

## **Donahoe Family Church**

### **Jan. 9, 2005**

**BROTHER KEITH:** Dr. Joe Boyd [is] with me today. And so, Brother Joe, we ordained you, what, a couple of years ago?

**BROTHER JOE:** Yeah, about two years ago.

**BROTHER KEITH:** And you had been ministering out in Texas, and God called you from the ministry that you were involved with into a new ministry. And I want you to share that, in just a little bit, with them. Compassion 2005. God has given us some great insights, and I want you to communicate that right now. All right, Brother Joe?

**BROTHER JOE:** Thank you so much, Brother Keith.

Good morning. My name is Joe Boyd. Some of ya'll remember me as "Big Joe." I don't know why people call me that, but they do. I'm here this morning to talk about super-sized Sunday. I'm here to talk about one of the biggest problems that faces America, more specifically, one of the biggest problems that faces Louisiana.

As Brother Keith mentioned, I did go over to Louisiana. I served as a youth pastor in a church that tragically lost a youth pastor to a drunk driver. And that was the first time in my ministry where I really understood what stress and strain and depression was all about. I experienced that. I saw that in the congregation. And as a result, I made a mistake and I turned to food instead of turning to God. And so that's what I want to talk with you about this morning: how we can keep our eyes on the prize and not on the fries.

So, if you could turn with me this morning, we want to go to Philippians chapter 3. When we look at this scripture — while you're looking for that in your Bible, you may want to hold onto that. You know that this is the chapter where Paul says, "Let us press on toward the goal and let us strip off any weight or sin that so easily entangles us." And so we pick up in verse 17, it says, "Join with others in following my example, brothers, and



take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame.”

Well, brothers and sisters, I shared with you a big struggle that I have always faced. Coming into Donahoe, even, I struggled with my weight. And I’m starting a ministry now in Houston, Texas. Whenever I discovered that I got as big as Bob’s Big Boy, I knew, Houston, we have a problem.

And so what happened was — the response was that I jokingly just started looking for answers and started reading the Bible and trying to understand food and started meeting with some other people that struggled with that issue. And what came about was a ministry that we jokingly called, but stuck, “My Big, Fat Church.com.” And now we have an online church, and it’s getting kicked off.

And the result of that is that we are trying to connect the spiritually hungry with the physically hungry, to glorify God through joyful obedience to Jesus Christ, which ties in great with Compassion 2005 because we partner with Compassion. And what we discovered is that if you keep your eyes on the prize, the children of God, and off of the fries, you can glorify God and lose weight. And I’m living proof. And we’ll learn a little bit about that.

**BROTHER KEITH:** All right, Joe. So let’s talk about how big a problem overeating is in the state of Louisiana. How big of a problem do we have?

**BROTHER JOE:** Well, in the state of Louisiana obesity is a real problem. And I grew up in this state. I’m right there with you. We scored last in terms of health out of all 50 states in the United States. And the reason why we scored last is because one-third — one-third — 1.4 million people in the state of Louisiana are obese. I’m not talking just overweight. Two-thirds of people in Louisiana are overweight, but one-third are obese, carrying excessive amounts of weight.

**BROTHER KEITH:** And, Joe, I resemble some of those remarks, but I’m working on getting better. And so I’ve put my wife on a steady exercise plan. No, no, no, not

because she's big, because I'm big.

What are the economic impacts of this type of problem that I just made happen with my family — No, what kind of economic impacts are these making?

**BROTHER JOE:** Well, see, that's the really scary part. I told you 1.4 million people in Louisiana are obese. One point four billion dollars could be saved every year in the state of Louisiana just from the direct cost of obesity. That's a thousand dollars per obese person spent every year extra in medical care and problems that could be avoided. And so what we have is a stewardship issue, because \$1.4 billion could feed an awful lot of kids around the world.

**BROTHER KEITH:** OK. So what you're saying is if we were good stewards with God's money, we need to be good stewards with God's body, His temple, right?

**BROTHER JOE:** Absolutely.

**BROTHER KEITH:** And so we're gonna talk about some medical problems that we encounter because we overeat, really, and overindulge. But let me ask you this question, OK? Let me ask you, is this a problem for the church today? Is it a problem for us?

