

The Last Sermon: Labor for Food that Endures
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Good morning. Let's pray.

Father, here in the power of Christ we stand. There is no other grace this universe has ever seen except the grace that you give. What glorious truth. It should affect our soul, the depth of our being, our DNA should cry out. Father, we are so unworthy to be before you today, but, Lord, in your great mercy and love for us you became like us to take the sin that we could not rid ourself from and your judgment and wrath is satisfied in the blood and body of Jesus Christ and in the life that the lived to satisfy the law. Father, help us to embrace that today. Help us to see that in such a way, Father, that we have never seen it before. Lord, I pray that you would bring to life those who are dead today in this congregation. Father, that you would bring sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf. And, Lord, if your Word does not bring that life, nothing will. And so, Father, I pray that you would speak through me today and that we would worship you in Spirit and in truth with such a fullness and over expression of joy that it would be inexpressible as Peter said, Father. We thank you for being the God who saves. In Jesus' name. Amen.

What a blessing it is to be with God's people. What an awesome season of life that we have been given as we call it Thanksgiving. We give thanks for many things. And I would ask for you to turn in your Bibles with me this morning to the sixth chapter of John's gospel in the New Testament—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—John chapter six and we will be looking at verse 22 through, I don't know, we'll see. And when you find that if you will hold that. I pray that you would have something to write with and on today. I always say this and I will say it to you is that I believe that no one has ever really studied the Word of God nor really worshipped through preaching unless they have taken notes. And if nothing is being said worthy of being written down, then maybe you shouldn't be listening to who is speaking. Not that what I have to say is important, but God's Word is.

Thanksgiving. I spoke with many of you today in just passing and the last few days and everybody would explain their Thanksgiving holiday. Well, how has it been? Well, it has been good, but I have over eaten. Everybody has been grabbing their stomachs today and we have seen that, we have heard that and I have to sit there as it was brought forth in the

announcements about the marathon training. We should all sign up after church, maybe, for marathon training at least for a couple of days to get our Thanksgiving meal digested.

But I started thinking about my own Thanksgiving holiday and how Thursday I overate terribly, not intentionally. I didn't get up that day and say, "I cannot wait to eat as much food as I can hold, plus some," neither yesterday as we met at my mother's for a Thanksgiving meal in the middle of the afternoon. You have heard of brunch. We do the reverse brunch. We eat dinner lunch at three. So we eat breakfast, lunch and then [?] and then by nine o'clock we are hungry again.

So as I went to bed last night I was extremely full, extremely ill, extremely overwhelmed with the digestive process of my innards and I went to bed and promised myself I would not eat another bite.

But then when you wake up this morning you are hungry again. And as ironic as it may seem, we go through life and we eat every day and, friends, I will tell you that most of us treat our lives as Christians the same way. We or we don't treat our lives as Christians the same way. We would not dare skip meals. And if we do, we make up for it at the second hand. But yet we skip meals sometimes for weeks, months on end when it comes to the Word of God and we ask ourselves as we look into the proverbial mirror and we say, "What is wrong with my life? Why is my joy gone?" Because we are starving.

And, friends, there are indicators whether or not you have been born again. If you know you are a believer because of something you did, you are so lost. Well, that is not good to say. It is awesome to say. I love you more than you will ever know. And if your assurance of salvation comes because of something you did, if someone asks how do you know that you know that you know that you are a child of God and the answer to that question starts with because I... I will tell you that will not cut muster with God. He will not be impressed with your examination of yourself. He will not be impressed with your answer that you give.

Because I said something, because I did something.

Well, you know what, friends? I never came down the aisle of a church and I never prayed a prayer to receive Jesus as my Savior. But from an early age God had been calling me to repentance and to love holiness and to love his Word and to live for him and every day of my life I struggle and fight to uphold what God has done, which what he has done is redeem me through the person of Jesus Christ by his declaration of justification, not because I called on him and demanded that he save me. That is witchcraft.

But yet sometimes we say, "Oh, I am ok with God because of what I have done. Therefore, I am satisfied and I don't need to study my Word and I don't need to worship. And I am ok."

Friends, you are not ok if you do not love Christ, if you do not love his Word and you do

not love righteousness and you do not fight against sin. You are not ok. I want you to hear me this morning.

What in the world are you preaching?

I am preaching to you the Word of God. Preaching has a sole... excuse me. I had better not say that. Two purposes. The primary purpose of preaching is that God is pleased with hearing himself for he loves himself. He is worthy of self love. Christ is the only one in whom God is pleased. And if we are not in Christ, then God is not pleased with us.

And as we sit here today and hear preaching, the primary reason that I preaching that God may be glorified, that he may be honored with his own Word reaching his own ears. And the second reason that we preach is that you may be troubled. Preaching should trouble the soul of the saint. It should impact our lives, not tomorrow. I should never preaching... preachers should never give you something you should take home and work on. That is not found in the exposition of Scripture. It is not found in the teaching of the apostles. And yet what we see is if we hold to the apostles' teaching today, not one letter of the New Testament was written to unbelievers. It was all written to the Church, every jot and tittle, because we take it... I took it.

My testimony is that I used to think the gospel was for lost people and that when I received the gospel then I was done with it and I was moving on to bigger and better things called ministry and churchmanship and things of that nature. But, oh, was I wrong. And oh was my soul hungry and was I just starving going from the meal that I done as a child and every now and then getting fed and just going on that forced hand feeding from time to time and now that I came to the realization that my whole problem was that I didn't hunger of righteousness. I didn't thirst for Christ. I didn't hunger for his Word. And he showed me his Word and nothing has been the same since, nothing.

