

## **I AM: I Am The Bread of Life<sup>i</sup>** **John 6:25-35**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Good morning, Trinity! It is so good to see you today. My name is Chris Wigley, I'm one of the pastors here at Trinity. If you are a first-time guest, we are just thrilled to have you with us today. We'd love the opportunity to get to know you a little bit. You can provide information to us by texting the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mount Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you send that keyword, a link will be sent back to you and that will take you to a form that is less than a minute to fill out. When you click "submit," it notifies me, and I always look forward to following up with our guests each week.

If text messaging isn't your thing, please swing by our information center located in the fellowship area, right out these doors in the lobby. We have a gift there for you just as a way of saying thank you for being our guest today. Again, we are thrilled you have chosen to worship with us today.

### **SERIES OVERVIEW:**

Today we are kicking off a new teaching series simply titled, "I AM." We are going to press pause on our study through 1 Samuel and study each of the 7 sayings of Jesus that begin with the phrase, "I AM." Now, we will work our way back to 1 Samuel, for those of you whose OCD is in high gear right now, and we will pick up where we left off.

Throughout the Gospel of John, we find 7 "I Am" statements of Jesus. These are statements that Jesus made about Himself. And in each of these statements He reveals who is truly is. And what He reveals is both surprising to His audience and encouraging to His followers. In these statements, we see who Jesus is and what it is that He came to accomplish.

I wanted to study this following Easter because in light of Jesus being the resurrected victorious warrior, in light of Him being Lord and Savior, we ought to know Him fully, at least seek to know Him to the extent that our finite minds can comprehend. But we also need to know and see His heart towards people. Jesus was very intentional in the use of these statements, they are not flippantly stated and recorded. In fact, Jesus will be challenged and He will face testing for the things that he says and the things that He claims. As a result,

each follower of His should know them. My prayer is that through this study, we gain a deeper understanding of who Jesus is.

So, this morning, I want to launch our series by looking at the first recorded I Am statement. Jesus says, "I am the bread of life." So, I want to invite you to grab your bibles and let's turn to John, chapter 6, we're going to begin in verse 25. Today we are going to examine The Name, The Need, and The Response. Name, Need, Response.

### **MESSAGE:**

So, let's begin in by looking at...

#### **1) The Name.**

Names are important. That was especially the case in Jesus' day. But perhaps your name is meaningful. Maybe you were named after a parent or grandparent. Anybody that's the case? Maybe you were named after a person in the bible? Anyone here where that's the case? Anyone name Judas? I didn't think so.

But you know, some names even reflect your family's history. For example, Millers, if that's your last name, your family ground or "milled" wheat into flour. The Smiths were metal workers long ago; silversmiths, goldsmiths or blacksmiths. Jones family, we're not really sure what you guys did, we are all just trying to keep up with you. Names mean things.

Other people's names reflect a relationship. Erickson is the son of Erick. Anderson explains the relationship of a father and son. So forth and so on.<sup>ii</sup>

When it comes to Bible times, names were very important. And we learn in the book of Exodus God's name. God revealed His name. When the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt, they were in bondage and very much so mistreated. That went on for hundreds of years. God had enough and He chose a man named Moses to lead the people out of slavery and into freedom. Moses was in the wilderness and God appeared to him by way of a burning bush that wasn't being consumed. And God told Moses that he was chosen for this task.

Now, Moses, unsure of himself and his own ability, began questioning God. In one of his objections, Moses told God, "Well, if I go and tell the Israelites that their God has sent me to do this, they're going to ask me what Your name is."

So, Moses asks, "What should I say to them?" In other words, the Jews are going to want to know who this God is that is going to set them free. So, God gave His name to Moses. In Exodus 3:14, God says, "My name is I AM WHO I AM." It is the name that we sometimes pronounce Yahweh. That's God's name.

