

During Lent, we are inviting our congregation to spend time in God’s word. Once a week, we will guide this time with a devotional reading from Scripture and a reflection from someone within our church family. Begin by centering yourself in prayer; ask God to reveal something new and speak to you today. Next, spend time reading the Scripture passage for the day, noting what stands out to you and what word from the Lord might be coming through the text for *you*. Then, move to reading the reflection shared below. Below, you will see that we have also included a piece of visual art for you to consider as you reflect on the passage. I (Pastor Ashley) encourage you to actually get out your Bible and engage with the text on your own first, before reading the reflections shared below. Also, we would love to hear what God was saying to you through this passage! Comment on our [Facebook post](#) for today with what stood out to you from the Scripture passage.

Lenten Devotional: Week Three

Step One: *Prior to reading the Scripture passage, spend a moment centering yourself in prayer.*

Step Two: Our Scripture reading today is **John 6:22-40**. Read through the text (maybe even twice), noting what stands out to you and what word from the Lord might be coming through this text for *you* today. This is a longer passage, but it’s important to read the entirety to get a picture of this full story

Step Three: Now, enjoy this reflection from our friend, Rachel Dodd:

When I first looked up this passage and saw its title, “The Bread from Heaven,” I thought I had opened the wrong end of my Bible. “Bread from heaven—that’s a story in Exodus, right?” I thought.



As it turns out, there’s more than one story about bread coming from Heaven in the Bible.

Today’s passage opens on the Sea of Galilee the day after Jesus miraculously fed 5,000 men (plus the women and children who were present too). The crowd is curious—and hungry again. Yesterday they’d listened to Jesus teach and received a miracle that sustained every single one of them. But today was another day. And the people needed more.

It is no coincidence, as John points out in verse 4 of this chapter, that the particular date when Jesus asked God to multiply loaves of bread was around the time of year when the people celebrated Passover—a festival in which they remember God delivering their ancestors from Egyptian slavery. On the very first Passover, God warned His people to bake unleavened bread, which they’d need to take with them when they made a quick escape (Exodus 12). Not long after, as the Israelites struggled to find food while in search of their new land, God provided them with...you guessed it—*bread from heaven* (Exodus 16).

The funny, and sometimes frustrating, thing about the way we’re wired as humans is that we can’t survive on just one meal. We need to nourish ourselves daily in order to be strong and healthy. I like to think Jesus watched with a smile as those baskets of bread and fish were passed—and as perhaps faithful people in the crowd commented to each other, “See? God hasn’t forgotten. And He still provides for us.”

But in today's story, as the people crowded to Jesus in search of food again, he told them about another part of us that needs sustenance—our souls. Just like our bodies, a single meal won't do the trick. If we want to do God's work in our homes and in our world, we have to seek Him out and ask Him to fill us. And the miracle is, He will—time and time again.

I don't know about you, but I'm finding spring 2021 to be a tough season. As we get nearer a full year of social distancing, I realize I'm feeling pretty tired. In this passage we find a beautiful promise that we can come to Jesus *daily* and know that we will never be spiritually hungry. Today I encourage you to read John 6:22-40 once again, and be filled and sustained by Jesus' promises for you.

- *Rachel Dodd*

Step Four: Close in prayer, thanking God for what has been revealed to you today and asking the Lord to help you carry it into this day and the days ahead.

Step Five: Join us as we continue reading God's Word this week. Here are daily suggestions for further reading:

- **Thursday, Mar 4** – Exodus 16:1-36
- **Friday, Mar 5** – 1 Kings 17:7-24
- **Saturday, Mar 6** – Psalm 104
- **Sunday, Mar 7** – Acts 2:42-47
- **Monday, Mar 8** – 2 Corinthians 9:6-15
- **Tuesday, Mar 9** – Philippians 2:1-11