

Greenwood Baptist Church
Pastor John
September 6, 2026
Eat Up
Ezekiel 3:1-3

Good morning, church. We want to give a quick shout-out for our mission trip interest meeting. If for any reason you think money may be a reason not to find out about a mission trip — man, please don't let that stop you. We have a booth set up over here in what's called our Connection Point, out here to the left in our big foyer, right next to the information desk. A lot of people have gone on our mission trips and have not known how they were going to fund it when they first started feeling that God was calling them to that. And that team has developed a way that can help you raise funds to go, if God's calling you to that. And God's fully funded everyone who has needed money to go on those trips. God has fully funded those.

So maybe that could even be with your group Bible study — having a conversation with them, if you feel it, asking them to pray for you, that maybe God is leading you to that, or maybe even talking to them about financially helping support you. Because the reality is, we're all called to be missionaries, whether it's on this soil or whether it's somewhere else. We're all called to be missionaries. And this meeting is not a commitment to go on a mission trip, but it is just an informative meeting to get all the details as you seek how God's going to speak to you in that. So again, there are two dates to choose from. You can choose either one of those and go and hear about it. And if you want more information, again, go to the Connection Point, which is out here in our foyer just to my left, next to the information desk.

We were all anticipating Pastor Brian being back today. And so I am not him, nor do I play him on TV. But yesterday, Pastor Brian found out that he has a kidney infection due to his knee replacement. And so the doctors are taking some extra precaution. He has been admitted to the hospital for treatment. And so we do appreciate and covet your prayers, and hope he gets to come home soon. He is not able to accept visitors at this time, but I can just tell you personally, through mine and his conversations this week, we talked about the sermon that he had prepared to preach today. He was very excited and very eager to be back in the pulpit. And I will not do you the dissatisfaction of trying to preach what he already had prepared.

So my name is Pastor John, and I'm the executive pastor. And so you get me today. Like it, love it, hate it — it's happening.

So I want to real briefly just give you an update from last week. Last week was Code One. And Code One is always a special week and a special day for our church. Not only for what we get to see, but it takes a lot of individuals to make it happen. And our church always comes together. And the way that this church serves and prepares for that is just an awesome, awesome week.

And so a few highlights from Code One is that we had 1,275 people here on campus that heard the gospel. And another — this one kind of blew my mind — but another 1,399 watching online. Yeah, that's pretty awesome, right? And if you're watching online today, and last week you got on there and then got off real quick, I'm just going to tell you: you're the reason we were not at 1,400, and that's on you.

So we had multiple, multiple, multiple salvations across all three services, and we got to witness 50 people — 50 people — taking that step to declare to this church, and to the 1,399 also watching online, that they have followed Christ. They've surrendered their life to Christ and taken that next step of baptism. And church, that should get us excited. Come on, now. And so we want to welcome those new brothers and sisters into the family of Christ, the ones that surrendered their life to Christ, and encourage those that took that step of baptism. And if that was you, I want to encourage you: don't stop there. And we're going to kind of talk about that a little bit.

If you are one of those people who wants to kind of get ahead, you can turn to Ezekiel chapter 3. It's in the Old Testament. You go to Psalms, and then Proverbs, and then it's just a few books later. He's one of the Old Testament prophets. If you want to follow along, you can follow along by scanning the QR code. And you'll see here in a few minutes — I wasn't anticipating everything that was going to be in-house being published on the web. But you'll understand that here in a little bit. There's some lovely extra pictures inside the sermon notes this week. So I'll explain those here in a little bit.

When we take that step of baptism — man, so many of us, it's an exciting day. It's an awesome day. It is pumped up. Ronnie talked about it last week. When you see somebody come up out of that water, man, their face is just, they're glowing. They're excited. And that's my prayer for them. But I've come to realize, for a lot of us, that a lot of times after baptism, it just kind of stops. Just kind of stops right there. My prayer is that our church wouldn't be a church that stops at baptism. That we wouldn't be a church that just says, we're just about getting people saved. We're just about getting people dunked and baptized — which we're going to get to see three young ladies in this service get baptized here in a little bit. And we're excited for that. But that's not where we want to stop.