When the Hebrew Scriptures were written, the name of God was considered too holy to speak out loud by anyone but priests.<sup>iii</sup> So, in some places in the Scriptures, you see a different word in its place. But when you see the word LORD in all caps, it is that covenant name of God, the I Am. This is the name that Almighty God gives Himself.

So, when Jesus comes on the scene, He is given many titles. At Christmas we studied that one of Jesus' titles was Emmanuel, which means God with us. Jesus is actually God with us. He is not like God or a god, He is God with us. God the Son. So, in Jesus, the Great I Am came to dwell among us. And when Jesus uses the phrase, "I Am," He is intentionally making reference to the name of God. He is saying, "I Am God."

Every time Jesus makes an I Am statement, He's connecting to God's name being I AM WHO I AM. He says, "I am the bread of life," "I am the light of the world," "I am the door, I am The Good Shepherd, I am the resurrection and the life, I am the Way, the Truth, and The Life," and, "I am the true vine." And Jesus backed up all those claims to being God by performing miracles.

As we are going to see, the first statement, "I Am the bread of life," is a direct tie to Moses and the Exodus.<sup>iv</sup> But it also comes on the heels of one of Jesus' most famous miracles, the feeding of the 5,000. Really it is the feeding of the 15,000 or more. In those days, only the heads of households were counted. So, by the time you add everyone present, there's like 15,000 people that are fed. The miracle being that Jesus did that with a sack lunch and still had leftovers. Let's read the passage in its entirety. John, chapter 6, beginning in verse 25.

*<sup>25</sup>When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?"* So, Jesus retreats after the miracle and tells the disciples to head to Capernaum [Ka Per Neh Um]. Jesus joins them later by walking on the water, another incredible miracle. The next day, everyone started out to Capernaum so they could see more of Jesus' miracles. And Jesus calls them out on it.

Verse 26. *<sup>26</sup>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. <sup>27</sup>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." <sup>28</sup>Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?"* Isn't that interesting? What do we have to do to get more stuff from you, Jesus? *<sup>29</sup>Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that that you believe in him whom he has sent."* Don't do, just believe in Him. *<sup>30</sup>So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?"* You see the absurdity here, right? Like they all just ate miracle food, they witnessed a miracle before their eyes, and they want more signs? That's the human condition, right? They go on, *<sup>31</sup>Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'*" This is the reference to when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, and they were wandering in the wilderness. They didn't know where they were going to get food. The next morning, a bread like substance fell from Heaven and they took it at ate it for nourishment. Manna, literally translated means, "What is it?" So, God provided for them. And the Rabbis taught that when the Messiah comes, He will give manna to people just like Moses. So that's why they make this statement.

Verse 32. *<sup>32</sup>Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup>For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." <sup>34</sup>They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." [To which] <sup>35</sup>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."*

All this talk about bread and Moses and Jesus is saying, listen, I'm the bread of life. And in so doing, Jesus corrects their thinking. Number 1, it wasn't Moses that gave you manna. Verse 32, it was God, The Father, that did that. Number 2, that bread was just physical food and didn't have any eternal value. And number 3, the true spiritual nutrition needed is a person, not a loaf of bread.<sup>v</sup>

See, the bread of God, the true bread of God, is a person.<sup>vi</sup> Look at verse 33 again. *<sup>33</sup>For the bread of God is he...*" It's a person. And Jesus goes on to say, I am that He, I am that person. I am the bread of life. That's the name and the power behind the statement.

So, we've examined the name, now let's look at...

## 2) The Need.

Jesus is the ultimate teacher. He is masterful in His analogies. He said that there is a deeper need behind your desire to want bread. He says they are looking for life. Jesus is speaking of something way different from what these folks are talking about. Why? Well, Jesus is driving at the heart of the matter.

See, in the original language that this passage was written in, there are three words that can be translated as "life."<sup>vii</sup> This is where we see the limitation of the English language. Greek has so much more clarity. So, one word for life is the word, bios [Be Ohs]. That is where we get our word biology. That is talking about physical life. Natural human life.