**BROTHER JOE:** Well, you know, I used to think not. I used to think, well, you know, Subway's got Jared, but, hey, man, we've got Jesus, right? So everything's fine. But what I discovered in my research was that actually people who attend church are heavier than people that don't go to church. And that was a study that was done by Dr. Kenneth Ferraro at Purdue University.

**BROTHER KEITH:** So churchgoers are heavier.

**BROTHER JOE:** Churchgoers are actually heavier. Christians are heavier than non-Christians. And what's really scary about that and what hits home right here is that of all the denominations, the Southern Baptists are the heaviest. And don't think it's because we're evangelizing and going to church, now.

**BROTHER KEITH:** OK. So it is a big problem.

**BROTHER JOE:** Yeah.

**BROTHER KEITH:** Well, let me ask you this: Are churches doing something to

rectify this problem? What are we doing to fix it?

**BROTHER JOE:** Well, actually not a whole lot. That's the scary part. I did a church — a worldwide search to see who was dealing with the issue from the pulpit. And only a few churches — and when I say a few, I mean three churches in the entire United States, only three — were actually preaching on it more than just one week. And, of course, this time of the year everybody hears, well, you know, the body's a temple. And, really, the temple is a place where the Holy Spirit lives, and so we've got to deal with more than just the sin that we can liposuct out. And so we've got to deal with a lot of issues.

**BROTHER KEITH:** OK. And, Joe, let's talk about some of those issues that you're speaking of right now, these issues that are in our life: appetites, desires. What are we doing with those things?

**BROTHER JOE:** Well, the reality is that we have a lot of desires, we have a lot of cravings. There are things that are just taking us at our heart. We're trying to fill up our life, an emptiness in our heart, with things like fast food. We're trying to fill up our life with the drive to make more money, to have more power, to be in control of just a few more things. And so what's really going on is we're feeding the crave instead of going to God.

**BROTHER KEITH:** OK. Then, Joe, what does the Bible say about food? And what I mean is this: Was food ever a problem for anyone in the Bible?

**BROTHER JOE:** Well, yeah, absolutely. I mean, food's always been a problem. If you go to Genesis chapter 3, you know that the original sin — Satan could have picked anything for man to fall, but he chose to have two people eat something that they shouldn't have, and we've been in a jam ever since, right?

Some other issues that deal with food —

**BROTHER KEITH:** Been in a jam, huh?

**BROTHER JOE:** Been in a jam.

**BROTHER KEITH:** No pun intended.

**BROTHER JOE:** The reality is that we're a fast-food culture. And actually, fast

food was originally an Old Testament tradition. If you know the Passover right before the Exodus, you know that they were to kill a lamb and they would eat some bread and they had a little spicy herb with it. And they were supposed to, I mean literally, get dressed, ready to run — and so that's the first time, you know, we saw the principle of eating and running. But you can only eat and run if you, in fact, run.

**BROTHER KEITH:** Yeah. We eat and we don't run. That's the problem.

**BROTHER JOE:** Yeah, yeah. We eat and we don't run.

**BROTHER KEITH:** It's OK to eat, but we need to run.

**BROTHER JOE:** And food we drive through. We drive and then we're through.

**BROTHER KEITH:** This man's crazy. All right: Why do we eat food? Now, that sounds very simple?

**BROTHER JOE:** Yeah.

**BROTHER KEITH:** So, why do we eat food?

**BROTHER JOE:** Yeah. I thought about that a lot. You know, when God was creating and designing us, He could have designed us anyway He wanted. He could have made us without a stomach. He could have made us to just run on solar energy, you know, whatever. But He chose for us to have a physical hunger, which is a precursor that sets up for us an understanding of spiritual hunger. And so if He didn't build it into us — basically, He built His teaching tool right into our digestion. And so there's a couple things that are going on. There are two main things that drive us in terms of our compulsions. There is a sympathetic nervous system on one hand. And then you toggle to the other side, the switch flips, and that's your parasympathetic nervous system. Now, let me explain what that is.

