

"The perspective of satisfaction" Mark 8:1-9 Trinity 7 2022

The grace, mercy, and peace of Christ Jesus rest upon each and every one of you this day.

We hear in our Gospel today that over 4,000 tired and hungry people ate the miraculous meal of fish and loaves, and they were satisfied, and we can't help but think, "Well... duh! Of course they were satisfied!" They got a free lunch! Who doesn't like that?! On top of that, there was more than enough to go around for everyone, with seven huge baskets left over. Jesus didn't just give them a Snickers bar. Their hunger was more than satisfied. More than that, it was Jesus Himself satisfying them in a truly miraculous way. What an honour, to be on the receiving end of such a gracious and profound miracle! Who wouldn't be satisfied? And I think if we're honest, we hear about this massive group being satisfied by Christ, and a certain sense of jealousy and covetousness comes over us. Look at the world we're living in right now. Everywhere you look, all you see and hear is great dissatisfaction (and that's putting it nicely). Everyone is either angry or afraid... or both. In fact, it's hard to believe that anyone could possibly be "satisfied" amid all the sickness and fear and violence and hatred all around us.

And it's at this point that we could immediately jump to the reality that no matter the circumstance we may find ourselves in, we

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have already been satisfied in Christ, by Christ. Our deadly debt of sin has already been fully and completely satisfied, paid in full with the all-atoning, just and righteous wrath-satisfying blood of the Son of God Himself. "It is finished, once and for all." There's a fancy theological term for this: "vicarious satisfaction." Basically, Jesus took our place. This means that no matter how bad things may get on this side of the grave, you still have the gift of everlasting life, right? Even if EVERYTHING else in your life was suddenly snatched up and taken away; even if things got so bad that old Job would thank God that he wasn't you, you still have the heavenly mansion and eternal feast that Christ has already prepared for you, right? Nothing can take that away from you. Isn't that satisfying enough? It kind of puts everything else into perspective, doesn't it? It should.

And truth be told, I could end right now, and it would be a faithful sermon. But here's the thing: Our Lord does care about the physical, material side of our lives too. I say this only because so often we Christians, with the best intentions, don't speak of material goods and riches, at least not in a good sense. When we do speak of such things, we use a term with a negative connotation—mammon—setting forth a stark contrast between the material and the spiritual. It's either mammon or the Bread of Life. That's it. Either/or. To be sure, when it comes to matters of salvation, it is an either/or. You may make it your

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god, but all the mammon in the world won't save you. It won't get you in the door of heaven. You can't take it with you. When your time comes, either you have the Bread of Life or you do not.

But... does our Lord not command us to pray for daily bread? "Give us this day our daily bread..." Believe it or not, your Lord does care about our physical, and material needs. He richly and daily provides for us, even when we fail to ask, even when we fail to return thanks. He satisfies us with all that we NEED (not necessarily want) for this body and life. Just take a moment to think about all the daily bread your Lord blesses you with and satisfies you with. Think back to your catechism days. "What is daily bread? Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and need of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friend, faithful neighbors, and the like." "And the like..." just in case you think something was left out or omitted. Everything you have and everything you are is a gift given you by God's free and undeserved grace. The only thing you deserve; the only thing you have earned is present and eternal punishment. That's it! That's your one and only right! You have a right to burn in hell! Everything else is a gracious and merciful gift of God specifically for you,

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given specifically to you by Him because of His compassion for you; because He loves you. Again, it kind of puts everything into proper perspective, doesn't it? It should.

And that brings us back to the world we live in right now. Consider your daily bread reality right now during all this darkness, despair, and dissatisfaction. So, the finances may take a bit of a hit. So, you can't do EVERYTHING you used to be able to do. Things have changed. So, Walmart doesn't have your favourite ice cream. They only have forty other brands that you'll have to decide from before you drive home in one of your cars (because no one here is homeless or carless) and get on your phone that has more technology in it than all the lunar missions combined, all so that you can post a picture of your ice cream while lamenting how oppressed and dissatisfied you are. Umm... there are many reasons to not be satisfied with how things are going in our world right now, but you still have daily bread, right? In fact, even a cursory glance/inventory of your life reveals an over-abundance of daily bread and blessing in your life, doesn't it?

And all this necessarily takes us back to the cross of Christ, because apart from this, none of the other stuff matters. Apart from Christ, nothing will truly satisfy. Man has a cross-shaped hole in his heart, and only the cross of Christ will fill that void.

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My prayer for you is that this full and complete satisfaction of Christ truly satisfies you. When this Bread of Life satisfaction truly satisfies you, which through the working of the Holy Spirit will be the case through faith, all His satisfying gifts of daily bread will also begin to satisfy you. You will be satisfied with a fully satisfying peace that surpasses all human understanding, no matter your circumstance; in good times and in bad, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health. Satisfied by Christ and in Christ, you will ever and always be satisfied, giving thanks in all circumstances for all that you have and all that you are...in Christ. Amen.