

Fil-Am Community Church

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I Am the Bread of Life

Key Verse: John 6:35,51

This morning we're going to start a new series. It's called **"got Jesus?"** In this series we're going to look at the answers to the questions people ask about Jesus like "Who is Jesus?", "What did he do?", "What can he do for me?", "Why do people worship him?", **"Is he still relevant today?"** and so on. To answer these questions, we're going to look at the "I Am" statements of Jesus in the book of John in the Bible. There are seven of them. Pastor Dave and I are going to try to unpack these seven **"I Am"** statements of Jesus in the next several weeks. We're going to see how these statements will shed more light on the person of Jesus and why he impacts our lives.

There are two very important words in the Bible. These two words reveal who God really is. These two words are **"I Am"**.

God said those two words to Moses in the burning bush episode. At the time Israel was in bondage in Egypt, and suddenly, while Moses was tending sheep God spoke out of a burning bush. God told Moses that he was the man to lead the Israelites out of their bondage in Egypt.

And when Moses requested that God give him a name to tell the Israelites who had sent him we read in Ex. 3:14 *"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.'"*

And God went on to say in v.15, *"This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation."*

Now, what does "I Am" mean? "I Am" in Hebrew is "Ehyeh" and related to the Hebrew verb "to be" which implies the absolute existence of God. It also gives the meaning of "Self-existent One", someone who was never created and will continue to exist. So, that's a pretty powerful name.

This Hebrew name "Ehyeh" is the source of the other name of God "Yahweh" or "Jehovah". So, God claimed that name for himself.

Now, fast forward to the New Testament. In John 8, Jesus was having a not-so friendly conversation with certain Jews. Let me read the verses starting verse 52, *"At this they exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death. 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?" 54 Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. 55 Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." 57 "You are not yet fifty years old," they said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"*

58 *“Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”* 59 *At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.*

Notice in verse 58, Jesus says, “I am”. And immediately, the Jews reacted violently. They were going to stone him. Why a violent reaction? Because to their mind, Jesus committed blasphemy. Jesus said “I am” and they knew that that was God’s name. In effect, they knew that Jesus was claiming to be God but to them Jesus was just a mere man. And what is the punishment for blasphemy? Death by stoning. Leviticus 24:16 said, *“Anyone who blasphemes the name of the LORD must be put to death. The entire assembly must stone him. Whether an alien or native-born, when he blasphemes the Name, he must be put to death.”* For sure, the Jews knew about this and they were ready to execute judgment.

So, Jesus is God. The Jesus of the New Testament is the Jehovah or Yahweh of the Old Testament. The Book of John reveals some more of the divine nature of Jesus and how through his I Am statements he can lead you out of bondage from sin and death just like he led his people out of bondage from Egypt thousands of years ago.

This morning we’re going to look at the first “I Am” statement of Jesus that John mentions – **I am the Bread of Life.**

Who loves bread? I love bread...second to rice. But I really love bread especially if that bread is pan de sal, the Philippine bread. In the Philippines, pan de sal comes in different sizes and shapes. And you'll really love it when it's served straight from the oven.

I remember when I was young, my mom would wake me up early in the morning to run to the bakery to buy a bunch of them. They were hot and sometimes I had a hard time holding the paper bag containing these bread because they were just hot. But, of course, as I walked back home, I was already munching one bread. Sometimes two. I always had a headstart. Because I knew that when I got home, they would be gone in 60 seconds. Imagine seven hungry kids waiting to devour those soft, succulent, tasty breads.

Now, the only thing I don't like about bread is when it's all gone. Bread brings satisfaction, but it is **only temporary**. No matter how much we have it in stock, bread will be gone--or if I don't eat it right away it will become stale, and then moldy, and I'll have to throw it away. I know that when the bread is gone I'll soon become hungry again, and until I get something to eat I won't be satisfied.

In our text Jesus called Himself the Bread of Life or the Living Bread.

v.35 says, “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.**”*”

v. 51 says, “*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.*”

The most interesting thing about this bread Jesus talks about / is that it will last forever. I want you to keep that in mind as we examine Jesus' claim to be the Bread of Life.

Now, as we look at this statement of Jesus, the first thing we must understand is that:

1. THE SOUL IS HUNGRY

When we are physically hungry our stomachs growl. But if we will open our ears to the sounds of the world around us I believe we will hear the growling of people's souls. The people of Jesus' day experienced this spiritual hunger. At the beginning of this chapter, Jesus had fed the crowd of 5,000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish. And now they have come to Jesus wanting more food –their physical hunger was only temporarily satisfied. And Jesus told them in v.27 “*Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you...*” Jesus knew that although

these people had a real need for physical nourishment, their need for spiritual nourishment was even greater.

Isn't that evident in the world today? Can you hear the cries of people who are living their lives without Christ? Can you hear their souls crying out for something to eat? Can you see the moral degradation of our world and see that it directly corresponds to the need for spiritual fulfillment? Why does the drug addict keep taking drugs? Why does the alcoholic keep drinking? Why does the prostitute sell her body? Why does the homosexual march through the streets of our cities declaring to have "Gay Pride"? Why do people turn to religious cults in droves? Why do men and women reject those they have committed their lives to in marriage and go out and have adulterous relationships?

It might seem like too simplistic of an answer--but I believe it is because they have a **spiritual void** in their lives. They walk through life with an empty spot in their heart and they don't know how to fill it. So they turn to the things they think will satisfy--things like booze, sex, and cults. And when these don't satisfy their craving they turn to another vice, and another.

Do you want to know why depression is the most common mental problem in the world today?--it is because people have hungry souls and they don't know how to feed them.

