

**Sermon Notes – August 1, 2021**  
(John 6:24-35)

Have you ever met someone that has everything the world has to offer, but they are still not fulfilled or satisfied? Some of you remember the name Tom Brady, the NFL superstar quarterback. In 2005, he was interviewed by 60 Minutes. In some part of that interview, he made the comment, “I know I’m only 27-years old and I’ve already won a couple of Super Bowl rings, but there has got to be more to life than this. There has got to be more for me than this.” The interviewer asked, “Well, what’s your answer, Tom?” Tom Brady replied, “I wish I knew.” Carl Jung, the late Psychiatrist said, “The central neurosis of our age is emptiness. Humanity’s problem is a spiritual problem.”

In our gospel lesson today, Jesus had already fed the 5,000 with five loaves and two fish. Jesus tried to meet the physical needs of the people. He knew that we have a basic urgent need for food and water, and that before he could get the people to look at their deep spiritual hunger, he had to meet their physical need.

Abraham Maslow came up with a “Hierarchy of Needs” theory. He said that the most powerful drive in our world – in our lives -- is that need for food and water – those basic necessities. If we don’t have those basic necessities, we won’t even look above to try to get to love, achievement, self-fulfillment, and all those things. We won’t seek other deeper things because we have such a desire for our physical needs. Jesus knew our basic need for physical, earthly bread, but what he’s trying to tell the people that day is that it takes more than physical bread to fulfill us. He’s trying to get them to realize the deep spiritual hunger within their hearts. He had already fed 5,000; he had given them a free meal. As the scriptures said, “They got their fill” – they had full stomachs. Now they’ve crossed over to the other side of the lake, and guess what? ... They want another free meal and they want Jesus to fill their hungry stomachs. Jesus tries to point them to a deeper, spiritual hunger that lies within each of us.

Several years ago, when I was working with the youth at the church, I had them get into small groups of about 4 or 5. I took puzzles from the children's department and poured them on the floor, upside down -- all the pieces were scrambled up. I had each group put the puzzles back together without talking. What they didn't know was that I had one missing piece out of each puzzle. They were checking each other's pockets, trying to figure out what happened to the missing piece. "Where is the missing piece, Ms. Peggy?" All of a sudden, I said, "Are you looking for this?" and I held up their missing piece. ***You see, the missing piece in our lives is Jesus Christ. There's a vacuum or a hole there that can only be filled by Jesus Christ -- the Bread of Heaven, the Bread of Life -- who can sustain us, satisfy us, and give us eternal life.***

St. Augustine said, "You made us for yourself, O Lord and our hearts are restless until we find rest in you." That's true, isn't it? St. Augustine had lived a life of sin and debauchery; he was a womanizer; he liked to brag about himself; he was full of pride and conceit. He liked to drink heavily, but his life was not too pleasing. He had a deeply religious mother who prayed daily for him that he would come to know Christ and he would change his life. One day, he got to the bottom of himself and he called out to Jesus. He invited Jesus to come into his heart and his life. In one of his books, St. Augustine says, "When God came into my life, the Spirit began to work on my desires, my attitude, and my thinking - and it changed me." He came up with this comment: "You made us for yourself, O Lord and our hearts are restless until we find rest in you." We are constantly looking for something to fill that empty void in our lives.

William Broyles, Jr. is a retired senior editor of Newsweek Magazine. Years ago, as editor of Newsweek, he hob-knobbed with all the powerful, rich, and influential people of the world trying to get stories; he had everything that money could buy and made hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. But, his life wasn't full - he was missing something. One day, we went in and called a board meeting, and he told them that he was leaving his job. He told them he quit and went in and packed his office, and walked out the door never to go back. "There's got to be something more," he said. "There's got to be more to life than this." All

of us are seeking something, but it's that bread - that eternal life - that only Jesus can give us.