So please stand with me in the reading of God's word, Ezekiel chapter 3. So how are we going to not stop? Well, we're going to eat. We're going to eat up. Chapter 3, verse 1, Ezekiel. **“The voice said to me, ‘Son of man, eat what I am giving you — eat this scroll! Then go and give its message to the people of Israel.’ So I opened my mouth, and he fed me the scroll. ‘Fill your stomach with this,’ he said. And when I ate it, it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.”** May God add his blessing to his word. You may be seated.

Now, I love good food. How many of y'all in this room would join me and say, I'm a foodie? I'm a foodie. I like good food. I like what I like. And so I'm going to tell you, as I say that, there are some people in here that may know me and may accuse me at times of being a pretty picky eater. My theory is: if your toddler likes it, so will I. I love steak. I love chicken. I love Velveeta mac and cheese. That's one of my favorites. It's kind of like a staple with steak. If you don't have it — potatoes, they can go away. Give me the mac and cheese, right? Like, the kids' meal should just be in better portions on the adult meal. That's my theory. But if it's got a lot of color in it, like a lot of different colors — probably out. That probably means vegetables. Pretty sure vegetables are of the devil. I'm just saying, Cain's offering wasn't accepted. Stick with the meat.

So anyway, man, I love food. I love food, but I like the food that I like, right? I like the food that I like. I know it's the food that I like because I've tasted that food and I've decided in my mind, in my palate — or whatever that thing's called, my taste buds — it likes that food, right?

So here's the thing. If I'm hungry — I'm like really hungry — and I have decided I want a steak. I want a steak. Matter of fact, from now until Tuesday night at 6:30, every man in here should be thinking about steak. Because this Tuesday night, our men's team is doing a men's dinner, and it's steak, y'all. That's a reason to come in and of itself. But the fellowship and the word that's going to be shared is even better.

But here's the thing. When I'm thinking of that steak, and I know how it's going to be prepared — it's going to be prepared medium rare. Right? Can I get an amen? Amen. Okay, listen — side of mac and cheese, right? So I want you to picture it. This is my table. I got my plate. I got my steak. I prefer a filet. I'm bougie, I know, but that's okay. I prefer a filet. If not a filet, I would rather have a sirloin than a ribeye. Ribeye has fat. Your kids won't eat fat. Again — John the toddler — the ribeyes are not for me, right? I want something where there's no fat on the meat.

So I'm picturing this. I got my side of Velveeta mac and cheese. And then, to make it the perfect steak, what I'm going to do is I'm going to get a little cup and I'm going to fill it full of ketchup. And I'm going to set it right there next to my steak. And then I'm going to take a picture of it. I'm going to send it to Will Wimberly, right? To let him know I'm eating ketchup again with my steak, because that's what's good to me. I love — say whatever you want to. I've only gotten in trouble for it one time. Not a lie: at a bachelor party, Cattlemen's Steakhouse, asked for ketchup. The chef came out. I was scared. But it's true, he did. He asked me why I didn't like his steak. And I was like, I don't even know what's going on right now. I'm just a child.

But anyway. If I'm hungry and I want that steak, here's what I don't do. I don't prepare that steak, get that mac and cheese, get that ketchup, and sit down and stare at it and go, whoo, that's awesome. Let me get my knife. I'm going to cut into it. Let me cut into it. It's nice and red on the inside. Got the juice flowing. Like, I'm like, mmm, that's fixing to be good. And maybe, staring at it, it'll fill me.

Now, I just want to be real, but that's pretty dumb. If we pay to go to Longhorn or Mesquite Pit or Texas Roadhouse to get a steak, and we just sit there and we stare at it and hope that somehow it will fill us, to where when we walk out of there we're like, man, that was good. That was good. Man, it smelled good. It was cooked to perfection. It was good.

