



God's Promise of Satisfaction

Isaiah 42:1-17 New International Version



What brings you satisfaction?

When I finished an architectural project during college I was satisfied. Long hours and late nights gave way to completed drawings and a model. It looked so good and made me feel good too, at least until I had to defend it before the tribal council of my professors. I would leave wishing I had done something different and feeling like I had just gone under at the county fair's dunking booth. Everyone felt like I did after leaving the circle. They always challenged us to do better and our satisfaction turned to despair.

Mick Jagger summed things up for me: *I can't get no satisfaction*. Why is life like that? We wash the car and it gets dirty. We clean our houses and they get messed up again. We do well on a test and the teacher presents more new material to study for the next test. We get gifts and soon grow tired of them and want something else. Our society is desperate. It looks for new jobs, new spouses, new toys, but nothing seems to bring satisfaction. The quest for satisfaction is like trying to catch the wind, and I for one have never caught it.

All these endless strivings are only the surface problem. The Bible says that the problem goes to the depth of our hearts. The Bible also says that our heart is desperate and wicked and that we can not always understand it. John Calvin said that our heart is an idol factory. Idols are not merely little statues, or an immunity necklace but anything that we trust to make us happy. Nothing lasts too long, so we go on to something else.

Jesus said, *"My purpose is to give life in all its fullness."* (John 10:10). Are you surprised that Jesus said those words? He did not come to make you miserable, but give you the best possible life. He did not come to give you an emotional high and a constant smile, but contentment in all of what comes with life. He is the only consistent source of happiness in my life. There are many things that make me happy and give me purpose, but ultimately they let me down.

Isaiah speaks of one who brought him delight.



The Servant will gently establish justice

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. ² He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. ³ A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; ⁴ he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope."

Isaiah 42:1-4

You may have noticed that justice is a common theme in those four verses. The promised justice is not brought about by force, but by love. The New Testament writer Matthew quotes this verse in His gospel to refer to sick people being healed by Jesus and Jesus kept quiet about it (Matthew 12:15-21). Even if we do not boast of our deeds, on the inside we usually still want people to notice. In contrast, Jesus gave people their lives back that had been taken away or diminished in some way. Yet, He did not exploit them or call the news cameras for a promo event.

The analogy goes beyond the context of these several verses and refers to a court room scene where the Lord is prosecuting the idols. In contrast to the idols that claim to bring satisfaction, the Lord is proving that only He can and will bring lasting satisfaction. Included in the idea of justice is our longing for a better life and a better world. It comes through the servant, the chosen one.

“What is all this talk about idols? I do not worship any statues”, you say. Well, an idol doesn’t have to be a little statue. *Webster’s Dictionary* list one definition of an idol as “A person or thing blindly or excessively adored.” Is there someone or something that you adore and trust to make you happy?

The Bible also gives insight and says, *“Those who worship false gods turn their backs on all God’s mercies.”* Some things that we can idolize are money, reputation, sexual pleasure, video games, sports, being in control, clothes, and theology, just to name a few. They cause us to turn our backs to God and seek happiness and contentment in them. The idols that look so good and feel so right are in reality worthless, empty, deceptive, useless, false, and they do not last. This is why God wants us to turn from them and turn to him.

So back to the idea of justice since that is what frees us from the power of idols. The idea of justice is revealed truth that comes through God’s servant. This truth is not progressive as people discover it, but it comes by an agent of the Lord, his servant. The agent is Jesus Christ and he comes not only to good people, or intelligent people, or any certain type of person, but to the whole earth. A familiar verse summarizes this idea.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. John 3:16-17

In going to the entire world, God comes to some unlikely places. I went to a little country church this week for a Christmas program in which my daughter participated. The most moving thing for me was not that it was her first Christmas program, but the simplicity of it all struck me. There was an uneven cardboard star painted yellow, a cardboard manger cut out, and a hand painted no vacancy sign displayed.

The words of the preacher helped me to think about the Christmas story. God chose to make Himself known to us humans through a little baby. The baby was born to a teenage mother who was poor and lived in a Podunk town. In today’s terms, we might say that Jesus was born in a trailer park on the wrong side of town to an unimportant, and unimpressive young Mom. Now that we have looked at the servant we’ll move on to what he will do.



What the Servant will do

⁵ This is what God the LORD says-- he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it: ⁶ "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, ⁷ to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. ⁸ "I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. ⁹ See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you."

Isaiah 42:5-9

God wants it to be clear that He is to be more desired than empty idols. God, the LORD, is the one who has created the heavens, spread out the earth, gives breath and (vitality) to people. The LORD is God and besides Him is nothing but idols that do not make good on their promised satisfaction.

Idols are like the army men that I ordered from a comic book when I was a kid. For a small cost I was to receive an inordinate amount of army men, tanks, and airplanes. Wow, the deal was unbelievable! When the package finally came, I ripped into the package only to discover that all the plastic pieces were flat. Flat army men. Flat airplanes. Flat tanks. It was a flat deal and I was disappointed. The idols that we chase after are flat also, yet they seem to promise us what we desire.

