

Sunday, May 16, 2021

THE “I AM” SAYINGS OF Jesus
“I AM the bread of life”
John 6:35

We are continuing our study of the teachings of Jesus. Last week we began an examination of the I AM sayings of Jesus as recorded in John. There are 7 specific passages, PLUS the bold declaration we examined last week where Jesus was likely quoting from Moses as recorded in Exodus 3:13-14 (the burning bush passage). He was declaring He is God in that statement. The I AM sayings we begin examining today give us a better understanding of who Jesus is – and our relationship with Him, when we follow Him. Today we want to talking about Jesus being “the Bread of Life”.

I. Background and context

- a. Begins with the feeding of the 5000 (6:1-14).
- b. Following this they want to make Jesus king immediately. But it is not time (and misunderstood), so Jesus departed into the mountains to be alone (6:15). While He is there, His disciples sailed toward Capernaum. John then records Jesus walking on water (John 6:16-21).
- c. The next day, people are searching for Jesus and find Him in Capernaum. Baffled as to how He got there they ask, “Rabbi, when did You come here?” (6:22-25)
- d. This begins our discourse on this occasion:
 - i. First, Jesus declares that they were not seeking Him because they saw signs (that verified His claims), but rather because He had fed them (John 6:26).
 - ii. He then introduces His spiritual food, *Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.*” (6:27)
 - iii. They ask, “*What shall we do that we may work the works of God?*”. Jesus answered, “*This is the work of God, that you may believe in Him who sent Me.*” (6:28-29)
 - iv. Again the people ask for a sign, even appealing to “our fathers” eating bread in the wilderness. (30) Jesus promptly reminds them that it was not Moses who gave that bread, but “*My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.*”
 - v. For the first time, He identifies Himself as that bread (vs. 33) “*For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.*”
 - vi. When the people ask for that bread (34), Jesus replies, “I am the bread of life.” (35). It is bread that can eternally satisfy hunger and thirst.
 - vii. Jesus then notes that many there did NOT believe. (36)
 - viii. He then notes that all who the Father gives to Him will come to Him, and such will by no means be cast out. (37-39). ¹ The point being, they would NOT rob the saved of their eternal reward.
 - ix. 6:40 – Jesus then says, “*And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*” (We will address this when we make application).

¹ NOTE: This is NOT teaching Calvinism (God randomly selects who will be saved and who will not – such contradicts too much of scripture. God is no respecter of persons – Acts 10:34, 1 Timothy 2:4; We have free-will – Acts 13:46, Revelation 22:17, etc.). Salvation is available to anyone willing to receive it

- x. 6:41-42 – typical – the Jews complained because of Jesus’ claim about being the bread that came from heaven. They even appeal to his earthly father and mother and ask how He came from heaven.
- xi. 6:43-45 – Jesus again defends Himself that those who belong will come to Him and even quotes from the prophets noting that they would be all be taught by God (Isaiah 54:13, Jeremiah 31:34, Micah 4:2, etc.) He continues, *Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.*
NOTICE that those who come are those who hear and learn. This is something ANYONE can do and describes ACTION one takes that leads to Jesus and the Father.
- xii. 6:46-47 – Jesus again reveals that HE is from God and has seen the Father. Then He offers an invitation, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.”*
- xiii. 6:48 - Again, for at least the 3rd time, Jesus said, *“I am the bread of life”*.
- xiv. 6:49-50 - Now He addresses the bread in the wilderness – they ate that bread, but NOW they are dead. He contrasts what He is offering with that. What He offers, “bread which comes down from heaven”, leads to everlasting life (if you eat of it you will not die).
- xv. 6:51 - Again, “I am the living bread” (5th time) which came from heaven. THIS time, Jesus identifies it saying, “that it is His flesh which He will give for the life of the world.” – a reference to His coming sacrifice.
- xvi. 6:52 – thinking carnally, the Jews argued about how they could eat His flesh (cannibalism).
- xvii. 6:53- 57 – in a very pointed way Jesus said to them, you either eat His flesh and drink His blood, you will not have eternal life. He says that it is how you abide in Him and He in you.
- xviii. 6:58, He concludes, *“This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.”*
- xix. 6:59- Many of His disciples see this as a hard saying and difficult to understand.
- xx. 6:61-63 – IMPORTANT: This explains what Jesus is saying. He again replies, “Are you offended?” What if I were to ascend as before? (without saving them). HE then notes that it is the Spirit who gives life. Flesh profits nothing. *“The words that I speak to you are spirit, and are life”* Thus Jesus declares plainly His words have a spiritual application. Which they did not grasp.
- xxi. Vs. 66ff – from that time many of His disciples left. Jesus calls for a commitment, and that is too much for them – PROVING that some were only following Him for the material and superficial reasons – to be fed, have some material need met, out of curiosity, etc. Jesus is even a little discouraged because of this as we read in the rest of the chapter. And here we find His true disciples stand with Him knowing who He is.