In your sympathetic nervous system, if you get in danger you respond in one of two ways: you either fight or you flight, you run. And so you've got your hit and run on one side, and then over here on the other side, when you shift away from that, you have your parasympathetic nervous system, and that controls your intimacy, your relationships, and it controls your desire to want to eat and get comfort. And so whenever you have an

exciting thing happen, all of a sudden, you know — like church, man, it's exciting. So we've got to go get calmed down, so we go eat, right? And you go and you eat, and that shifts you back.

And you even brought up a real interesting point about the inmates in the prisons. What was that?

**BROTHER KEITH:** Well, they tell me that the inmates are well fed due to the fact that it kind of sedates them a little bit. So if you're full, you don't have a desire to fight and be irritable — or you're not irritable, nor do you cause irritation or “annoy-ation,” if that's a word.

**BROTHER JOE:** Right. And so on one side you're angry and stressed, and then we eat to shift out of that anger-stress. And then we get angry and we get stressed —

**BROTHER KEITH:** That's right. All those “-ations” take place. All right: Why do people eat? I ask you, Joe — is food a sin?

**BROTHER JOE:** Well, you know, food in and of itself is not a sin.

**BROTHER KEITH:** OK.

**BROTHER JOE:** But how we deal with food can become a sin.

**BROTHER KEITH:** OK. Talk about it.

**BROTHER JOE:** And what I mean by that is we don't really have a problem with the gift until we have a problem with the giver. And that's where sin kicks in, because originally everybody up to Noah's time were vegetarians, and that's all they were supposed to eat. And then after the great flood they were able to eat, you know, kosher meals, some meat that was prepared and no [bottom] feeders. And then when Jesus came and saved the world, all food became accessible but within moderation.

**BROTHER KEITH:** OK. Well, do you want to elaborate on that?

**BROTHER JOE:** Sure.

**BROTHER KEITH:** OK. You know, we're talking about moderation too. A lot of people are looking for a miracle. They're looking for that one book, that one seminar, that one exercise program. And what's gonna happen? I'm gonna be radically changed. We

need not a miracle, we need moderation, and that means to back up and put down the excess, right, Joe?

**BROTHER JOE:** Absolutely.

**BROTHER KEITH:** So why don't you go ahead, and let's talk.

**BROTHER JOE:** And speaking in terms of moderation, that brought up an interesting point.

**BROTHER KEITH:** What is that?

**BROTHER JOE:** I partner with a ministry in Houston — it's Action Ministries — and they provide the food for hunger relief, the tsunami. They're providing the meals. They air dropped this in. With Compassion they air dropped food in. And what I'm holding is a packet of food that would feed six people for one day.

**BROTHER KEITH:** Six people can eat out of this one packet?

**BROTHER JOE:** Out of this one packet. This is the amount of food. So speaking of moderation, this is the amount of food that six people would eat for one day in hunger relief.

**BROTHER KEITH:** Oh, man. Well, give me that packet, and I'm gonna get six volunteers, please, to come. And what I want you to do is take this packet and put it in six portions, please, Tina, and just bring it back out in the cups and pass them out randomly, OK? So you don't have to step back into the sanctuary and worry about what to do, just make it happen, OK? Thank you, guys, so much.

**BROTHER JOE:** And Tina is gonna be our Compassion chef this morning. So, we're gonna — food's gonna show up. So we're gonna see how that goes.

**BROTHER KEITH:** All right. All right, Joe, so let's talk about the good rule here. And you have it written down here. A good rule is that lust and temptation promise what they cannot deliver. Sin fascinates, but then it assassinates.

**BROTHER JOE:** Absolutely. And we see that in Eve. We see that she was falling into the temptation of the food, what it promises. And temptation always promises what it can't deliver. That's true whether you're dealing with food or money or sex. Whatever it is,

temptation always promises what it cannot deliver. And we know what happens because when we fall into any kind of sin, a little bit will get you started, but then it starts to grow. And we know that from Ephesians 4 [verse] 19. It says, “Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity.” And so if you have one sin going on in your life, it’s gonna spread into other areas of your life. And so sin unchecked can really become a big problem.

**BROTHER KEITH:** OK. So give us some insights about a relationship with food and God’s purpose in our life.

**BROTHER JOE:** OK. Well, there’s two main things I want to point out here. One is that a relationship with food isn’t really about diets. God’s plan really isn’t about diets. I mean, for example, you know, Atkins wouldn’t fall into what a biblical principle would be, because even Jesus Christ said that He was a complex carbohydrate. I mean, He said, “I am the bread of life.”

