
Encounter(ing) God

Jesus Part 2

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Today — the Son, Jesus

Ideas about Jesus are all over the board —
non-existence, just another philosopher/teacher —
Almighty God in human flesh.

Our Goal — to reveal the truth of Jesus... so we can encounter Him.

The I AM Statements of Jesus

...what Jesus said about Himself

The Eight *I Am* Statements of Jesus are:

- **I AM**
- **I am the Bread of Life**
- **I am** the Light of the World
- **I am** the Door/Gate
- **I am** the Good Shepherd
- **I am** the Resurrection and the Life
- **I am** the Way, the Truth, the Life
- **I am** the Vine

*It is the **Gospel of John** where the **I am** statements are found. John will take us on a revealing journey to Who Jesus is and what He does!*

I AM the Bread of Life

- **John 6**
- 71 verses surrounding this claim — will summarize and draw out specific points
- Jesus had been performing incredible miracles, and large crowds began to gather around him
- Jesus is constantly trying to get away with His disciples
- they cross the Sea of Galilea and discover that about 5,000 men, which including their families would have equated to about 15,000 people, had followed them to the other side

- they are out in this remote place by the Sea of Galilee and everyone is hungry, but no one has money or food
- except this one boy who had five loaves of bread and two pieces of fish...
- the boy brings what little He has to Jesus, and Jesus multiplies it and everyone is fed and there are still leftovers
- the crowds are so amazed by this that they start coming toward Jesus to force Him to be their King
- Jesus, knowing they were about to do this, runs away from them again... and then he crosses the Sea of Galilee... by walking on it, *small detail*
- the crowds eventually catch up to Him and find Him... And they say, “*Why did you leave us!? Where did you go? Why did you run away...?*”
- Jesus says this...
- **John 6:26-35**

Jesus answered them and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷ 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.”²⁸ Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” ²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.” ³⁰ Therefore they said to Him, “What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?” ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘*He gave them bread from heaven to eat.*’” ³² Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.” ³⁵ And Jesus said to them, “**I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.**”

THE CLAIM

THE CALL

THE COST

The Claim

Jesus shows up and says — *don’t you dare put me in the same category as Moses or Abraham, or even Muhammad or Buddha — or any other religious leader or prophet!*

- I’m **not** here to **show** you the way to fulfillment — **I AM** the source of eternal fulfillment.
- I’m **not** here to **teach** you 10 principles to live a satisfied life — **I AM** eternal satisfaction.
- I’m **not** here to **provide** you with some temporary physical gratification — **I AM** here to satisfy the deepest longings of your soul...
- **John 6:53-54**

“...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Question — Isn't it funny the argument "Jesus is just a good moral teacher, or He's a great example to follow"? — Whoever is saying something like that has never read John 6. What ethical pillar of humanity is going to show up to 15,000 people and say, "Eat my flesh and you'll have life!"?

- when you read what Jesus claimed about himself, it forces you to wrestle with the question... "Who in the world is this man?"

The Manna fell from heaven... the word Manna literally means, "What is it?" Jesus, the Bread of Life came down from heaven — He forces you to answer the question, "Who is it? Who is this person?"

- *if He is who He claims to be* — I can't keep living as if the whole universe revolves around me!
- *if He is who He claims to be* — I can't keep living for my own 'self-centered, all about me, what I want, when I want, how I want' ways...
- *if He is who He claims to be* — my only right response is to abandon my whole life for Him... and place Him at the center of my very existence.

**Jesus doesn't leave us any room to say
he's a great example for us, or a good moral teacher.
No good moral teacher would ever make such arrogant claims.
But Jesus did.**

"Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse.
You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon
or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God,
but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher.
He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."¹
~ C.S. Lewis

Jesus says, "I'm it. I'm everything. It's all about me. I will fill you and fulfill like nothing else in your world that I created. I AM the Bread of Life, eat of me and you'll never be hungry again."

The Call

15,000 people gathered around Jesus... all had watched Jesus perform miracles and heal people, and miraculously feed them all. They're all trying to follow Jesus — and Jesus runs away from them! The disciples are probably thinking that there are enough people following Jesus to take on Rome and liberate the Jewish people!

