

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

## Finding True Satisfaction

John 4:31-34

**Intro:** In 1965, there were a lot of new rock and roll bands trying to make it big in the American music scene. Many such bands from Britain were also trying to duplicate the success of the Beatles from the previous year. The lead guitarist from one of these non-descript bands sat down one night in a hotel room in Clearwater, FL and recorded a 3 chord riff for a new song he had been working on. He only ran through it one time before he fell asleep. When he listened to the recording the next morning, there was 2 minutes of acoustical guitar before you hear him drop his pick and then him snoring for the next 40 minutes. When the band recorded the song in the studio, the guitarist originally envisioned the riff being played by a horn section so he plugged in a Gibson Maestro fuzzbox to his guitar to sustain the sound of the riff in order to simulate a brass section. After hearing the first cut, the producer and sound engineer loved the sound of the fuzzbox so much, they nixed the idea of adding a horn section altogether and released the song “(I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction” as it was originally played in the studio the very first time.

Of course, if you’re older than 30, you know I’m talking about the Rolling Stones. Now, you might be wondering what a ragged out band of British geriatrics has to do with John ch4 and all I can tell you is: absolutely nothing. But, that song, which was released as a single in June of 1965, was an instant hit, giving the Stones their first #1 hit in the US. It would later become their 4<sup>th</sup> #1 hit in the UK. Mick Jagger credits this song with taking the Stones from being just another band to being a monster band, one of the biggest, most recognized and apparently, longest lasting bands of all time. In fact, this song has landed the #2 spot on the list of the “500 Greatest Songs of all Times.” But, why?

I believe the song has universal appeal. The lyrics refer to sexual frustration and commercialism but the general idea of constantly falling short of satisfaction speaks to the condition of just about every human being. That particular feeling of frustration is almost universal. Mick complains in the song that he can’t get what he wants but the sad fact has been revealed time and time again is that even when we get exactly what we want – we’re

seldom truly satisfied.

This is true for everyone – well, almost everyone. There has been 1 exception and we'll find Him in our text today.

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**31-33-** The disciples' request for Jesus to eat becomes the occasion for Him to teach them something about His priorities. Remember, when they had come to the well, Jesus, who was weary, stayed behind while the disciples went into the city to buy food. While they were gone the woman came, and Jesus talked to her, leading her to faith. About the time the woman left her waterpot to go back into the city to bring others to Jesus, the disciples had finished their errand and had returned. They were surprised that Jesus had been talking to the woman, but they were doubly surprised when Jesus showed no interest at all in the food they had just purchased for Him. Their suggestion that Jesus should eat was completely natural. As far as they knew, the whole purpose of their trip into the village was to buy food. They knew He was weary and most likely hungry as well and so they ask Him to share a meal with them.

In His reply, Jesus actually puts some distance between Himself and them. The "**I**" and "**you**" in **vs32** are in emphatic contrast, implying there was a great divide between what Jesus is doing and what they were expecting Him to do. The word **food** is the normal word for anything that can be eaten but what is significant is that Jesus is telling them He has sustenance of which the disciples know nothing about – although, it seems like they should know.

To say the least, His reply confuses them! Clearly, they have no idea what He is talking about. We've seen this before. When Jesus spoke to the woman about giving her living water, she took it in a literal and material way. "How are you going to do that? You have nothing to draw with?" When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about the need for new birth, he took it in a purely physical way – "Can a man enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" In **ch2**, when the Jews in the Temple asked for a sign, Jesus said, "**Destroy this temple, and in 3 days I will raise it up.**" (19). The Jews were incredulous! "It's taken 46 yrs to build what we have now! You're going to do it in 3 days?"

What gives? In the first 3 examples, Jesus was speaking to unbelievers, but these were His disciples! It's clear that they are thinking solely in terms of

material food. But why is that? Well, 1<sup>st</sup>: they're still human; 2<sup>nd</sup>, more importantly, they haven't yet acquired the mindset of eternity or view of the eternal that they will have later. It's this view of the eternal that allows Peter and John to look down at the lame man and tell him, "We don't have any money for you but what we do have, we'll give to you. Rise up and walk!" They saw a need and immediately knew a solution (Jesus). How often in our own lives are we confused or even upset because we don't understand why the Lord allows certain circumstances to touch us. Could it be that we don't yet possess the view of the eternal as we should. Are we still looking at things from a clearly literal of material fashion and not from a heavenly perspective? Granted, a heavenly perspective doesn't answer all questions but it can give us the confidence (faith) to move forward in the darkness of the unknown. The disciples complete misunderstanding opens the door for Jesus to teach them valuable truths.

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**34-** Jesus' food was to do the divine will. These words speak both of His mission and His devotion to it but they also speak of the sense of complete satisfaction it brought the Son to do the will of the Father. The Father is referred to as "**Him who sent Me.**" The work Jesus did was not just human work, it was the work of one sent by God. All through out John's Gospel, Jesus declares that the work He does is what the Father sent Him to do. Obedience to the divine will is the major concern of Jesus. He didn't view the Father's will as a heavy burden or distasteful task; He saw it as the very nourishment of His soul! Doing the Father's will fed and satisfied Him. It was the joy & strength of His life. Vs34 is the keynote of Jesus' life, the very essence of His life. Doing God's will gave Him complete satisfaction!