I want to stir your soul this morning, church. I want you to be so troubled that you forget about lunch and that you go do something else. I want you to be so stirred by the Word of God that you can't go to work Monday morning, that you have to take a day off so that you can spend your time on your face with the Word and you can wonder what magnificent awesome just grace and riches that are coming through into your heart today that you have never perceived before. I want you to see God in such away that you have to change all your thinking, that you have to change everything you have been taught since you were a child and you have to start over from new beginnings, because that is what the Word of God does.

Overeating. Oh, how I pray we would overeat on his Word, church. Oh, how I pray we would overeat on his Word. Oh, how I pray that amens would resound from congregations world wide, not because it is just cliché and it is what we do when we get excited, but that we are standing in agreement. So be it. Thus saith the Lord that we would stand and say, "Yes, I, too, have ate from that table and you are serving me the same meal that I ate from this morning in my home and I agree that God is good."

Before coming here to Claxton to start GraceTruth Church in my church at First Baptist Church, Newark, California, I was half way through the first chapter of Colossians and we sang about the first chapter of Colossians today if you didn't now that, that Christ is the Creator, the magnificent one, the one whom the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. If you know who that is, do you know who Christ is? And what is amazing is we always say, "Do you know Jesus? Do you know Jesus? Do you know Jesus?"

You know what? That is not the question God is going to ask you. The question is: Does Jesus know you?

Nowhere in the New Testament are we asked that ... are we asked that question, do you know him? Maybe he asked that for Peter and the disciples.

"Do you know who I am? Who do you say that I am?"

"You are the Christ, the son of the Son of the living God."

But yet even in that profession of faith Peter was not one who was passionately sold out to Jesus. He denied him [?] for his flesh was more powerful than his passion.

Well, friends, I will tell you that we ought to be struggling. We ought to be looking and understanding what the Word of God is teaching us and we ought not be looking for this pragmatism. But we ought to be looking to be worshipers in Spirit and in truth.

Do you know who God is seeking? Not leaders. Not teachers. Not preachers. God is not seeking those who are good at what they do. God is not seeking those who have their lives together and their finances in order. God is seeking worshippers.

In John chapter four Jesus himself says God is seeking worshippers. The Father seeks worshippers. Are you a worshipper? Look at your life. Look at your love. Look at your passion. What do you live for? What do you spend your time on? What do you use your money for? When you have free time what do you kick your heels in the air and run out the door to do? Is it to spend time with God? Or is it to do things for yourself?

See, preaching is to impact your life right now, not later, that you may be confronted with the greater, the cheese grater upon the forehead of your soul called the gospel and that it would change you forever.

I pray today that you would see Christ as the Creator of all things who is sufficient and satisfying and I pray that in time many of you would see this truth.

Consider the idea, friend, that this might very well be the last sermon that many of you hear. I thought about that today. Oh, I get to preach at East Side. Oh, what a burden, what frustration, what fear, what anger. What am I supposed to say, God? What am I supposed to do? What if it is the last sermon that someone hears there? What if they don't make it through the service? What if they die before they leave? What if they die before

the sun goes down? Am I giving them the gospel or am I giving them something that is useless to their lives?

Consider the idea that this may be the last sermon you may ever here.

As I contemplated this for myself over the last few weeks I prayed that if this I the last one or more of ... if this is the last sermon that one or more of you might ever hear, it could very well be the last one I ever preach.

Think about it.

As we live life though tomorrow is a given, we ought to have a plan for tomorrow morning. We already know in some sense what we are going to do Tuesday. Are we sure? Are we sure that we are going to be able to get up tomorrow and, thus, fulfill the contract of our calendar?

We learn as though we can catch up later. Well, yeah, I need to get that, but next week. How about, ok, it is toward the end of the year, so we will start doing what we need to do in January, a new year's revolution.

As we think and ponder these things my prayer is that you are not doing this with your spiritual life. We are not doing this with our church, that we are not living as though we have tomorrow, but that we are doing all that we can for the glory of God today as true worshippers who are growing to such an intimacy that we are really understanding who he is more today than we did yesterday.

Some of you might say, "Well, I am certainly giving my time to Christ. I am a deacon in the church or I am a teacher in the church or I am a leader, I am a musician or I am a singer or I am a children's worker."

Great. That is not what I am talking about. We don't get crowns in heaven for being a teacher or a worker or a Sunday school teacher. We get crowns in heaven that whatever we are doing [?] below, we do it for the glory of God out of a passion and love and adoration for Christ, not the stuff that we do.

We don't come to serve in the church because we love children. We come to serve in the church because we love Christ and he has called us and commanded us to serve children or to serve through the music or to serve as a deacon.

I hope our attitude isn't that we will get these things later.

As we think and ponder these thing we are certainly bombarded with emotions. I pray that many of you are so caught up in though that you are having a hard time paying attention to what I say, because that is what the Word of God is supposed to do.

Hebrews four and verse 12 says:

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword.”

It cuts to the marrow and the bone and the flesh and the soul.

Is the Word of God cutting your soul? Or do you like I did for many years and have a vitamin box of Scripture, the vitamin popping Christian who goes and says, “Well, I am feeling a little down. Let me take my happy Jesus pill. For God so loved me he gave himself for me. I am ready.”

