Blaise Pascal, a mathematician and philosopher from the 1600s, said, “There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every person which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator.”

God created us to long for God, to yearn for God, and to hunger for God. I invite us to think about a time when we stayed underwater longer than we expected. The longer we stayed, the more we yearned to emerge above the surface and breathe that air. Finally, when we come up out of the water, we fill our lungs with this air. We are created to yearn for God just like we long for air to breathe. When we finally take that breath of air, we are satisfied.

Because we are created to hunger for God, nothing else really satisfies us. We can try to find other substitutes, such as possessions, drugs, or recognition, but they don’t really satisfy us for long periods. When we go after these substitutes, we seek the food that perishes rather than the food that lasts and satisfies.

Sometimes we try to have just a little of God. Maybe we say a prayer at mealtimes or when we sense ourselves getting into trouble. That’s not really filling ourselves with God. That’s like just nibbling around the edges of our plates rather than eating the whole meal. If we just nibble around the edges, we’ll be hungry again less than an hour after getting up from the table.

Sometimes we may be afraid to really commit to eating the whole meal – to become totally immersed in what Jesus is saying to us and doing and asking us to do. Finding substitutes or just nibbling seems easier. Yet that doesn’t work for long. We are hungry again. Our yearning isn’t satisfied. The only thing that really satisfies our appetite is a committed relationship with God --a relationship in which God talks to us, and we listen, and we speak to God, and we do what God asks us to do. To be filled with God is to be fully in a relationship with God.

We maintain our relationship with God through prayer throughout the day – not just at meals. We open our hearts completely to God and share our most intimate concerns. We spend time in silence just listening to God.

We also maintain our relationship through attendance at church with others living in a relationship with God. We support our relationship by treating all people with kindness and by reflecting daily on Scripture. We act in ways that show our love for God and for our neighbors. We put everything we have into deepening our relationship with God.

Basically, we work on our relationship with God every single day so that our relationship deepens. Only when we have a deep connection with God will that hunger for God begin to be satisfied – just like when we’ve been underwater a long time. Only deep and sustained breaths satisfy. Or when we’ve fasted all day. Only a real meal fully satisfies.

If we maintain this relationship with Jesus – we’ll be filled. We’ll receive the peace of knowing that no matter what is going on, God goes with us and God never leaves us. We may struggle, but we’ll find that we have everything we need – and more—to make it through that struggle. We’ll have joy. Joy isn’t just happiness; it’s something deeper. Joy comes out of us being willing to give up something of ourselves for others. Joy is an intense emotion that endures and satisfies, whereas happiness tends to come and go. Only God can fill us with joy. Only God satisfies our deepest hunger.

Our souls hunger for God. Only when we dig in deeply and really develop a relationship with God can we begin to be filled. God fills us only when we really dig in and act as we’re called to serve.

Jesus offers us everything we need to be filled and satisfied. He provides us with the food we need, the breath of fresh air we crave. To accept this food, we really need to dig in. If we just nibble, we won’t get what we need to sustain ourselves over the long term.

Friends, let’s eat.