II. How is Jesus the Bread of Life?

a. ***First, as we have seen, understand that this is a spiritual application.***

- i. In our text, Jesus continually spoke of His being sent from heaven – 6 times in this text He speaks of this (33, 38, 41, 50, 51, 58). Continually, especially in John, Jesus keeps trying to drive this point home. His kingdom is spiritual (John 18:36) and spiritually based (see the Sermon on the mount where Jesus makes continued contrasts, etc.).
- ii. Jesus in our text CONTRASTED the manna in the wilderness and the bread He was offering.
 1. Meeting Jesus on this occasion, they want another meal and even appealed to Moses – John 6:30-31.
Exodus 16 describes this bread that sustained them for 40 years in the wilderness.
 2. Jesus quickly emphasized it was not Moses that gave them bread, but the Father (32). And He contrasts bread as the TRUE bread and gives life to the world (not just the Jews).
 3. Consider also the following about the bread of manna and the bread of Jesus:
 - a. Both came from God – heaven – Exodus 16:4

- b. But manna was temporary – only sustained life for the day. It is not keep them from dying physically. John 6:49-50 – Jesus noted the bread in the wilderness was temporary. They ate of it and now they are dead. Jesus - The bread of heaven – is eternal. You eat of it, and it can sustain you for eternity.
 - c. Both required faith – You had to act according to God’s instructions. Manna – gathered in the morning. 2 days’ worth on Friday. Etc. Jesus gives us instructions – we must obey Him. Obey the gospel in becoming a Christian, and remain faithful to Him.
 - d. AND, of course – as noted. The manna only sustained the physical body, while Jesus sustains the soul.
 - iii. He then challenged them with strong and offensive language to eat His body and drink His blood. BUT he does clarify what He meant in vs. 63 noting the flesh profits nothing and the Spirit gives life. *“The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”*
 - iv. With the teachings of Jesus and our relationship to Him – ALWAYS keep in mind the spiritual application. ***We developed that as we studied the parables.***
- b. **The point: Jesus is to sustain us.**
 - i. ***Bread is a source of sustenance.*** In scripture it could refer to literal bread or to food in general (Matthew 6:11). Jesus, in out even appealed to the manna in the wilderness. It did sustain them.
 - ii. ***The bread Jesus provides is Himself*** – as we go through this life, we need Jesus. He sustains our souls.
 - 1. He gives us direction through His word – John 6:45 in our text, Jesus appeals to those who hear and learn from the Father come to Him. Again vs. 63, the words He speaks are spirit and life. John 6:68 after this Peter rightly declares, *“You have the words of eternal life.”* Colossians 3:16 – let the word of Christ dwell in you richly
 - 2. He gives us an example to follow – 1 Peter 2:21, cf. John 13:15
 - 3. He intercedes for us – Hebrews 4:14-15, 7:25. Jesus is our avenue of prayer to the Father.
 - 4. He is the ONLY source of salvation – Acts 4:12
 - iii. ***We are to “partake” of Him.*** In vs. 57 Jesus said, *“he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.”* Observe the word here is a present tense verb (ongoing action) which is actually found throughout this discourse. The message of Jesus is about receiving Him, not a weekly memorial. Consider Galatians 2:20 – I am crucified with Christ. Philippians 3:7-11 – Paul counted all things loss to gain Him.
- c. **NOTE: This text is NOT a reference to the Lord’s Supper.** While the emblems we use symbolize His body and blood, that is all they do (Matthew 26:26-29, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). The Lord’s Supper is a memorial to be done weekly when we assemble together (Acts 20:7). But in our text, Jesus is clearly speaking about living FOR Him and letting Him be the source of our spiritual sustenance.

III. **Some lessons to consider:**

- a. **You can follow Jesus for the wrong reason** –
 - i. As earlier noted, many were following Jesus out of curiosity or for some material gratification.
 - ii. Far too many today want to follow Jesus, but on their own terms. They want to set the rules so that they can continue in their own sinful lifestyle. We cannot do that and truly follow Jesus.
 - iii. Luke 6:46 – Why do you call Me Lord, and not do the things that I say?

- iv. And let us not forget, one of those wrong reasons is turning the true gospel into a social gospel – that is about social reform and relief and entertaining the masses. Jesus was clear that using food to draw crowds will convert souls (See John 6:26, then 66.
What converts – the simple, gospel of Jesus – Romans 1:16.
- b. Are we feeding spiritually on Him?
 - i. First, do we know Him well enough to know He would do? All we can know about Him is what is revealed in His word – both His teachings and that of His apostles (John 14:26, 16:13 – He will guide you into all truth).
 - ii. Matthew 5:6 – do we crave to be righteous?
- c. What type of faith do we have?
 - i. Intermixed in His teachings – Jesus calls for us to believe in Him.
 1. John 6:35, ... *He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*
 2. John 6:40, *And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."*
 3. John 6:47 says, *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.*
 4. As we note often, Faith involves believing in Jesus.
 - ii. BUT we must be clear to understand that TRUE faith is obedient faith. You can believe and even profess Jesus and still not be saved – Matthew 7:21-23, James 2:14, 17-20, 24. consider later in John 12:42-43 notes that even among the rulers many believed, but...
 - iii. Hebrews 5:8-9 – He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.
 - iv. Even our text implies this. Consider the very idea of consuming His flesh and blood implies action. Jesus is calling for believers to act!

In a world that is spiritually and morally starving, we desperately need spiritual food. Jesus is the bread of life. Is He the bread of YOUR life? Think about it.