Folks, when I think about God’s love for me I can’t kick my heels up. I have to bury my face. Sinless hands, the crimson stain, the sinless hands of God. Why? Because he wanted to. Christ lived. Christ created the womb from which he was born and became like humanity in every way except that he was sinless. The fullness of God in humanity and he lived a perfect life. We talk about the cross all day long, but, friends, the cross is worthless if Christ hadn’t lived a perfect life. Christ’s life as a human being commands the love of God. Our life as a human being commands the wrath of God. Understand the difference. My life commands God’s judgment. Christ’s love commands God’s affection. There is a difference. Christ is worthy, worthy, worthy, holy, holy, glory, glory due. You hear this. We sing this, but do we grasp it? Friends, grasp it. Struggle with it. Be bewildered with it.

I am lightheaded. Be bewildered. Be amazed. Be astonished. Are you astonished with Christ today? Are you overwhelmed with his mercy, that you deserve every ounce of God’s wrath through all of eternity and, but in his mercy he has forgiven that by taking your sin up on himself and, thus, not only satisfying the law as a human being in living out the life that commands God’s love and demands God’s love toward him, but then also he dies a death that demands God’s justice be satisfied against us.

And in Romans three Paul teaches very clearly that God put forth Christ as it says in Isaiah that God was delighted to put Christ to death. It pleased God and God put forth Christ as propitiation. That word is written several times in the New Testament. It means the satisfaction of judgment. God’s judgment is satisfied.

We are all in church, we say, each week speaking as though we have another seven days to begin listening to the Word, another year or two and then we will become more interested in spiritual things. You know, after the first year ... that is after the first of the year, you know, that is the time I am going to get serious about my faith.

Church, don’t play that game, because I am here to tell you know if you don’t have a passion for the Word of God and for living for Christ against the grain of the world and the culture, against the retirement that you have planned, against the call of the world and the goodness of what we see in our society, friends the chances of you being born again is slim to none. And that is not my opinion. That is the Word of God. For John himself in his first epistle chapter two verse 15 says:

“Do not love the world.”

It is a command.

“Do not love the world.”

Do not love the things of this world, the lust of the eyes, the things we like to see, the things that we like to own, the pride of possessions, the pride of live, the positions that we hold. Do you not love these things because he qualifies it. If you love these things the love of God is not in you.

He didn't say you are an idolater. He says you are lost.

And in John chapter six today I am going to show you just that. It is sort of like a fish. Well, I am going to get right with God. I am going to start becoming a lover of holiness some time soon. That is the like the fish after being born jumping up on the fish and saying, “I will get back in the water in a couple of weeks. Now I want to be a sunbather for a little while.”

He is going to be baked. He is going to die because he has no oxygen. He can't live out of his environment.

Friends, the true Church cannot live out of its environment. She only lives with the bread of life which is the Word of God who is Jesus Christ, the living Word, John 1:14.

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory.”

So there are a few thoughts. This may very well be the last sermon that some of you hear. My question is: What different is that going to make in you life?

When God opens your ears and your eyes and your hearts to him, will you see him for who he is and will you love him? Will you worship him? Will you live for him? Friends, when God opens your eyes, when God opens your ears, when God opens your heart, when he gives you a new heart, that is called rebirth and John chapter three we see Jesus talking to Nicodemus in that way. He said, “You cannot see the kingdom. You cannot physically see it unless you are born again.”

And unless you are born again, you cannot come to faith. It teaches that in Scripture. You will express faith in Jesus Christ if you love him. And that faith will not be a profession from the mouth. That is not what is important. What is important is that a change of life and a change of heart is evident.

We go back to John in his first epistle. It also teaches us that, that if we say, if we profess with our mouth that we walk in light, but our affections of our heart are for the world, we are a liar. Those are exactly the apostle John's words in the Greek. You are a liar, James,

if you say you love Christ, but yet you hold on to the world, you lie and the truth is not in you.

And when was the last time you heard that? When is the last time you read that? Chances are if you are reading any of the New Testament you will get that.

The Word of God, friends, is God's grace to us for eternal life and for Christian living. Don't wait for another bread.

I want you to understand that all that we do is an act of labor. Just some little presuppositions, some things I want you to do before I get into this text.

Everything we do in life is a labor, whether we sleep, we are working to that end. We work to the day. We get ready for the bed. We labor into sleep. We rest. Whether we are getting up. We are going to do something where we are tuning a guitar, we are working toward something. What are we working toward? Having a tuned guitar that when we play it it might be appreciated or its sound and not its disunity, so that we might lead worship. It is a good thing. Nothing wrong with this. I am just wanting you to understand everything we do is labor.

What are we working toward in life, church? As a Christian, what are you working toward? When I talk to the church I am not talking about what the church is doing corporately because I don't see that as evidenced in the Scripture. I am talking about what you are doing as a part of the body individually. God has not called the church corporately to do evangelism. He has called each one of you to be evangelistic.

And do you know the dangerous spot to be in right now is when you scoff at what just came out of my mouth, if you roll your eyes and you go, man, I can't wait till 12. That is a dangerous place to be, boy. That is a dangerous place to be.

The Word of God is grace. All that we do as labor as believers we should be living for his glory. We should labor for his glory. We should labor for the gospel. It is the truth of our lives. Everything that we do, we ought to be able to prove that it is for the glory of God out of affection, out of spontaneous supernatural affection for Christ. All that we do, whether we go to work or whether we go play ball, it ought to be for the glory of God.

