

Abide

The Disciple's Emotions

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The Disciple's Emotions John 6:25-35

Well, good morning. If you have a Bible, and I hope you do, let me invite you to open with me to John 6. Everything that satisfies comes from Him. One of my favorite desserts in the entire world is Key-lime pie. You don't get Key-lime pie a lot, so whenever you have the opportunity to have a Key-lime pie its exciting. My wife can make an incredible Key-lime pie, but that hasn't always, particularly, been the case.

When we were in college and were dating, she knew I loved Key-lime pie. So one day I was sitting in my apartment, and there was a knock at the door, and I go see who it is, and I open up the door, and it's my girlfriend Heather. And she is standing there with a big smile on her face and she's holding something in her hand that has a cover on the top—I can't see what it is. I said, "What is that?" She said, "Guess what I made you." I said, "What did you make me?" She said, "I made you a Key-lime pie!"

And I was pumped immediately, because you don't get Key-lime pie a lot, this craving wells up. "Can't wait! Alright lets dive in, so come on in Heather." I would have let her in anyway, but because she had a pie I figured now would be a good time to let her in. So we go in the kitchen and we pull out some plates, and a fork, and put the Key-lime pie down on the table.

Now at this point, the cover is still over it, so I haven't seen it. And just in case you're not a big Key-lime pie fan, or you've never had Key-lime pie—notice what a Key-lime pie looks like. It's a lime pie, but it's not green like a lime. You'll notice it has more of a yellow tint—just keep that in mind.

So we've got the plates, we sit down at the table, and we take the cover off the pie. I look down—and she would say the same thing—and I see more of a bright fluorescent green shade, and it looks like a gelatin substance. My first thought is, "That looks nothing like Key-lime pie." But I've learned by now that you don't always say the first thing that comes to your mind. And so I look at my girlfriend and say, "That is the greatest looking Key-lime pie I have ever seen." She said, "Why don't we go ahead and cut a piece." And I said, "Of course, cut a piece of the pie."

And so I cut a piece and put it down, and I'm thinking at this point, "Well maybe it just looks a little different, but it tastes just like any other Key-lime pie." And so I take the piece, and I take the fork, and take a bite and put it in my mouth. And if I can be completely honest with you, and she would say the same thing, it tasted a lot like bright fluorescent green gelatin substance. And my first thought was, "That tastes absolutely nothing like Key-lime pie." But my first words were, "That's the greatest Key-lime pie I've ever had. Wow this is so good."

I get through that piece and decide, "You know, I'm kind of full. I think I'm going to put it away to eat later." So we put it in the fridge. And over the next few weeks it grows some more green stuff on it in there. And that was our first experience with Key-lime pie.

You know when you've got this craving that wells up in you, bright fluorescent green gelatin just doesn't quite fill it like you were expecting. I'm guessing we've all got cravings across this room. You may crave food, or maybe even things deeper than that. Here's the question I want to ask this morning: Do you think we have cravings in us just accidentally? Do you think they're just this quirky part of our personality, where this person craves chocolate, or this person craves this, or this person craves that? Or do you think these cravings, these desires in us are there for a reason?

What I'd like us to do is dive a few steps deeper than even craving for food, and go on a journey where Jesus challenges some folks to let their craving for food go a little deeper, and to really think about if we've got these cravings, then why do we have them? Has God created us with these cravings for a reason?

And so, at this point, I want us to begin to think about how those cravings or those desires inside of us relate to our faith. This is not something we talk about a lot. How does our faith relate to our cravings? How does our faith relate to our desires? How does our faith relate to our emotions? A lot of the times when we talk about faith, we stop where we stopped last week in talking about our minds, and filling our minds with truth, and Jesus transforms our minds. And yes, that's key, but there's also something that happens in our emotions when Christ comes into our lives. And I think we have a tendency to go to one side of the spectrum or the other on this picture.

A lot of the times, we go to this side of the spectrum, where we do talk about emotions, and we even get carried away in our emotions. And many people in the church, and maybe even in here, we get caught up in our emotions. We've actually created a theology in the church today where sometimes we think we can have warm feelings for God, even if we are completely disobedient to Him in our lives. We still feel good about our faith. And we've got to avoid that kind of emotionalism.

On the other side of the spectrum, we've got studying the Word, and studying truth, and filling our minds with truth. But many times, that process leaves us pretty devoid of emotions. And we have a pretty cold, hard faith, where we come into a setting like this, and we're sitting, and our arms are crossed, or we're listening, and our emotions are not a part of this thing.