- Jesus didn't play the numbers game.
- He didn't trust the crowds. He was constantly running away from the crowds.
- When the crowd finally catches up to Jesus, He says:

¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (Harper Collins, June 2, 2009)

- **John 6:26**

“Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.”

Question — What is He saying? “You don’t want me. You want what I can give you. You don’t want the GIVER you want the GIFT. You’re trying to use me so you can get what you really want.”

- you see that I have power to work miracles, and I speak as one with authority from God
- you want to use Me to overthrow the government, *because you think that’s your problem*
- you want to use Me to provide food for you, *because you think physical hunger is your problem*
- in today’s world... turn on the TV and you’ve got preachers saying — give your life to Jesus because He wants to make you healthy, and wealthy — and the blessings of God can be yours if you sign up to be a monthly giver today!
 - How self-serving and oppositional to the gospel

Answer — Jesus looks at the crowds and says, “You don’t want me. You just want what I can give you. And as long as you just want to use Me for your self-centered purposes — you will remain lifeless and spiritually hungry.

The call, the invitation from Jesus throughout the gospels is not for half-hearted-commitment from fans and admirers. Jesus expects whole-hearted, all-in, totally-devoted followers.

- **He does not want...**

- we show up to give him a couple hours on Sunday morning and think, “Maybe I can get something from Jesus today.”
- I’m gonna try this church thing for a little while and see if it improves my life...
- I’m gonna take a few good thoughts from the Bible and add a little bit of Jesus to my life and see if that works.

- **It will not work**

PASTOR ROB’S PERSONAL STORY: Listen to me, God didn’t deliver me from heroin addiction because I sprinkled a little bit of Jesus on my life. I completely destroyed my life and had nothing left, nowhere left to turn and I fell in love with Jesus... My deliverance from addiction was not the result of seeking deliverance — *but the result of seeking Jesus*, and totally abandoning my will, my dreams, my life for Him. I didn’t have to try really, really hard to stop shooting heroin... *I was so in love, so enamored, so satisfied in Jesus that deliverance and freedom were just a byproduct of my relationship with Him.*

The Truth is many people are attracted to Jesus, many people even admire Jesus, but very few people will follow Jesus.

- Jesus knows not everyone is truly committed
- this why He stands up and unapologetically says things like.. “You’ve got to eat my flesh and drink my blood!”
- **what happens after He says this? 15,000 people hear this and they leave.**
- the original 12 are sitting there... “Jesus, what kind of sermon was that? They all left!”
- Jesus says, “They didn’t want me. They weren’t all-in with me.”

I AM the bread of life. I AM it. The manna that My Father gave you in the wilderness was a sign pointing you to Me. The Showbread in the tabernacle and in the Temple was a sign pointing to Me. Feeding the 15,000 people, that was a sign pointing you to Me. The miracles, the healings, all of it points to Me.

The Cost

The story began with around 15,000, now is down to 12. By the world’s standards Jesus isn’t doing so hot.

- **John 6:67-70**
Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?” ⁶⁸ But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?” ⁷¹ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son of Simon*, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.
- There are some of us today who want to add just a little bit of Jesus to our lives, and we want Jesus to improve our circumstances and provide miraculous bread from heaven, and that’s about as far as our commitment goes.
- And then there are those like Peter, who say, “Lord, you have the words of eternal life... where am I gonna go? You’re the Holy one of God, you are the Christ. I’m not after what You can do for me. I want You, I need You. I’m not going anywhere. Sure, there’s stuff on the earth that might be enticing, but it’s nothing compared to You, Jesus. I gladly give it all up for You...”
- But then Jesus closes with the story of Judas... He says, “Twelve of you are left but one of you is a devil...” Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.
- After Judas betrays Jesus, he’s there alone with the bag of silver and realizes the extent of what he just did. “I traded the Son of God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, the Living Water, the Bread of Life, the Great I AM, the One who raised people from the dead, and cleansed people of their diseases, healed their wounds, brought life, and joy and peace... I traded all of that for this bag of silver??”
- Judas goes back to the temple, filled with enormous shame, and regret and throws the bag on the ground in front of the priests, “*What did I do? I don’t want it! I traded God for this!?*”

Question — what are you trading in the Son of God for? What are you looking to be your bread? What is your bag of silver?