So we've identified our condition--the Soul is Hungry; the 2nd thing we need to notice is the sad news that:

2. THE WORLD CANNOT FEED IT

Secular agencies and governments have been somewhat successful in feeding hungry people. During times of natural disaster or crisis different agencies are quick to come to the rescue. And no matter how you feel about our present welfare system we do know that there are not many poor people in this country going without food. But when it comes to spiritual hunger secular agencies and individuals have done more harm than good.

Those outside of Christ seem to believe that all human problems can be solved through psychology and psychiatric treatments. In today's world psychology doesn't try to fix problems as much as it tries to give approval to them. Up until just a few years ago Psychiatric journals looked down upon homosexuality, treating it as a sexual disorder--now it is considered acceptable behavior. Have the facts changed? Have there been studies that have changed their minds? Has some evidence come to light they didn't have before? No, the facts about homosexuality have remained the same. - But in our world it has become politically incorrect to point a finger and say "that behavior is wrong." And psychology now points its finger and says, "that behavior is acceptable as long as it's acceptable to you."

It seems that our world is not trying to help people fill their spiritual void as much as it is trying to fulfill their need for self-acceptance. And that goes totally against the teaching of the scriptures. Our world is so caught up in the psychological realm that we find we are beginning to accept concepts that are totally foreign to the Bible.

Examples:

1. Human nature is basically good--the Bible says it is inherently evil.
2. People have the answers to their problems inside them--the Bible says we can find the answers to our problems through Jesus and His Word.
3. The key to understanding and correcting a person's attitudes and actions lies somewhere in his past--the Bible teaches that understanding will come when our past is forgiven.
4. An Individual's problems are the result of what someone else has done to them--the Bible says our problems are a result of what we have done to ourselves.
5. Human problems can be purely psychological in nature, unrelated to any spiritual condition--the Word of God shows us that almost all of our problems are spiritual in nature.
6. Deep-seated problems can be solved only by professional counselors using therapy--the Bible teaches that the Word of God and the Holy Spirit is what we truly need to counsel us.

People are crying out to the world for help to fill the spiritual void in their lives. But the advice the world has to give only makes the void grow larger.

The Soul is Hungry; but the World cannot feed it; - the Good news is;

3. GOD HAS SENT US BREAD FROM HEAVEN

The people Jesus had fed wanted a sign from heaven. In v.31 they said to Jesus, "*Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'*" But Jesus replied in v.33 "*the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and **gives life to the world.***"

He went on to say in vv.48-51, "*I am the bread of life. 49 Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. 50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. 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.*"

Jesus was saying, "You want a sign from heaven? **I am the sign from heaven.**" "You want proof--I'm giving up my life for you." "You want manna that will temporarily satisfy--**I am the bread that satisfies forever.**"

God saw the hunger of the world's soul. So He sent Jesus to satisfy that hunger. God has sent us bread from heaven.

So we've seen that the Soul is Hungry; that the World cannot feed it; and that God has sent us bread from heaven: The last and most important point is this:

4. WE MUST PARTAKE OF JESUS TO FILL OUR HUNGER

A very thin man met a very fat man in the hotel lobby. "From the looks of you," said the fat man, "there might have been a famine."

"Yes", was the reply, "and from the looks of you, you might have caused it."

There's a famine in many parts of the world today. You have all seen films of the starving children of the Third World. It is almost impossible to look at them very long. Their stomachs are protruding; there are flies stuck to their faces; they are crying out for something to eat.

Let's say we had a big grocery bag filled with nutritious food and we placed it in front of one of those children. But we put the bag inside a cage that is locked. The child could see the food; and would have a great desire for the food; but until the cage was unlocked the food would do him no good.

The spiritually hungry of the world are in a very similar situation. They have a great hunger in their life but no way to fill it. But Jesus enters the scene.

They learn who He is and begin to understand what He's about. They can look at Him and see that He is what is needed to fill their spiritual stomachs.

But sometimes they find that Jesus--like our bag of groceries--is locked up in a cage and they can't reach Him. Is it because Jesus doesn't want them to have Him? No.

It is one of two reasons:

1. Sometimes we Christians have locked Him up by not telling the world that He is available for their every need.

And they can see us and they can see Jesus somewhere in the shadows, but until we tell them about Him we are just as cruel as someone who wouldn't share our food with a starving child.

3. The second reason has to do with the spiritually hungry person.

Some know without a doubt that Jesus will satisfy their need. But they themselves are unwilling to unlock the door. It isn't a door holding Jesus in-- It is the door of their heart that is keeping Him out. The starving child wouldn't hesitate to partake of food if he was able--but for some reason many without Christ refuse to partake of Him even though He is standing at the door of their heart.

How do we partake of Jesus? Jesus tells us concerning Himself in v.51, *"If anyone eats of this bread He will live forever. This bread is my flesh which I*

will give for the life of the world." He goes on to say in v.53, "Jesus said to them, "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."

Was He talking about cannibalism? No. Was He talking about the Lord's Supper. No, it has nothing to do with that. Jesus was saying, "To partake of Me is to make Me a part of you."

He is saying, "Don't hold back--take all of Me--allow Me to work in your life." How do you partake of Jesus. There are three simple steps. As simple as ABC. First, admit that you are hungry for forgiveness of your sins. Admit that you're a sinner who needs forgiveness. Second, Believe in your heart that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose from the dead to give you eternal life. And Third, confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of your life.

Jesus is the Bread of Life. And the good news is, **this bread will never run out--It will last forever.** He is **enough for you** today and forever.

Let us pray.....