So, is there a way that truth and emotions can both come together? I think they're intended to come together. I think we're intended not to get carried away in our emotions. At the same time, we're not supposed to ignore our emotions. This is one of my favorite parts of reading Jonathan Edwards, who was writing in the middle of the Great Awakening. And this was a time in the church where people were going to one of those sides or the other. They were either getting carried away in sensationalism and emotionalism, and they left the Word behind, or the other side was saying, "We don't want to become like that, so we're going to study the Word, and you won't ever see a smile on our faces when we do." And so, Jonathan Edwards comes on the scene. He writes a book called *Religious Affections*. And I want to share with you one of my favorite quotes from that book. Listen to what he said:

Our external delights, our earthly pleasures, and our reputation, our human relationships, for all these things, our desires are eager, and our appetites strong. When it comes to these things, our hearts are tender and sensitive,

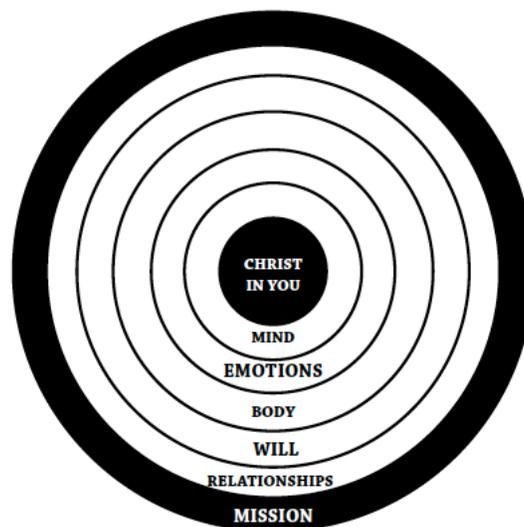
deeply impressed, easily moved, much concerned and greatly engaged. We get depressed at our losses. And we're excited and joyful about any worldly success or prosperity—Then he makes the shift. He says—When it comes to spiritual matters, though, how dull we feel. How heavy and hard our hearts. We can sit and hear of the infinite height and length and breadth and love of God in Christ Jesus, of His giving His infinitely dear Son, and yet sit there cold and unmoved. If we're going to be excited about anything, shouldn't it be our spiritual lives? Is there anything more inspiring, more exciting, more loveable and desirable in heaven or on earth than the gospel of Jesus Christ? We should be utterly humbled that we are not more emotionally affected than we are in the church.

The Foundational Truth

And what I want to say to us—what we're going to see in John 6—is that if we know God, we will be affected by God. And if we love God, we will have affection for God. The foundational truth that we're going to see unfold here in John 6, is this: We cannot separate faith in Christ from feelings for Christ. We cannot separate faith in Christ from feelings for Christ.

Now, that seems a little weird, a little different for many of us to begin thinking about that. Here's the picture I've got in my mind, and what I would encourage you to envision – faith and feelings. Get this picture. Imagine our brothers and sisters in underground house churches in Asia that gather together at the risk of their lives to study the Word for 12 hours a day. Day after day after day they're studying the Word for 12 hours a day. At the same time, whenever they pray, they fall on their faces and they weep before God. They call out, "God, thank you for loving us. God, thank you for not forgetting about us." Their tears are in puddles around the room. It is faith and feeling—they go together. And I don't think we can divorce faith in Christ from desire for Christ.

So I want you to look at those circles that we're walking through over this series. Christ in you at the center. Christ affects our mind. And Christ affects our emotions.



And the question I want to ask is, "What if God intends for you not only to know Him, but what if He intends for you to enjoy Him?" That would make sense, wouldn't it, that God would get great glory in being not only known by His people, but enjoyed by His people? And I want us to think about the disciple's emotions based on a conversation Jesus has with some folks in John 6.

The background is, in the beginning of this chapter, Jesus feeds the 5,000. Over 5,000 people are fed with 5 loaves of bread, and 2 fish. Pretty cool miracle. And as a result, He had a following. Free food? Follow Jesus. And so, you had all these people that were flocking to Jesus.

They didn't know where He had gone. What had happened is the disciples had gotten in a boat and gone to the other side of the lake. But Jesus didn't get in with them. So, they thought Jesus was still there on the same side of the lake that they were on. But then they get word that he's on other side of the lake. And they can't figure out exactly how He got there. And Jesus had just decided to take a stroll across the lake. And so, He had done that.

And then you get to verse 25, and the crowds catch up to Him. Listen to what they say:

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, 'Rabbi, when did you get here?'

Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.'

Then they asked him, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?'

Jesus answered, 'The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.'

So they asked him, 'What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."'

Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.'

'Sir,' they said, 'from now on give us this bread.'

Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty' (John 6:25-35).

The Hunger of our Souls ...

This is an incredible conversation that Jesus enters into with the crowds, all these people who are following Him, but all these people who had misconceptions about who He is. And so, what He does is He begins to address some of the deepest things that are going on in

their lives, and takes things many steps deeper than just talking about food, to talk about the hunger that is at the core of their souls.

And what I want you to see is three glorious truths that come out of this picture, this dialogue between Jesus and the crowds in John 6, that give us a picture of the hunger that's at the core of each one of our souls in this room this morning.

Christ alone can fulfill our desires.

Truth number one is this: Christ alone can fulfill our desires. Christ alone can fulfill our desires. When you see the beginning of this conversation, the crowds come to Him and ask Him, "When did you get here?" And Jesus ignores their question basically. He's not going to tell them that He took a stroll across the water. Instead, He goes right to the heart of the issue, and He starts talking about food. He says, "*You are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill*" (John 6:26). And the rest of this conversation revolves around this picture of food, of bread.

But what I want you to notice is Jesus doesn't say in this passage, "You shouldn't want food." Instead, He takes this picture of food, and He uses it to teach them because this was something that was naturally in them for a purpose. In fact, He doesn't say, "You need to not want food." He says, "You need to want better food than what you're getting." What He says in verse 27, "*Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life*" (John 6:27). He said, "If you're going to eat, make sure you're eating the good food, not the bad food."

And it's at this point I want us to pause, and I want us to realize the picture we've got up until this point in John 6, a picture that began all the way back at the beginning of the Bible. Go back with me to Genesis 2. I want you to look at the very first book in the Bible, the second chapter, Genesis 2. I want you to see this truth right here that's a foundation for what we're looking at in John 6. This truth—God created us to crave. God created us to crave. Look at this, in Genesis 2:15.

Now, this is the story of God creating man. And I want you to hear the first thing God says to man in Genesis 2. He put him in the middle of the garden. He describes the garden, all the beauty of paradise in the garden of Eden. And listen to verse 15, "*The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man*"—first thing God speaks, first command—"You are free"—to do what (Gen. 2:15-16)? "To eat."

Well, that's good news. Adam looks around. There are all these great things, and God, the master chef of the universe says, "You are free to eat." Obviously, God created man with a craving, with a desire. Think about it with me. In this picture, in Genesis 2, of the creation of man and woman and paradise in the garden of Eden—did man have needs at this point?

Our first instinct is to think, "No, he didn't have any needs." But he did. He had a lot of needs. From the very minute God breathed life into Adam, he had a need for God to supply a breath of life on a moment by moment basis. All of us in this room have that need right now. We don't think about that craving a lot, but we all crave air. We all need oxygen. We're created with that.

And he had a need to eat. Created with a need to eat. And we see later on in this chapter, we talked about it in our last series in "Engage," he had a need for companionship. And so, woman came into the picture.

So, it's not that – don't miss this – it's not that in the Garden of Eden man didn't have any needs. Instead, man was created with needs, but don't miss it, that were intended, every single one of them intended to be satisfied by who? By the Creator. God created us to crave, and our cravings are designed by God to be satisfied by Him. Our cravings are designed to be satisfied by our Creator.

And so that was the picture in Genesis 2. But then you get to Genesis 3 things change. This is where sin enters into the world. We briefly talked about this last week, how the entrance of sin in the world came with an idea, at the level of the mind, the adversary, the tempter, saying to Eve, "Did God really say this? You don't need to trust what God says." But I want you to see how quickly the emotions come into it in verse 6.

Look in Genesis 3:6. It says, "*When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it*" (Gen. 3:6). Did you catch that? Those are some emotionally charged words. She saw that it was good. It was pleasing and it was desirable. Obviously, right here, emotions are a part of this temptation, and really, right after we see that emotional picture, she eats of the fruit.

So, what was the picture of sin here in Genesis 3? It was not only doubting what God has said, and not trusting what God has said, but it's a man and a woman here basically looking to find satisfaction, looking to fulfill their desires in the things of this world instead of in their Creator. Follow that – it's a picture of sin, looking for satisfaction in the things of this world instead of from the hand of their Creator.