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"Well, (you may say) that sounds great but what does it mean? More specifically, what does it mean for me?" To better understand the concept of satisfaction that comes from desiring God's will and doing it, let's contrast the obedience of Jesus with the disobedience of Satan. In **Isa 14** we're told the thoughts that entered Satan's mind at the moment of his revolt against God and the results of his rebellion (**12-15**). The point is: Satan's revolt occurred in the area of the will, desiring his will over God's, resulting in dissatisfaction for Satan and his eventual judgment.

There are 2 significant features in Satan's thoughts here. 1<sup>st</sup>) Satan's desire to climb above the position God called him to. He'd already been given the highest position of any created being. Ezekiel tells us he was "**full of**

**wisdom and perfect in beauty**” (28:12). He was the top dog of all creation. But, this wasn’t enough for Satan. He desired to rise **into heaven . . . above the stars . . . to sit on the mount of the assembly . . . above the heights of the clouds . . . to be like the Most High**. He wanted to push God off the throne and receive the worship of the universe all for himself.

2<sup>nd</sup>) The strong assertion of Satan’s own will. Note: Satan asserts his own will five times: “**I will . . . I will . . . I will . . . I will . . . I will**.” Eventually, Satan’s **I will** is multiplied many billions of times, first by the equally rebellious “wills” of his angelic followers and then by the “I wills” of billions of fallen humans. Satan’s **I will** was the origin of sin in the universe; the results of sin reveal the tragic consequence of anyone trying to do things in any way other than what God prescribes.

What were the results of his rebellion? When Satan got Adam and Eve to sin in the Garden, God revealed the results by telling Satan that he would **eat dust all the days** of his life (Gen 3:14). This symbolizes dissatisfaction. God is telling Satan here that from now on his life would be dry, un nourishing, and tasteless. But how different were the results of the obedience of Jesus Christ! Paul also wrote of His obedience in **Phil 2:6-10**. What a great contrast! Satan exalted his own will and found nothing but misery and brought nothing but misery to others. Jesus submitted Himself to the will of God and He both found great blessing and brought great blessing to a multitude of others.

Do we see the benefits of submitting ourselves to God’s will? Are we willing to do our best in whatever position He calls us to? Our fallen human nature naturally prefers our own will over God’s and even at our best, after God works with us, we often only desire to know and to do His will halfheartedly. It’s like the little girl who wrote her grandma to thank her for her Christmas present? She said, “Dear Grandma, thank you for the pincushion. I have always wanted a pincushion, but not very much.” We’re just like that. We want God to reveal His will for us but...but not very much. Thus, one of the greatest steps in a believer’s spiritual growth comes when their will is first surrendered to God’s will and they are enabled to say, as Jesus did, “**My food is to do the will of him who sent me.**”

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Also take note: Jesus didn’t say, “My food is to know the will of Him who sent me.” That’s important, but it is only part of the story. He actually said,

***My food is to do the will of Him who sent me.*** This is important for us because so often, even when the will of God has been revealed to us, we're still reluctant to do it. But what is God's will for me?

There are a number of verses in the Bible that give us specific things to do. If you're not yet a Christian, Jesus exhorts you to, "***Enter by the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it***" (Matt 7:13). Paul says in Acts 17:30 that God ***commands all men everywhere to repent***. If you're not yet a Christian, God's will for you is that you should believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior and be saved.

If you are a Christian, there are literally hundreds of clear-cut statements to consider. Jesus said, "***Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven***" (Matt 5:16). He also said, "***Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you***" (Matt 5:44). Paul says we are to present our bodies as living sacrifices and not be conformed to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of our minds. (Rom 12:1-2). The list of similar verses would be almost endless, but this is enough for our purposes. Do we do the things we know? Do we work at them? If we're not willing to exert ourselves to accomplish what God has already revealed. We can't expect Him to give more.

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Finally, Jesus said, "***My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work.***" Sadly, many begin the work but fail to finish it. Before the incarnation, Jesus declared through David, ***I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart***" (Ps 40:8). To do that, Jesus Christ assumed our humanity. Jesus was born in Bethlehem and was raised in the dirty little town of Nazareth and grew up in the carpenter shop of His stepfather Joseph. In time He began His teaching ministry, a ministry that took Him throughout all the towns and villages of Palestine. During these years, He looked ahead to the cross, which loomed ever larger before Him. Finally, just before His crucifixion as He prayed in the garden, Jesus declared, "***I have glorified You on earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do***" (John 17:4). One of His last cries from the cross was simply this, "***It is finished***" (John 19:30).

Aren't you glad that Jesus was determined to finish the work that the Father gave Him to do? It resulted in our salvation. Are we like Him in this area? Are we striving to finish the work that we've been given to do? At the end of his life, the Apostle Paul was able to say, "***I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.***" (II Tim 4:7). His success should be the goal of every believer.

Have you discovered the secret of true satisfaction yet? Clearly, its determined by how we live our lives, by what we live our lives for. In 1965, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards couldn't get no satisfaction because they were looking for it in all the wrong places. Today, some 52 years later, though their fortunes have changed dramatically, I'll bet they're still singing the same sad song. Do you find yourself singing along with them more often than not? Could it be that, more often than not, you're asserting your own will above the Father's will for your life?

But, there is another song we can sing, in fact, we sang it this morning. True satisfaction comes from living for His pleasure. It comes from running for His fame. Vs34 is the keynote of Jesus' life. If you make it the keynote of your life – you'll be singing another tune! 😊