- if I just had that, then I’ll be a somebody
- if I just had more money, then all my problems would go away
- that relationship, career, accomplishments or their affirmation, that pleasure, all that wealth, that position, that status

- then I'd be fulfilled
- then I'd have peace
- then I'll be satisfied

Answer — Jesus is saying the same thing to us as He did to the crowds...

- **John 6:27**

Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life...

*Many of us think about going all in with Jesus, and we focus on what we're going to lose, what we're going to miss out on. There's no question, you will lose something. **But counting the cost isn't about what you lose — it's about what you gain!***

- Jesus compares the Kingdom of God...
 - to a man who sells all that he has — to gain the treasure buried in the field
 - to the Merchant who found a pearl of great price and sold all that he had to buy it
- what you gain ETERNALLY EXCEEDINGLY outweighs what little you have to give up

“...if we're not all-in... if it's not 'everything I have for you, everything I am for you... my whole life laid down for you' ... '[it] costs abiding peace; a life penetrated throughout by love, faith that sees everything in the light of God, overriding governance for good, hopefulness that stands firm in the most discouraging of circumstances, power to do what is right... [it] costs you exactly the abundance of life Jesus said he came to bring.’”²

~ Dallas Willard

Question — how in the world do I give up my whole life? That seems impossible. Who can live this way? Who can do this?

Answer — The truth is, you can't. You can't until the gospel hits you, until it sinks in and pierces your heart...

When Jesus says, “I AM the Bread of Life”

- to consume bread, you have to break it, take it in your hands and tear it if it is going to provide nourishment to your body
- Jesus is saying, “I, God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, descended and took on human flesh, subjected myself to human hands, and was torn to pieces for you.”
- The bread is My body, broken for you, to give you, not just temporary sustenance, but eternal satisfaction, rest for your soul, enduring hope, peace, joy, abundant life right here, right now that will last throughout eternity.
- I am the Bread of Life broken for you!
- Jesus Christ, the Bread of Heaven, was torn apart so that you could be made whole! **He was broken to pieces so you could be mended.**
- Jesus laid it all down for you... lay your whole life down for him.
- Orient your whole life on Him, who is your fulfillment, who is your satisfaction, who is the true bread, the Bread of Life.

² Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (Zondervan, Jun 13, 2006)

Communion

I want to close by giving you a homework assignment.

This is what Jesus instituted in the Upper Room before His betrayal. The Eucharist, communion. The bread, representing the body, and the cup, His shed blood for us.

Every week before service begins we offer a time to take the bread and the cup... and once a month we have Sacrament Sunday...

We wanted to do something for you this week...

- Pastor Jimmy created a resource that will lead you through facilitating a time of Communion in your home, with your family, with your small group, or even just you alone before God...
- The guide is available to download along with these sermon notes

But let me address a couple things:

1. This is something you can do at home — it's okay, you don't need a pastor, you don't need an intermediary. You can sit down with the bread and the cup, and walk through the guide that we've created for you. It's really simple...
2. If you're going to be doing this with your small group or with friends or family, use this as an opportunity to share with others what you're tempted to look on as your bread. We all have something, but Jesus invites us to follow Him with others for a reason. We need people to help us and sharpen us on this journey. Give them permission.
3. Use this as an opportunity to come back to Him as your true bread, your true satisfaction, and reorient your whole life around Him.

How to take communion together

- [Any drink will do, and bread/cracker will do.](#)
- Anyone can take communion that believes in Jesus. (**John 3:16**)
- [Anyone can serve communion.](#) (**1 Peter 2:5-9**)
- Set aside some time to remember Jesus and what He has done for us.
- Read the scripture above as a simple meditation to lead you all as you take communion together.
- How do you [examine yourself before taking communion?](#) (**1 Corinthians 11:28**)

Discussion Questions

1. How are Jesus' claims different than those of those worshiped in other world religions?
2. Can Jesus be followed half-heartedly? Does He "allow for that"?
3. What about following Jesus whole-heartedly challenges you?
4. Do you love Jesus for Who He IS, or for what He does for you? (Would you love Him the same if you were poor, sick, and abandoned in a ravaged war-torn country?)
5. What do you have to GAIN by following Jesus?

NOTES