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John 6.35, 41-51 WHEN JESUS NO LONGER SATISFIES Christ Church, MB. 12.8.18

In the past few weeks I've read 2 books on pastors and their struggles with sin in their own lives and brokenness in their families. Both also struggled at times with their faith in God. I've read heaps of books about members of the church and their struggles with sin and with God. In the past week I've sat at a table with people who have sinned against God and against one another, and who say that because of the sins in the church they can no longer believe in God. And then there is John 6. Seven times people complain about Jesus in one way or another and many leave him: John 6.14-15... 30-31.... 41-43.... 52.... 60.... 66.... 70....

What about you? Are you satisfied with Jesus? Do you complain about God? Do you complain about the church? Do you complain about the Pastor? "In EAST OF EDEN John Steinbeck wrote that we all have one story, and it is the same story: the contest of good and evil within us. Any honest person knows that they are losing this contest." In fact it is really the battle between God and Satan – the battle for the human soul – the battle for your soul. It began in the Garden of Eden... it continued throughout the OT... it reached a climax in the Garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross and in the Garden of the Open Tomb. On the cross Christ defeated sin, death and the devil, once and for all. Faith in Christ is **the victory which overcomes the world. Everyone born of God overcomes the world. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.** 1 John 5:4-5.

It sounds easy. Believe in Jesus and overcome the world. Believe in Jesus and overcome sin, death and the devil. Believe in Jesus and all your troubles will go away. It sounds easy. So why is it so hard? Why do so many Pastors struggle with their faith in God? Why do so many parishioners fall away from the faith? Why do so many of our children no longer follow Jesus? Why are so many people not satisfied with Jesus and look elsewhere? John 6 gives us some reasons why people are not satisfied with Jesus.

1. We want a God who gives us what we want. v15, 26... We are like spoilt children who think life revolves around us and want their parents to give them everything, and put on a turn when they don't get it. The people wanted a king who would give them all they needed for this life – material things... a nice home without a mortgage ... a nice partner... a good paying job... holidays etc. But as Jesus said when Satan tempted him: **we don't live on bread alone...** King David was a great man of God. But he wasn't satisfied with God alone. He wanted Bathsheba, and he committed adultery and murder to get her. But his sin didn't buy happiness, but a broken and unhappy family. Jesus promises: **I am the bread of life... I alone satisfy!**
2. We want a God who proves himself to us over and over. 30f. You'd think feeding the 5000 would be enough. But NO. They wanted more signs. Prove that you are God. You'd think the resurrection would be enough. But NO. Send somebody else back from the dead and then we will believe. **Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved**, said Paul. That was enough for the Gaoler and his family, but not enough for many people today. **We walk by faith, not by sight.** But that's not enough for so

- many people inside and outside the church, who will believe what they read in the Advertiser but not what they read in the Bible. **Whoever believes has eternal life.**
3. We want a God who lives at a distance. 41ff... I sympathise with these people. How could this Jesus, whose family they knew, be God? How could God be like Jesus, full of love for people they didn't like? How could this ordinary man be God, forgiving people, eating with sinners, calling them to repent and believe in Him? Do we want a God who is right beside us, who sees all our sins, who calls us to repent of our greed, and our anger, and our foul mouth, and our domestic violence, and our sexual immorality? Don't we rather want a God who lives in heaven, and is short sighted when we sin, but very loving when we seek forgiveness? We quite like the God of John 3.16 who loves us. But how do we feel about the God of Eph. 4:5, who calls us to **put off your old self... and put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. This God came to earth in Jesus – Immanuel, God with us. Loving us, forgiving us, calling us to repent and enter his kingdom, promising: I am the bread of life... I alone can satisfy you... whoever believes has eternal life.**
 4. We want a God who is easy to digest/to understand. V52, 60. Too many people don't want to go beyond their Baptism/beyond cheap grace, or beyond their confirmation, or beyond John 3.16. How many people in this congregation read the Bible every day? How many attend Bible study regularly? How many could clearly explain to someone else how to be saved? And sadly, how many come to worship regularly? We fear getting too involved lest others brand us fanatics. We fear feasting on Jesus as though our life depended on it, because we have so many other things that grab our time and attention. And so we get the dreadful result where our children who no longer follow Jesus fool us and themselves by saying: *BUT I STILL BELIEVE!* Judas probably still believed in Jesus, but he betrayed him, and took his life in despair. Jesus promises: **Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life... 54f**

Finally Jesus turns to the dozen disciples who are left. **Will you also go away?** Are you still satisfied with me? Thank God for Peter. Peter often got it wrong, but this time he was spot on. **Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.** Jesus is the true God and there is no other. Yes, we may turn to other things. They may give short term pleasure. But God gives pleasures forevermore. **You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures for evermore. Ps. 16.11. I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall not hunger. He who believes in me shall not thirst.**

When Jesus no longer satisfies it's probably because we've drifted from him, and forgotten how good and loving he is. In John 6 Jesus offers us all we need for this life and the next. Come to the one true God and be satisfied with him. **His mercies are new every morning. He is the bread of life. Come to him every day and you will never hunger or thirst, here on earth, or hereafter in heaven.** God really is good. He loves you so much. He has given everything for you. Only Jesus can satisfy you – forever. Amen.