

*June 19, 2022 - Pastor Rafael Aristy*

***I AM The Bread of Life*** - John 6:35 NIV

This is the first message in a 7-week series in the book of John called "I AM." John writes of 7 occasions where Jesus makes declarative statements revealing who He is. These statements were significant for the Israelites, and they are equally significant for us today.

The 7 metaphorical "I AM" statements are:

1. I am the bread of life (Jn 6:35,48) (cf. Jn 6:41,51)
2. I am the light of the world (8:12/9:5) (cf. Jn 9:5)
3. I am the gate (10:7,9)
4. I am the good shepherd (10:11,14)
5. I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)
6. I am the way, the truth, and the life (14:6)
7. I am the true vine (15:1, 5)

Today we will look at the first statement: **"I am the bread of life." John 6:35**

## **The Setting**

**The Passover** is the backdrop of John chapter 6. This is a significant and important festival for the Israelites. It is the time when they celebrate the Lord bringing them **out of Egypt**.

| *Dig deeper: explore the first Passover in Exodus 12*

The Passover lamb and its blood point to Jesus and the blood he shed as “**the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.**” (John 1:29)

The fact that this occurs during the Passover is highly significant because this is the time the Jews recognize/celebrate as their deliverance from bondage, and now Jesus is beginning to reveal himself as the **TRUE ETERNAL DELIVERER**.

Not only is Passover going on, but Jesus performs two miracles during this festival:

1. the feeding of the 5,000
2. walking on water

**These miracles point back to central events in Exodus:**

- The feeding of the 5,000 points to God’s **provision of manna** for the Israelites in the Wilderness (**Exodus 16:4**).
- Walking on water points to **the EXODUS itself** when the Israelites walked through the Red Sea on dry ground (**Exodus 13:17-18**)

With the multiplication of the bread and fish in the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus is setting the table to show the Jews He is the BREAD OF LIFE!

He is setting the table to show that He is the one who **sustains**, the one who **satisfies**, the one who **gives life**.

After this, a large crowd begins following Jesus because of the miracles they’ve seen him perform. He gets away by himself and the disciples hop on a boat and go on their way to Capernaum. Jesus had not joined them yet. He shows up walking on water and they freak out.

- He tells them “**It is I; don’t be afraid!**” John 6:20
- This “It is I” has the same meaning as “I AM”

With Jesus walking on water, not only does Jesus show He is able to defy the laws of physics by the way he interacted with water (something the Israelites would attribute to God due to the Red Sea experience), but also by saying I AM, translated here “It is I”. He brings back what God told Moses when he asked Him “who do I tell the Israelites sent me?”

**Exodus 3:14NIV** God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’ ”

This is the context for the passage in John 6.

*The fact that this occurs during the Passover is highly significant because this is the time the Jews recognize and celebrate as their deliverance from bondage, and now Jesus is beginning to reveal himself as the **true eternal deliverer**.*

## In John 6, there are 3 types of hearers

**Outline of the Discourse on the Bread of Life (6:22-71)**

**3 types of hearers**

**The Multitude (v22-40)** - the group who had witnessed the miracle, materialistic curiosity seekers who were self-satisfied in their tradition.

**The Jews (v41-59)** - in the synagogue at Capernaum, they represent the element that became vocal and argumentative.

**The Disciples (v60-71)** - an interview with the disciples (more than the 12) shows the effect of Jesus' words on the inner circle of His own followers.

**Merrill C. Tenney**  
*John: The Gospel of Belief, The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament*

The first group of hearers:

### **1. The multitude:**

#### **John 6:26-27 NIV**

**26** Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but **because you ate the loaves** and had your fill. **27** Do not **work** for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

These were the ones who were curious and seeking Jesus because He had given them bread. This speaks to MOTIVES.

The multitude/crowd had a materialistic curiosity. A "what's in it for me?" type of attitude.

- Have you ever seen someone who is going through a rough time, and they start coming to church. They seemingly begin following Jesus but when things turn around it's like, "Thank you Jesus, but I've got it from here."

