

Sermon Title: God Wants to Satisfy You – November 27, 2011 (Scripture is from ESV)

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 31:10-14

Introduction

Please open your Bibles to Psalm 145:15-16. These are two of my favorite Bible verses and I love to pray them over North Korea, over the orphans, and over myself.

Psalm 145:15-16 – The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you **satisfy** the desire of every living thing.

Now please turn to Jeremiah 31:10-14...

Jeremiah 31:10-14 – For the Lord has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall be like a watered garden, and they shall languish no more. Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. I will feast the souls of the priests with abundance, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, declares the Lord.

The word satisfy in both Jeremiah 31:14 and here in Psalm 145:16 is “Saba” in Hebrew. What saba means is, “To satisfy, to be filled, to have in excess,” and in some translations even to “to be weary of” because you have so much. I think image of this word I could give is of a person who has just had a huge Thanksgiving feast and is leaning back in his chair completely stuffed. And then someone offers that person another piece of pie and he responds, “No thank you, I am saba, I am satisfied.”

And what we just read in Psalm 145:16 is that God opens His hand and sabas (satisfies) the desire of every living thing. God wants to satisfy you! That is what I felt Him put on my heart to preach today and that is the title of this sermon. But before we begin, let’s pray...

Pray

God’s Plan for New Philly

Before I begin this message I have to say that this sermon has been on my heart for some time. A few weeks ago when I was asked to preach today, it was immediately the word I felt led to share. And so I found it interesting when Pastor Erin preached last week about, “Increasing Your Capacity to Receive.” I really feel God wants to bless this church. I feel God is about to release greater blessings on people in the church and on the church as a whole, blessings that will lead to greater responsibilities and greater impact. And I feel through Pastor Erin’s word and through this word, God is desiring to enable our hearts to have both the faith and the capacity to receive all that God has for us.

But I feel the need to start with a warning, especially for those who are listening through podcast and aren’t members of our church. Let me share a story with you all that my uncle shared with me a few years ago...

A Story of Warning

He told me that a few decades ago there was a village in Mexico that was extremely poor. A certain company decided to help them out and so they built a factory just outside the village and gave everyone jobs there. The villagers all worked diligently their first week and things were looking good, but at the beginning of the second week no one from the village showed up for work. The managers were greatly confused and went into the village to investigate. The people there all responded that they had made more money from their first paycheck than they ever thought they would accumulate in their life and that they didn't need any more. They were content. The company was overwhelmed and wasn't sure what to do about their empty factory. So after some thought, they distributed department store catalogues throughout the poor village, showing them things that they could buy with their money. The next day all the villagers returned to the factory. They were no longer satisfied with what they had and suddenly they wanted more.

I Am Satisfied (Identity in Christ)

What those villagers experienced after seeing the department store catalogues is what most of what people who grow in countries like America, Canada, Korea, and other top economic societies deal with all their life. Society thrives upon materialism and the "need for more:" whether it is something simple like the desire to buy the latest product, eat another good meal, or to watch another movie... or it's something deep like the need for more alcohol, drugs, or a way to fulfill sexual desires. In the moment of achieving their desires, most people would say they are satisfied. But shortly after the thrill passes, the emptiness sets back in and there is need again to satisfy oneself. Often times what once satisfied us before is no longer good enough, so we search for something bigger, better, or more intense. This is how addiction starts. Pornography, drugs, alcohol, money, and other outlets are never the answer. There might be temporary satisfaction, but there is always a need for more. They don't satisfy.

Jesus told the woman at the well, "Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again" (John 4:14). The apostle Paul, a man who had endured beatings, whippings, stoning, prison, and even ship wrecks wrote, "I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content" (Philippians 4:11). He no longer found his emotions based upon the highs and lows of life, but rather on the constant love, joy, and strength of God. In Christ, we are truly satisfied.

This identity is critical to claim when temptation tries to creep in. Everything that tempts us on earth will be absent in heaven. Why? Because they don't fully satisfy. Only a relationship with God can truly satisfy us. As we set our sights on Him and on the things of heaven, the temptations we face gradually lose their allure. Our minds become renewed and no longer find their fulfillment in the things of this world. Our satisfaction is found in God. In Christ, we are truly satisfied. Amen?