Now, with that background, we come back to John 6, and I want you to see how Jesus is addressing exactly that. Look in John 6:30, "*They asked him, 'What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: "He gave them bread from heaven to eat"'*" (John 6:30:-31).

So, what they're doing right here, follow along here, what they're doing is they're comparing Jesus to Moses. They're talking about manna. Just in case you don't remember, back in the Old Testament, you had a picture of manna, bread from heaven, and God's people were wandering in the wilderness, and how He provided food for them in the middle of the wilderness was by sending, literally, bread from heaven. It would be there in the morning. They would be able to eat it. So, on a daily basis, God provided food – manna.

But the thing is they're talking about this, saying, "Well, Moses did that. What are you going to do for us?" And I want you to see how Jesus addresses this. He says in verse 32, "*Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven'*" (John 6:32). Did you catch that? This is Jesus getting to the heart of the matter.

These guys were saying, "Moses gave us this. Now, what are you going to give us?" And Jesus says, "Moses didn't give you anything. It was God who gave you bread from heaven." And what we're seeing here is that we have cravings and desires that we begin to look for in the things of this world, even in the people of this world that God alone is intended to satisfy.

And He gets real personal here. He shifts it in verse 33, He says, "*The bread of God is he –*" is a person, "*he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world*" (John 6:33). It's

not a thing. It's a person. And they say, "Well, give us this bread." Verse 35 is when He brings out that statement, "I am the bread of life."

Many of you know that in the book of John, there's six other times where Jesus uses this phrase, "I am –" and He fills in the blank. It's intentionally used here. In the Old Testament, this was the name of God. He was Yahweh. He is the I AM. And so Jesus, by using that title, is identifying Himself with God. And He said, "You want bread to eat? I'm the bread. I'm the bread. Moses gave you this bread; I'm giving you myself."

Here's the picture. Jesus is saying, "You were created with cravings that can be only satisfied by your Creator, and here I am. I am your satisfaction." Don't miss it. Satisfaction is not primarily found in gifts from God, but in the giver, God Himself. This is so key that we get our hearts, our minds around this. Satisfaction is not found in gifts but in the giver. God has created each of us with a craving in our souls, a hunger in our souls that can only be satisfied by Him, over and above even His gifts.

Now think about it with me. Where do we find our satisfaction? I mean really? Where do we seek for satisfaction? Because God has given many gifts, many good gifts. He gives us forgiveness of our sins. He gives us heaven. The promise of heaven—it's a gift of God. He gives us family. He gives us friends. He gives us different things in this life that we enjoy.

Let's really dive into this. If you had all these things, all these gifts, if you had forgiveness, and you have heaven, and you had a great family, and great kids, and great friends, and great fun in this life – if you could have all of that without God, would you be happy? Before you answer that question, I want us to realize this is exactly what Jesus is addressing in John 6—a materialistic people, who were looking for things instead of looking for God. And they were looking to be given things as opposed to finding satisfaction in their Creator. And I think we're right there in western Christianity.

We're a people who love the things of God in a way that many times we lose complete sight of what it means to love God Himself. We've got to realize our deepest craving is not for something; our deepest craving is for someone. Our deepest craving is for someone, and the temptation – and it is real, even in this room this morning – the temptation is for us to come into this room, looking to get our fill. And by that I mean, looking to get our fill of good music and a good atmosphere in corporate worship. And looking to get a good fill of relationships and to walk out of here and get into our good cars, and drive home to our good homes. And live this week with our good jobs. And enjoy all the good things we have in this life. And never give one thought to the fact that we are seeking satisfaction in all of those things, and we have neglected a good God who alone can satisfy us.

This is exactly what Paul is saying in Philippians 3, when he says, "I take all the best things this world has to offer – family, religion, schooling, everything, everything that's good this world has to offer, and it's rubbish compared to one thing – the surpassing greatness of Christ." That's the picture. "Even if you take away everything this world has to offer from me," Paul says, "I've got all I want in Christ."

Is our satisfaction, those of us who are followers of Christ, is He our satisfaction, or are His gifts our satisfaction? If we could have all that heaven is, apart from God, would we want it? And I pray that God will bring us to a point where we see that all of these things are rubbish compared to Him, and Him alone. He is the one we crave for. He is the one we long for. And this is so key in every single one of our battles with sin. Because as we saw in Genesis 3, this was the core of sin – desiring the things of this world as opposed to our Creator.

Think about sin and satisfaction, and the trigger of sin. It is an emotional trigger in Genesis 3. I'm not saying it's devoid of our minds, but there's an emotional trigger there. When she saw what was good, what was pleasing, what was desirable, she ate it.