Now, I know what's going to happen. I'm going to cut it up. I'm going to take every little bite, and I'm going to take that bite, I'm going to put it on a fork. Probably put one piece of mac and cheese on top of the steak, because that's how I do it. And then I'm going to dip it in a ketchup, and then I'm going to eat it, and I'm going to eat the entire thing. I'm going to consume the entire thing that's on my plate, so that when I walk out of there, I don't go, oh man, that smelled really great. No one cares what steak smells like. I promise. People care what it tastes like. And for me, when I walk out of there, just like you — you want to walk out of a steakhouse and go, oh, I ate too much. Right? That's what we want to do. That's what we want. We want to consume it. Everything that's on the plate, we want to consume it. Why? Because it's good. Because it's good to our taste. Because we know it is good. It would be foolish to think otherwise — to think that the smell, that the appearance, is good.

But listen to me, church. So many of us treat God's word just like a steak at the best steakhouse, and we sit down and we come to the table, and then we go, that looks good. I bet that tastes good. And that's all we do. We don't consume it. Did you hear what the writer of Ezekiel said? He said, I ate it. When it filled my belly, when it filled my mouth, it was sweet as honey. It tasted good.

Somehow, in our Christian world, we have decided that after we surrender our life to Jesus, we show people, we declare in front of hundreds of people, maybe on a Sunday morning, and maybe even to the 1,399 watching online, that we've surrendered our life to Christ. We're beginning to follow Christ. And then we come, and then we go, hey, I know there's so much more. It looks so good, but I'm good. I'm going to stop right there. And that is not what Jesus has intended for us.

If it doesn't work with physical food, why would we think that it would work with spiritual food? Why would we think that somehow we can just get God's word without it? And listen, I'm not talking about Sunday morning, Wednesday night, or whatever your group Bible study time is. I'm talking about getting in God's word. Because Jesus himself is called the Word. John 1:1 — in the beginning was the Word. Sorry, NLT. I get confused on it a little bit, since we've changed versions. **“In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.”** Listen, Jesus himself declares he is the incarnate Word of God. And he leaves this book with us so that we can know how to follow Jesus and how to know him.

The Bible says that he came to give us an abundant life. An abundant life. Listen, I like an abundant life. Anybody else not like boring people? I mean, just be real. Like, we're being real today. I don't like boring people. I want to enjoy life. Enjoy life. Here's the best way to enjoy life: go to the source that created life. When the source that created life says, I came to give you

life and give it to you abundantly, give it to you to the full — let's take him at his word. What is his word? He is his word. He came so that you could enjoy life.

But he wants you to know: hey, it's foolish to think that once you give your life to Christ, you get baptized, and you begin to live your life claiming to be a follower of Christ — if you're not in God's word, that it's just magically going to get in there. It's not. If we want to be called a disciple of Jesus, we got to get in his word. We got to open it, and we got to see what it says.

Hebrews chapter 4, verse 12 says this: **“For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.”** For some of us, that's what scares us. Myself included. Because when we get in God's word, it begins to show us who we are. And listen, the reason it shows us who we are is because it shows us the need for a Savior. And if you think you can figure out everything on your own and that you've got it all together, you're wrong. God has a purpose for you and a plan for you, and it's to know him. And to get to know him, you have to consume his word. Why? Because it cuts deep.

The word of God is not here to tear us down. Does it expose sin? Absolutely. But it shows us the freedom and the joy that comes through knowing Jesus, through having a relationship with Christ, to give us life and life to the full.

How many of y'all are action movie people? Right? Anybody? All right. Thank you, both of y'all, for being with me in that. I'm an action movie person. Doesn't really have to have a point. I just like action movies. And two of my favorite characters in the Scripture are Joshua and Caleb. And I think they would be in an action movie, if there was an action movie made in the Old Testament. But they were these mighty warriors. And they would do whatever God told them to, to the point that when they went into the promised land, they were part of the 12 spies that were chosen to go into the promised land. When they came back, they declared that, hey, yeah, what everybody else is saying — there's giants. There's people there. Yeah, it's going to be hard. There's all these things. But it doesn't really matter, because God said so. We should go and take this land.

They were the only two out of the 12. And they were willing to stand on what God had told them, the truth of God's word, to the point that everybody around them wanted to stone them. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit had to basically cloud the other people's eyes, and Moses had to move Joshua and Caleb out, because they were going to kill them. They were going to stone them, because they wanted to stand on the truth of God's word.