This is my warning to you: **if God is not your true source of contentment, then you will never be satisfied.** If you do not look to Him completely, then you will never be fully complete. Those villagers did not have God as their eternal anchor, and so they were suddenly dissatisfied when they saw they could have more.

But to say that God doesn't want to give us gifts... to say that God doesn't care about our needs or desires or dreams... that is completely false and paints a blasphemous picture of God. God is a loving Father, amen? And a father cares for the needs of his children. A loving father isn't going to say to his child on his birthday, "I'm your father and I'm all you need, you should be content and happy, this cake will just rot your teeth and make you fat" and then take the cake away from him. Such a father is messed up in the head and has no

heart or love for his child. And yet so many poor, lonely Christians paint that picture of God to those around them and live under such lies...

Pastor Erin shared some of her own personal struggles with receiving last week, and now I want to share my own story...

My story

I first came to Korea at the end of 2005 and for my first three years here I lived in Geon Christian Children's Home. While I had raised support for short term missions in the past, moving to Korea marked my first time living solely off of support money as my yearly salary. And for my first two years I unknowingly allowed myself to live under spirits of poverty and religion. I felt that as a missionary I needed to live on barely nothing and needed to justify every dollar spent. My view of God was distorted. I felt since I was fully trusting in Him for my provision that He would be upset with any unwise spending and that I would lose favor with Him, as if He were a penny-pinching, overbearing boss rather than a loving father. I ate poorly, lost a lot of weight, was sick a lot, and rarely had meals where I felt satisfied. I claimed I was living for His glory and thought He would be proud of my perseverance, but truth was the picture I was painting of God was that He is poor, demanding, and doesn't care about my health. I was actually being a false witness!

It wasn't until 2008 that God began to correct my view of Him. He began to open up my eyes to all sorts of Scripture of Him meeting not just our needs but also satisfying us, like we read in Jeremiah 31 and in Psalm 145. And as I began to receive these revelations and see God not as a penny-pinching, overbearing boss but rather as a Father who loves to bless His children, I began to take better care of myself. My health got much better and ministry also began to grow and bear much more fruit than before. God wasn't interested in just satisfying my physical appetite, but in every desire.

Seeing God

One thing I want to emphasize before sharing three specific areas God wants to satisfy you in, **is that you cannot receive a specific thing from God unless you see His character in that area.** For example, you will not receive healing unless you begin to see that God truly is a healer. You will not see the supernatural unless you begin to see that God truly is supernatural. This is why healing is something that tends to grow and build up in churches rather than just be released. We see small healings like headaches and stomachaches gone and we celebrate and our faith grows, but we aren't at the blind and deaf yet. We are seeing God as a healer around us, but we have to press in more in prayer, in seeking to see Him as a healer more, and in stepping out in faith. We must continue to contend for the kingdom. Our church is now seeing legs growing out, tumors disappearing, and brain aneurysms vanishing. And so as we continue to contend more, we will soon see the crippled are walking, the blind are seeing, and the dead are being raised. Amen?

The reason why I feel God has put this specific word on my heart today is because so many Christians are settling for empty pleasures or living unfulfilled because they have not gotten a full revelation of just how much God wants to satisfy us. **For some Christians there is a fear that God might discipline us or demand something big in return for our requests, so we ignore our desires or fulfill them through sin.** There is even a fear of disappointment for some Christians that God is going to come up short, so they don't even bother asking. For other Christians there is this thought that, "I will be satisfied in heaven, so I should suffer here on earth." But then you would have to completely throw out Psalm 145:16, which clearly states that God satisfies the desire of every living thing.

God wants to satisfy you. I'm going to cover three areas God wants to satisfy us in that I feel are really important for our generation to hear. The first area I want to share about is that God wants to satisfy you relationally.