The trigger of sin is this: looking to the things of this world to satisfy us apart from our Creator. That is sin. Looking to the things of this world to satisfy us apart from our Creator. And the reality is we can get drunk and overeat on religious things that miss the whole point of being satisfied in our Creator. This is the trigger of sin, thinking that this guy, this relationship, this girl, this activity, this thing in this world will satisfy us instead of our Creator. That's the trigger of sin. And the tragedy of it is we end up running from the one our souls long for most by seeking satisfaction in the things this world has to offer us.

The core truth that Jesus is communicating here is that He alone can fulfill our desires. Christ alone can fulfill your desires. You have cravings. All of us have cravings in this room that were given to us to drive us to our Creator. The problem is many of our cravings right now, this week, are driving us away from our Creator. This is why we need Christ to transform our desires and our emotions and our cravings, not just our minds.

Christ alone can transform our tastes.

It leads us to this second truth: Christ alone can transform our tastes. See, here's the problem. Okay, Christ is the bread of life, and He alone can fulfill our desires, but we've still got struggles with sin. "So, how do we deal with that, Dave? How do we deal with our desires for the things of this world as opposed to our desires for Christ and Christ alone?"

I want you to come with me to verse 28, John 6, "*Then they asked him, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?'*" (John 6:28). This is a thoroughly Jewish statement. They're saying, literally, "What kind of works do we need to work in order to get to God? Give us the list, outline the list of the things we need to do, and we will do those things." And it's our way, too.

All of us want satisfaction. Every single one of us desires satisfaction. We can't ignore that. And so, we try to come up with a formula, "Well, how am I going to get satisfaction?" So, we're going to do this, or we're going to do this, or if that doesn't work, we'll do this. "How do I get satisfaction, Dave? How do I satisfy my soul? What do I do?" And that is one way to approach it.

But listen to what Jesus says. He answered, "The work of God," verse 29, "is this," and changes from the plural works to one work, "*The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent*" (John 6:29). So, we got two options here. As we look at our battles with sin across this room, we've got two options.

Number one, we can conquer sin by working hard to change our deeds. That's one option. "Give me a list of things to do, Dave, that'll make my Christian life better, and I'll do them." We can work to conquer sin by transforming our deeds and by changing our deeds.

And this is the pattern of the religions of the world." You follow these five pillars, you'll be satisfied." "You follow this eight-fold path, you'll be satisfied." "You follow these two or three hundred rules of discipline in Buddhism, and you'll be satisfied." That's how you'll get there. And Jesus comes on the scene and says, "No matter how hard you work, it's not going to work." We've got to be careful not to let Christianity creep into this picture of the rest of the religions of the world, where we basically look at Christianity as a list of "to do's." And we've exchanged one list of "to do's" in this world for another list of "to do's" in Christianity, where we come to a place like this on Sunday, and we think, "Okay, the preachers going to tell me

what I need to do to be better this next week." And next week, I may have fallen, so I need to learn how to do better the following week. And when I address sin in my life, sins that I'm guessing we all struggle with, well, how do you conquer that? Well, try to do better next time. That's one option, but it's not the option Jesus lays out.

He says option number two is we can conquer sin by trusting Christ to change our desires. This is the one thing, "You believe in me. Believe in the one God has sent." And He echoes that in that statement in verse 37, "He who comes to me; he who believes in me." What Jesus is saying is, "If you want to conquer sin in your life, then you come to me, you believe in me, you trust in me as the one who alone can satisfy. This is so much deeper.

Faith is no longer a prayer you pray, or a card you sign. Prayer is not even an intellectual assent to, "Okay, I believe this about Jesus." Even the demons do that. This is so much deeper than that picture. Faith is coming to Jesus and receiving from Him, feasting on Him, so to speak. That's the picture we've got throughout John 6, feasting on Him and the satisfaction the bread of life that He gives in such a way that now our desires are different, and our lives begin to look different. This is the key. If we go straight to our actions, our behaviors – we talked about this some last week – then we will spend our Christianity in vain, trying to do all the right things we're supposed to do. And when we come to Christ, and we begin to feast on Him, and we find satisfaction in Him that will radically change the way we live in this world.

You think about our faith. How will we overcome the pleasures of sin? Isn't that the question? "How can we overcome the pleasures of sin, the pleasures that this world offers us? How do we overcome that, Dave?" And the answer is—don't miss it—we overcome the pleasures of sin by letting Christ overcome us with the power of His satisfaction. We overcome the pleasures of sin by letting Christ overcome our lives with the power of His satisfaction.

