

Hunger for what satisfies...

Advertising can be misleading. Take the Snickers bar, for example. Do you know what the latest slogan is for the Snickers bar? “Snickers Satisfies.” If you’re hungry, they say, why wait? Grab a Snickers, because Snickers satisfies your hunger.

But advertising can be misleading. I read online this week: Studies have shown that sugary foods like Snickers cause a rapid spike in blood sugar. So you feel satisfied – for an hour or two. But then there’s a rapid plummet in your blood sugar. And you end up even hungrier than you were to begin with. So if you’re hungry, you might crave a Snickers bar. But be warned: It won’t really satisfy.

Hungry for what doesn’t truly satisfy. That’s a pretty good description of the crowd Jesus spoke to in our gospel lesson. Oh, they weren’t physically hungry anymore – Jesus had seen to that. Remember a couple weeks ago, how Jesus took a little boy’s lunch and miraculously multiplied it for more than 5000 people, and they all ate their fill? That’s the people Jesus is talking to here.

But they were still hungry. They still wanted more out of Jesus. So much so that when Jesus slipped away from them and crossed the sea of Galilee again, they followed him all the way around the shore to the other side. They were still hungry...but they were hungry for the wrong things. When they find Jesus, that’s what he told them: **“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. ²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.**

Jesus’ miracle was a sign. It was a message, that Jesus was the Savior God had promised, the one who’d rescue them from their sins, who’d win them forgiven life with God that lasts forever. That was the eternal food he had come to give them! But that’s not why they went looking for Jesus. They weren’t hungry for that. They were hungrier for **food that spoils**. They were more interested in the material things Jesus could give them. Another meal – maybe even manna from heaven like Moses!

So, what about you? What are you hungry for? Are you hoping for just a little more money? If you got a little more pay, you’d be more financially secure, have more freedom to do things you enjoy. Are you hungry for a happier marriage? Or if you’re single, finding a spouse? Then you’re life would be easier, you’d feel complete. Are you hungry for just fewer problems in your life? If your kids behaved better, if your health would improve...

We’re all hungry for something...something we think that if we just had that, then we’d be satisfied, secure, complete. Unfortunately, that something is not always Jesus. Unfortunately, we’re like this crowd – often more hungry for earthly blessings than spiritual ones.

It’s true, isn’t it? We look forward more to time off work than time spent in God’s Word or in prayer. We’re more concerned in growing our finances than growing our faith. We strive to raise kids that will succeed, but do so little to ensure they’re kids with faith.

And that’s sinful. But it’s also foolish. Jesus says this is **food that spoils!** Every earthly blessing is like the bread on the shelves at Kroger. It all has an expiration date. One day, it’ll all rot. It can’t do us any good beyond the grave.

But also because it's food that can't truly satisfy us, even now. Oh, it seems to. We think that if we had just a little more, if our earthly circumstances were just a little better, then we'd feel more secure, have more happiness, be more content. Then we'd be satisfied. But it's false advertising. Solomon said it about money, but it's true of every earthly blessing: "He who craves riches is never satisfied." Like a Snickers bar, never truly gives what it promises...always leave you hungry.

But not Jesus. Never Jesus. Did you hear his wonderful words? **"I AM the bread of life... he who comes to me will never go hungry, he who believes in me will never be thirsty."** Yes, Jesus is the great I AM – true God from eternity. Yet like manna that came from heaven, he came down from heaven and became one of us.

And he did it because he was hungry. Thankfully, a hunger different from ours. Not to give us the perishing bread we crave, but to become the lasting bread that we need. To do for you what all the manna in the world never could – fill not your stomach, but your soul. To give you real life – sins forgiven, at peace with God – life without an expiration date. Of course, to do that, it would cost him his life. That's the price he had to pay – the punishment we deserved for our sinful cravings and all our other sins. But it was a price he was eager to pay – that's how hungry he was to fill you with forgiveness and everlasting life. And he paid it in full, on the cross.

Jesus is the only food that truly satisfies. **He who comes to me will never go hungry, he who believes in me will never be thirsty.** And it's not false advertising! If you have Jesus, you have it all. Completely forgiven. Completely loved by God. Total security, even when finances fail, because of his promises. Joy, even when circumstances are painful, because you're his. Peace in problems, because you're right with God.

When you hunger for Jesus, you're never left hungry. So why would we ever hunger for anything else? Amen.