

I AM the Bread of Life 4.23.17 #cccsermons

The I AM Claims of Christ Series

Jesus used the words "I AM" to describe Himself on eight different occasions in book of John and the book of Revelation, which was also written by John.

- The first time it is found is in **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."*

The phrase I AM was a pretty **SACRED** phrase in the life of a Jew.

- The origin of the phrase came back from **Exodus 3**, where Moses had just been summoned by God through a burning bush in the desert to help the Israelites get out of Egypt, but Moses felt inadequate. (see **Exodus 3:13-14**)
 - **Exodus 3:13-14** (NIV) *Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" 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.'"*
 - The Lord basically said to Moses to tell them, **"Whatever you need, I, the great I Am, will supply it."**
- God tells Moses His name is **I AM** because **God simply IS**, that there was never a time when He did not exist, or a time when He will cease to exist.
- Fast forward to the New Testament, and in **John 8:58**, Jesus shocked religious leaders when He said, **"Before Abraham was, I AM."** The religious leaders were so furious at Him that they wanted to stone Him because Jesus was claiming to God. So when Jesus declared, **"I am the bread of life"** in **John 6:35**, Jesus was just beginning a revelation to His followers that He is what everyone **NEEDS**, that He becomes whatever is lacking in our time of need.

It is no shock that Jesus talked about food to share the message of the Gospel. Jesus always used what was around Him to share the Gospel and so should we.

- Bread, **or food in general**, is essential and vital for life because no one can live very long without food.
- Just as God gives us physical food to sustain us physically, and if we don't take it, eat it, digest it, **we will die**, in the same way God gives us spiritual food to sustain us, but if we do not take it, apply it, live it, we will die of **SPIRITUAL STARVATION**.

Let's look at the events that preceded this statement of Jesus in John 6 which starts with the feeding of the 5000. (see **John 6:1-15**)

- In a truly miraculous way, Jesus uses the lads lunch and not only feeds everyone, but the disciples even gather 12 baskets of leftovers.
- Ironically, because the people were so thrilled with the miracles and having their bellies full, they now wanted to **forcibly** make Jesus their king, so the Bible said that Jesus went up into the hills to get away from them.
- Jesus did not want to be king of Israel, but He did want to be king of everyone's **HEART**. Jesus could have been king, but chose not to.
- That night, fearing the misplaced zeal of the crowd, Jesus LITERALLY walked across the Sea of Galilee and freaks out his disciples. (see **John 6:16-24**)
- Undeterred, the next morning, the crowds all pile in boats, cross the sea of Galilee, and find Jesus. When they find him, they ask for another miraculous sign to prove He is the Messiah. READ **JOHN 6:24-35**

Many of the people who followed Jesus at this point were hoping for a **POLITICAL SAVIOR**. They wanted political solutions, with free handouts, and welfare.

John 6:26 (NIV) *Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill."*

- These people look to God only for what they can get out of Him. And they are quick to turn their back the first time He fails to **DELIVER** what they want.
- Jesus didn't come to **ENTERTAIN**, but came to challenge us to give our lives by serving and living a Christ-like life. And the Gospel is not mentioned to make you feel better, but to convict you.

Sadly, when we don't do anything with the conviction of the Holy Spirit, then we just become fat in our PEWS. We have too many fat Christians, who have eaten the good things of God, but have never done anything with it.

- God's desire is not that we become fat Christians, but that we are healthy Christians by looking to Christ to satisfy our hunger.

When Jesus said in **John 6:27** (NIV) *Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you,* Jesus is telling them to don't waste all of this effort in seeking things

which are here today and gone tomorrow like food, drink, relationships, toys, home, cars, clothing, and more.

- God has given us these things and they all can be good, but when we **OVERINDULGE** ourselves on these "good needs", we become fat in all the wrong ways.

Ways We Become Fat Today:

- **#1 We become fat with POSSESSIONS** – We have to have the latest and greatest. We think stuff satisfies. (see **Mark 8:36**)
- **#2 We become fat with PLEASURES** – We are always looking for ways to spoil ourselves. (see **Proverbs 21:17** and **Ecclesiastes 2:1**)
- Solomon had tried it all but nothing satisfied.
- **#3 We become fat in PROSPERITY** - God never promises fat bank account to all his faithful, but He does promise to be faithful to meet your needs at just the right time and in His **perfect** way.
- **#4 We become fat in PRIDE** – thinking we can meet all of our own needs with our wealth and wisdom.

Ironically, every time God's people thought they didn't want God or need God, God **still** sustained them. In fact, God sustained the Israelites for 40 years in the wilderness by sending manna from heaven.

- **John 6:30-31** (NIV) *So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"*
- Even though God provided manna in such a supernatural way, it was only for **ONE**-day use. God was teaching them to trust God for their **DAILY** bread. (see also **Proverbs 30:7-9** and **Matthew 6:5-15**)
- **Proverbs 30:7-9** (NIV) *Two things I ask of you, Lord; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.*

Like the crowd, we can take good things and pursue them more than we pursue Jesus. They can satisfy us for a brief time, but soon or later, we will be even emptier and hungrier than we were before.

- This is how the devil works, trying to get us obsessed with things we need in order to try to fill our emptiness. Since the garden, the devil has been offering **ENTICING** "food" to keep us from God or the things of God.

We need to stop going after the temporary satisfaction and move on to maturity.

- **Hebrews 5:11-14** (NIV) *We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

Learn three things from Hebrews 5:14 about our spiritual walk:

- **#1** If we are not **CONSTANTLY** using the things of God we learn, soon we will become careless.
- **#2 We have to TRAIN ourselves** to be better by doing things on **purpose** every day.
- **#3 We need to distinguish** between what is good and evil and the only way to do this is to be in step with the **HOLY SPIRIT**.

Jesus is more interested in feeding our **SOULS** rather than our stomachs.

- Sometimes we think that one hour with Christ and one nourishing bite from the Bread of Life is expected to last at least seven days.
- **Actually, seven days without Christ makes one WEAK.**
- When Jesus made the statement **"I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty"**, Jesus wants them to see the reality they were starving to death spiritually.
- There is a spiritual hunger and thirst within all of us that we must recognize.

Be careful because when we starve ourselves spiritually, we will look for fulfillment on anything we can find to eat.

- **Psalms 34:8** *Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.*