This is Galatians 5:24, "*Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.*" We have a whole new set of desires when we come to Christ because we know that He satisfies.

Let me illustrate this. Practically, how does this look? "Dave, maybe I'm here and I'm struggling with greed for money and greed for success. Maybe I'm struggling with lust. Maybe I'm struggling with pornography. Maybe I'm struggling with this or that in this world. How do you overcome that? How do you overcome those things that have so many people in the church in bondage to them? How do you overcome those pleasures?" You overcome them by being conquered by a superior pleasure in Christ so that when Satan comes to you and says here's lust, or greed, or pornography, or money, and says, "If you will serve this, you will be satisfied," you look at that and you say, "I know that that tastes nothing like the satisfaction I have in Christ." And so we say, "I don't want that stuff because I want Him." You see how our satisfaction in Christ is key for our battles with sin.

This is the picture in Jeremiah 2:13-14. We don't have time to go there, but write that down and go look at it this week. It's an incredible picture of God saying to His people, "I have given you a fountain of life, and you have gone to broken cisterns in this world that can't even hold water, and you're trying to drink from those, when I give you everything."

"So, how do you conquer those sins, Dave?" By seeing them for what they are, seeing them as piling in comparison to the satisfaction that Christ alone can give and running from those things. And I'm not saying it's that easy. I'm not saying that sometimes we won't give in. But the deal is, when you've tasted of the satisfaction of Christ, and you take one step to

taste of the things of this world, at that moment, as soon as you turn on that computer screen, as soon as you make that deal, as soon as you do this or that in your life, that you're giving yourself to the things of this world, at that moment, you realize how awful that tastes now compared to the beauty of the bread of life. And you go running back to Him.

And you do the 1 John 1:9 thing and you say, "I'm confessing my sins, and I know you're faithful and just to forgive me of my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. I want to drink from this fountain because that doesn't compare." You see how key this is, and you realize – you realize how mammoth this is for showing the glory of Christ.

If we as a Church, as the people of God, who follow Jesus Christ, if we are running after the things of this world, and giving ourselves to the things of this world, then what is that showing the world? That He doesn't satisfy. And if we live our lives running after the money, and the fame, the power, the sex, and the ambition and everything this world has to offer us, we run after all those things, and then we come to sing a bunch of songs while we enjoy the things of this world, then we will have missed the whole point of Christianity, and we'll be showing to the world that Christ does not satisfy, when He does.

He is so infinitely more satisfying than all of those things in the world put together. God, transform our tastes by overcoming us with superior desirability, with superior satisfaction. How do you overcome sin? By being ravished with the beauty and the glory and the majesty of Jesus Christ, seeing Him for who He is.

And so, this is our prayer. Our prayer: God, increase our desire for pleasure. God, increase our desire for pleasure. "Dave, what do you mean by that? I thought when you become a Christian, you say no to pleasure. There's no fun anymore for you. I thought that was what it meant for me to be a Christian." It's not what it means. When you come to Christ, you're saying, "I want the greatest pleasure." This is one of my favorite quotes from C. S. Lewis. He wrote a book called *The Weight of Glory*. And listen to what he says. These are the key words: "If there lurks," Lewis says,

If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from the world, and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises reward, and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea.

And then he says these words that are so piercing, "We are far too easily pleased."

Did you catch that? If we're feasting on the things of this world, and we think having the right job, or the right amount of money, or the right house, or the right car, or the right relationship – if we think having the right habit here or there is going to bring us satisfaction, then what Jesus is saying in John 6, and what C. S. Lewis is reminding us of, is that at that point, we need to realize our desires are so weak. "We're like a little child playing in a slum in the mud, when a holiday at the sea, a vacation at the beach is ours," he says.

And so, we pray, "God increase our desire for pleasure." And based on the authority of the words of Jesus Christ, I say to every person, "If you are struggling with greed, money, sex, ambition, things of this world, pride – if you're struggling with those things, then I say to you, your desires are too weak." They're too weak. You are settling for a processed hamburger, when you could have a steak. You are settling for such miniscule things when it comes to your desires. Get an appetite for the greatness of God and give yourself to Him. And you will find in Him a pleasure that far outweighs all of that stuff.

God, increase your churches, your people's desire for pleasure in you, so that we spurn the things of this world. Christ alone can transform our tastes to where we begin to desire Him, and we don't want the things of the world anymore; they're rubbish. We see them for what they are, and at that point, the power for sin to lure you and I away is broken because we're feasting on the bread, and we're drinking from the fountain.