The second Greek word for life is the word, "psyche." Where we get the word psychology. It refers one's personality, the inner life, or one's thought life.

But the third word for life is the word, "zoie" [Zo A]. This kind of life is eternal life, spiritual life. And that's the word Jesus uses here. I am the bread of ultimate life, I am the source of eternal life. Sure, He is the source of physical life, He created it. And yes, God gives us a personality. But more than those things, in Christ, there is true life, spiritual life. It is the same word Jesus uses in John 10:10 when He says that he came to give us abundant life. Fulfilling life. True life. This is something that is far greater than physical life.

So, in using the word, "zoie," Jesus is saying that **we have a hunger that transcends our physical nature**. And by interacting with the people the way He is, Jesus is going after the space in their lives that only He can heal.<sup>viii</sup> Right? He just fed the people physically, but they are already hungry again, desiring more bread. But they are missing true life. So, by claiming to be the Bread of Life, Jesus is saying that what you are truly hungering for is Me.

Listen, Jesus is still looking for people who are looking for life. And that's everyone by the way. He still offers us true life. The problem with the people in this passage is that they refuse to accept His definition of life.

Verse 26. *<sup>26</sup>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.* In other words, you're hungry again and you are wanting me to solve that hunger.

Verse 27. *<sup>27</sup>Do not work for the food that perishes* [Don't only seek temporary food], *but for the food that endures to eternal life* [true life], *which* [only] *the Son of Man will give to you*. The people want temporary bread when Jesus is offering eternal life.

The same is true for us. We're no different than the crowd Jesus is addressing. We all have a "zoie" need that we try to fill with "bios" solutions.<sup>ix</sup> And we know the outcome. It always fails us. Doesn't it? **When the crowd says we are concerned with our stomachs, Jesus says, "I'm concerned with your heart."** We've all heard a pastor say, "There is a God-shaped hole in your heart that only He can fill."<sup>x</sup>

And the Bible says the heart is easily deceived. That's true, isn't it?! Our hearts know that we need life, but our tendency is to look for it in all the wrong places. People think, "I hate my job. I'm in a dead-end job, it's draining me." So, we go to another job to find what? The same thing. Now, I'm not saying that God isn't desiring you to take another job. I'm just saying at what point do we find contentment?

Or we say, "Things are caving in all around me, I'll find the solution to all the challenges of life in a bottle or a drug." Or we think, "I'm so unsatisfied. I will find life in the pleasures of this world." Or we say, "My spouse just doesn't meet my needs, it's a fight all the time, and what I need is a different relationship." Or what about this one? "I just need more affirmation in my life, so I'll find life in the opinions and thoughts of others." And so, we work hard to build this image for others to see.

Listen, Jesus sees all that and He goes after that. That is the space that only He can fill. He's concerned. Jesus sees that and is like, "Oh man! They're feasting on the wrong things." We have a tendency to turn to things that only wind up leaving us feeling empty. You and I will never be truly filled by those things. They're fleeting. The reason why those things can never satisfy is because we try to solve a "zoie" problem with a "bios" solution.

But Jesus is the bread of life. Only in Him can we find true life. Satisfaction, fulfillment, hope, and meaning. We've looked at the name and we've looked at the need. Now, let's look at...

## 3) The Response.

Verses 28-35. *28Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?"* [They aren't interested in a relationship with Jesus. All they want are the benefits and not Him. And Jesus is going to expose their true motivation.] *29Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you **believe** in him whom he has sent."* Believe. Have faith in. Trust in. *30So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?"* Show us you are who you say you are. What? He just fed 15,000 people! Jesus is getting to their true motivation. *31Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'* *32Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."* *34They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."* *35Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.*

Jesus didn't come to bring bread; He came to be bread welling up to real life. But that only comes by having a personal relationship with Jesus. He is saying that you think you are looking for more things, but what you are really looking for is me. Jesus is saying He's all we need.