We shouldn't do what we do because our pastor says to do it or because our denomination says to do it or worse off because momma says to do it, although that is not a bad thing to do, is obey momma.

Look at John six. There will be several responses to what is in this text today and I pray that everyone here will have the response that the Word of God demands, not asks for. God doesn't ask for anything. He demands all things. He commands it.

The question is: Are you obeying God or disobeying God? Anger is a response to what is going to be preached. Some of us may become angry. Some of us may become amazed.

Some of us may have an attitude, good, bad, indifferent, apathetic. Some of us may be alarmed. Some of us may be ashamed. Some of us may be in adoration.

In John chapter six at the very beginning of that text Jesus feeds 5000 people. And I don't want to read all of this. I want you to get the picture. He feeds 5000 people.

Now think, listen, look at it. You have got to read the text this way. Every time you read the Bible you have got to put yourself in the [?] first century Palestine. That is where we are, the Middle East. These are a people who have been walking around listening to Jesus for weeks, following him.

I would suggest to you, just being conservative, a quarter of a million people walking around listening to Jesus teach. And then he looks out over the people who were there to see what he has to say and they are listening to Jesus. They are following him around. And he looks out at them and he says, "We need to give them something to eat."

This is a paraphrase because I don't want to get through all of this. I want to get into verse 22.

And so one of the disciples says, "Well, it would take a day's wage and that wouldn't even feed them all. What are we going to do here?"

And, of course, one of them brings a sack lunch from a young boy. Will this do? There is a sermon in that. There is a sermon in all of this.

And Jesus takes and supernaturally, because he is the Creator God, reaches into this basket and keeps pulling and feeds 5000 men, because only men were counted, heads of households. So there was a wife, very well could have been a wife. We can suppose there was a wife and at least three or four children for each man. How many people is that?

Let's just be conservative and say 20,000 people Jesus fed with a little bit of fish and a little bit of bread. And at the end they gathered up what was left and each disciple carried a basket that he could barely carry away of leftovers. He provided for their needs. There is very ... there is incredible allusion to Old Testament prophecy in that. I wish I had time. If I had a couple of months to go through the gospel of John here, chapter six would be a great chapter for us to study. You will worship Christ when you see that.

And so what happens is then Jesus around verse 16 the disciples... he disappears as he always does. He goes off by himself to pray. The God of the universe in man in flesh, he prays to the Father and yet we often find it no time to pray to God.

And so here we are. Jesus and the disciples go on and they are [?] about a six mile journey across the [?] end of the sea there and the Galilean Sea and a storm starts to brew. Jesus walks out on the water, gets in the boat and teleports them to dry land three miles. That is what it says in chapter six verse 16 through 21. And immediately they were on

land. They was three miles in, three miles to go in the water and he steps in the boat and immediately they were on dry land. He teleports.

Some really cool stuff in Scripture. Star Trek didn't think of this.

And verse 22, follow with me.

On the next day... this is after he fed them miraculously. The crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there. Listen. And Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread and the Lord had given thanks. So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

Do you see what is happening? Jesus is not there. They saw the disciples leave. Jesus wasn't with them. So they [?] well, he must be over there somehow. Let's go find him.

When they found him, verse 25. This is key. Many of us in the room are in this crowd right here. Don't think it is not you. Pay attention.

When they found him on the other side of the sea they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?"

And Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, listen, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves."

Now stop. Jesus is saying, "You seek after me not because of my divinity, not because of my power, not because of me. You want what I have for you."

Let me tell you the greatest trick the enemy has always done in the sight of preaching and he did it in the garden with Eve and Eve said, "God said I cannot eat of the fruit of that tree lest I surely die."

And the devil says, "No. Did he really say you would die?"

See, God has something. This is Satan speaking to Eve. God has something that he wants to keep from you, something that he will give you, if you just eat of this. You will be like God. You will know good and evil.

And he was only telling a half truth. And sometimes we come to Christ because of what Christ can give us and, friends, those people will stand before Christ and he will say, "I never knew you. Depart from me you workers of iniquity, you laborers of sin."

And Jesus answered them in verse 26. I have already read it, "You are seeking me not because you saw the signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves."

Listen. He commands them. Do not labor. Do not labor for the food that perishes. I could preach a series on that. What is the food that perishes?

Well, Jesus will answer that for us. But [?] food and the implied verb there is labor. Do not labor for the food that perishes, but labor for the food that endures to eternal life. That means it is everlasting. Labor for the food that never perishes, is what Jesus is saying. Stop working for your meals and [?].

That doesn't mean, all right, kids, teenagers, I hear you now. You are going to go home and say, "See, the pastor said we don't have to work."

No, the Bible honors work. If a man doesn't work, he doesn't eat. But that is talking about the temporal. This is talking about eternity.

Do not labor for the bread, for the food that perishes, but labor for the food that endures, that lasts, that never fails unto eternal life. Do you see? Look.

Which what? Which the Son of man will give you. What is he giving? Which? That referring to the bread of life. The bread that endures to eternal life, I, the Son of Man, Jesus, will give to you. I will give it to you. Here it is. I am putting it on the table and it is set. Sit down and they are seated. Here it is. Eat it.

They didn't want that bread. They wanted what Jesus had fed them. Do you see that?