I can say that with great authority. There's absolutely nothing that any one of us in this room will find that brings satisfaction – absolutely nothing – based on this last truth.

Christ alone can guarantee our satisfaction.

Christ alone can fulfill our desires, and Christ alone can transform our tastes. But Christ alone can guarantee our satisfaction. He's the only one who can guarantee our satisfaction.

Look in verse 34, it says, "*Sir...from now on give us this bread*" (John 6:34). They're implying... We'll come back. I mean, they had just gotten bread from Him before. Now they're coming back, "We need more bread." "He says," – I love this part of verse 35 – *I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never*" there's an emphasis there, literally, "never, never go hungry. And He who believes in me will never, never be thirsty" (John 6:35). It's a promise here.

Jesus says, "You come to me, I will always satisfy you. For all of eternity, you will never be hungry again. You will never be thirsty." It's the same thing He told to the Samaritan woman at the well two chapters before this, "You'll never be thirsty when you drink from the living water that I give you. You won't have to keep coming out day after day after day to get water. You'll have it forever."

Now how can He say that? The basis of His guarantee, three things, and I wish we had time to unpack the rest of this chapter. We just don't have time. But let me just show them to you real quick. The basis of His guarantee is number one, the initiative of the Father. The initiative of the Father.

Six times in John 6, six times Jesus talks about how the Father is the one who is working. And I want you to listen to what He says in verse 37, "*All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away*" (John 6:37). The picture is literally Jesus saying, "The Father is drawing people to me, literally wooing people to me."

Hosea 2:13-14, God is alluring His people to Himself. The picture is the only way we can even begin to desire God is based on the glorious reality that God desires us. God draws us to Himself. He initiates this picture of desire. The God of the universe, with sinful man and sinful woman, God is initiating this. The initiative of the Father.

Second, the obedience of the Son. Listen to what He says, verse 38, "*I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me*" (John 6:38-39). Did

you catch that? Jesus says, "Every single thing I do is in obedience to the Father, and every single person He draws to me I will keep; I will guard. I will lose none of them."

The obedience of the Son. The rest of this passage goes on to talk about... Jesus starts talking about eating His body and drinking His blood. It gets kind of weird, and everybody's kind of confused. And the picture is, He's talking about the cross, and He's talking about Him going to the cross and giving His body, and giving His blood, so that we might have satisfaction.

The picture is the reason we're not satisfied is because we have turned aside to the things of this world, apart from our Creator. We have sinned. We've seen that picture, and the only way for us to be reunited, brought back to the satisfaction of our Creator is if someone would take the price of our sin upon themselves. And that's exactly what Jesus is talking about in John 6. The only way He can say, "I am the bread of life," is if He gives His body and His blood for our sakes. The obedience of the Son. Jesus Christ was crucified to pay the price for your satisfaction. That's serious stuff.

The initiative of the Father. The obedience of the Son. And the promise of a resurrection. He says it twice at the end of verse 39, "*I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day*" (John 6:39). Verse 40, "*My Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day*" (John 6:40). The beauty of it is, He does give His body, and He does give His blood. But a few days later, He rises from the grave, and He says, "To all who trust in me, I will raise you up."

Death cannot stop this satisfaction. He says, "I promise you, there's nothing there's no disease; there is no cancer; there is no AIDS; there is no hardship; there is no suffering – there's nothing you will face that can take away the satisfaction. I will raise you up at the last day. That's why He says, "Never, never go hungry, and never, never be thirsty," because the Father is drawing people to Himself. The Son is completing that mission all the way to His resurrection.

The bottom line then is this; we have two options. Number one, we can live for the fleeting pleasures of this world. That's one option for us. And they are fleeting. They're fleeting. Teenagers, the pleasures of this world, they're fleeting. No matter how promising it looks, no matter how satisfying it looks, they're fleeting. Husbands and wives, they're fleeting. The pleasures of this world that we're giving ourselves to are fleeting. Men and women, they are fleeting. They don't last. They are broken cisterns, and they will not hold water. Jesus is shouting out clearly, "You can't find satisfaction in them."

And the picture is, the end of John 6, a whole crowd is about to walk away from Jesus, looking for more food, looking for satisfaction in other places, when the only one who could satisfy, they're turning their back on. Everything they will go to is fleeting. That's the tragic picture in John 6 at the end. Everybody leaves except for His disciples – everybody. They turn from the only one who can satisfy them. They turn to the fleeting things of this world. God help us to see that they are fleeting.