**BROTHER KEITH:** See, only Joe can come up with deep stuff like that.

**BROTHER JOE:** So, you know, it’s not necessarily Atkins. We talk about “Eat all of the protein, be in the zone.” You need to be in the zone going home. But the reality is that the relationship is with God and not really about the food.

And the second thing I want to point out is an example of Esau. A lot of people kind of overlook this part of the Bible. But they were two twins that were born, Jacob and Esau. And [Esau] came out first so he got the birthright. And you know, old Jacob had him by the ankle coming out. And so ever since then he was always — [he] had him. You know, Esau always kind of felt a little snared. And a lot of us, including myself, something’s always got us by the ankle, doesn’t it?

**BROTHER KEITH:** Yeah.

**BROTHER JOE:** You know, holding us back. And, you know, there’s a temptation that promises what it can’t deliver. And so Jacob, knowing that Esau was starving to death, says, “You know, I’ll offer you this food if you give up your birthright.”

**BROTHER KEITH:** Yeah.

**BROTHER JOE:** And he fell into that instant gratification. And when he did that, he got a bowl of lentil soup and some bread, and he forfeited his birthright.

And what we're discovering in Texas is that there are all sorts of people. I mean, in Houston, Texas, alone, there's 1.2 million people that are obese that are forfeiting the life, the birthright, that God always planned for them, and they're shortening their life with something that could easily be given up if they would just trust God and feed on His breast.

**BROTHER KEITH:** Yes. I think food in our generation — I know, we're filled but not transformed. We are compulsive. We do what feels good, right now, and so some times we forfeit God's plan and God's purpose for our life or that instant — [to] fill that void or satisfy that appetite outside of God's will. And so they're handing out the cups right now, that would be the portion of food that you would eat — but, Joe, we're gonna talk about that, I believe, in just a little bit.

Why don't you go ahead? Let's go to the next thing about why do you think we have such a spike in obesity today?

**BROTHER JOE:** Well, in the past 20 to 50 years, we have had a real spike in obesity. And the reason why a lot of people believe that that has happened is because of the new onslaught of fast food. We are genetically designed to hold onto weight. So the state of Louisiana has very superior genes. You know that, because of LSU football. You know that, because we're holding onto salaries. And genetically we know that, because the medical research facility, which is in Baton Rouge, the leading authority of obesity in North America, showed that genetically we're gonna hold onto ... the strongest are gonna hold onto calories and not give them up.

**BROTHER KEITH:** It's easier to gain than it is to eat. And we know biblically that's true because the people who survived the Exodus experience going through the desert had to hold onto those calories in order to survive that experience. And so actually, God designed us to want to thrive and survive, but He didn't expect us to have an overabundance. I mean, that's like filling up the tank of your truck and then putting gas in

the back of the truck just in case you need it later. And God only wants us to have what we need at the time.

**BROTHER KEITH:** Yeah. I remember the quail. Remember, God brang [sic] manna down. They were to collect it daily. But if they were to collect that manna more than what they needed that day, it began to what?

**BROTHER JOE:** Accumulate. They culled too much and God didn't bless them for that.

**BROTHER KEITH:** You remember the quail? They said, "Lord, we're tired of bread. We want some meat." He said, "I'll give you some meat. You can have what you want, but you may not want what you get." The Bible says they were literally sick of eating that meat —

**BROTHER JOE:** Absolutely.

**BROTHER KEITH:** — because I believe they were gorging on it. I believe they were Baptist. Now, I can't prove that, but you can't disprove that, all right?

**BROTHER JOE:** The Texas Baptist ... quail. But, you know, the reality is that the reason why we're gaining so much weight right now is because our perspective on portions has radically changed. And so we're gonna show you a clip from a documentary called *Super Size Me*, and we can take a look at how radically our view of proportions has changed.

