

# I AM The Bread of Life

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This week we start a 7 week series looking at the person and work of Jesus as revealed by his "I am" statements in the Gospel of John. These 7 emphatic statements recorded by John portray the absolute deity of Jesus and, within the context of the Old Testament Scriptures, present Jesus as the fulfilment of God's promises for the restoration and salvation of Israel and the world. Each image helps us to more fully understand the nature of Christ as well as his purpose in coming to the world. My prayer for you is that through this series you might deepen your understanding of who Jesus is, and be more passionately devoted to him in response.

As we start this study, share what you felt God speaking to you through the sermon on Sunday.

## Immediate Context

Run your eye back over John 6:1-24 (feeding of the 5,000 and Jesus walking on water). What strikes you about Jesus from these 'signs' as John calls them?

Why would the people still doubt and ask for a sign after Jesus had just performed these ones (John 6:28-31)?

What does Jesus reveal about their motives in John 6:26-27?

**Sharing question:** It's easy to be guilty of seeking the gift and not the Giver of the gift. Sometimes we only recognize this in hindsight, after we become angry when God doesn't give us what we desire. So often, my prayers are about what I want and not about the greatness of the One to whom I speak. My time with Him is all about me rather than being about His glory and His kingdom. If comfortable, share with your group something you have sought from God in place of His presence and His love.

Contrast the people's motives (and sometimes ours) with Jesus' statement about his own motivations in John 4:31-34. In what way is this 'food' for Jesus?

In what ways would doing the will of the one who sends us (Jesus – see John 17:18) be satisfying and fulfilling in our lives today?

## Old Testament Context

Read John 6:31-35. Jesus here clearly draws a link with manna...read the account of the Israelites in Exodus 16 receiving manna 'from heaven' in the desert

- How is Jesus *like* the manna in the wilderness?

- How is Jesus *unlike* the manna in the wilderness?
- How was the Israelite's need for manna and response to God for providing it similar to our need for and response to Jesus today? In what ways are they different?

Jesus taught very clearly that he was greater than the Israelite's experience of 'bread from heaven' (Read John 6:47-51). In what ways is Jesus greater than the bread/manna received under Moses?

### **The Bread of Life**

John 6:35 – what is the hunger and thirst that you think Jesus is talking about here? In what ways does Jesus alone satisfy these (and satisfy them always)?

What is Jesus revealing about himself in calling himself the 'bread of life'?

Do you think that the parables Jesus told which involve feasting help us to understand Jesus as the bread of life (eg Luke 14:15-24)?

John 6:51 speaks to the free nature of this 'bread' and the all-inclusive nature of the offer of this bread ('whoever eats'). Has it been your experience that non-believers understand this good news, or do they feel there is 'a catch'?

How do we balance the free grace gift of Jesus with his demands of discipleship in the way we approach evangelism?

### **Let's get personal**

What are some of the things/attitudes in your life that make it difficult to fully depend on Jesus to meet all of your needs? Do you think that there are any genuine needs you have that Jesus is unable to meet?

So many people in our world today fail to grasp the greatness of Jesus, both who he is and what he offers. How can we demonstrate through our lives (not just our words) that He is our bread of life?

Using your own words, how would you summarise what Jesus is teaching here in one sentence?