Oh, church, I pray you see it. If I have a [?] I am scared.

Which the Son of man will give to you for... do you see that big [?] Big word in the Greek. For on him, on Christ, on the Son of man, God the Father has set his seal. .

Do you know hat that means? Have you ever read that and just skipped right over it? Do you read the Scripture?

Church, do you know what that means? That means God has approved and sealed and made certain and affirmed the Son. He loves the Son. He cherishes the Son. He adores the Son. He gives the Spirit without measure. He gives love without measure and Christ is pleased. The fullness of God was pleased to dwell in him and so that which God affirms and seals now is the giver of the bread that gives life to those who believe.

So stop working for everything else and start working for the bread of life. That is not a works salvation. It is just a call on the carpet for those who are following Jesus and they weren't really in love with him.

Judas worked for Jesus, but he hated him.

How many deacons and pastors and leaders and teachers and business people, how many people in the church today actually fall into that category?

You say, "Well, I love Jesus."

Ok. Then prove it by the way you live your life according to the commands of Scripture, through the power of his grace which is given through the Word of God. Eat the Word of God. Eat Christ.

Let's look.

They said to him... Jesus said, "Eat," and they asked him, "So what sign do you do? What power do you display? What miracle can you perform that we may believe in you? What are you talking about?"

"I just fed your behinds with a sack lunch. I just walked across the sea. I made blind people who were born blind see. I have made limbs go back on bodies."

He hadn't done it yet, but people who were paralyzed for 38 years take up their bed and walk and the same thing the Pharisees say. Who told you you could take up your bed on the sabbath? I can walk, dude. What are you? What is your problem? Who told you you could... you violated the law. Who told you you could take up your...

You know that.

What sign do you give that we may see you and believe? What work do you perform?

And look at the argument. They go back to Moses and the Old Testament and the Exodus account. Do you know that in Genesis and Exodus?

Our father ate the manna in the wilderness. As it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven."

And listen to what Jesus says in verse 32. He says to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you it was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven, but my Father who gives you true bread from heaven."

Are you seeing it?

For the bread of God, listen to that. God giving bread, the bread, the true bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives light to the world.

Now that is not universalism. We are Baptists. We do not believe that everybody is going to be saved, but what we do believe is that in the Semitic writing of John as well as what Jesus is talking about back in John chapter three is when we see the word world in contrast to the Jews, it means that God is not a respecter of persons. It doesn't mean the whole world is going to be saved, because if we did that, then why would we ever teach the Bible? [?]

We don't believe the whole world is going to be saved. We believe those who believe in Christ are saved.

And they said to him, "Sir..." Look what they ask for. "Give us this bread always."

What does Jesus say, "I am the bread of life. I am here. I am before you. My table is set. Here. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

Americans, we don't understand that. We don't understand what it is like to go weeks without food and water, hunting for it. I tell you, about two o'clock if we just stayed here and sat we would know a little bit of what it was like to be hungry and we would be irritated.

Do you get irritated when you... I am irritated when... I am mean when I am hungry. I don't mean to be.

How must it be for those who have not had food, who wanted to eat because they were physically in need of food and Jesus refuses to give them any more because they labored for what was temporal. He loved them and he gave them what was loving rather than what was good in their eyes.

I love you and I am not giving you any more bread and I am not giving you any more fish. I would rather you starve to death and eat of me than live a healthy life and go to destruction. Eat of me. I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger. Whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I say to you, he rebukes them. I say to you that you have seen me and yet you do not, you will not believe.

All... look at verse 37. All... this is going to rock your world. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

I began to weep when we sang that in song this morning. Never pluck me out of his hand. I didn't get myself there and nobody can pluck me out. The Father put me in the hand of Christ. And I want the bread of life, do you? I want the bread of life. Jesus.

All that the Father gives to me come to me and whoever comes to me I will never cast out, for I have come down from heaven, not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.

There is so much [?].

And I skipped some. Back up. Look at verse 28 and 29. I skipped it. I am like wait a minute.

Verse 28.

Then they said to him... for the Father has set his seal in verse 28. Then they said to him, "What must we do to be doing the works of God?"

See, the whole idea of this dialog is a labor. They are working of something. What are they working for? What are they working toward? What are they trying to accomplish? What must we do to be doing the works of God?

Jesus answered them, verse 29, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

You know, that is a command. Believe in him whom he has sent.

You see Jesus goes on to say... and if you will skip down to verse 43.

Do not grumble. The Jews began to grumble.

Verse 44 said no one can come to me unless the Father who sent him draws him and I will raise him up.

Look at verse 47.

Truly I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life.

Look at verse 49.

Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and they died.

Do you see the relationship? When we labor for anything but Christ it is a dead work. Faith without works is dead. And anything that is done outside of faith is sin.

And Jesus says in verse 50, "This is the bread that came down from heaven so that one may eat of it and not die."

He has already said, "I am the bread of life. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

The Jews then disputed saying, "How can this man give us flesh to eat?"

And Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say to you unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

Now what happened to unbelievers that day is they were confused and frustrated. They didn't want to hear anymore and they left.

Now verse 60.

When they heard these things... there is so much here. It actually, it took me about a year to preach through chapter six. Many of the disciples heard it. This is a hard saying. Who can listen to it? Many of them left and the disciples said, "Who can listen to this? This is hard teaching."

