

Pastor Shaun Arndt

August 8, 2021

Sermon Text: John 6:24-35

"Hungry"

O Taste and see that the LORD is good. Amen.

Dear Friends in Christ,

Hungry? Of course you are as your stomach growls once more. In a little while you push your lunch plate away satisfied. And yet, later that same day, you are hungry again; more than ready for supper time! And though you have a great meal, it starts all over when you wake up hungry again the next morning.

It doesn't matter whether you fill up with a hot dog, a healthy supper or a gourmet meal. No matter how good the food, no matter how much you eat, it simply doesn't last. You will be hungry again.

Ok, obviously I'm not telling you anything new. This is a pattern that goes all the way back to the earliest days of our human history. But it helps teach us vital truths.

Let me read what God said to Adam after our first parents' rebellious fall into sin. As I do, count with me how many times some form of the word **eat** comes up.

God said, **Because you... ate from the tree about which I commanded you, "You shall not eat from it," the soil is cursed on account of you. You will eat from it with painful labor all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles will spring up from the ground for you, but you will eat the crops of the field. By the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the soil, for out of it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return** (Genesis 3).

Five times! **Eat... eat... eat... eat...** and in between there is no longer just joyful fulfilling work, but now **labor, toil** with frustrations and sweat upon ground that is now cursed. And after all that hunger and eating... dust and death.

On account of sin, no true lasting satisfaction is found from the soil of this earth, no matter how hard we work for it! Or as Jesus said in the Gospel: **Do not continue to work for the food that spoils.**

Don't just think of the tomatoes going rotten on the counter before you get to enjoy them. Even the good **food** we eat that nourishes our bodies also **spoils** both in the sense that it will leave us **hungry** again and it cannot stop us from **spoiling** – dying and falling under the eternal judgment sin has earned.

But it's not just **the food** we **work for that spoils**, that can't satisfy. Nothing of this world can give us lasting meaning or purpose, none of it can save us but will in the end leave us forever **hungry**.

A person may be **hungry** for *power*, but history has shown how the human heart *always* craves even more power. And in the end, the rich and powerful die just like the weak and lowly.

So it is with a **hunger** for money. Scripture says: **Anyone who loves money is never satisfied with money** (Eccl. 5:10). And though it is a better way to live, even being content with what you have won't save you from dying.

It's the same with a **hunger** for attention, a **thirst** for knowledge, or the modern slang uses **thirsty** to talk about lust or longing for relationships. In the end any **"food"** this world offers to try to fill that longing in your soul will leave you **hungry**, empty, lost not just in this life, but in the life to come!

Deep down we all know this. Philosophers have spoken about it. We even use expressions like: 'Money can't buy happiness.' 'Whoever dies with the most toys, still dies.' Even rich and famous rock stars like the Rolling Stones have said it: **"I can't get no satisfaction."** Most of all, God's Word says it: **'No eye ever sees enough, and no ear ever gets its fill of hearing'** (Eccl. 1:8).

We've even experienced it. We were so excited about getting that new... "whatever," and convinced ourselves then we'd be truly satisfied, only to later (or sooner) grow tired with it and want something else, something more.

Of course we all *know* this, but we still need to be reminded again and again don't we? I know I do, because our natural sinful setting is to look in all the wrong places to solve this problem.

Hungry? Yes, we always will be if we rely on ourselves and the things of this passing world. Let every hunger pang and every disappointment stand as a reminder that

we are fallen, sinful, broken creatures living in a fallen, sinful, broken world and nothing any man, woman or child can do, earn, get, buy, will solve the problem.

But don't stop there! Jesus does not tell us these things to leave us in despair. He tells us this because He loves and wants us to enjoy something better!

When He says: '**Do not continue to work for the food that spoils**', He is not saying that it is wrong to work to provide for our families, to buy food, or to enjoy with thanksgiving the blessings God gives us.