*[Viewing movie clip.]*

**BROTHER KEITH:** Wow. That's amazing.

**BROTHER JOE:** I mean, that's a lot of —

**BROTHER KEITH:** We've grown in the wrong direction, haven't we?

**BROTHER JOE:** Yeah. Depending on the gas station in Texas, you can get the biggest one, the biggest Big Gulp for 39 cents, and upwards of \$1.20 — and you can just kill yourself for little amounts of money.

**BROTHER KEITH:** Well, why haven't we seen these principles or dangers in the Bible? Are they there?

**BROTHER JOE:** Well, actually, we know from the story about the quail that people have a tendency to want to go overboard, and God's not gonna bless that. But we also see in the story of Joseph, whenever he rose to power and he's second in command, the "Joseph principle" kicks in. He knew that there was gonna be seven years of abundance and then there was going to be seven years of famine. And so the tendency of the people would have been to eat all the extra food. But Joseph stepped in, he took everything that was left over, and he stored it for later. And so they were able to have a regimented diet in a moderation that allowed them to survive the droughts and the really tough time.

**BROTHER KEITH:** Well, you know what I want to do? I want to ask the people, who has the cups? Would you please hold them up at this time? Now, I want you to look at this. This is what people in the D.R. and other countries, tsunami victims, this is what they eat a day. OK. You can hold it down. There are six that are held up. Now, notice some of you did not receive a cup. That means that you would go hungry. You would not eat that day. And for you moms who have four or five children? Would you eat this if you had four or five children? You know what you would do? You'd say, I'll take two or three grains, but I'm gonna give the rest to my kids. I know my wife would, and I know if you are a mom, you would do that. You would sacrifice for your children. One meal. Think about our Christmas. Think about our Thanksgiving. Think about how we overindulge. This is not to make us feel bad, but this is to make us realize that God has blessed us. And, Joe, I want you to share with them what God spoke to your heart about.

**BROTHER JOE:** Well, what I discovered when I saw this food, that each one of these cups represents 220 calories. Small fries, 200 calories. And I started realizing that what I was doing was, I was living a life out of bounds. I didn't do anything real radical, I just started doing some record keeping. I started writing down what I was eating. I didn't go exercise. I didn't do any of that. I just wrote down what I was eating, when I was eating, and how much I was spending on it.

And what I discovered was the pattern of super-sizing. I was super-sizing everything I was eating, fast food. I would make that trip to Sonic and get the Route 44

Diet Coke. And what I discovered was I was spending a little over \$4 every day just on snacks and junk food and super-sizing. And so I realized that I was wasting God's money on the fries instead of investing it in God's people around the world.

And so what I did was I decided to take \$4 every day and I started sponsoring Compassion kids. I carry this in my wallet. This is one of the four —

**BROTHER KEITH:** How many kids are you sponsoring?

**BROTHER JOE:** I sponsor four. And actually, I've lost 10 percent of my body weight in 10 weeks, just by not eating the extra food. And I've been able to take the focus off of my needs. And, like, I focus on Betty. She's in India. And literally, I'll have these pictures just sitting on the dash of my car. And I'm driving along, and I'll have a craving, and I'll go, hmm, is Wendy's gonna get this money, or is Betty gonna eat today?

**BROTHER KEITH:** That's awesome. You know, Joe, you had called and wanted to meet with me, and we met. And we were eating [lunch]. And Compassion 2005 was just ringing within my spirit. And you began to talk about food. As you began to talk about food, I began to make the connection, and I said, "No, I won't say anything." And then when you had taken out your billfold — you brought your billfold out and you showed me those pictures — I knew, beyond a shadow of a doubt, God wanted you here today speaking. So instead of you eating an overabundance, not only you were feeding yourself with God's resources that He's entrusted you with, now you're feeding four other children.

**BROTHER JOE:** Right. Instead of eating for one and gaining weight, I've lost weight by eating for five.

**BROTHER KEITH:** Did Jesus ever struggle with food?

**BROTHER JOE:** Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. I mean, He wouldn't be the King and reign supreme if He didn't face the same temptations we did. Most specifically, He faced the exact same temptation that Adam and Eve faced, except this time, round two, He won.

And we notice with Adam and Eve, you know, they didn't pray before they ate that food, and they didn't seek God and ask Him what He thought. And really, they ate out of

boredom.

