

John 6:24-35

Pentecost 12; August 11 & 12, 2024

How many like an all-you-can-eat meal? (Or maybe an eat-all-you-can meal?) You get hungry just thinking about it. They have fried foods of all kinds of different things. You see all kinds of baked items. The salad bar may have so many different toppings for you to put on your salad. Then comes the desert bar, right? You can get done and you sit at home and think: *why did I do that?* I'm not going to eat anything tomorrow, because I'm way too full. Then you wake up the next morning hungrier than the day before. You may not like a buffet. But what if, you could eat and eat and eat without any kind of consequences to your body? Never gain a pound. Never have any health issues. What if you were always perfectly satisfied by what you would eat and drink? That would be quite a promise. Hunger and thirst are universal experiences. We all experience both every day. Yet, no matter how many times you go back to the buffet, and no matter how many times you refill your cup, satisfaction never lasts.

John tells us that the people were looking for Jesus. **"Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"** Why were they looking for him? They wanted food. The day before our text, Jesus had fed 5,000 men plus women and children. Mark tells us: **"They all ate and were satisfied."** (Mark 6:43) They had seen the disciples being told by Jesus to go in the boat across the Sea of Galilee and he was going to spend some time in prayer. They watched the disciples go sail away. They saw Jesus go a different way. They had thought that Jesus was still here because no other boats had gone missing. What they did not see was Jesus walking on the water. Even though they had been satisfied by the food Jesus had given them, they were once again hungry. But as it always does, their hunger returned, which led them to seek Jesus again.

They were looking for Jesus take away all their problems. The problem that they were facing in our text was that they were hungry. They thought that if Jesus solved their problem of hunger, their problems would all go away. Jesus immediately saw that. **"Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill."** They thought that if Jesus would just give them all the food they wanted, then all their problems would be solved. They could be a stronger nation if they didn't have to worry about food. Then maybe they could get rid of those pesky Romans. If they could get rid of the Romans, they could once again return to the glory days of David.

Maybe, we can understand their thought process. Do we ever look to Jesus to take away all our problems? I think, many times we think exactly the way that they do. We look to Jesus to take away all our problems in life. So, we are constantly searching for a happier home life. We are searching for medical treatment that will work. We are searching for more recognition, more vacation, more income, more security, more something. The search never ends because, no matter how satisfied we are for a moment, the moment always passes. The problem, of course, is all the things we search for are perishable.

Everything in this world will come to an end. Everything in this world has an expiration date. What do you do about those expiration dates? Well, I think it depends on how old those dates are. If my carton of milk is only one day expired and it still smells okay, I might still use it. But if that milk expired three weeks ago and has chunks in it, I may not want to do that no matter how much I want milk on my cereal. Or you pull that package out of the freezer that is only been in there for a couple of months, I might feel perfectly comfortable in eating it than the package that is 5 years old. Right?

Nothing in this world lasts forever. The home that you live in will at some point down the road will need to be taken down. It may not be in your life time. It might not be in your children or grandchildren's time, but someday, it will fall apart. The clothes that you wear are either eventually wear out or will be so much out of style that you will be done wearing them. And I hate to disappoint you, you will be hungry again after today. If we look to Jesus to give us a life that is filled with ease and comfort, we will never be satisfied. If we think that Jesus will give us a problem-free, worry-free and care-free life in this world, we will never be satisfied.

Yet, if we take one wrong step, we fail. All it takes is one sin to fail. As we've been watching the Olympics this year we've seen it. All it takes is one misstep and one is disqualified. One stumble and the race is over. Yet, behind every good

Olympic athlete there is a good coach who has taught, trained and encouraged. Behind every believer in One who teaches, and encourages. That One is Jesus. Not only does he encourage, he also picks us up and puts us back on the track.

What does Jesus say in response? In his compassionate and love way, he says look at me. Because when we look at Jesus, we see the one who is sufficient – the one who is sufficient to give us bread that lasts through eternal life. **“It is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”** He has saved us. He has paid for our sins. He was raised from the dead to prove that he did pay for the sins of the world. He wants us to know that he will always be there for us. After all, he is God.

Jesus offers something which does not perish—namely, Himself. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans: **“Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.”** (Romans 6:8) In his grace, he says that we can live life abundantly. Jesus says: **“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”** (John 10:10) Yet, he doesn’t mean that we will always be satisfied with things in this life. But it does mean that our desires will be shaped and met by the only One who can satisfy. Jesus has given us much better food than an all you can eat buffet. He has given you eternity through him. We know that whatever happens in this life, we are cared for. We are fed. We have enough. We know that whatever happens in this world, we have the hope of eternal life. That is the thing that truly satisfies us always. Amen.