You see, the people coming to Jesus that day just wanted another physical loaf of bread and to have their stomachs filled. They wanted Jesus to do more miracles. How many times do you hear people say today, "Well, if God would just do this for me... If God would just do that for me, then I'll believe in him?" That's the way the people of that day were... "Lord, give us one more miracle. What are you going to show us now so that we can see and believe that you're the Son of God?" They compared Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 to Moses giving manna to the people when they were in the wilderness - after they'd left Egyptian bondage. Jesus tries to correct their thinking. They said, "Lord, you fed 5,000 with five loaves and two fishes, but Moses fed the nation of Israel for forty years with manna." Jesus corrects their thinking by saying, "No, Moses didn't do it. God did. God was the originator of the bread. Moses just got to facilitate and share it -- but, God is the one who provided the bread."

When Jesus gave them physical bread, it was a symbol of him being the true bread from heaven - the manna that came from heaven. He was trying to point them to what God was going to give them from heaven -- the Bread of Life, the Bread of Heaven is Jesus Christ. It is Jesus Christ that satisfies and sustains our life, and gives us purpose, inner meaning, hope, and grace. That's the only person that can meet that need. All of us have a hole - a vacuum - in our heart and it can only be filled by Jesus Christ in our hearts and our lives. Just as bread, we have to eat it for it to give us nourishment, vitality, and strength, so we have to partake of the Bread of Life - the Bread of Heaven - from God -- that means to invite him into our hearts and lives and believe that he is the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

You know the people thought they wanted to work for the gift of eternal life. They said, "Lord, what must we do? What kind of works must we do?" In other words, "Can we pray more? Can we serve more? Can we give some more money?" ***Jesus said, "No, it's a gift from God." All he***

***asks you to do is to believe that he is the Son of God and the Savior of the world. He will fill your life and do what no one else can do.***

Many of us in this church know people that had a rough life and then they turned to Christ. They've given up alcoholism or drug addiction - all kinds of things. Sometimes, those of us who haven't had those issues, we think, "Well, we know enough about God." But, we forget that we ALL have that vacuum and only God can fill that hole that is there - for need for inner peace, satisfaction, and fulfillment.

Richard Stearns wrote a book called, "The Hole in the Gospel." Richard Stearns was a CEO of Parker Brothers and Gillette. His last company was Lenox China Corporation. He was there for many years. While he was at Lenox, he got invited by the Executive of World Vision to go on a mission trip overseas to help feed the hungry children in other countries. He and his wife went, and that trip changed his life. He didn't know much about living the Christian life, but he found out while he was gone. When he came back, he went back to work at Lenox, but it just wasn't the same. He said he was missing something. He went home one day and told his wife, "Honey, we've got two homes. We've got boats, cars, money, our kids are out of college... we've got everything we need, but I'm not fulfilled. I'm not happy. Something is missing." He turned to Jesus Christ and he gave his life to do whatever God wanted him to do. A few weeks later, he resigned from Lenox Corporation. He was hired by World Vision to become their Chief Executive Officer - where he served for twenty years. He and his wife went on mission trips around the world. He not only did fundraising, he did mission work. He found the peace and satisfaction that only Jesus Christ can give us.

***What is the missing piece in our lives? ... Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, who can sustain us.*** When we're going through the difficult times, when we're going through the good times, he is always there for us. He is the bread that fills us. Jesus said, "The only thing I'm asking you to do is believe in me and let me live in your life. When you partake of me and nurture your life with me, your life will be different, your thinking will

change, your actions will change, your speech will change, but you'll know a fulfillment in your life that you've never known before."

I've worked with lots of teenagers over the years and there was a kid who came to me when he was about 17 or 18 years old. He said, "Ms. Peggy, my parents want me to join the church and be baptized, but I'm not sure that I am ready to commit to Jesus Christ yet." I said, "Chris, you'll know when it's in your heart and mind. You'll know when the time is right." He went off to a camp and when he returned, he said, "Ms. Peggy, guess what? I found Jesus Christ in my heart and he's making a difference in my life."

**All of us have a missing piece that only Jesus can fill. I hope that you remember that. When you come across someone else who is struggling in life and they think they've had all that life can offer them, but they're not happy, I hope you'll share with them about the one who can fulfill their life - Jesus, the Bread of Life. Amen.**