God wants to satisfy us relationally

Without even having to look there, let's think about the first problem in the Bible. No, it wasn't Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit. The first problem was, "It is not good for man to be alone." God noticed this right away. And so what was God's response? Did He ignore the problem for a while? Did He tell Adam to just suffer through it and be celibate? Did God create the dog and say, "Look, here is man's best friend... he might not meet all your hopes and desires, but he is pretty loyal and fun." No, God made Adam his mate that was the right match for him. God's first gift to man was to satisfy Him relationally. And God blessed their union.

As you read Scripture God provided for other problems like food, clothes, shelter, and such for His people. But the very first problem that I feel God desired to emphasize as most important for us was lack of relationship.

If God's first gift in the Bible of relationship isn't enough to prove that God wants to satisfy us relationally, then please look with me at 2Samuel 12:7-8. David, who already has a few wives and all the kingdom of Israel, has just committed adultery with Bathsheba. The prophet Nathan has come to rebuke him and let's read this rebuke.

2Samuel 12:7-8 – Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. **And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more.**'"

"If this were too little, I would add to you as much more." What an odd statement within a rebuke. Basically God is telling David, "If you aren't satisfied, just ask me for more and I will give you so much more!" **God is rebuking David for not looking to Him for his desires but rather trying to fulfill his desires by his own means.** God is rebuking David for pursuing Bathsheba secretly rather than simply asking God for more.

It might be odd to use this example since David already had a number of wives and shouldn't need to be any more satisfied relationally, but the fact that God was still offering Him more only goes to show just how much God desires to meet our desires and satisfy us.

James 4:2b – You do not have because you do not ask.

Making a List

When God began opening my heart back up towards marriage a few years ago, I was encouraged by some friends to make a list of attributes I desired in my future wife. I was also encouraged to ask certain people close to me, such as my parents and siblings, what type of woman they could see me marrying. Not only did this help me know what to expect more, it also helped me pray to God more specifically. God convicted me that a wife is the greatest gift He could give me, so I should be specific about my desires. If I didn't ask for anything or expect anything, then how could I fully appreciate who He would give me? But since I prayed and asked specifically for things, I'm so much more grateful for how God answered

my prayers through my wife Sky. When people ask what I like about Sky, I don't stutter. I can run off a list of attributes about Sky that I had prayed for and truly appreciate.

A couple quick words of advice here though, try to be specific. Almost every person will say, "I desire someone I feel comfortable with and I desire someone with a sense of humor." Great. But what type of humor do you like? Do you like offensive humor? Do you like brainy humor? Do you like downright corny humor? Be specific. And comfort? What type of comfort? Someone who gives a lot of hugs? Someone who is physically strong and protective? Someone who is really goofy and you feel safe showing your strange and funny sides to? What's important?

Now, I have to admit, while God answered a lot of my prayers for Sky, a couple of her main desires weren't met in me. She expected to marry someone of Korean descent. Do'h! She prayed earnestly for someone with musical and artistic talents. Ouch! But in the end she will tell you that she is truly blessed and more than satisfied. She learned even before I expressed interest in her that there were deeper desires and needs that she hadn't discovered yet. She can testify that what she was expecting wasn't the best for her and that God knew better, amen babe?

God knows best and God wants to satisfy you relationally. Pray, wait, and let God prepare you for relationship along the way.

God wants to satisfy us sexually

And when that relationship comes you will soon learn, and you better learn, the next area that God wants to satisfy you in. I don't believe there are any little ears in the audience today, so let's get into it... **God wants to satisfy you sexually.** Amen?

Let's go back to the beginning again. After God met Adam's relational needs and provided him with Eve, what was God's first command to them in Genesis 1? "Be fruitful and multiply." So what was God essentially commanding them to do? ? =)

Now some religious folk will teach you that sex is solely meant for procreation. We are only meant to have sex to be fruitful and multiply. In fact, this was the view of the church for centuries and even millenniums. You heard me, millenniums!

