# "I Am The BREAD OF LIFE"

John 6:30-36, 47-63 (text v. 35)

This is the first of seven "I AM" statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John. Jesus was teaching that He is whatever we need Him to be.

- 1. *I am he b ead f life* (6:35). If you are spiritually hungry Jesus is your sustenance. As bread provides physical nourishment, so Jesus provides substance to our spiritual life.
- 2. *I am he ligh f he ld* (8:12). If you're in the dark, Jesus will "light up" your life.
- 3. *I am he d* (10:7). If you feel trapped, Jesus is the door way out!
- 4. *I am he g d he he d* (10:11). If you're lost, Jesus will guide you and care for you.
- 5. *I am he e ec i a d he life* (11:25). If you are dead in sin, Jesus will quicken you.
- 6. *I am he a, a d he h, a d he life* (14:6). If your life lacks meaning, Jesus is the purpose for living (Phil. 1:21).
- 7. *I am he e i e* (15:11). If you life is empty, Jesus will make your life fruitful.

Perhaps you've seen the recent Weight Watchers commercial where Oprah Winfrey says, "I love bread (and chips)!" I'm not a promoter of Winfrey or Weight Watchers, but I have to say, "Amen! I love bread, too."

I wouldn't do well on a "no bread diet." Hardly a day goes by that I don't eat bread in some form or another—A sandwich... toast... muffin... biscuit... bread stick... hamburger bun... cinnamon roll... donut (fried piece of bread dough with a hole in it and coated with glaze!)

During the days when Christ was on earth, bread was the principle food of people. Jesus instructed His disciples to pray, "Give us this day our DAILY bread."

- Lesus used this indispensable commodity of bread to teach some tremendous spiritual truths about Himself.
- ►The CONTEXT. Jesus statement concerning "the bread of life" was preceded by the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 (vs. 1-14).

- **I.** The SIMILITUDE of it. Jesus liken Himself to bread six times in this passage (vs. 32-33, 35, 41, 48, 51, 58).
  - The manna is <u>a type</u> of Jesus Christ (6:31-35 cf. Ex. 16:4, 13-21).
  - A. Divine in it's origin (John 6:31-32). The DEITY of Jesus.
    - 1. The Jews thought Moses gave them the manna. But it was God. Moses was only the human instrument. We must look beyond the man to God who works through the man.
    - 2. It came down from heaven (vs. 33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58). Seven times Jesus said He came DOWN from heaven...
      - He came DOWN from heaven to meet our deepest need
      - He laid His life DOWN on the cross.
      - He is set DOWN at the Father's right hand, interceding for us.
      - He will come again to put DOWN His enemies (1 Cor. 15:24-25).
  - B. Small in it's size (Ex. 16:31). The HUMILITY of Jesus.
  - C. Round, in it's shape (Ex. 16:14, 31). The ETERNALNESS of Jesus.
  - D. White in it's color (Ex. 16: 31). The PURITY of Jesus.
  - E. **Sweet** to the taste (Ex. 16:31). Jesus is sweet to all who trust Him.
  - F. **Sufficient** for all (John 6:33).
    - The manna in the wilderness was only given to Israel. No Gentile partook of the manna. But "the true Bread... giveth life unto he Id." (vs. 32-33). Jesus, "the Bread of life" reaches beyond Israel to the whole world.

#### II. The SIMPLICITY of it.

- Nothing complicated about eating a piece of bread (ILLUS).
- 4 things the children of Israel could have done with the manna:
  - A. They could pick it up to eat.
  - B. They could **trample it**. Hebrews 10:26-31 says that if you do not receive Christ, you have trodden Him under foot.

- C. They could **ignore / neglect it**. If the manna wasn't gathered, it melted (Ex. 16:21). The result of ignoring / neglecting the manna is the same as if it was rejected (Heb. 2:3).
- D. They could **store it**. Some said, "Hey this is too hard to do daily. Let's gather a bunch of manna to tide us over for several days." What happened? It bred worms and stank (Ex. 16:20). So, too, there are those who say, "I've had enough Bible. I don't need to go to Sunday School, Sunday night service, or a Life Group. I've got enough stored up."

