

## SATISFIED

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John 14:8-17

*Show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.* These are the words of Philip, one of the twelve disciples—words we read in the Gospel of John. *Show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.* This takes place during a portion of John's Gospel known as Jesus' *Farewell Discourse*. The Discourse covers several chapters and is presented as taking place at one meal, at one time. Jesus delivers all this information to the disciples: theology, teachings, and prayers—even about himself, about who he is and about his relationship to God. Some scholars suggest that the Discourse didn't take place at once. That it was in fact a collection of teaching moments. But it doesn't appear that they've been listening to him at all.

It's kind of like if you were to teach a semester class on the Civil War, let's say "Causes of the Civil War and you spent the entire semester talking about the roots of that war (It was slavery.). But you get to the end of the semester and a kid comes up to you and goes, "Teacher, now we're still trying to figure this out. What are the causes of the Civil War?" And you go, "Haven't you been listening? That's all we've been talking about!" Jesus kind of does the same thing here. Philip says to Jesus, *Show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.*

Now, let's take a moment and talk about that word: *satisfied*. What does it mean to be satisfied? It means you have enough. But for us today, it really means more than that because we're never really satisfied. I mean, who is satisfied with what they have? To say you're satisfied implies an overindulgence, that you've got way more than you actually need. "Oh yeah, I'm satisfied. I'm good." It's like a Thanksgiving meal. You either eat reasonably or you eat until you cannot eat anymore, and as you're waddling away from the table, you announce, "Oh, I'm satisfied." That means you've had too much, more than you need. So, what do we need to be satisfied? Is it more food? More money? A higher salary? To win the lottery? That would be great. "You know, if I could just win the lottery, I'd be satisfied." I know too many people that use the lottery as their retirement plan. Terrible idea, but they still do it. "If I just win the lottery, I don't have to worry about all this other stuff." Or maybe your retirement plan is a pension, and you go, "If I just had a little more coming in each month, I'd be okay." Maybe you want a bigger house, a faster car, more friends, whatever it is. What will satisfy you?

And so it makes one think, "Well, what is enough? How much is enough? How much will it take to satisfy us?" And that got me to thinking about a man who's been in the news a lot in the past couple of months, a man named Elon Musk whose claim is, among other things, to be the wealthiest man in the world. His wealth is said to be around \$400 billion. And it fluctuates by a few billion every day,

depending on how his stock prices are doing. But he's okay; he's not going bankrupt any time soon. But this amount, \$400 billion, to be honest, is an amount that is beyond my comprehension.

A billion? What is a billion? A billion is 1,000 million. And I have a pretty good idea of what a million is, what a million will buy today. But 1,000 millions? Wow. And he's got way more than that. He's got 400,000 million dollars.

I did the math. If you were to win a lottery, let's say it were \$250 million, which is what lotteries are going these days, you would have to win that lottery—\$250 million—every week for 31 years to amass the wealth that this man has. Now, to be fair, that wealth is not liquid; it's not just sitting in a checking account over at Wilson Bank. It's mostly tied up in the equities of his companies, but it is still wealth, and this wealth affords him great power and influence and likely the ability to do just about anything he wants. But we look at somebody like this, and there are many more like him that have hundreds of billions of dollars, and we ask, "How much is enough? How much does a person need? When will we be satisfied?" Because none of those billionaires have announced, "Okay, I've got enough. I'm out of this game." No, they just keep going and going and going. And it's a legitimate question to ask, "How much is enough?" It's also a legitimate question to ask ourselves, "If we were in that situation, what would we do with that wealth?"

