

If you have your Bibles with you, let me encourage you to take them and be turning in them to the Gospel of John. We'll be looking at chapter 6 beginning with verse 25 for our thoughts together

You know there are some people that want to live a life of seclusion and obscurity. The less you know about them, the better they like it, but that's not the case with Jesus. He wants us to understand exactly who he is. In fact, as you read through the gospel of John, you will discover that there are at least seven statements that Jesus made concerning himself and his identity. They all begin with the little phrase, "I am." Sometimes these are referred to as the "I am sayings of Jesus."

For instance, in chapter 8 He said, "***I am the light of the world***". In chapter 10 he says, "***I am the gate of the sheep***" and a little later in that chapter he said, "***I am the good shepherd***." In chapter 11 he says, "***I am the resurrection and the life***." Then in chapter 14 he says, "***I am the way, the truth and the life***." In the 15:1 he says, "***I am the true vine and ye are the branches***."

But today, we want to focus on the first of those seven "I am" statements as found in John 6. There we have recorded Jesus telling the crowd, "***I am the bread of life***." I want us to read about this event beginning with verse 25. Now keep in mind the background of this passage.

The previous day, Jesus had fed a large multitude of people with merely two fish and five loaves of bread. There were 5000 men in that crowd, not counting women and children. You remember he miraculously multiplied that small amount of food until it became a great banquet for that crowd of people. When they were finished and everyone was satisfied, there were twelve baskets full of food that remained.

Well, the people were so impressed they wanted to force Jesus to be a king. But that wasn't why Jesus had come, so he eluded the crown and went up by himself to a mountain. But the next day, the people apparently still thinking about the miracle he

had performed started looking for Jesus. They searched until they found hem. He was on the other side of the sea at Capernaum. And that's apparently where this conversation took place.

Now let's read the text starting with verse 25. *(John 6:25) And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? (26) Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.* Jesus was simply saying, you are not interesting in the spiritual truths I was trying to convey, but rather you see me as a free meal ticket. You are willing to stay with me as long as you can get your stomachs filled. And then he makes this statement in verse 27. *(27) Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. (28) Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? (29) Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* Let me call to your attention that Jesus says that "belief" is a work.

(30) They said therefore unto him, What sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? (31) Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. I find the statement made by the Jews truly amazing. They had just seen the miracle of feeding the multitude the day before and were so impressed that they wanted to make Jesus a king and now, they want to see a sign that they may believe. They argued that Moses gave the people in the wilderness manna to eat.

(32) Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. (33) For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. (34) Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. (35)

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. (36) But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. (37) All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (38) For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. (39) And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (40) And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

This is a marvelous passage concerning the identity of Jesus. He is helping people to understand who he is. So as we look at these verses, I want us to focus on three things that Jesus tells us about himself.

JESUS TELLS US THAT, LIKE BREAD HE SATISFIES. Look at verse 35: *Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.* Now the people could identify with what Jesus was saying. They understood the importance of bread. To the people of that day, bread was essential to life. In fact, it was the only stable food in the lives of many people. Without bread they would die. So Jesus is simply saying unto them, **what bread is to your body, I am to your soul. I am essential to life.**

And as Jesus makes this point, he draws a contrast between two kinds of hunger—between two different types of appetite. **First he talks about physical hunger** that is being satisfied with food that perishes. Look if you will at verse 27: ***Labour not for the meat which perisheth.*** He is talking about satisfying physical hunger. I don't want you to misunderstand what Jesus is saying here. When he says, "*labor not for the food which perisheth,*" he is not saying we are to quit our jobs and sit around the house all day long and not provide for our families. To the contrary, we know from other

passages of scripture what Jesus expects us to do. Paul tells those in 1 Thes. 3:10 *if a man will not work, neither let him eat.* Paul also writes to Timothy in 1 Tim 5 *that if any provideth not for his own he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel* (unbeliever). We have a responsibility to work and provide food for our families and the necessities of life.

But what he is warning against here is **an unbalanced perspective**. Jesus is saying, “*Don’t make that the most important-the most encompassing thing about your life.*” There are people like that. Sometimes we refer to them as “*work-a-holics.*” Their life revolves entirely around making money to buy things for themselves and family. Soon their life gets out of balance. That’s what Paul was talking about in Phil 3:19 where he refers to people “*whose god is their belly.*” That simply means they live for physical pleasure.

Really that’s a pretty good assessment of our society today. Many have the idea that life is all about how much you have and how much you are worth. But Jesus says don’t work simply to satisfy you physical hunger. **AND THEN HE TELLS US WHY.** Physical hunger he says is satisfied by food that perishes. The things of this world are temporary. They don’t last. Eventually they pass away. And so Jesus says don’t work for the food that perishes.

Jesus then moves from physical hunger to talk about man’s spiritual hunger. *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.* Jesus wants us to understand that we are more than just a bundle of appetites. That’s the thing that makes us different than the animals. Your pet at home spends its day thinking about its appetite. It eats and it sleeps. That’s about all it’s concerned about. But there is more to you than simply the physical. When God made you, he gave you a soul. You have the capacity to reason and understand spiritual things. Dogs and cats don’t have that capacity. That’s why there are none of them here

today for worship. They could care less about spiritual matters. They have no concept of the God of heaven, but you do. And Jesus says that inside of you there is a gnawing spiritual hunger that material things can't satisfy. It can only be satisfied by spiritual bread, and that bread is Jesus.

You can't ignore that hunger. You are going to try to satisfy it in one way or another. If you don't satisfy it with Jesus, then you will satisfy it with something else. Perhaps that is one of the reasons that people today are so fascinated with **Psychic's**. There are commercials on TV wanting you to call in and they will tell you all about you life and the world beyond etc. Apparently, people are attracted to that. Then there are others interested in witchcraft while still others are involved in the new age movement or Satan worship. When we hear of such instances, we scratch our heads and wonder why people would get involved in something like that. Well, the answer is simple. They are trying to satisfy that spiritual hunger that material things can't satisfy.

When you get hungry enough you will eat almost anything. I'm not a picky eater. I generally eat whatever is before me without any complaints, except for liver. Liver ought to be used for fish bait and that's all. No one should have to eat liver. But if I went three weeks without any thing to eat and someone offered me some liver, and that was all that was available, I would gladly eat and enjoy liver. Why? Because I had gnawing hunger that something had to satisfy. Jesus alone is the bread of life and he is the only one who can satisfy that spiritual hunger. **(Mat 5:6) *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*** Does that describe you? If not, I hope you realized the importance of have a balance between spiritual bread and physical bread.

We have considered Jesus is the bread of life satisfies our spiritual hunger. Tonight we will consider two other points from the section of scripture. We will notice that Jesus also sustains and secures.

Invitation. Do YOU need the bread of life?