### **III.** The SALVATION in it (vs. 47-58).

- The Bread had to be APPROPRIATED. Not until a person actually eats and digests the bread does it do him any good.
- A. The HARD saying (v. 60). Typically, the people were only thinking in terms of the physical. They failed to make the spiritual connection. (e.g. Nicodemus; woman at the well, etc.).
  - Jesus was NOT speaking of His LITERAL flesh and blood. That was ludicrous—Cannibalism. These men could not do it.
  - 2. Jesus was NOT referring to the Lord's Supper.
  - 3. Nothing physical can make a person spiritual (Rom. 14:17).
- B. The UNDERSTANDING. Jesus referred to His flesh as a metaphor for believing His WORDS (v. 63). The "life" Jesus offered (vs. 53-54) was in believing the WORDS He spoke (cf. v. 68).
  - → Jesus and His Word are practically synonymous. Jesus is the WORD made flesh. Whatever the Bible says about Jesus, it says about itself.
  - Jesus is holy... His Word is holy.
  - Jesus is truth... His Word is truth.
  - Jesus is light... His Word giveth light.
  - Jesus is eternal... His Word is forever settled in heaven.
  - Jesus is powerful... His Word is quick and powerful.
  - Jesus discerns peoples thoughts... His Word is a discerner of our thoughts and intents of our heart.

- Jesus gives life... His Word gives life.
- C. The ASSIMILATION (v. 56). When I eat physical bread, that bread literally becomes a part of me. When I receive Christ by faith, He becomes part of me... He lives in me... I am a partaker of His divine nature... He is in me and I in Him.

## **IV.** The STRENGTHENING of it (Mt. 4:4).

- What bread is to your stomach, Jesus is to your soul/spirit.
- Leviticus 26:26 refers to "the aff of your bread." A staff is something you lean on to hold you up. Bread is sustains us—holds us up!
- A. Manna sustained God's people on their way to the promised land. Jesus sustains us while we live in the wilderness of the world on our way to heaven.
  - Uneaten bread will not satisfy your hunger. It is not the bread on the shelf, but the bread that is assimilated that gives strength.
- B. There are some foods we eat only occasionally and others only when they are in season. But bread is a food we need daily. Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."
  - There must be a **daily appropriation** of Jesus. If the Christian fails to feed on Christ and His Word daily... he will become spiritually weak and sickly. This explains why so many Christians are spiritually flabby and easy prey for Satan's devices.

# V. The SATISFACTION of it (vs. 35).

- Sweets, candies, and chips do not satisfy like a healthy slice of bread. Substitutes for Jesus (religion... worldly pleasures), do not satisfy.
- When I partook of "the bread of life," all my deepest needs were satisfied. Jesus is everything I need (Hymn #492).
- A. Greek mythology speaks of "King Tantalus." He was punished by the Greek gods to be chained in chin-deep water with branches of choice fruit just above his head. When he would try to take a

bite of the fruit, the branches would withdraw themselves. When he would bend his head down to drink, the waters receded so he could not drink. He could not satisfy his hunger or his thirst. The story illustrates the frustration of trying to find satisfaction in the things of this world. His name "Tantalus is the origin of the word tantalize.

- That is what the world does—It will tantalize you with pleasure... power... possessions, but leave you empty... frustrated... and unsatisfied.
- Only Jesus can satisfy your soul...
- B. Blaise Pascal wrote in 1670: "What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there, the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object—in other words by God himself."
  - Pascal's quote has been paraphrased to say: "There is a Godshaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ."

**SUMMATION**: Have you received Christ as "the Bread of Life." If you don't partake of "the bread of life," you're toast! (v. 58).

Are you daily eating of "the bread of life" to nourish your soul?