And this brings us back to Philip's statement to Jesus: *Show us the Father, and we'll be satisfied. Show us the Father.* That will do it. Then we will have enough. So what is it that Philip desires when he makes this demand of showing us the Father? Well, clearly, he wants to see God. And if he sees God, then he believes that, yes, that will be enough; he will be satisfied. And I think he would be. What Philip desires is a mountaintop experience, a theophany, a moment with the divine to be one-on-one with God. That will give him what he wants. He believes in God, I have no doubt about that, but he wants to see God. And this frustrates Jesus, frustrates Jesus quite a bit, because he's been teaching about this very issue. And he says, *Haven't you been listening to me? You've been with me all these years, and I've told you, if you see me, you've seen the Father. My words are God's words. God works through me. I am in the Father, and the Father is in me. You can believe me because of the works of power that I have done. Those miracles, they come from God. If you see me, you've seen the Father.* And Philip still doesn't get it, does he? And he won't. None of them will, until after the resurrection. That will change things. When Jesus returns to them, they will understand better who he is and then take his word out to the world. But for right now, here in this place, Philip does not understand that Jesus is sufficient. He believes that if he can just see God, he'll get his fill, that then he'll be satisfied.

Which makes me wonder, how many of us, how many people among us, have given up because we didn't see God like we wanted to? I read a wonderful story this week by a theologian who told how, as a young girl, she was to be confirmed in the

Episcopal Church, and it was going to be a big day. The bishop was coming to officiate at the confirmation for her and her class. Big day. And as the day approached, she began to believe that when she walked up to be with the bishop, that act of confirmation would be amazing. Something would happen. Something would change her and change her life. She would feel God's power within her. And on that day, she walked up the stairs to where the Bishop was standing. He performed the ritual and nothing happened. She was so disappointed. Nothing happened. She didn't feel anything. And she said it took her years of growth and development and maturity, to understand that, no, she wasn't going to feel something then. But what she was doing was entering into a lifetime in a community that placed God at their center. It was a lifetime of moments. And then she was satisfied. She understood it wasn't one moment; it was all these moments coming together.

Philip had something that we don't have. Philip had Jesus there. He could walk with him, and he could talk with him, and he did. We don't. We don't have Jesus walking among us like the disciples. But Jesus promises that we will have the Holy Spirit with us. As Paul writes to the Romans, *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.* Jesus promises that God will send what he calls the Advocate, or the Counselor, or the Paraclete—I just like to call it the Holy Spirit—to be with us, to guide us, to lead us, to give us power as we go into the world. We are not alone. We may not see God directly. We may not have Jesus walking with us, but we have Christ with us through the Spirit.

And so the question is, with all of this, are we satisfied? Is it enough? Or are we just too busy trying to be satisfied in our everyday lives? Trying to get more, trying to get ahead, that we fail to fill the God-shaped desire that is in our hearts. Are we stuck in the song, "I can't get no satisfaction, though I try, and I try, and I try..."?

To be satisfied is not about filling a void. It's not about filling a desire or having more and more and more than anyone else. That is not satisfaction. For us as Christians, to be satisfied is not about fulfillment, and it's definitely not about overindulgence. It's about something else. And I believe we can find what it is in a clue, a little clue that God planted in that word, "satisfied." Where it comes to us from two Latin words: one is *satis*, which means "enough." That makes sense. Satisfied, enough. So it must mean "to have enough." No, the second word is *facere*, which means "to do." So this word "satisfied" means not to have enough, but to do enough. As Christians, satisfaction is not about having enough or acquiring enough. It's about doing enough in God's name for God.

God doesn't call us to simply bask in God's grace, like sunbathers around the pool. We're not here just to lie around and feel God among us. No, we are here to be agents of God's transformation in this world. We have a purpose. We are to do, to do enough. Then we will be satisfied. But really, we won't be satisfied, because God calls us to do in his name, and so what we really should be if we really want to be

satisfied, we've got to be un-satisfied. We've got to look around at our community and our world, at the plight of those that are hungry or in prison, those who are poor, those who are victims of injustice and violence—all these people who may not have the ability to see God. And we should work for them and be God's agent among them, allowing them to hear the words of Jesus, to see God, to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. We need to be un-satisfied until they are satisfied. We are disciples. We are given a task. We are asked to sacrifice ourselves for others, to go out into the world as God's agents, because to be satisfied is about stepping into a new life, leaving this life and stepping into the life of God. Amen.