*What's your **motive** for coming to **church**? What is your **motive** for coming to **Jesus**?*

After Jesus' reply, they ask him "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

**29** Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: **to believe** in the one he has sent."

This answer was not what they were expecting. Their view of eternal life was based on works...based on them earning salvation by good works

- Judaism stressed righteous works, but Jesus stressed the work of God is to BELIEVE in Him

That seems simple enough, doesn't it? 'Believe in the ONE He has sent'. Not really. After operating in a specific way, we develop habits and mental maps that dictate how we behave and what we believe to be true.

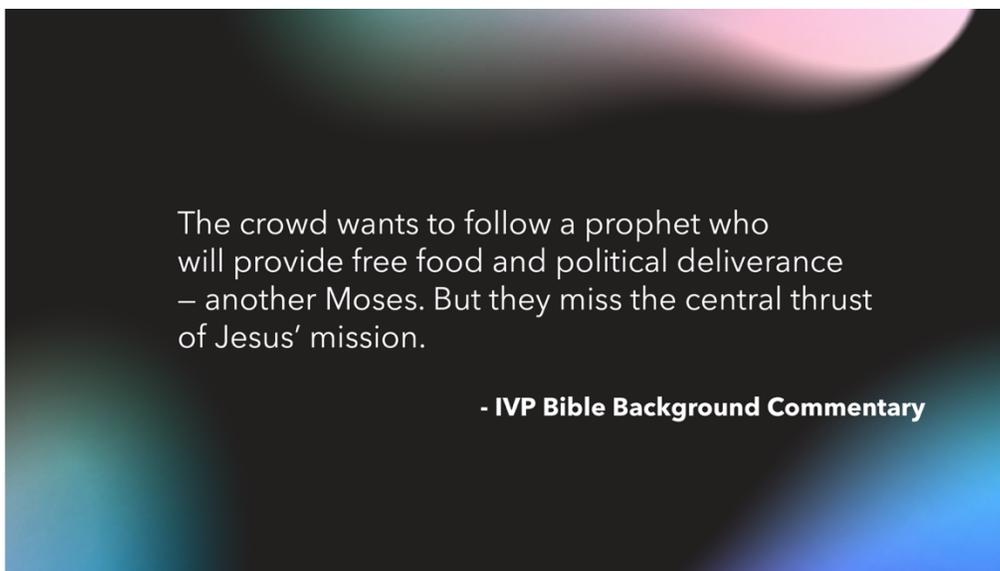
Maybe you have been trying to work to gain God's approval (there's a time for works), when what you must do first is BELIEVE...that's where it starts.

- You've been trying to "BE GOOD"
- You've been trying to act in a way that may make you feel God approves of you
- The problem with that is that, when you don't measure up, you condemn yourself

A relationship with God begins by BELIEVING in Jesus.

The MULTITUDE asked Jesus, 30 "What miraculous sign will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?"

- They told Jesus that Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat
- They were still stuck in the past. They were looking for physical bread
- They were looking for miraculous signs...looking to satisfy their appetites.



They completely missed thrust of Jesus' mission: To bring LIFE to the dead. To bring FREEDOM to the captives.

The question the multitude asks tells us a lot concerning where they are in their relationship with Jesus.

- The MULTITUDE is still asking Jesus to perform for them
  - “Jesus, what will you do so I can believe? Do something for me.”

This has echoed through history...remember what one of the thieves on the cross said to Jesus? “If you are the Christ, save yourself and save us...”

The gospels also tell us of the Pharisees and religious leaders asking Jesus for a sign...His response?

**Matthew 12:39 NIV** “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

It is interesting that the MULTITUDE is asking for a sign when they had already witnessed miraculous signs:

**14** After the people saw the miraculous sign Jesus performed, they began to say, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.”

You must make a decision to believe who Jesus says He is, not because of what He does, but because of faith.