When we see the scene of Jesus, who's out in the desert, Jesus is hungry. He hasn't eaten for 40 days. And so it's a little bit different. But this time He turns to Scriptures, He turns to God's Word. He turns to that relationship with the Father.

And the second thing that He did was He resisted. A lot of time we don't resist the temptation, that instant gratification, because everything can be different for you. And just like that, if He would have just fallen into a simple temptation — that's really a need, a need for food.

**BROTHER KEITH:** Yeah. Well, I remember when the disciples went to town and they had been working all day and witnessing — they had gone to town. They came back and Jesus was at the well, and they said, "Aren't you gonna eat?" And He had said, "I have meat that you know not of." See, Jesus was more focused on people, and I think a lot of times — without being condescending — we are more focused on ourselves, and therefore we recognize our need and never see the need of others. Jesus always saw the need of others, and therefore, really, He got His need met. And so, Joe, that's wonderful.

Let's talk about the solution now. We're running out of time, and there's so many things that I want to share and you want to share. But what's the solution, Joe?

**BROTHER JOE:** Well, I mean, as I said, it's not really about a diet, it's about a relationship. And if there's two things that you walk away with today, know this, that temptation always promises what it can't deliver. But more importantly, Compassion actually is a solution for us to deal with the problem. If we could just stay focused on the prize, the people that God died for, and keep our focus off of the fries, then the solution lies there.

And here's my example. We focus on the feeding of the 4,000. When the disciples fed the 4,000 — what's interesting in that scripture is that after the disciples fed the 4,000, they realized that they had not eaten. When you take the focus off of yourself and you're meeting needs in the name of Jesus Christ, your hunger and your financial appetite will drop. That is biblical. And only after that did they realize, "Oh, we didn't eat."

**BROTHER KEITH:** Yeah.

**BROTHER JOE:** And so we can take the focus off of that. The other thing is I would just say, eat for two. Start eating for two. Be like a mom. Adopt one of these kids. And when you're making decisions about what you're gonna eat, you know, one for me, and one for them. Start eating for two.

**BROTHER KEITH:** And I know we're in a hurry because of time, but talk about the "little mom" aspect very quickly, what you had just spoken about, and then let's pray. I want you to pray for us, Joe, and then we're gonna — Kevin is going to come, and he is going to sing a song. So let's talk about the mom. Reemphasize that point, and I want you to pray for us.

**BROTHER JOE:** OK. When we know that we are responsible for another adult — or responsible for a child — we take on a paternal role and we start living our life for them instead of us because we believe their generation is gonna carry on the legacy of Christ Jesus, we're gonna leave that legacy. And so when we start living and eating for more than one, we really find that there's less of me and more of God.

And so I want to pray a prayer that we've been praying with people in Texas that's really helped them, whether you struggle with weight or you struggle with something else. We're gonna pray first, John 4, that tests the spirit that's within you, and then in the name of Jesus Christ, by the authority of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit, we're gonna ask those things that are holding you back, that have got you by the ankle, to let go. And we see a lot of freedom in that.

**BROTHER KEITH:** Why don't you stand and join hands with someone next to you?

You were talking about feeding for two. I remember when my wife was pregnant — it wasn't necessarily that she was — she began to crave food, and I really started craving food. And I never understood that. But one thing I do understand is that my hunger, my physical hunger, is a direct correlation to the spiritual hunger that I'm experiencing. So Christ is the bread of life, and as I partake of Him, that void, that appetite, is filled. But it's

filled with the right thing and the eternal thing.

**BROTHER JOE:** Right. Absolutely.

**BROTHER KEITH:** All right, Joe. Pray for us.

**BROTHER JOE:** Let us pray: Lord, we just come before You. We are so in love with You, the Giver, over the gift. God, You are the God that died on the cross for our sins so we might be saved. And God, You died for all the people, whether they're overweight or underweight. Lord, right now we pray as You taught us in 1 John 4 to test the spirit. Right now I ask in Jesus' name that the spirit that dwells within this people, this congregation, is the Spirit that recognizes Jesus Christ who is God, who came in the form of a man, walked this earth, and died on the cross for our sins so that we might be saved, is the Spirit that dwells within us, the Spirit that recognizes Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior.

**BROTHER KEITH:** Amen.