**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes from 9-25-2022
The Bread of Life**

Our Fall Fest yesterday was just a great time of fun and fellowship and getting to know new people from in and around our community. And we were blessed to have lots of food there, including several kinds of chili, which is perfect for a chilly day, by the way. 😊

Food and fellowship really go hand and hand, don’t they? And then in four short weeks we have our annual church turkey dinner fellowship meal. And just talking about it starts to make me a little bit hungry. Maybe you as well. Chestnut Grove is truly blessed with several people that are gifted cooks.

And I trust that this will be a great time of fun and fellowship together in sharing this meal. You know, there are big meals like that common on special days like Thanksgiving and Christmas, which we sometimes tend to eat a bit too much. And if you are like me, there have been days over the years when you truly feel so full that you don’t even want to think about food for a while.

But the funny thing is, we get hungry again, don’t we? Sometimes even a few hours later we find ourselves ready for another large meal. What’s up with that, right?

But the good news is that it is okay, because this is how God made us. He created us to hunger and thirst for food and drink. Our bodies need nourishment in those ways. And in God’s goodness, most of the time food and drink tastes very good as well. And God is so creative, I must add, with the foods that He has made. He didn’t just make one or two fruits and vegetables, but dozens and dozens. He is so creative and so generous in His goodness.

But physical hunger is nothing new. Nearly two thousand years ago, there were large crowds that were fascinated by Jesus and listening to Him teach many things about God. In fact, we are told that there were 5,000 men, besides women and children. There may have been more than 10,000 people there listening to Jesus teach. And where everyone was sort of between towns. It was getting later in the day and people were beginning to become hungry.

And then Jesus performs a miracle. He takes 5 loaves of bread and 2 small fish and He blesses them and prays over them and then He creates more food. Food enough for many thousands of people. And we are told that everyone ate until they were satisfied. They didn’t just get a crumb or two. They had more than enough. In fact, there were 12 basketfuls left over – one for each disciple to hold in his hands. What an amazing sign that Jesus is God in His creating these things to feed the people.

Interestingly though, the next day, Jesus was on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, but some people from the crowd tracked him down. And as we turn to this morning’s passage, we find a really fascinating conversation between Jesus and some of these people that had tracked Jesus down. Let us turn to John 6:25-35

**25When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” 26Jesus answered, “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. 27Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.” 28Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” 29Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” 30So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? 31Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+6%3A25-35&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26289a)**]” 32Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” 34“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.” 35Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.**

This conversation between Jesus and some of the people in this group that tracked him down is a very fascinating one. After they find Jesus, they ask Him, **“Rabbi, when did you get here?”**

Jesus doesn’t answer this question. He could have said, “well, my disciples went ahead of me while I spent some time in prayer. And then I walked on the water across most of the Sea of Galilee, but the disciples saw me and they took me on board and here I am now.”

But He didn’t say this? Why? Because he knew that it would be a waste of time. He knew the hearts of these people that had tracked him down. And what Jesus knew was that they were not pursuing Jesus because they wanted to submit to Him as their master, but for a much for carnal reason. They tracked him down because they were hoping to get another good meal out of Him.

They had experienced the miracle, but they missed the sign. The feeding of the 5,000 was meant to point to something far more important than another meal in the belly.

And so Jesus answered,**“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.**

Again, they experienced the miracle, but they missed the fact that it was a sign revealing who Jesus was and is.

And most likely the rest of this dialogue took place soon after this when Jesus was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum, as John 6, verse 59 states.

So, as Jesus was teaching in this synagogue, he likely teaches them beginning in verse 27, where he states the following:

**27Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”**

And what ensues is this dialogue between Jesus of some of these people that are questioning him. This conversational type of dialogue was actually rather common in synagogues. In church, we usually do not see that practiced today.

Maybe if I say something really out of the blue, someone will question what I say in the middle of my sermon. And please feel welcome to. But that is not the common practice today, of course.

In this dialogue, Jesus says many significant things, including the first “I Am” saying that we are taking a closer look at. In fact, John’s Gospel includes several “I Am” statements of Jesus that are critical in revealing who exactly Jesus is.

And here, Jesus says **“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”**

This is so huge. What is Jesus saying to them? He is telling everyone present that Jesus alone satisfies people’s spiritual hunger and thirst. It is only He who can do it.

Augustine, one of the early church fathers, is quoted as saying **“our heart is restless until it rests in You”** – in reference to Jesus.

The sign of the feeding of the 5,000 was to point to Jesus being the only One who can satisfy the soul. Jesus was telling everyone that they needed to put their trust in Him to meet all their spiritual needs.

The work that God required of them was to believe in Jesus. And this belief is not just an agreement that Jesus is powerful or Jesus does miracles, but that Jesus is the One we need to trust in following to enter into eternal life.

So sisters and brothers, as we process this passage and consider its significance for our lives today, what is the big takeaway? **And it is to remember that Jesus alone satisfies! Jesus alone satisfies the hunger and thirst in people.** Jesus alone brings rest for the soul.

Friends, we were made by God and for God. It makes complete sense that it is in God alone that we can experience true satisfaction, true rest for the soul, true peace, true identity.

We live in a time where so many people are trying to fill that void in other ways. Sometimes it is through other religions. People get into all different things. None of them satisfy but Jesus. All of them fail to deliver peace. All of them are really just a performance treadmill and will not satisfy the soul.

Similarly, many times in the world today people try to fill that void through sports, whether it’s playing sports or being a fan of a team. Now, I enjoy sports. I’ve played sports. I’m coaching Mya’s soccer team and our girls are into sports as well.

But unless sports are a means of worship, it is just another dead end. Even in winning championships, there is no lasting satisfaction.

The same could be said with money. Money does not give rest to the soul, Jesus alone does.

Sometimes people try to find satisfaction through claiming a man-made identity for themselves. Boys are claiming to be girls and girls are claiming to be boys. Sometimes people are claiming to identify as cats or other animals and schools are even going along with it in not wanting to offend.

But sadly, the truth is that every identity outside of finding our identity in Jesus Christ, is a disappointment and is unsatisfying. We were made for Jesus and our hearts will be restless until they find their rest in Him.

Friends, part of the good news of Jesus is that He offers us rest for our souls. Jesus is all we need. Coming to Him daily is essential.

**As must as we miss physical food if we go a day without eating, a day without talking to Jesus is a day of starvation for the soul**. We are called to come to Him and spiritually find our sustenance and strength in Him. He is our Creator and Savior. Only He can satisfy.

Brothers and sisters, please remember to eat and drink heavily of Jesus each day. May we be spiritual gluttons, because Jesus alone satisfies and gives rest and peace to our soul.

And let us be thankful. We have what the whole world needs, whether they realize it yet or not. And let us share Him with others, so that others may find true satisfaction and rest as well.

Let us pray…

Resources:

[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

The Gospel According to John – D.A. Carson

“Our heart is restless until is rests in You” <https://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/media/articles/ourheartisrestlessuntilitrestsinyou/>

# <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qR_OPFrC6Gg> School Supports Student Who Identifies as a Cat - My Thoughts.