*Jesus is the one who sustains and nourishes our spiritual life.*

After asking Jesus “what miraculous sign will you do?”, they proceed to tell Jesus that their forefathers ate manna from heaven in the desert. Jesus tells them:

**John 6:35 NIV** Then Jesus declared, “**I am the bread of life.** Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

God revealed Himself to the Israelites in the wilderness:

- He provided food for them in the desert
- He was the one who sustained them. God was their source, not a man (Moses)
- NOW Jesus has become our source of life

But there is a requirement...to COME to Him.

***Jesus is the one who sustains and nourishes our spiritual life.***

The second group of HEARERS:

## **2. The Jews**

They were the ones who were familiar with who Jesus was...Jesus the man.

**41** At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." **42** They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven?'"

There's a level of familiarity. These Jews think they know this Jesus and they grumble at Jesus' statement of "I am that bread that came from heaven."

- This points to the grumbling they did in the wilderness against Moses (**Exodus 16:2**)
- They grumbled against the man (Moses) whom God sent to deliver them from slavery of Egypt
- Now they grumble against the ONE whom God sent to deliver them from slavery to sin and the Devil

Then Jesus takes it a step further, He tells them:

**51** I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

This really sends them over the edge... **52** "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

After their GRUMBLING, Jesus adds,

**53** "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

Remember The Passover? The Israelites were to slaughter the lamb and eat it.

- This is a marvelous symbolism
- Jesus is pointing directly to the Passover lamb
- The lamb that gave its life IN ORDER that they may live

A thoughtful interpreter, however, might have also recalled the expression "the blood of grapes," meaning wine (Gen 49:11), which was essential to the Passover meal.

- IVP Bible Background Commentary

Jesus' words were challenging. His words were difficult for them to understand.

- There's an obvious tension with what Jesus is saying "eat my flesh and drink my blood"
- It sounded like CRAZY talk to them
- It sounds crazy to some today to be a Christian

To me "eat my flesh and drink my blood" means that:

- Jesus must be part of WHO I am, just like when you eat something, it digests and absorbs.
- I must be willing to accept His sacrifice that paid for my sin and provided my deliverance, BUT ALSO that I must be willing to bleed for him...to suffer, if He wills.

The third group of HEARERS:

### **3. The Disciples**

**60** "On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" **61** Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you?"

These hearers are not only the 12 disciples, but the inner circle of Jesus' followers.

- They could not come to terms with what he was saying. Who can accept it?
- Jesus' ask was too much for them.
- Jesus knew he had offended their religious system, their belief system.

### **John 6:66-69 NIV**

**66** From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. **67** "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. **68** Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. **69** We have **come to believe** and **to know that you are the Holy One of God.**"

Following Jesus is not for the faint of heart.

- It is not for those who get easily offended
- It is not for those who are looking for the easy way out
- It is not for those who want all the satisfactions/BENEFITS of the Kingdom with submitting to the KING

No matter what Jesus asks, we may respond like Peter:

"Lord, to whom shall we go?...We have **come to believe** and **to know that you are the Holy One of God.**"

- This is a statement of FAITH, of TRUST, CONVICTION, and of DEPENDANCE

Jesus declared, "**I am the bread of life.** Whoever **comes** to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

Jesus is declaring today - I am the "BREAD" that will fill you  
 He is declaring today - I am the "BREAD" that will satisfy you  
 He is declaring today - I am the "BREAD" that will sustain you

Is Jesus the "bread" in your life? Are you turning to other things to satisfy and sustain you?

Are you looking for free food and a political leader? Don't come to Jesus.

- BUT if you have tried to receive life and walked away feeling empty with things that satisfy only momentarily
- If you're looking for the BREAD of LIFE...the bread that truly satisfies and gives life...

*Is Jesus the "bread" in your life? Or are you turning to other things to **satisfy** and **sustain** you?*

*Jesus is the ONLY answer!*

**The gap between 'more' and 'enough' never closes. Jesus IS the 'enough'. Jesus says "I AM the enough".**

Questions to consider:

1. What group of hearers do you identify most with?
2. Have you come to Jesus only for what he can do (miracles)?
3. What would it look like for you to trust Him to satisfy and sustain you?
4. What is your response to Jesus through the message today?