying, “for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen. 2:17). The pericope ends there, but we all know what happens next. The devil comes along and tempts Eve to *disobey* God's command, to take of the fruit of the tree and eat and be *truly* satisfied.

You see, the devil's whole angle was to convince Eve that the good God had provided them wasn't good *enough*, that He was holding something *back* from them, something *better*. They were *surrounded* by gifts from their loving Creator; and yet, thanks to the devil's lie, the satisfaction they were made for became *dissatisfaction*. They took God's gifts for granted, and the result was catastrophic. “Cursed is the ground because of you,” God says to Adam; “In pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gen. 3:17-19). So, not

only would they no longer be in paradise, not only would they have to contend with creation, which had itself been subjected to futility (Rom. 8:20), but they would now hunger and thirst for *righteousness*. That perfect relationship they had with God was no more. They had broken it.

And not just for themselves. Paul writes in Romans 5, “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, so death spread to all men because all sinned” (verse 12). Because Adam and Eve were dissatisfied,

Now we *all* are dissatisfied.

And it’s not for lack of God providing for us. Even post Fall, God graciously *continues* to provide for all our needs of body and soul. When we pray in the Fourth Petition, “Give us this day our daily bread,” this means that “God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving” (Luther’s Small Catechism).

And therein lies the rub. Because we have all inherited Adam’s sin, we have this tendency, this unfortunate *weakness*, to be just as dissatisfied with God and His gifts as our first parents were. Surrounded though we are by gifts from our loving Creator—clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children—all that we need to support this body and life, we are lured and enticed by the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh to look at these good things and decide they’re not good *enough*. “Why hasn’t God given me more?” we think. “Why aren’t my circumstances different? Why can’t everything in my life be more to my liking?” Thanks to the devil’s lie, the satisfaction we were made for becomes *dissatisfaction*. We take God’s gifts for granted. We lie and cheat and steal, whatever it takes to get what we *think* will make us happy, to eat and be truly satisfied.

But, you never will be, not if that’s how you go about it. No amount of seeking fulfillment in the things of this world will ever truly satisfy. And that’s because

The only true satisfaction in this life is found in Jesus.

And that brings us to today’s Gospel lesson and our text from Mark 8. Why had a great crowd gathered? Was it merely because they wished to see a sign? To have their circumstances changed? Were they dissatisfied? In a way, perhaps, but not with God. After all, they’d been willing to sit around and listen to Jesus for three days without any food. *Three days!* Clearly, that’s not why they were there. It seems to me they were heeding Jesus’ words from the Sermon on the Mount, where He says, “Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’...For...your heavenly

Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:31-33); or the words of the prophet Isaiah, who writes,

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Listen diligently to Me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.
Incline your ear, and come to Me;
hear, that your soul may live (55:2).

So, they listened, knowing that they had not a righteousness of their own; that if they ever wanted to be truly satisfied, it would have to be through *Jesus*. Yes, He took bread, and having given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples to set before the people. And having blessed the fish, He said that these also should be set before them. And they ate and were satisfied. But this was not merely to satisfy their hunger for *food*, or to make their time out in this desolate place more to their liking; it was to show them that *He alone can satisfy*.

And we know this because later, on the night when He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread, and having given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My *body*, which is given for you.” And having blessed the cup, He set it before them, saying, “Take, drink; this is My *blood*, which is shed for you.” Same language, different food, *rich* food, *better* food. Here Jesus feeds the hungry with *Himself*, His true body and blood, broken and shed to pay the price for our redemption. His is the food which *truly* satisfies, for

He Himself has satisfied the wrath of God on the cross for sin.

We have all inherited Adam’s sin of dissatisfaction, but Jesus is the *Second* Adam, whose perfect obedience to God means the many will be made righteous (Rom. 5:19). Jesus took the curse for us; in pain He lived and ate alongside us all the days of His earthly life; thorns and thistles they brought forth to place upon His holy head; and by the bloody sweat of His brow He endured, till He returned to the ground.

But He did not return to *dust*. That’s not what He is, and that’s not where He came from. From heaven above to earth He came to bring good news to every home, every family, every soul, which seeks to be satisfied. He is true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and by His all-atoning sacrifice, proven by His resurrection from the dead, He has opened to us the way of paradise. The gates of Eden are unbarred, and we wait now with eager longing for the Last Day, when Christ will come again and

creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption. And not only the creation, but we ourselves will be set free, our bodies raised to incorruption, and

We will never be dissatisfied again.

We were made to be satisfied. That's something we struggle with now, in many and various ways. But Jesus says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." God certainly gives daily bread to everyone, even without our prayer. He gives us what we need to live. But if you want to be truly satisfied, you need Jesus. And here He is, not just in Word but in *Sacrament*, in with and under bread and wine, for you. Take, eat, and be satisfied.

In ☩ Jesus' name. Amen.

Soli Deo gloria