Do you know why? Because it is truth. Christ didn't come to bring peace. As a matter of fact, out of his own mouth he says, "I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." He says, "I will pit father against daughter and mother against son. I will divide nations. I do not come to bring peace on earth. But my kingdom will come and it is a kingdom of peace, a kingdom of priests, not those who labor for all the world and who labored for all the religion and who labored for all the church ministry, but those who labored for me, not in my name, but out of affection for me."

People seek Jesus for what he has done, church. The table is set. Are you seeking Christ and what he can do for you? Is your motivation to come to spiritual things out of a fear of hell? Hell ought to scare us. God's judgment ought to scare us, but God's grace ought to break us. God's judgment turns the hardest of man into a repentant heart, but God's grace allows that repentance to flee if it is not true.

God raised Pharaoh up before the world began that he might judge him and find him worthy of being a vessel of destruction. And God put judgment on Pharaoh and Pharaoh then relented and said, "I repent and here you can leave." But as soon as God took the plagues away, Pharaoh changed his heart because the heart of man is inherently wicked. It is sinful. It is deceitful among all things the Scripture says. It cannot be trusted.

Don't ever listen to a man of God who tells you to trust your heart. He is a liar with a double tongue. Don't ever listen to anyone who teaches you thus saith the Lord to go with your instincts. The instincts of humanity is to destroy, to be greedy, to be selfish. But we who are born again now have a heart that is tuned to holiness.

Jesus rebuked these people for seeking him in that manner, for seeking the bread that dies, the bread that perishes. Jesus revealed their hearts and he says, "You see me, but yet you do not believe." He is saying, "You sit at my table and the feast is before you, but you look at it and you turn your nose up like the rich young ruler that we see in the gospel of Mark and Matthew."

We see it. And he sought after Jesus. He loved the Word of God, the law, and he knelt down before him. He called him good master, exercised faith in knowing that Christ was divine and yet he loved the Word more than Christ. When he balanced out the riches of his life and the prestige and the honor of his name against this man who stood there holding this with 12 others. There is no way I am giving up all this for you.

Jesus reveals our hearts. This text reveals your heart today, church. I am telling you. If you are a Christian this morning you are troubled, but rejoiced. You are troubled because you have been confronted. Are you confronted by your sin every day? You better be. Repentance is not a point in history, but a present reality. Belief is not a point in history. As a matter of fact, it is a terrible thing, but the English translations of Greek it is hard. It is very difficult to get... I mean, some of it is plain as day, but on simple little things like this, the term “believe” and “believed” is always the future tense in the Greek when it talks about salvation, an always continually forever believing and believing always comes with the actions overflowing from affections that are stored deep down inside the flesh.

And of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. And in the abundance of the love and the passion of the world where the treasure is, there your heart is also. And where your treasure is, where you put your time, where you put your mind, it is where you put your treasure. It is where you put your life. Your life centers around it. Are you centered around Christ?

And if you are not, the only hope you have is God’s grace that Christ is the bread of life. Repent and believe the gospel.

Nowhere ever in the Scripture does Jesus come and beg anybody to come to faith. He commands all men to repent and believe. He demands it. He commands it, because he can. He is God.

He says, “You will repent or you will perish.”

See, that is not the picture of the Jesus that we have been perpetrating and proposing and selling and purveying all throughout American church, but the Jesus of the Bible who came to be the Lamb of God to take away the sins of all who believe will be the same Jesus who we see in Revelation who comes with a sword of fury, who smashes the enemies of God under his feet and he will pour out the fullness of the cup of wrath on us if we are not his children.

And we as the Church will stand and worship God and pierce [?] as this takes place. And with not a tear in our eyes, but it will be song and worship in our hearts.

Is that the Jesus that you know? Because if it is not, that is not the Jesus of the Bible. How good is it to feed someone bread and then the next day feed them bread again. We ought to feed the hungry. We are commanded to have pity on those who need it. But when it comes to having pity on people who need it, why do we feed them something perishable and never feed them the truth of the gospel? And here is the truth of the gospel. Here is one of the biggest lies you have ever heard: God loves you and has a plan for your life.

Do you know what the plan is for most of humanity? That God is going to put them in hell for all of eternity.

How does that sound? That is the truth. Jesus says, "Broad is the way that leads to destruction, leads to damnation. Narrow is the gate that leads to righteousness and few will find it."

Are you part of the few or are you part of the many walking through comfortably? Are you comfortable this morning? I pray you are not comfortable, church. Coming to church is not a game. It is not a civic duty. We are standing in the ear of the voice of God and hearing his Word as powerful as it was the day it was spoken from the vocal cords of God the man Jesus the Christ. Is it affecting you?

We labor for the food that perishes when we think that the programs of the church will bring people to Christ, church. And you have to understand. I have been on pastoral staff for two mega churches and we baptized the one year 300 people. And I can run a program and I can develop things that will draw thousands and if it doesn't work, add a monetary cash prize to the youth program and watch them come. It is useless. And not only is it useless in bringing people to Christ, it is an affront to God.

The food that perishes in the body of Christ is thinking these programs will bring people to Christ. It will bring them to us. Are we discipling them into Christians? And we can't even disciple them into Christians. We disciple them as Christians and when they reject the truth and they leave, don't try to get them back because they hate Christ.

Do you see the point? [?] Pray for them. Go to their house and disciple them there. You can have as many classes as you want, but unless you are teaching the Word of God to someone personally, you are not being obedient.

