

“I Am the Bread of Life” – We’ll Never Be Hungry

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All of Jesus’ I AM statements are found in John’s Gospel. They’ll be our focus for the next seven weeks. Each one of the I AM’s represents a particular relationship of Jesus to the spiritual NEEDS of all men and women.

In every one of these statements, we see that Jesus wants us to receive Him, NOT for the gifts He can give us, but for what He can BE to us. Right after the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus made the first of the recorded I AM statements in John 6:35, *“I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”*

Bread is one of the staples of life. In Jesus’ day, meat was simply a side dish at a meal, but bread was the major part of the meal, everything was built around it. In Jesus’ day it would have been an insult to not include bread in a meal!

John 6 tells us that after hearing Jesus’ words, some of the people grumbled, and ultimately left Jesus. Some folks just couldn’t stomach it when Jesus shifted from physical food to spiritual talk. They were the **Stuff Lovers**.

These people wanted either political solutions, or free handouts. For them, Jesus was the latest and greatest gravy train! Jesus knew He had a problem the day after He fed the masses with five barley cakes and two salt-dried fish. In fact, when the crowd arrived, look at verse 26 to see how He greeted them, *“Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.”*

Jesus continued His thoughts with a focus away from visible things to spiritual. Look at verse 27, *“Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.”* The Stuff Lovers turned away from Jesus. Another group soon would join them! They were the **Rule Lovers**!

These Rule Lovers asked Him, *“What must we do, to be doing the works of God?”* If these people couldn’t get a free lunch, they at least wanted a list of rules they could hang on to. The problem is, it’s easier to make rules than to build relationships. Jesus wants to live in the heart of every individual believer.

He’s sent His Spirit to write His Law on our hearts. He calls every one of us to study His Word for ourselves and learn of Him. He wants us to share His Word and encourage everyone around us to seek a personal relationship with Him.

But some people simply don’t want a deep relationship with God. But Jesus wants a genuine love relationship with every one of us. That kind of relationship can’t be bought with stuff, and it can’t be built on rules!

One more group walked out on Jesus that day. They were the **Miracle Lovers**. Look at verse 30, *“So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?”*

Think about it. Jesus had just fed over 5,000 people with 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread. The very next day, they are asking him for a SIGN! Obviously, the miracle of feeding of the 5,000 gave them enough faith to climb in boats and row all the way across the lake to find Jesus, but yesterday’s miracle wasn’t enough to last until the next morning!

We have plenty of these kind of churchgoers in America today. These kind of folks are *“pep rally believers.”* Keep them *“wowed”* and you’ll keep them around; bore them and they’re gone! These people crave excitement. They love entertainment. They want

Jesus to take them from one mountaintop experience to the next with no valleys in between. They want all kinds of rewards but no responsibility.

Jesus didn't come to give us endless spiritual highs. He came to give us a chance to know Him! Verses 33-34, *"For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."* They said to him, *"Sir, give us this bread always."*

Now look at verses 35-36, *"Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.'" The response of the crowd tells us a lot about the difference between what people WANT and what people NEED. So often the very thing people need the most is the last thing they're looking for.*

So what does Jesus, the Bread of Life provide? He cares about our needs. He doesn't want us to struggle or be in physical need. Instead, He promises He will be with us always. He wants us to know He sees us as His own and cares for us desperately.

He wants to stretch our faith. Many of the people were caught up in the stuff needed to fill their stomachs. But that's not Jesus' focus. Jesus has exactly what we need to be filled spiritually. He gives us His Word and asks us to spend some time with Him coming to know Him better. He says, *"When you pray to Me, I will hear. When you bring your request to me, I will answer."* The closer we can be to Him, the better life will be.

Jesus multiplies what we have. Jesus took water and made the best wine the steward had ever tasted! He took five loaves and two fish and fed almost 10,000! He sees any shortage we might be experiencing in life, and as we lay it before Him in trust, He will provide us with more than we ever expect. We'll never be hungry again!

Jesus takes us farther than we plan. So many times we get so caught up in the now, that we lose our hope for the future. So many times, we can't see how there could ever be a positive solution. But Jesus says in verse 40, *"For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life."* His ultimate goal for us is heaven forever!

Jesus is more than we think. He's not just like us, He's omnipotent. He's all powerful. He's omniscient. He's knows all things and He knows what's best for us. He's omnipresent, He's everywhere. There's nothing greater than Him! Jesus is the Son of God!

Jesus gives us Himself. Jesus didn't come to feed the world with bread that would give physical life. He came to give Himself as the Bread of Life. In His explanation to the crowd, Jesus pointed to the Last Supper just before His death. Verses 53-55, *"So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.'"*

Remember these words as you take Communion today. When you take the bread and the wine, you're partaking of Jesus Christ. You're saying, *"Yes, I believe You are the Bread of Life."*