

Two weeks ago, Rev. Sunny preached to us about the language of love. We heard how she and her husband, Sung, have developed their understanding of each other's wants and needs. They learned to recognize and understand others' needs, how to listen, and how to respond. When I heard her speak, I could see that the more they understood their needs, the more they could lift each other up in life. The more they can comfort each other. As we learn to communicate, we build understanding and strengthen our relationships.

Last week, we heard Rev. Sunny speak about opening doors to our church, accepting anyone seeking God, and worshiping along with us. We will support all who may seek God's grace and the ultimate goal of His forgiveness. How can we live and walk in the footsteps of Him, and at the same time, cast judgment?

Today, we will explore how we speak our love with Jesus Christ and its role in our relationship with Him. When we reflect upon our own lives, we can discover where and how we need to grow, to walk in His footsteps.

As humans, we need nourishment to live. We use nourishment to fuel our bodies, to use as energy. When we sit to eat a wonderful meal, it is easy to want to enjoy the meal more than we need, to consume more than what our bodies will burn and use to heal and grow.

We are then eating, not for nourishment, but for the comfort and pleasure we seek. We become hungry not for food, but we hunger for the next bite. We see this pattern play out over and over in many facets of life. We get a taste, and we want to go back, to get more and more and more.

Have you ever just wanted more? More for the sake of more? More of anything. You don't need to share it with the person next to you. You can reflect on your truth. *[Pause]* I say we all have wanted more and more and more.

I am guilty of having everything I need, only to feel empty and desire "more." Sometimes it is hard to see the difference, it's easy to feel what we want, and I ask this: When do we have enough?

It is easy to eat what we need and yet, still feel the draw for more. What we need, and what we want! We have this opportunity to decide what we need and to know the difference from what we want. Our society reflects this pattern back to us. We see things all day that we may want...on TV, internet ads, Costco, the new 86-inch TV, the list can go on.

John in the New Testament tells us that Jesus said, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me will never go hungry and whoever believes in me shall never be thirsty." Jesus had fed 5,000, with only some barley loaves of bread and a couple of fish. If you don't know the story, here is a brief summary of it.

After Jesus heard that John the Baptist had been killed, Jesus sought to be by Himself. He saw that crowds had followed by foot. After healing their sick, it was late, and villages to get food were far. Jesus asked that the people sit in groups, and a boy had only five loaves and two fish—not enough for 5,000. Jesus blessed the bread and fish, His disciples handed it out, and everyone was fed. Twelve baskets of leftovers were found. Jesus asked that none go to waste.

**The crowd followed Jesus to Capernaum.** Jesus told the people that they had sought Him not for what they saw Him do but to fill their wants. They wanted Christ as their King because they consumed the loaves and had their fill. While Jesus performed a miracle around them, feeding 5,000 people from only five loaves and two fish, the people only felt their full bellies. They did not see the miracle that had just occurred amongst them, for it was not a relationship with Christ they sought.

The comfort that we seek is found within and during our relationship with Lord Jesus. The act of communicating our faith to Jesus, the behaviors we do as people here, now today, define our relationship. This faith, everlasting, is how we live through Jesus Christ. We can live through Him by being as His.

Our comfort is found when we choose to put faith above our wants. Jesus knows our language of love. Like Sung and Sunny, Jesus knows how to understand us. We must now learn the language of love that Jesus, our Savior, speaks with us. When we can listen and speak through faith, our actions follow.

In John 6:29, Jesus said, "The work of God is to do this: to believe in the one he has sent." How do we show this belief? Do we seek to forgive others as Jesus did? Do we seek to know our wants from our needs?

We will be tired and weak. We will fall. As sinners, it is our responsibility to seek redemption. As forgiven sinners, we can forgive each other. We can learn to communicate with each other, to lift and support each other. We each speak the same language of love. Can we learn to see faults as strength when healed like *Kintsugi*—the art of repairing cracks of ceramic vessels with gold?

As followers of Christ, it is us who can learn to speak His language. It is us who can then follow in His footsteps more clearly, today.

Our reassurance is our relationship with Jesus Christ, our Lord. This week, I ask you to join me in seeking to be better communicators of our love for Jesus Christ and our love for all people. I invite you to join me in speaking the language of love with our actions, for others, to help others, to forgive others, and to embrace all. Our common bond is our sin and our forgiving God. Let us forgive ourselves and forgive each other so that we may see our best intentions and not our imperfections.

Be the bread of life for others. Let forgiveness be the flame of our light. Please join me in prayer.

**God of forgiveness and new beginnings, thank You for today, thank You for our being here, for now, and for being able to worship You free of persecution together. Thank You for our faults, and thank You for providing us humility. You feed our hearts with compassion and nourish our souls with the bread of heaven. As Jesus fed the hungry crowds, knowing that they needed both physical bread and the bread of heaven, fill us with Your generous spirit and make us one with Christ. Strengthen us to forgive others, to speak the language of Your love. Please give us strength when we receive the gift of opportunity to follow You so that we may all feel the fullness that comes when we walk with You, Lord. Help us, hunger for Your peace and righteousness over the things of this world. Lord, have mercy upon us for what we may endure. Thank You for opening our hearts and minds to the gift of Your word, the bread of heaven. Amen**