DYM DOWNLOAD YOUTH MINISTRY

Big Idea: We spend our lives trying to fill ourselves with things that can never satisfy. Only Jesus can truly make us whole.

Main Scripture: John 6:35

[Leader Note: Walk on stage holding a Thanksgiving plate overflowing with food. Place the plate on a table and then sit down at the table. Consider having the table decorated to resemble a Thanksgiving meal.]

Wow! Would you just look at this FULL plate! It has everything! Turkey. Mashed potatoes. Stuffing. Gravy. Cranberry sauce. Green bean casserole. Dinner rolls. I have it all right here. I'm excited. I have an idea...you all can watch me eat all this for the next 20 minutes. Alright, here we go!

[Leader Note: Start eating the food and be over-the-top comical.]

I'm so sorry. I know you were expecting a message, but I'm just so hungry, and someone's got to eat all this food.

[Leader Note: Continue eating the food.]

Wait. Okay. Okay. I'm joking. I'm not seriously going to make you watch me eat this full plate of food. Who has ever eaten so much Thanksgiving dinner that you thought you were never going to eat again? Like, your stomach is on the verge of exploding? Then, 30 minutes later, what do we ask? *"Anybody want dessert?"* Physical fullness doesn't last. You eat and eat and eat. And guess what? You'll be hungry again in time.

We always want more. You eat today. And you will eat tomorrow. I mean, you don't have to eat, but I think we all know what happens if we don't eat. If you withhold yourself from food long enough, you will starve yourself to death. But here's the thing. We eat, and then we get hungry again. Physical fullness doesn't last. It's something you will experience your entire life. And the same is true spiritually.

We need spiritual food. Our souls need to be fed. And not just once or twice, but our souls need to be fed daily. And if we're not feeding our souls, do you know what happens to us? Our souls go hungry, and ultimately, if we don't fill our spiritual selves with the right thing, we will inevitably spiritually die. But we'll come back to that later. A lot of us are feeding our souls, but not with the right food.

Point #1: You can have a full plate but still be empty.

We try to fill our lives with so much stuff. Popularity, relationships, sports, achievements, money, possessions, entertainment, food. But eventually, we're hungry again. When you get the latest and greatest iPhone or game system...guess what? The novelty wears off eventually, and then you want to upgrade when they come out with the next best thing.

For some of you, you so look forward to one sport. You play a season, and then you're done. And what do you do? You're not satisfied. So, you go on to the next sport. Or you're looking forward to the big blockbuster movie. And it's great. But then you watch it once or twice, and you want more. Hollywood continues to pump out blockbuster after blockbuster because of this. Think about social media. You check your phone because you want to see who liked your post or who responded to you. And when you see those notifications, it feels good. But then what happens? A little while later, you're checking again. You need another notification. Another like. Another comment.

Or maybe it's achievements. You work for an A. You make the team. You win the game. You accomplish something you've been working toward for a long time. And it's awesome! But how long does this feeling last before there's another goal? Another test? Another thing you need to accomplish? You see the problem? We keep putting things on our plate thinking, *"This will finally satisfy me."* But it doesn't. We get it, we enjoy it, and then eventually we're hungry again. You can have a full plate and still be empty.

Point #2: Your full plate won't last forever.

Think about how quickly life can change. We've all heard stories of earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, or other disasters where people lose almost everything in a matter of seconds or minutes. Homes gone. Possessions gone. Jobs gone. And sometimes, people lose loved ones.

What if you knew this was coming? What if someone told you, "*You have 10 minutes to get out. You can take whatever you can carry."* What would you take? What's important enough to you that you would make sure it came with you?

[Leader Note: Give each student 5 index cards. Have them write down the five most important "things" in their life – people, possessions, talents, abilities, dreams, etc. Have them hold all five cards.]

Now, I'm going to take some of those things away. **Drop any card representing a material possession.** That thing was stolen. It's gone. **If a card represents a person, drop it.** Sorry, this person is no longer here. **If a card represents a physical characteristic, drop it.** You lost the ability or characteristic. **If a card represents a talent or ability, drop it.** You were in an accident and permanently lost the ability.

Now look at what you're holding. Close your eyes for a second. What do you have left? Which card was the hardest to let go of? Why?

[Leader Note: Give students 30-60 seconds of silence to really reflect. Don't rush this moment. You can quietly repeat the questions: "What do you have left? Which card was the hardest to let go of? Why?" Then allow students to open their eyes.]

Everything you wrote on those cards is temporary, unless you wrote "God" or "Jesus." Some things might last your entire life. Some might disappear tomorrow. But none of them will last forever. It's a hard thing to think about, but it's true. Eventually, we're all going to reach the end of our lives. And when it happens, what are you going to take with you?

So, what does this tell us? If the things we're filling our lives with don't last forever, maybe we shouldn't build our entire lives around them.

There was a king named Solomon in the Bible who lived thousands of years ago who had more money and stuff than anyone who has ever lived, and probably ever will. He went on a party journey to see if he could find contentment and happiness with things here on earth. Let's see what we can learn from his search. In Ecclesiastes 2:10 Solomon writes:

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