And here's what Joshua says. Joshua chapter 1, verse 8: **“Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.”** Joshua was like, hey, listen, study it day and night. Be in it.

And here's what is going through a lot of your mind, because I've wrestled with it myself for years. Here's what it is: John, you don't understand. I'm busy. Listen, I want to be truthful. If that's how you define your life — listen, I believe that's one of the most useful words of the devil himself: the word busy. Because here's what it says. It doesn't mean that life's not happening. I love people that give time management ideas. I want you to think about that. Your 24 hours is my 24 hours. I can't manage it any better. The guy who manages it, he's up there. He's already got it. He's already said, this is your time frame. This is what you have to do.

We've come to wear it as a badge of honor when somebody says, oh, how are you? I'm busy. Like, as if that makes us any more important than the next person. Busy does not necessarily mean successful. Because even in busy, we figure out the time for the things that we want to figure out time for. We do. Every time.

So don't use busy. But here's the thing: it may be where you're at in life, in your walk with Christ, that you just need to get a plan. Every time you hear from somebody that says, hey, this is how you handle time management, they're going to tell you, build into your schedule time frames to do things. And we will all build into our schedules the time to do the things that we want to. We will. So it may be time for some of us to just get a plan. Get help. There's Bible reading plans all over. The YouVersion app has a lot of them. We have them here. We'll give them to you. Get a Bible reading plan. Get help.

There are groups that are meeting all over this church called D-Groups, discipleship groups of men and women that come together. Some of them meet at five o'clock in the morning. And for some of y'all, that may not be your group, because we don't want to deal with you at five o'clock in the morning. And that's an okay thing. Some of them meet in the evening. Whenever it is, find help. Get a plan.

I've been walking with Christ for 39-plus years. I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, John, you're older than 39? I am. Barely. But anyway, I've been walking with Christ for 39-plus years. Still to this day — to this day — I have to have a Bible reading plan, and I read through that plan with somebody else that holds me accountable to that plan. Because what happens is, I begin to drift. I begin to stare at the steak rather than consuming it. And I don't want to stare at it. I want to consume it. Why? Because steak is good. The word of God is good. It's wonderful.

Here's the thing. The hot piano player — I asked her out on a date one time. She said yes. And now we're married, and she's been stuck with me for 25 years. And that's for real. Like, Shelly is my wife. And so we've been married 25 years. And the other night, I decided, like, I am going to be a good husband. And I'm going to make dinner. So I have a picture for you. And this is me in my house. Y'all go ahead and peep the shoes — go Horns.

But I decided I'm going to make dinner for my wife. I'm going to cook. It's going to be a good thing. Like, it's going to be awesome. And I'm sitting there prepping. Go ahead to the next one.

Here's the end result. Here's the final result. It looks pretty good, yeah? Really? Not even props for that? Come on, people. I'm struggling. That's okay. Yeah, thank you. Here's the thing. It's got beef. It's got the bell peppers. It's got broccoli. That's about the only two things I can do in vegetables. And rice and all this other stuff. And I was like, home run, baby. Killing it as a husband.

Well, go back one picture for me, Steve. So the reason this picture exists is because when Shelly came in, she had to send a picture to our daughter in college, because our daughter in college would not believe that it was taking place unless there was evidence that it was actually taking place. So I was not being a great husband. Actually, trying to make up for a lot of mess-ups.

And here's the thing. If you look closely at my left hand, underneath my left hand is an exact printout of how to make this dish. Literally step by step by step, telling me exactly how long to cook things, how much seasoning to put in. Literally, it says, open the package of beef. Right? Because here's what I want you to know: I'm not good at this. I'm not good. I don't do cooking well. I needed help. I needed something that would tell me, hey, here's how you get to the end result. And the end result is good, but sometimes you may need some help to get there.

And here's the truth: consuming God's word always ends in a result that looks like Jesus. Hear me, church. Consuming God's word always ends in results that look like Jesus.