We labor for the food that perishes when we think that God needs us. Well, what am I going to do for God today? How about you believe and worship. That is the work of God that you believe in the one whom he hath sent. Believing means forever and every day repenting and trusting in Christ alone. [?]

We labor for the food that perishes in the body of Christ when we think that we can do something that God is unwilling or unable to do.

"All who come to me I will never cast out. No one can come to me unless the Father draws him. And all that the Father give, come and believe."

Has the Father given you to the Son today? Are you a born again believer? Can you express faith in Jesus Christ, not just with your mouth in an emotionalism and emotional idea taking down the lights, playing some songs, doing some things and you feel like it is God and then Monday it is sort of like, yeah, that was cool.

Friends, when you come to faith in Christ your life will change today. Usually from the

world's perspective for the worse, because you have got so many idols sitting in front of you at home you have to get rid of, not because you have to, because you want to.

So to get married you have got to give the little back book a toss, men. I enjoy going out for dates with that girl, but maybe I will steal her number just in case. My wife won't care. Ask her.

Oh, she will care and you and that piece of paper will be covered up on the sidewalk or the Blackberry, whatever it is on.

Do you see the point? We have a relationship with Christ, our relationship with the world and with each other is different immediately. And it is never perfect. It is always a battle. It is always a struggle and the closer we are with God, the poorer we will be and the sicker we might be and the more hated we will be.

I tell you. I have been banned from churches for preaching this very message, not the same sermon, but this very truth, the gospel. And I have had deacon boards ban me from the property that if they see me, they will call the police.

You come here and you are stirred my people up. Now they are all wanting to grow in their faith and read the Bible and pray. Heaven forbid. It is not me. It is God's Word. We labor for the food that perishes when we think that we are in tune with being a believer, when we live as the world lives. We think when we think that we are ok with God because of something that we have done and we labor for the food that perishes when we think that we are empowered in our role and our ministry and, thus, it makes us somebody. God doesn't need us. He will use those who love him and who are obedient to him and when we decide to be disobedient we repay the consequences. If we are his children, we will be disciplined unto repentance, though we are restored. If we are not his children, we will be cast away.

We labor for the numbers rather than worshippers. I [?] full house sometimes people say. You know, I would rather have five worshippers than 500 people, because I tell you. Who doesn't understand preaching and that is the world. The world doesn't understand the Word of God. Those who are not in love with Christ and changed by his grace, dug in, bought and born again by the blood of Christ, redeemed. He had no sin became sin that we might become the righteousness of God.

You just don't get the name tag. You get the new nature. Do you understand that? The world doesn't understand preaching. That is why we have to change it and make it appealing. What is appealing about eating the flesh of Jesus? What is appealing about hating your mother and father? What is appealing about sacrificing your children on an altar? What is appealing about living your holiness?

You know, I used to say it and still do. Holy is a four letter word in the church, but yet it is the intrinsic worth of God himself.

We labor for the food that perishes when we labor for what makes us feel good or we labor for preaching that give us some tools to live by rather than worship with.

The purpose of preaching is to affect the soul today, not plant some resources tomorrow. It is food. Preaching is to confront every aspect of our nature, every aspect of our nature that is not dead to sin.

And, friends, it should help us to be discriminating against the flesh. We labor for the food that perishes when we labor to assimilate people who hate Jesus. Well, how does that work? Well, just answer these questions in your heart.

Why do so many people fall away from the church? Because you can't fall away from what you are a part of if you are really a part of it.

What does the Scripture say in two different places? They were not of us, therefore, they left.

So it could be that somebody doesn't love Jesus. It could be in some churches—and I would say in most churches—that sometimes people leave because they are in love with Jesus and can't find him, can't find him in the preaching, can't find him in the congregation. We find a lot of good moral people. Well, Jesus came to save his children from their morality.

As for the question: Why do so many people not grow in their faith? That is ridiculous. You know, and we have got some doctors in the house, but if your child didn't gain any weight for three years you would take it... actually with a couple of us, if it started looking [?] you take that child to the doctor and they say, "Well, you have a... What is he eating?"

Oh, he is supposed to eat. I didn't know. This is my first baby. I just thought he had enough. [?] No the hospital gave him what he needed to go. I am just... get a job, boy. Feed yourself. Not going to change that diaper brand, though, it is not too appealing.

Do you see how silly? It is silly. But that is the way we treat our faith. That is the way we treat people in the church. Just come on in and we plug them in somewhere and then they will grow. No they won't. If they don't love Christ they won't grow. If they do love Christ they will bang on your door to be disciplined.

Why do so many members in the church, why are they apathetic toward spiritual things? Why is it when you come to a business meeting in the church nobody has a Bible? Business meetings in my church, if people come in there and talk about anything but the gospel for the first hour and a half they are gone. They are lost their... they have lost their position in leadership. That is the business of the church. Christ.

Yeah, you still got to pay the bills. You still have to do the things. You still have to get the lights on. You still have to manage and administrate. But, friends, deacons meetings.

Do you know what διακονος (dee-ak'-on-os) means, δουλος (doo'-los) in the Greek? It means slave, slave out [?].

Are you all deacons? Are you slaves to Christ and then to the pastor and then to the church body?