Here's a question that I think is worthy of asking at this point. Could Jesus put an end to world hunger? Yes. In an instant. But that's not the real problem here, right? Because even if God did that, it would not solve the ultimate problem.<sup>xi</sup> See, it is possible to have your fill and not be satisfied. I read one commentator this week that said, "Our soul is craving someone, not something."<sup>xii</sup> And until we are settled with the Someone, we will never be content with something.

We see that in our day, right? Some of the most impoverished areas in the world are the most joyful people. There is something that transcends stuff. It is actually Someone; Jesus.

Unfortunately, the response of the majority of this crowd will be, sorry Jesus, I'm going to go after something. They will abandon Him, leave Him. They will ignore the very One that is before them. But the few will say something different. They will go on to say, at the end of chapter 6, "Where can we go? Only you have the words of life." The two responses that Jesus demands.

The question then becomes what is our response? Will you come to Jesus to find true satisfaction and fulfillment? To find true life? Eternal life? Or will you and I continue to pursue the things of this world only to keep coming up empty time and time again?

Jesus says today what he said so long ago, "I am the bread, the source, of eternal life. If you come to me, you will find life and never hunger or thirst again." Will you come to Jesus today?

### **CONCLUSION:**

When you think about it, the analogy Jesus uses here is perfect. Of course it is. He's God. But think about it. What is said of bread? We break bread. We eat it.

Listen, Jesus is the only bread that will break for you.<sup>xiii</sup> Of all the breads that are out there, careers, drugs, pleasures, relationships, affirmation, material possessions, Jesus is the only one that breaks for you. But all those other things will break you. They will leave you broken, wanting, addicted, hurt, and unsatisfied.

But Jesus is different. Instead of breaking you, He broke for you. He died a sinner's death upon the cross at calvary, taking our place there. He bore the penalty of our sin, was laid in a tomb, but rose from the dead on the third day. Jesus did all that so that hungry sinners might find true life.

The people in our passage of study were all tied up in manna from Heaven. But Jesus, quite literally, is the bread that came from Heaven. He has come to rescue us from sin, shame, and death. He can be enough for you if you'll allow Him. If you respond to Him as Lord and Savior of your life.

I'm going to pray and our worship team will lead us in a time of response. How will you respond to Jesus today? Our elders will be here at the front ready to receive you. Simply come, take us by the hand, and say, "I need Jesus." That's it. And make today the day of salvation.

Or, if there is an area of unsettledness in your heart, a relationship, a diagnosis, a burden, we would love to pray with you and over you. In all seriousness, this is a time of ministry. Let's come to the One that gives life. You come this morning. [PRAY]

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> Works consulted in preparation for this message: John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 1-11*, Moody Press: Chicago, 2006; Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2000; Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *The Communicator's Commentary: John*, Word Books: Waco, 1985; Jamin Roller, "I AM: The Bread of Life," sermon preached at The Village Church, February 7, 2016, accessed online:

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<https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/series/85/sermon/1191>.

<sup>ii</sup> This section was inspired by the illustration in Rev. Christian B Creyer's sermon.

<sup>iii</sup> Jenna Martin, "7 Meanings of Yahweh and Why It's Such an Important Name for God," article published by Bible Study Tools, December 9, 2022, accessed online: <https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/why-it-matters-that-god-is-yahweh.html>.

<sup>iv</sup> Roger L. Fredrikson, page 132-133.

<sup>v</sup> These three corrections were pointed out by Skip Heitzig.

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>vii</sup> Strong's Concordance, 2222 (zoie), 979 (bios), 5590 (psyche).

<sup>viii</sup> Idea taken from Matt Chandler's sermon.

<sup>ix</sup> Quip taken from Jamin Roller.

<sup>x</sup> Phrase first coined by Blaise Pascal.

<sup>xi</sup> J.D. Greear

<sup>xii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xiii</sup> Illustration taken from Jamin Roller.