Family, how is your Lenten season? We are on a journey to Easter—a brutal cross and an empty tomb. For us, it’s about discipline and preparation. It is also about increased awareness as we consider Christ’s suffering and sacrifice. During Lent, we should look again at His life, death, burial, and resurrection. This journey of awareness helps us experience the all-sufficiency of Christ. St. Augustine has written, “You have made us for Yourself, oh Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in You.” In His earthly life, Jesus encounters restless hearts—in His ministry and with His miracles. In the Gospel of John, Jesus has just fed 5,000 men (John 6:5-12). They and their families have eaten their fill, and the leftovers now fill 12 baskets. He next walks on water and begins to preach. This feeding of so many with the bread, other than the resurrection, is the only miracle mentioned in all four Gospels. They document that people have followed Him, looking for another miracle. Very simply, they follow Him to “get stuff.” But when they follow Him, they get HIM.

 I submit to you this morning that there is a tremendous difference between being filled/sated and being satisfied. “I am the bread of life” is one of 7 “I am” statements of Jesus. In this instance, Jesus moves from meeting the physical needs of His followers to meeting their spiritual needs (John 6:30-33—see passages in support of this sermon at end of text). In verse 35, the word “believe” is, in the Greek, “pisteuo.” It means “to trust oneself to another completely.” This usage points us to our need. For Christians, belief is a very personal relationship with a very real and personal God. In the context of the whole Bible, the “bread of life” here reflects the OT “bread of presence,” the offering to a God who offers fullness. Have you ever started eating and didn’t realize how hungry you were until that first bite reaches your stomach? Jesus is “the bread of life”; He is available to those who believe in Him—the ever-present manna, the Bread of Presence—like that of the Temple—offered to us in a New Covenant. It—HE--is

the life-giving eternal source of provision. The idea of bread as a source of life is found throughout scripture (Exodus 25:23-30\*; Leviticus 24:5-9\*\*). Discerning people in the crowd that day can connect the dots: Jesus as Bread of Presence fulfilling the old covenant. Jesus is the Bread of God who satisfies the hunger of the soul (John 6:32-25, see passages in support of sermon at the end of the text). Jesus is our High Priest. His Presence is not just a place where we are filled but also a place where we find and live in satisfaction. The familiar prayer of Matthew 6:11 asks, “Give us this day our daily bread.” We trust Jesus, the Bread of Life, to take care of our daily needs and to be our source of satisfaction. Jesus tells us in Matthew 4:4, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” We find nourishment and satisfaction in Him and in the Word of His Father in the Bible.

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\*Exodus 25:23-30

23 “Make a table of acacia wood—two cubits long, a cubit wide and a cubit and a half high.[a] 24 Overlay it with pure gold and make a gold molding around it. 25 Also make around it a rim a handbreadth[b] wide and put a gold molding on the rim. 26 Make four gold rings for the table and fasten them to the four corners, where the four legs are. 27 The rings are to be close to the rim to hold the poles used in carrying the table. 28 Make the poles of acacia wood, overlay them with gold and carry the table with them. 29 And make its plates and dishes of pure gold, as well as its pitchers and bowls for the pouring out of offerings. 30 Put the bread of the Presence on this table to be before me at all times.

\*\*Leviticus 24:5-9

5 “Take the finest flour and bake twelve loaves of bread, using two-tenths of an ephah[a] for each loaf. 6 Arrange them in two stacks, six in each stack, on the table of pure gold before the Lord. 7 By each stack put some pure incense as a memorial[b] portion to represent the bread and to be a food offering presented to the Lord. 8 This bread is to be set out before the Lord regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath, on behalf of the Israelites, as a lasting covenant. 9 It belongs to Aaron and his sons, who are to eat it in the sanctuary area, because it is a most holy part of their perpetual share of the food offerings presented to the Lord.

 Let us look again, Family, at Psalm 91. These lines are a confession of trust. David writes on the security that we find in our God. God has sent His Son into the world to save sinners. In His sojourn on Earth, Christ encounters restless hearts. The world offers our restless hearts many things, but none of them satisfies like God. David writes in Psalm 107:9, “He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.” Christ alone is our satisfaction. John Piper has said, “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.” You might be here this morning in a state of quandary, a struggle with self-worth, for instance. You feel like you are defined by your past. Perhaps, you struggle with anxiety, doubt, and/or deep, deep hurts. Listen to me carefully: JESUS LOVES YOU MORE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE. He, the Bread of Life, calls each of us to trust Him, to be loved by Him. He calls us to allow Him to define who you are, to redeem your past. You are valuable to Jesus. Allow Him now to bring rest to your restless heart. Trust Him and find satisfaction in Him.

 Perhaps, right now, you can examine your understanding of Him and His offered Presence. Is Jesus merely useful, or is He the treasure of the Heart that He is and wants to be in your heart? Make the Most High your heart’s dwelling place. The promise of Psalm 91 fills the heart with humble trust. ACCEPT CHRIST’S OFFER TO ACCEPT YOU. His acceptance takes away shame. He is sufficient: “All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away”(John 6:37). This is a beautiful promise! He invites you to come to Him, to be accepted. Our ever-present Christ, the Bread of Life, provides hope and the promise of peace, power, hope, nourishment for the soul—all is found in the person of Jesus. In Holy Communion, we celebrate Christ as the Bread of Life (1Corinthians 11:23-26\*). We affirm our belief in the Good News of Gospel, the

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\*1Corinthians 11:23-26

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

satisfaction of life in our Bread of Presence (\*Romans 5:9-11). In Communion, we affirm that we enjoy a personal relationship with a very real, living God. The 5,000 Christ feeds in the story found in all the Gospels affirms that Jesus fills all the needs of believers—not just physical needs but also spiritual needs, complete satisfaction. He removes misplaced desires and replaces them with hearts satisfied in Him. Come to the table and see!

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\*Romans 5:9-11

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! 10 For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! 11 Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

PASSAGES IN SUPPORT OF THIS SERMON:

Psalm 91

1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High

 will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress,

 my God, in whom I trust.”

3 Surely, he will save you

 from the fowler’s snare

 and from the deadly pestilence.

4 He will cover you with his feathers,

 and under his wings you will find refuge;

 his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

5 You will not fear the terror of night,

 nor the arrow that flies by day,

6 nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,

 nor the plague that destroys at midday.

7 A thousand may fall at your side,

 ten thousand at your right hand,

 but it will not come near you.

8 You will only observe with your eyes

 and see the punishment of the wicked.

9 If you say, “The Lord is my refuge,”

 and you make the Most High your dwelling,

10 no harm will overtake you,

 no disaster will come near your tent.

11 For he will command his angels concerning you

 to guard you in all your ways;

12 they will lift you up in their hands,

 so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

13 You will tread on the lion and the cobra;

 you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

14 “Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him;

 I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.

15 He will call on me, and I will answer him;

 I will be with him in trouble,

 I will deliver him and honor him.

16 With long life I will satisfy him

 and show him my salvation.”

John 6:35-40

35 Then 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. 36 But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. 37 All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. 38 For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me but raise them up at the last day. 40 For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”