What should we be doing? See, when we labor for all these things in closing what we do is we labor for a perishing food, a perishing life, a perishing church, a perishing ministry, a perishing family, a perishing career, a perishing retirement, a perishing hope, a perishing dream, a perishing pride, a self proclaimed God status that will usher us into the judgment of a holy God who will joyfully and rightly execute his judgment against us and we will have no say, but Romans says we will be shut up and that all mouths will be shut before him as he rightly puts forth a deserving hand of destruction.

So what are we laboring for? Friends, we ought to labor of righteousness. We ought to see sin in our lives and run from it as far as we can. We ought to trip over the grace of God running into the folds of his love who is Christ. We ought to [?] the Word of God.

If you are not in the Word of God several times a day, you are not worshipping God this morning. You are worshipping some aroma of a meal that you have smelled cooked in that kitchen months ago, maybe hotdogs for Halloween. That is what you are smelling. That is what you are worshipping. You are not worshipping a new and fresh moment with the Savior of your soul.

The Word of God is imperative to worship. The Word of God is the source of life. The Word of God is the source of grace and grace saves and graces sustains. When I am hungering in the flesh and hungering in the soul, then the Word of God keeps me from sin.

And we labor for the bread of life and we labor for righteousness and we labor for the Word of God for those purposes and we labor for the pursuit of the glory of God. God, friends, is satisfied with himself.

The question is: Are you satisfied with him? If all you had tomorrow was Christ and your Bible, is that enough?

Well, all of us would have to say, "Not really."

Then what are we doing? Do we recognize that and do we go, "Woe is me"?

God, if it weren't for your grace I would see idols when I didn't see them yesterday. I see them today and if it weren't for your grace, if it weren't for your salvation of my soul apart from me, I would never, ever have hope. With the cause of your love I have hoped.

Now I could worship you. You are amazing, God. You saved me even in the middle of idolatry and wickedness as I see sin now that have been there for years and I didn't even know it existed. You saved me from that. Thank you, God.

Is this the last sermon that you will ever hear? Are you living in the last era of your day? Are you breathing the last series of breath of your existence? You will never know. Repent and believe the gospel.

When we labor for the food that perishes, church, we die starving without bellies full of yesterday's meal. When we labor for the food that perishes we reject the true gospel and, thus, bring judgment to ourselves and to the people around us. When we labor for the food that perishes, we hold to man's ways. We put our hope and our pastors and our leaders and our government, we stare down the face of culture and wonder how we are going not do anything to bring life to them and then we do everything but what Christ has commanded us to do to reach them.

See, the great commission was never, never, never, never filled in a mass [?] of a people to attend anything, but the great commission is fulfilled in individual obedience and it doesn't say, "Go, get people to receive Jesus." It says, "Teach them to obey him."

Jesus says that. Do you realize that as evangelical Southern Baptists since the 1600s being a Baptist? The Great Commission is to teach people to obey the Scripture. That is it. Primarily and first repent and believe the gospel every day of your life.

When we are born again, we, his children, we hunger for him. We strive for him. We fight for his glory. We rest in his grace. We desire him. We devour our time. We devour the Word of God. We live and we long to die for his glory as we live for his glory. See, this meal that ... who is Jesus the Christ, that feast on which God put his seal, his approval, his pleasure, his joy is before every one of us this morning. Some of us cannot see it, but we sit at the table of his Word. Some of us are blinded to it. We see this great meal and we want another bread. We want to hurry up so we can go to lunch. We want to hurry up so we can get our hunting in this afternoon. That is more important than Christ.

We have got a class to do. We have got this to do. We have got that to do. And yet, I will give you 45 minutes a week, God, but that is it.

We sit at a table and all we see is a place where we want bread. We want something to touch with our hands when the fullness of Christ, the treasure of God is right before our eyes?

Some of you today will be born again as you have heard this sermon. You have come to faith. You see for the first time the reality of who Christ is and what he has accomplished on your behalf. Christ did not die on the cross to make salvation possible. He died to make it certain. I preached that on Mother's Day of this year here.

Some of you will be born again. Some of you will be hardened and you cannot wait to leave. Some of you who are born again will rejoice as you are reminded of the supreme satisfying all holy treasure who is Jesus. Jesus is not taking us to a place. He is the place. He is the kingdom of heaven. He is eternal life. He is the joy. He is the bread. He is the truth. He is the living water. He is the sufficient king. He is the all powerful God. He is not taking us to any place or anything. He is bringing us to himself. And if you aren't in love with the bread of life, you are not in love with eternal life. You are not in love with heaven and you are not in love with the blessings of grace.

The only work that we are to be doing is believing through faith. The ultimate end of it, we are believing. We will see Jesus for the treasure that he is and we will be satisfied in Christ.

Let's pray.

Father, there is nothing any of us can say at this point, nothing that is going to change the heart of any person in here. You have already said it fully and completely. Christ is the bread of life and all who come and drink and eat forever will have joy and life in him. So, Lord, save your people. Bring them out of darkness into life. Bring worship fresh in the hearts of your children. Convict of sin. That is our prayer this morning. So, Lord, as we close our time today, may those who are called by your Holy Spirit, may they begin to live a life fully hungering for righteousness. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

An invitation today is going to be a lot different. I do things differently because I am weird. But we will stand and sing is song as a praise offering to God from our hearts, not just our lips. And my prayer for you is if you need to talk to me, if you want to talk about what has been said, if you have questions, concerns, after the service I will stand right over here and I will be there for anybody who wants to talk for as long as you want to talk. So let us stand and worship and I will give the service over to you, Matt. God bless you.

[singing]