That's one option, we can live for the fleeting pleasures of this world. Or two, we can live for the everlasting pleasures of the world to come. Everlasting – not fleeting, everlasting. Let me show you this, one more place to turn. Go to Hebrews 11. You've got to see this. You've got to underline a couple of these verses.

Hebrews 11, go to your right, and you'll go past a bunch of letters that Paul wrote, and you'll get to a letter we don't know who wrote. Hebrews 11, right after Titus and Philemon. You'll get to Hebrews right before James and then John – the books of John, and then you get into Revelation. Hebrews 11, look at verse 24, Hebrews 11:24. "Is this just a New Testament picture, Dave? Is this just something that Jesus brings on the scene?" No, this is something that's been there all along. Listen to Hebrews 11:24, "*By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for*"—how long (Heb. 11:24-25)? "A short time." Moses knew they were fleeting, and he chose to be mistreated rather than give himself to all the pleasures of the kingdom at that point.

He did this, verse 26, "*He regarded disgrace for the sake of –*" who (Heb. 11:26)? "Christ." That's weird. This is Moses in the Old Testament. "*He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward*" (Heb. 11:26). Did you underline that verse? Moses has anything he wants in Egypt. He says, "I don't want it. Why? Because I'm looking ahead to Christ, and He is a much greater reward than this." Do you think Moses didn't have desires? You think he didn't have pleasures? No, he had the greatest of desires, and he knew they would be fulfilled in Christ.

Then you get to Hebrews 12:1. It starts encouraging us to leave sin behind, "*Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us*" (Heb. 12:1). So we avoid sin. How do we do that? Verse 2 – if this verse is not underlined, make sure it is, "*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the*"—what (Heb. 12:2)? "Joy." Circle that word. Put a box around it. Put stars everywhere, "*...who for the joy set before him endured the cross*" (Heb. 12:2). That's weird.

How do you walk to a cross with joy? How can that happen? Walk to a cross with joy, scorning it's shame because you know you're headed to the right hand of the Father. You see, becoming a follower of Christ may not be easy, and it may involve bearing a cross. It may involve your very life. But you will find in bearing that cross, and in giving your life, there is ultimate pleasure in obedience to God. Why? Because you know where you're going.

This world is so not our home. We do not live for the pleasures this world would give us. Our desires are much stronger than that. We want the reward. Who's the reward? The reward is Christ. The reward is God. He is our satisfaction. So, we fix our eyes on Him, the One who alone can fulfill our desires, and transform our tastes, and guarantee our satisfaction. He promises to fill our deepest cravings. He promises to fill them. The deepest cravings of our souls, the hunger of our souls, He promises to fill our deepest cravings.

Not only that, He prevents us from even craving anything else. "Taste me and see that I'm good." "*Why are you downcast, O my soul? Put your hope in God*" (Ps. 43:5). He satisfies in a way that you don't need the things of this world any more. God, help us to get there. God, help us all to get there, to where we stop craving the things of this world when He has delivered us from that.

He promises to fulfill our deepest cravings, prevents us from even craving anything else, and He preserves our salvation for all of eternity. Hallelujah. What a Savior who says, "My Father has drawn you to me. And I'm going to keep you. I keep you all the way to me walking to a cross, dying there, and rising from the grave. And I guarantee you I will raise you up at the last day. You have no worries; I guarantee your satisfaction."

Is it possible to follow this Christ and not desire Him? Is it possible to follow this Christ and not feel deeply for Him? I'm not saying that our emotions drive this picture. When we know Christ, though, we will feel for Christ, and we will want the glory of Christ. We need a change of our desires, and we need Him to save our desires, our emotions our cravings.

So, here's the picture of the love of God in Christ, of the supreme desirability of God. And what I want to invite you to do over the next few minutes is to listen, to see, to hear, and to consider, to contemplate the satisfaction of God in Christ.

Then, after we've reflected on His desire for us, we're going to express our desire to Him. And I want us to have an opportunity as a faith family – we have opportunities when we leave here to live in a way that shows this. But while we're here together, I want us to have an opportunity to show God that we desire Him by praying to Him, and saying, "You are who we want. Christ alone is who we want. We don't want anything else this world has to offer." So, listen, reflect, pray, and contemplate His beauty and His satisfaction, and then we'll give Him the glory that He's due. Created not just to know Him, but created to enjoy Him.

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