

Isaiah 55:1-9

What Truly Satisfies

Nunawading and Waverley, 8-8-21

A few years ago, film maker James Cameron, on a solo mission, dived into the deepest part of the world's oceans, the Mariana Trench. Why? Because he could. It was a great thrill. But what next? Tourist space flights are now being arranged. I was invited into the cockpit of a 737 as it came into Melbourne and landed, which was really exciting but my memories are blunted.

Experiences can hardly become the foundation of life, but with modern standards of living, they can be for many. We all have things we would love to do such as a hot air balloon ride. One of our members wanted to travel to an African national park and stroke a tiger, which she did! These are wonderful things to do but does the sensation last and are they deeply satisfying?

I think our society is doing a pretty good job trying to ape God. It can create an alternative to the experience of knowing Christ. I think of the range of entertainments, food experiences, exotic and even weird travel experiences available to us. Climbing Mt Everest is now available as a tourist activity for those not so experienced in mountaineering. We can go from a mountain top high to the thrill of a virtual game. There are alternatives to God but do they fulfill our inner beings?

All these things require more and more, better and better, bigger and bigger. Why is that? The Lord has created us with a spiritual stomach, a whole in the centre of ourselves that only he can fill. The paradox of trying to ape God and fill this whole within us with other things, is that we are left feeling emptier than before. Apparently, we are changing our wardrobes much quicker than we ever have and good clothes are being moved aside for the new seasons' fashions. Why is that happening? The whole inside is getting bigger, that's why.

Thus, our Father calls out to his children:

**Hoy! All you who are thirsty, come to the waters.
And though a person does not have money,
come and buy grain and eat!
Come and buy grain without money
and milk and wine without charge.
Why hand over money for what is not bread
or toil for what never satisfies?
Listen! Listen to me!
Eat what is truly good
and your soul will take exquisite delight in the richest food.**

What our Lord offers is himself and his salvation completely free. There are no religious duties, special acts of devotion, a good life, obedience to commands or anything like that required of us. Our Father lavishes his love and saving grace on us free of charge, without conditions or payment. In fact, he pays the price, the price of suffering, rejection, being insulted, punished and humiliated. All the madness and guilt of the world was placed on him as well as our crazy consumeristic lives. Let's, once again, **come to him** and take hold of what he offers completely free, that is, to put our lives into his care and to trust him in an act of faith.

His promise is that, through the Spirit, he will enter into your lives bringing the deepest joy. Once my faith came alive, all those many years ago, I have always sensed the presence of the Lord. He has been filling me every day. His filling is our true fulfillment. We know the devotion of a pet, the affection of children, the love of a partner or spouse and the loyalty of a friend but the love of God is immense. It is something that you can explore and learn more about every day and yet never exhaust the understanding of it. The more we come to this love and seek it, the more it grows within us. Our world spreads before us a huge range of things we can enjoy but they are thin, just a shallow experience. But, by faith, through his free acceptance of us in Baptism, we go deep into his being. More and more is revealed to us as we explore his mind, his nature and what he has done for us. Shallow experiences cannot last but his deep being does.

This is when real meaning and fulfillment comes to us. Bill Hayden, once Australia's Governor General, was a life-long disciple of atheism. He came to Christ late in his life. While he preached atheism, he admitted to himself, that he was feeling empty. Greg Sheridan, a Christian and journalist, wrote about him in his latest book, "Christians", available at Big W for \$24. Hayden told him that he spoke to a nun and sensed that holiness was a true thing. On another occasion, a judge asked him, "If the Bible is removed, what is there to urge and instruct people to be decent?" These things got him thinking and, eventually, he came to the Lord and found meaning. The Lord filled his emptiness.

So, what about you? Are you working, **toiling** and striving and straining so hard to achieve, to get to the top of the mountain, to experience something new? What happens when you reach the top? Another peak to scale? So, I end then with some pointers.

Centre everything around Christ.

Make it your goal to know him on a personal level.

Let him change you.

Submit to his, sometimes, difficult requests.

Drink deeply of his word, live in your baptismal relationship and come to his table, the Lord's Supper.

Give yourself to him. Let him be in charge; let him be your boss.

Live in his peace and make peace with all as far as you can.

Give things away and give yourself to good causes.

Get involved in the lives of others. Listen, love, care.

Talk to people about what they live for. Ask them what it does for them. Do they think there could be more?

In this way, fulfillment is found.