The servant delivers and His name is Jesus. He is not flat, but full. What he will do can be found I verses 6-8. The LORD God has taken the hand of the servant and He carries out the righteous purposes of God.

Jesus is a covenant for the people. That is, he is the way that one may have a covenant relationship with the LORD God. I have a covenant relationship with my wife as I have promised myself to her and she has promised herself to me. Through Jesus Christ, God has promised Himself to you. Will you say, "I do", or turn down His offer of secure love.

Jesus is a light. Do you feel like you're stumbling around in life like it was a dark and unfriendly basement? Jesus is like a beaming lamp so you can get your bearings and find your way around in life.

Jesus opened eyes that are blind. His healing gave sight and changed the lives of many. You are not able to really see Jesus until He has opened the eyes of your heart to give you spiritual sight. When Jesus opens the eyes of your heart the difference is even more profound than putting on 3-D glasses at the movies.

When Jesus opens your eyes it is like being freed and released from a dark dungeon. He does not want you to be deceived by idols, but released from the things that pull you away from God. Why not ask Him to help you see Jesus for who he is and find release for your soul and the restful satisfaction that only a relationship with Jesus Christ can give. The appropriate response to this good news is a song.



inging a new song

¹⁰ Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you islands, and all who live in them. ¹¹ Let the desert and its towns raise their voices; let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice. Let the people of Sela sing for joy; let them shout from the mountaintops. ¹² Let them give glory to the LORD and proclaim his praise in the islands.

Isaiah 42:10-12

That song is like the one I used to sing when my favorite football team scored a touchdown.

*Hail to the Redskins
Hail victory
Braves on the warpath
Fighting for ole D.C.*

I'll spare you the whole song, but it was a happy song. I like to sing "Rocky Top" also--if we were in Tennessee right now, I might treat you to a chorus or two. God's people have something to sing about. God has forgiven their sin, adopted them into His family, and promised them that they will live forever with Him.

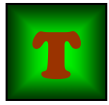
Sometimes people think that Christians are narrow minded and opposed to diversity because we believe the Bible teaches that Jesus is the only way to God. It is true that Jesus said, "*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me* (John 14:6)." The Bible also says, "*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men (people) by which we must be saved.*"

It is true that the way to God and heaven is narrow, but it will also be diverse and cover the earth. Look at Isaiah 42:10-12. God's praise will be sung in the remote parts of the earth, the coastal regions, islands, mountaintops, the desert, important and strong cities (Sela), and even people on the move (Kedar). The Bible also says, "*And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men (women too) for God from every tribe and language and people and nation* "Revelation 5:9)."

Does that intolerant? Does that discourage diversity? No way! There will be people from **every** tribe, **every** language, **every** people group, and **every** nation. No brand of person will be excluded from God and heaven so the singing will be with great joy! Each of these persons, however; will come to God through Jesus. Will you be one of them? I hope and pray that you will.

Many will be singing the praises of God's kind forgiveness and new start that they have received from Him. He has rescued them from their empty and worthless idols where they have placed their trust and sought a happy life. We have all lived like kids who climbed up on the counter and stretched up on their tippy toes to get the cookie jar, opened it up, and found it empty. So we go looking for another cookie jar and so on and so on. The good news is that God put a full cookie jar with the most delicious cookies on the table to share with all who will come. Will you come?

You need to know that in the Lord's desire to give you the best possible life that He will not passively sit on the couch. He is active and aggressive like a warrior because He will not tolerate sin.



he LORD as a warrior

¹³ The LORD will march out like a mighty man, like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies. ¹⁴ "For a long time I have kept silent, I have been quiet and held myself back. But now, like a woman in childbirth, I cry out, I gasp and pant. ¹⁵ I will lay waste the mountains and hills and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn rivers into islands and dry up the pools.

Isaiah 42:13-15

This does not sound like baby Jesus meek and mild does it? God has a multifaceted personality even as we do. He is great in love and great in His hate of sin. God is patient, and slow to become angry. When He displays His anger it is controlled and with a purpose. Because of this even enemies can become friends of God. *"For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"* (Romans 5:10)

Thinking about being rescued from your sin and following Christ may sound scary to you. You may not know where to begin or where to go. I felt this way at one time in my life and God lead me to a group of Christians who could show me what the Bible had to say and converse with me about their experiences with God. No man is an island and the church exists to help you know Jesus and grow deeper in your relationship to Him. Our church is both a lighthouse and a safe house. We are a lighthouse to those who are in need of Christ and a safe house for recovering sinners like you and me.



ummary: Trusting in the LORD versus trusting in idols

¹⁶ I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them. ¹⁷ But those who trust in idols, who say to images, 'You are our gods,' will be turned back in utter shame.

Isaiah 42:16-17

As you go home and enjoy your family and gifts. Also, consider the gift that will never run out of batteries, never go out of style, and always provide satisfaction.

Thank you for reading.

I'd like to invite you to come and hear the next message in person.

God has advised us not to neglect meeting together (Hebrews 10:25). So why not come and encourage us and let us encourage you?