

I AM the Bread of Life

Message 1 of 5 in the series: "I AM"

A. God's name is "I AM."

"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.'" God also said to Moses, 'Say to the Israelites, "The Lord, the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has sent me to you.'" This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.'" Exodus 3:13-15 (NIV)

I AM = "YHWH" (ancient Hebrew). It is pronounced "Yahweh" or "Jehovah" in English.

Note: God's existence doesn't depend on anyone or anything else. God's plans don't depend on any circumstances. He is always present everywhere, unchangeable, and completely self-sufficient to do whatever He wills.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end,' says the Lord God. 'I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come—the Almighty One.'" Revelation 1:8 (NLT)

Life Application: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea..." Psalm 46:1-2 (NIV)

B. Jesus came to reveal YHWH to us and make it possible for us to have a personal relationship with Him.

"In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being..." Hebrews 1:1-3b (NIV)

"...these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." John 20:31 (NKJV)

C. The day after miraculously feeding thousands of people with a little boy's lunch, Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again." John 6:35a (NLT)

1. Jesus reminded the crowd that YHWH's desire has always been to satisfy the hunger in our souls, not just our stomachs.

"I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. But don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval." John 6:26-27 (NLT)

"Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you..." Isaiah 55:2-3 (NIV)

Life Application: Do I want a personal relationship with Jesus, or do I just want Jesus to do stuff for me/give me stuff?

2. The crowd demanded that Jesus give them a miraculous sign to prove He was sent by God.

"Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do? After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" John 6:30-31 (NLT)

Note: A common (mistaken) expectation at that time was that when the Messiah came, God would start sending His people manna again. "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him." Deuteronomy 18:15 (NIV)

Life Application: Do I trust Jesus even when He works in ways that don't line up with my expectations, or do I have the attitude "What have you done for me lately?"

3. Jesus reminded the crowd that just as God had generously blessed their ancestors with physical bread from heaven (manna) that sustained their physical lives in the wilderness for 40 years, God was now blessing His people with spiritual bread from heaven (Jesus himself) who can give all who believe in Him abundant life for eternity.

“Jesus said, ‘I tell you the truth, Moses didn’t give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ ‘Sir,’ they said, ‘give us that bread every day.’ Jesus replied, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But you haven’t believed in me even though you have seen me... I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life. Yes, I am the bread of life! Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died. Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh.’ Then the people began arguing with each other about what he meant. ‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat?’ they asked. So Jesus said again, **‘I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you.** But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me...’” John 6:32-36 & 47-57 (NLT)

Note: Jesus’ instructions to His disciples at the Last Supper help us understand what He was talking about. “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’ Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.’” Matthew 26:26-28 (NKJV)

Life Application: Just as we choose to eat bread in order to satisfy hunger and sustain physical life, we must choose by faith to receive Jesus into our hearts in order to satisfy spiritual hunger and have eternal life.

“Many of his disciples said, ‘This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?’ ...At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, ‘Are you also going to leave?’ Simon Peter replied, ‘Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. **We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God.**’” John 6:60 & 66-69 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions:

1. How good are you with names? Share a time when you got someone’s name wrong. How did it make you feel?
2. Read Exodus 3:13-15 & Revelation 1:8. How does it make you feel to know that God’s name is “I AM”? Do you think it’s important to know this?
3. Read John 6:22-68. Why do you think the crowd that saw Jesus miraculously feed thousands with a little boy’s lunch followed Him to the other side of the Sea of Galilee? What were they looking for? How did Jesus respond to them? How were the people then like people today?
4. What did Jesus mean when he said, “I am the bread of life” and “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you”? (John 6:35 & 53) How do we do this?
5. Why do you think many people stopped following Jesus after he said these things? What things keep people from following Jesus today?
6. Discuss the following quotations:
“Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you...” Isaiah 55:2-3 (NIV)
“Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.” Augustine