

**“Earthy Restless Hearts”**  
Providence United Methodist Church  
Message by DD Adams  
August 2, 2015

Today’s gospel lesson is from the book of John, chapter 6, verses 24 through 35. I’ll be reading from the *Common English Bible*. When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

Jesus replied, “I assure you that you are looking for me not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate all the food you wanted. Don’t work for the food that doesn’t last but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Human One will give you. God the Father has confirmed him as his agent to give life.” They asked, “What must we do in order to accomplish what God requires?” Jesus replied, “This is what God requires, that you believe in him whom God sent.”

They asked, “What miraculous sign will you do, that we can see and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, just as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.” Jesus told them, “I assure you, it wasn’t Moses who gave the bread from heaven to you, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. The bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said, “Sir, give us this bread all the time!” Jesus replied, “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 God’s word for God’s people. Thanks be to God.

Let’s pray. God touch our hearing and receiving today for our hearts yearn for you. Remove all distractions as we zero in on the meaning of your words.

Amen. One important fact to know about the feeding stories is that they're recorded in all four gospels. That makes the message especially significant.

After the feeding of the 5,000, the crowd kept following Jesus—their food source. They followed him to the east side of the lake only to begin asking him a lot of questions. “When did you get here Rabbi?” Immediately Jesus deals with their unbelief and goes right to the heart of the matter. Jesus replies, “I assure you that you are looking for me not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate all the food you wanted. Don't work for the food that doesn't last but for the food that endures for eternal life . . .”

The crowd thought it was great sitting around all day and being fed—physically that is. They're fixated on material things and getting their tummies full. It's called obsession, and when we obsess on earthly things, our spiritual need is hidden. Jesus tells them to not work for the food that doesn't last, but work for the food that lasts forever. Physical hunger is satisfied by physical food, but there's a spiritual hunger that physical food will never satisfy. The crowd is wanting more and more. That's how the obsession over material things work when we get engrossed and swallowed up by them. I can hear the crowd screaming for more. “What awesome thing can you give me now?!” Do another miraculous sign for us! We want a repeat performance, but we want something better! What will you give us?! Give us the prosperity gospel! What's the benefit of working for what doesn't last? Crowds aren't much different today. They want more, they're still thirsty, and they're still hungry.

Saint Augustine, an early Christian theologian and philosopher in the mid—4<sup>th</sup> century said, “Our hearts are restless till they find rest in You.” And Audrey Assad, a Christian song writer and singer said the same thing in a song titled “*Restless*.” She sings, “I'm restless ‘Til I rest in You, ‘til I rest in You—the keeper of my heart.” What is it about our human condition that's never satisfied? . . . . .

. . . Until, we go into the sanctuary of God—our heart. It's then our perception is changed by the one who created us.

We all are delighted to eat a satisfying meal and we enjoy entertainment, but as soon as the physical food digests, we're hungry and searching again for something to satisfy us. Even the prayers of yesterday aren't enough to last over and into tomorrow. We need spiritual food *every day*, and if we don't get it, we start searching for satisfaction. We're hungry. We're thirsty. We're restless. What is it that satisfies?

The crowd asked "What miraculous sign will you do, that we can see and believe you? What will you do?" In response to their question, Jesus tells them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." In other words, knowing Jesus is the only thing in life that will sustain and continually bring us satisfaction. God alone has the answer to the human condition of our earthy and restless heart.

The one who believes and has faith in the one who is the bread of life will be satisfied. When we spend time with Jesus, our heart becomes more satisfied with what we have. What we seek won't be as earthy, and our hearts won't be as restless. God becomes our number one source of satisfaction. The inner emptiness of our hearts change, and we begin to consume more and more of the bread of life. Our reality changes, and we feel the spirit calling us to come and spend more time together. Then before too long, we find ourselves never hungry or thirsty ever again.

The crowd asked another question, "What must we do in order to accomplish what God requires?" Jesus replied, "This is what God requires, that you believe in him whom God sent." *John's gospel* states that Jesus said you must believe. *The apostle Paul* said you must have faith. Here we see John and Paul in agreement, but what does that mean to believe and to have faith?

Is belief and faith in God enough? Jesus said you must believe in him whom God sent. The apostle Paul said that the work God desires is faith . . . . . Faith—is it more than believing? . . . . . God calls us friends. Is God your friend? Do you spend quality time and have a good relationship with your Heavenly Father? Are you growing in trust and obedience? What’s the kind of life that issues from the relationship you have with Jesus—because God’s children will emulate their Father.

Here’s some food for thought. Is your aim to love all people and to forgive them and yourself when it’s needed? Are you determined to be transformed and to yield to God’s ways and trust him with all your heart? Our belief and faith in God should be moving us toward a closer relationship with God that serves others and pursues a deeper trust.

Let’s give thanks for the gift of salvation we’ve already received, but let’s redirect our goals. Instead of seeking more physical bread that doesn’t satisfy, let’s aim higher. Let’s seek a quality of life that finds rest in Christ. Let’s surrender our search for what doesn’t satisfy. All those things will perish anyway. Let’s pray. God we love you and yearn for the bread that endures to eternal life. For only you Lord are capable of truly sustaining life and giving complete satisfaction. Teach us as we move along our spiritual journey to value not the bread that perishes but to value the bread from heaven—Jesus the Christ. Amen.