Psalm 119 is full of reasons to get in the Scripture, to get in God's word. It's just packed — over 70 times it tells us to look into God's word in that one chapter. For time's sake, I just want to share a few from Psalm 119, of what these verses look like and how it tells us to get into God's word. It says this in verses 9 through 11: **“How can a young man”** — young person — **“stay pure? By obeying your word. I have tried hard to find you — don't let me wander from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”** Verse 105: **“Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.”** Verse 114: **“You are my refuge and my shield; your word is my source of hope.”**

I told you it was our 25th wedding anniversary, and I'll be honest: last week I wasn't here at Code One. We were actually celebrating. We are a big volleyball family. We love volleyball. And so for our 25th wedding anniversary, we went to go watch the greatest volleyball team around — go Horns — Longhorn volleyball, in Las Vegas. And so we were in Vegas last weekend for a few days. And when you go there, when you go to Austin, when you go to Weatherford, especially when you go to College Station — just wait, it's coming — it's hopeless. Right? Everywhere we look, we can see people that are hopeless, that try to fill it with whatever the world tells them. The Scripture literally says, if you want hope, you can find it right here. Your word is my source of hope.

But there are so many of us believers that have claimed to follow Jesus, claimed to surrender our life to Jesus, and yet we are still fighting, going, I don't understand. I feel hopeless. I feel despair.

I don't know if it's going to work out. I don't know if I'm ever going to overcome. I don't know. I don't know. And all that time, God is screaming, hey, I sent my Son and I left the Word. He is the Word, so that you can have hope. He is the source of our hope. His word is the source of our hope. But if we don't open it and consume it, we'll never know that.

The enemy is completely trying to take what Jesus has done, and he's telling you, you do you. You do you. Whatever that looks like, that's going to bring you joy. That's going to bring you hope. Man, our world is literally deteriorating around us. Literally. Every day, people are crying for hope. Christians, church, we need to be the ones that are saying, hey, let me tell you about the hope, because I've hidden God's word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Are you going to mess up? Yep. You ask God to forgive you and you keep going on. That's also in his word. See, we don't want to take, like what a social media account does, and take one verse and take it out of context. We take the whole counsel of God, and it all works together, and it all points to Jesus, because the Word is Jesus. And when the Word came down and lives in our hearts, we can then live it out and look like Jesus, because we know the Word, because we've consumed the Word. We feel full. We feel satisfied. Why? Because we've consumed the Word. We didn't stare at it on the plate.

Jesus wants you to experience everything he has for you. Did you know in Ephesians chapter 6, the only offensive weapon in the armor of God is the sword of the Spirit? That's it. But yet, sometimes we don't want to pick it up and go into battle. And Joshua says, hey, I'm going to meditate on it day and night. Why? Because I'm a warrior for Christ. And when he calls me to go into battle, I'm ready.

Sixty-six books in the Bible. 1,189 chapters. 31,102 verses. 40 writers. And yet, one author. And it all points to Jesus. Why? Because it's all breathed by God. There was one author. All of that stuff came all together for us, as he wrote that, so that we could know him and experience him fully.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 says this: **“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.”** Check this out — verse 17: **“God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do his work”** — to do every good work. Listen, church, it's for us. Eat it up.

Not talking about just coming here on Sunday morning. Not talking about even being part of a group Bible study. Here's what I'm talking about. I'm going to challenge you this week, as a church, to be serious about God's word. And I'm going to ask you to get into God's word a minimum of four times this week. Four days. You say, well, a spiritual pastor would have asked for seven. Yeah. We're still trying to figure out how to get volunteers to serve in the preschool area, so we'll stick with four right now. Four days this week. Four days.

Why do you say four? Is there a purpose? That seems really random. No, it's not random. It's actually proven. Several years ago, the Institute for Biblical Research and the Center for Biblical Engagement did the largest study that they have ever done on the effects of Bible reading of Christians. They engaged over 100,000 people in this. And here's what the results noted. One day a week — people who read the Bible one day a week — no noticeable change. Two to three days a week, a slight change that could be noticed, but didn't really affect anything. Four days a week — their words — everything changes.