In just the 2nd century leaders (Clement of Alexandria) of the church told Christians they could only have sex during twelve hours out of the night. By the middle ages the church forbade it on Sundays, feasts days, Wednesdays, forty days before Christmas, five days before communion, and so many other days... to the point that Christians only had about 83 days out of the 365 day calendar that they were allowed to have sex... and that doesn't include if the woman was menstruating. And the church made it clear that sex was only for procreation, it wasn't meant to be enjoyed. Some of the so called saints even castrated themselves out of their belief that sex was just plain sinful.

For so long the church has made sex seem dirty. For so long Christians have painted a picture that Satan created our sexuality and that we must repress all desires. It has gotten so bad that many Christian women who marry are unable to enjoy sex because they have always been taught that it was dirty. Many Christian men as well feel they are dirty for having any sexual thoughts beyond the ordinary so rather than finding satisfaction in their wife, they look to pornography and prostitutes for fulfillment. But let's look at what God thinks of sex in Song of Songs 4... this is one of the most erotic chapters in the Bible and most historians say

this chapter is about a married couple on their honeymoon night. While many Christian scholars and groups have allegorized Song of Solomon and said it is an analogy of the church's relationship with God, some parts of Song of Solomon are simply too erotic for it to be a complete allegory. In fact, Jewish scribes knew this book was so erotic that they did not allow Jewish boys to read it until they were of age. God isn't oblivious to sex. God created it. And He created our sex drive. Let's jump in to verse 11 of chapter 4...

Song of Songs 4:11-5:2 – (He) “Your lips drip nectar, my bride; honey and milk are under your tongue; the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon. A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a spring locked, a fountain sealed. Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates with all choicest fruits, henna with nard, nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all choice spices—a garden fountain, a well of living water, and flowing streams from Lebanon. Awake, O north wind, and come, O south wind! Blow upon my garden, and let its spices flow.” (She) “Let my beloved come to his garden, and eat its choicest fruits.” (He) I came to my garden, my sister, my bride, I gathered my myrrh with my spice, I ate my honeycomb with my honey, I drank my wine with my milk.” (Others) “Eat, friends, drink, and be drunk with love!”

So we just read this guy describe his wife's body pretty graphically. She then, well, invited him in. And he enjoyed. That is the PG version. But at the end there is another voice that the ESV titles as “Others” that basically cheers them on. Now what the... we were just reading one of the most intimate moments in Scripture... and then we hear this, “Eat, friends, drink, and be drunk with love!”

Now some people try and interpret this as a moment where the groom has suddenly left his honeymoon chamber to see his friends and they all encourage him. That seems pretty ridiculous but it doesn't flow at all with the Scripture. And while the ESV doesn't state it, *most historians* interpret this one moment as God voicing His approval over the couples love. I sure would hope there were no open windows during their first time of intimacy. So who else could see but God? And if you think God looks away during sex, you are mistaken. He obviously saw David with Bathsheba, right? You best get used to it, God is always watching. And He desires to meet our needs.

Let me read Proverbs 5:18-19 for you...

Proverbs 5:18-19 – Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely dear, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.

In nearly every other translation verse 19 reads, “Let her breasts satisfy you.” That is a command from God! God wants to satisfy you sexually! And I'm not just talking to the men, but also to the women. Song of Songs is filled with the woman expressing her pleasure, not just the man.

Sex is not just meant for procreation, or intimacy, or comfort, but also for pleasure. There is a clear truth in that as you read Proverbs 5 and the book Song of Solomon. God delights in us and He wants to bless us. If we have the right understanding of God, we will know that **He desires to fulfill us far more than pornography or prostitutes or masturbation ever will.** He knows our needs and He wants to meet them. During your time of single life you will learn self control and living above your desires. And you will know that God will eventually bless and truly satisfy you. And I guarantee that if you are a member of New

Philadelphia Church. Although our married couples ministry hasn't gotten kicked off yet, it will be soon and I will not allow any couple of this house to not experience true satisfaction and freedom in their relationship. If God desires us to be satisfied sexually and to experience sexual pleasure with our spouse to the point of intoxication, then we should expect it for every married couple in the house. Amen?

I never thought I would preach on that subject, but it wouldn't surprise me if I teach about it more as more people get married in the church.

