2026-11-01 Points

Title: Working to Believe: The Call to Active, Enduring Faith

Sermon Summary: Drawing from John 6 and several supporting passages, this sermon challenges believers to move beyond a passive or nominal faith toward an active, growing trust in Christ. The pastor uses the contrast between physical food that spoils and spiritual food that endures to eternal life to illustrate that Christians are called not merely to an initial moment of belief, but to a sustained, disciplined investment in their relationship with God. Just as physical bodies require consistent nourishment and exercise to remain healthy, the soul requires continual feeding through the Word of God, prayer, and faithful service. The sermon warns against the tendency to prioritize earthly concerns over eternal ones, and calls the congregation to recognize that genuine saving faith produces visible, lasting fruit in the form of kingdom work and service to others.

Key Points:
- Jesus rebuked those who sought him only for physical bread, missing the miraculous signs that pointed to God, illustrating how earthly preoccupations blind us to spiritual realities
- The command in John 6:27 to not work for food that spoils but for food that endures to eternal life is presented as a direct charge to reorder life's priorities around eternal rather than temporal concerns
- The work of God, according to Jesus in John 6:29, is to believe in the one God has sent, and this belief is not a one-time mental agreement but an ongoing, active trust that produces action
- Faith that is not exercised and fed will not plateau but will actually decline, leaving believers spiritually malnourished and ineffective in God's kingdom
- Prayer without ceasing, as modeled in the parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18, is presented as a form of spiritual work that reflects genuine, enduring belief
- The parable of the talents in Matthew 25 demonstrates that God entrusts each believer with resources according to their ability and expects a faithful return, with serious consequences for those who do nothing with what they have been given

- Believers are reminded that the soul is eternal while the body is temporary, and therefore investing in spiritual growth is of far greater importance than any earthly endeavor
- The sermon emphasizes that Christian witness is both spoken and visible, and that a life of active faith is itself a testimony to those who do not yet believe

Scripture Reference:
- John 6:25-29 (primary text), in which Jesus addresses the crowds who sought him after the feeding of the five thousand, directing them toward spiritual food that endures to eternal life and defining the work of God as belief in the one he sent
- Luke 18:1-8, the parable of the persistent widow, illustrating the call to always pray and not give up
- Matthew 25:1-30, the parables of the ten virgins and the talents, illustrating readiness and faithful stewardship
- Matthew 4:1-4, the temptation of Jesus in the desert, where Jesus declares that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God
- Philippians 4 and related Pauline passages on working out one's faith, rejoicing always, and praying continually
- James 2, referenced in connection with the teaching that faith without works is dead
- Acts 26-27, the account of Paul on the storm-tossed ship, used as an example of faith maintained under extreme pressure

Stories:
- The feeding of the five thousand and the crowds pursuing Jesus around the lake, used to illustrate how people can witness a miracle and still miss its spiritual significance because they are focused on physical satisfaction
- Peter walking on water and beginning to sink due to lack of faith, used to illustrate how fear and doubt undermine active trust in Christ
- The parable of the persistent widow from Luke 18, in which a widow's relentless appeals to an unjust judge result in justice, used to teach that believers should pray continually and not give up
- The parable of the ten virgins from Matthew 25, in which five who were

unprepared were shut out of the wedding banquet, used to illustrate the necessity of sustained readiness and spiritual preparation
- The parable of the talents from Matthew 25, in which servants are entrusted with varying amounts and held accountable for what they did with them, used to illustrate that God expects active, faithful investment of what he has given each believer
- Paul on the ship in Acts 27, maintaining faith and confidence in God's word amid a violent storm, used as an example of what enduring, active faith looks like under extreme pressure
- The healing of Jairus's daughter and the woman with the issue of blood, referenced to illustrate Jesus's call to not be afraid but only believe
- The pastor's personal story of asking his parents to be paid for household chores, only to be presented with a bill for room, board, and laundry, used to illustrate that provision and work are interconnected and that entitlement misses the point of faithful labor