But Jesus is telling us in the strongest way possible *what* we need the most, what is most important, what only can save us, what alone can give us a true and lasting peace and satisfaction. Namely, this: **the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. My Father gives you the real bread from heaven... I am the Bread of Life. The one who comes to me will never be hungry, and the one who believes in me will never be thirsty.**

Now the day before Jesus spoke these words, He had fed this very crowd he was speaking to in that great miracle we heard about last Sunday. He multiplied five tiny loaves and two small fish to feed more than 5,000 people.

And yet the people had missed the point of that **miraculous sign**. They just wanted more lunch, they wanted more things of this world. They missed how that **miraculous sign** pointed to Jesus as true God and Savior, the One who not only provides food for our bodies, but also **gives** us what we need most of all: eternal life!

Only God himself, the Son of God sent by **the Father** can take away man's greatest hunger... the need for life with God. Only Jesus can save us from our sin of acting like the temporary **food that spoils** is more important to us than the Lord!

Sin is our biggest problem. Sin is what leaves us unsatisfied and discontent. Sin is the reason the things of this world and our own bodies **spoil**, sin would leave us spoiling body and soul forever in hell.

But God looked at us hungry, broken, sinful beggars, and He himself stepped in to save us and feed us with the only **food that endures to eternal life**. In love, He gave His Son for the world so that believing in Jesus, we would not perish, not **spoil** (it is the same word in the Bible's Greek!), but have **eternal life**.

And so Jesus is **the bread of God... who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.** This is just like we confessed in the creed: *For us and for our salvation, He came down from heaven.* Jesus is true God from all eternity, the great **I AM**, and He is true man born of Mary, the perfect Savior.

And so Jesus can do what nothing else can! He gives us **life** with God, so that we will not spoil eternally, but live forever! He is the **Bread of Life.** He is not just the source of **life** with God, but Jesus Christ *is* that **Life.**

And truly your God loves you, cares about you and will always give you what He knows you need most of all. You can be sure of that, because in amazing and unearned love, has given us what we need most: **the Bread of Life!**

Just think, this **Bread of Life**, this Jesus is true God, through whom all things were made. And so He who created the very grain plants that give us bread, chose to become hungry and thirsty as He lived as the holy, perfect substitute for sinners. Just think that God should be hungry and thirsty!!!!

After 40 days of being tempted by Satan in the wilderness without food, Jesus *was* **hungry**, and yet He never gave into the temptation that *all that matters* is food for the belly and what you can get out of life. Instead He said: **Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God.**

And for our every sin, including our foolish searching for meaning in all the wrong places, He who filled the oceans and rivers with water, said ‘**I thirst**’ as He hung on the cross to pay for the sins of world and suffer hell’s punishment in our place. But on the third day, His body returned to life as the greatest **seal of the Father’s approval**, the greatest proof that He forgives our sins and give us life with God!

Hungry? Look no further than Jesus Christ who says: “**The one who comes to me will never be hungry, and the one who believes in me will never be thirsty.** Those who by the Spirit’s gift of faith trust in Christ, will not be hungry, not for just a little while or a few hours like after an earthly meal, but for the endless eternities beyond this short life, where we may hunger and thirst for a brief time.

Now it is true we still have a sinful nature and live in a sinful world, we will struggle with these truths and we won’t always *feel* completely satisfied even though by God’s grace we have been brought to Jesus, **the Bread of life.**

But that doesn't change the Lord's promise that will never fail, for it is backed up His empty tomb. Trust that through His life giving Word, Jesus will feed you and keep you until He comes in glory and brings us to the joys of the resurrection and the life that's described like this:

They will never be hungry or thirsty ever again. The sun will never beat upon them, nor will any scorching heat, for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes (Revelation 7).

No wonder the second to last verse of the Bible, teaches us to pray those words that we even use in a common table prayer, that as we receive food for our bodies, we remember Jesus is the **food that endures to eternal life, the Bread of Life**. And so we pray: **Come Lord Jesus (Revelation 22:20). Amen.**

Lord Jesus, give us this Bread all the time! Amen.

(Create in Me)

You may be seated. If you have not had a chance yet to fill out a connection card from the seat in front of you, we ask that you would please do so and then place that completed card in one of the baskets near the doors as you exit this morning.