God wants to satisfy us materially

The last area I want to share with you is perhaps the one that will surprise you the most... God wants to satisfy you materially. Now that statement alone would get me kicked out of most churches, but please give me a moment to explain.

Why has sex been labeled as dirty and largely ignored or condemned in the church for thousands of years? Because sex is dangerous. Because if you don't have a handle on your sex drive, you can make tons of mistakes and fall into all sorts of sin. That was why many Christians in the past castrated themselves or made vows to celibacy... not so much out of love for God, but because of **FEAR** of sex.

And the same thing now goes with money and the things that money can buy. While sex is now finally being addressed in the church and we are experiencing a shift in the church's viewpoint towards freedom in love within a marriage, money still causes great fear in the church. And for good reason, as I shared earlier how those poor villagers so easily became enslaved to it.

But just because we can become enslaved to our sexual desires doesn't mean that we are to forsake sex completely. And in the same way, just because we can become enslaved to materialism doesn't mean that we are to forsake money and products completely. **Church, we are called to be led not by fear, but by faith.**

I really believe God is calling many people in New Philadelphia Church to steward millions of dollars. But if we live with a fear that we will fall into greed if we have money, then we will never be entrusted with so much. We will be like the man who received a talent of money and went and hid it, rather than investing it and making it increase. Church, we need the revelation that God isn't scared of money, but rather that He owns it and He entrusts it to those who are walking in a healthy relationship with Him. And we also need the revelation that God doesn't just give us the money or materials for ministry, but also to bless us because we are dear to Him. Erin shared about this well last week. Let me give some Biblical examples...

How about the feeding of the 5,000? Jesus received a few loaves of bread and a few fish and blessed them and had the disciples distribute them. And let me read you the end result...

Matthew 14:20 – And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over.

Please notice that the text did not say, "They all ate until it ran out." Or, "They all ate until their hunger was gone." No, it says that they ate until they were satisfied. And God provided twelve basketfuls beyond that! That would be like God providing a Thanksgiving dinner where a few turkeys and plenty of stuffing were leftover. Some people would call that a

waste, but God obviously doesn't. He wants to satisfy us! He wants to show that He not only wants to meet our needs, but He wants us to really enjoy Him.

In fact, Jesus was accused many times of feasting too much and spending time with gluttons. Jesus obviously wasn't endorsing gluttony, but I believe He was showing the religious people that walking with God isn't just about suffering or regulations.

And even within the law in the Old Testament, God commands His people to have **five different huge feasts** each year in celebration of what God has done for them. **And in that same law how many times does God command His people to fast each year? Once.** Please take that as some revelation of how much God wants us to delight in Him. And I must add that some of those feasts weren't just for one day, but some were as long as a week straight. Imagine having a Thanksgiving feast more than 10 times a year? Those were God's commands in the Old Testament.

Church, God opens His hands to satisfy the desire of every living thing (Psalm 145:16). There are some things we desire that He wants to gift us with. Many of us make a Christmas list or birthday gift list for our friends or family because our loved ones want to bless us on those days. Their gifts are acts of love and are beautiful, blessing us not just materially but relationally. And so much more does God want to bless us. Amen? He is the most loving and He is the most wealthy in the family, so shouldn't we expect the best gifts from Him?

And like I shared about with relationships, God knows what is best. **We don't have to fear that He is going to give us someone or give us gifts that are going to ruin us.** His intentions are always for our good, and if we wait on Him we will truly be satisfied.

God's gift of Sky to me has only increased my worship and thanks towards Him. God's gift of sex in our relationship has only revealed to me more deeply just how much God cares for our desires and loves to fulfill them. And God's gift of an apartment, of clothes, and other provisions and gifts, only cause me to be thankful all the more. In the end, if God removed all those things I know I could find my joy in God. He is my anchor and He is my true source of love, joy, and fulfillment. But I have to admit, all that He has blessed me with has brought me a special joy and helped me know all the more just how treasured I am before Him. And I know God desires for all His children to experience this joy and affirmation.

Pray