Four days a week. When people who read God's word four days a week or more — here's what the statistics are. 228% of those people were more likely to share their faith. 407% are more likely to memorize Scripture. You'd be like, man, I have tried. I cannot memorize Scripture. Ice, ice, baby. All I can tell you is, there's a lot of you that are my age, younger, maybe even a little older, are singing that song right now, every word. Don't tell me you can't memorize. You can.

People who read God's word four times a week or more: 59% are less likely to view pornography. 30% are less likely to struggle with loneliness. Almost 50% are less likely to deal with anxiety. Almost 30% are less likely to neglect their family. And you could go on and on and list. And you can fact check me on this. You can Google Institute for Biblical Research, or the Center for Biblical Engagement. You can find this. This is what it looks like. Why? Because somebody took four days a week and they began to consume God's word.

Why? Because Mark 13:31, it says this: **"Heaven and earth will disappear"** — everything in this world is going to disappear, except for this — **"but my words will never disappear."** That is straight from the mouth of Jesus Christ himself. His words don't disappear. So why wouldn't we want to consume them? It's the only thing that's going to last.

When the word of God is actively in the majority of your week, your life begins to change. I want you to hear me in that. When the Word is actively in the majority of your week, your life will begin to change. So the question is, church: are you willing? Are you willing to follow Jesus in getting in his word?

If you'll bow your head and close your eyes with me. If you're here today, you may be here for the first time, and you may have heard for the first time that Jesus loves you. And here's what I want to tell you. Man, he loved you so much that he really sent Jesus. God loves you, that he really sent Jesus to die on the cross, to pay the penalty for everything that you've ever done, every sin you've ever committed. And when he said it is finished, it literally means the debt is paid. He paid your sin debt, and he was put into the grave. But three days later, he rose again, and he wants a relationship with you.

The Bible tells us that, first of all, we have to admit that we're a sinner. We at this church, we use the ABCs for understanding this: admit, believe, and confess. We got to admit that we're a sinner. We've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We got to believe that he really did

do what I just said. He really did die on the cross. That he really did pay the penalty, and that he rose again on the third day. But then we've got to confess him as Lord. And the Bible tells us in Romans 10:9, **"If we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart, we will be saved."** Period. End of story. No question to ask. And he did that for you.

And so I want to lead you in a prayer. If you've never surrendered your life to Christ, I want to lead you in a prayer that's the avenue for that confession. Because if you look at the next verse in Romans 10:10, it says this: **"With the heart one believes unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made to salvation."** And so I want to give you the opportunity to confess Jesus as Lord. It's not a magical prayer. But if it comes from a belief in your heart and you confess it, the Bible says you will be saved. So you can say something like this, or in your own words:

"God, I know I've messed up. I believe what you did on the cross was real. I believe that you died for my sins. But God, I believe you rose again on the third day. I believe it. I may not understand all of it, God, and I don't understand all the Bible, but I believe that really happened. And God, today, I'm confessing you as my Savior and Lord. I surrender my life to you."

And with every head bowed and every eye closed, if that's you and you just prayed that, asked Christ to truly come into your life — with every head bowed, just you — I want you to look up and make eye contact with me. If that's you and you prayed that prayer today. I see you over here on my left. Anybody? I'm not asking you to look up at me for any reason, but I just want to pray for you.

If that's you, I encourage you: tell somebody. Come tell me after the service. I'll be right up here. There's a QR code in your bulletin. You can scan this QR code. You can text SAVE to that number. We just want to talk to you, encourage you, talk about your next steps of what it looks like to follow Christ from God's word. So if that's you, text that in.

And Christians, church, if you didn't look up at me, that said two things. Either one, you didn't want to today, and that is your choice. Or two, you've already done that and you've surrendered your life to Christ. So my question to you, church, is: are you consuming God's word? Will you take up the challenge — four days this week, minimum of four days this week?

Father God, thank you for each one of these people who looked and indicated that they gave their life to you. And God, may we truly disciple them and bring them alongside as a church. And Father, teach them the joy and the heart of your word. And Father, I just pray, God, that you would just do a work in this church, God, and that we would all, as believers and followers of you, be consumed with your word. Lord, we love you. In Jesus' name, amen.