***“The God We Know:***

***Exploring the ‘I Am’ Sayings of Jesus”***

**Lenten Bible Study: Week 2**

**March 8, 2023**

***“I Am the Bread of Life: Knowing God’s Satisfaction”***

**Opening Prayer:**

Dear God, thank you for bringing us all together on this virtual platform. Help us to open our eyes, our ears, our minds, and our spirits to understand who you are as we discover our position in Christ. Please be with us as we discern the “Bread of Life” and satisfy the deep hunger in our hearts. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

**Meditate on the words to this prayer:**

* What word [or phrase] grabs your attention in this prayer? Why?

**Scripture Reading:** **John 6:27-59**

**Verses 26-34**

 26 Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs.

 27 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.”

 28 They replied, “We want to perform God’s works, too. What should we do?”

 29 Jesus told them, “This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent.”

 30 They answered, “Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do?

 31 After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, ‘Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

 32 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.

 33 The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

 34 “Sir,” they said, “give us that bread every day.”

**Verses 35-40**

 35 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.

 36 But you haven’t believed in me even though you have seen me.

 37 However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them.

 38 For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will.

 39 And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day.

 40 For it is my Father’s will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day.”

**Verses 41-46**

 41 Then the people began to murmur in disagreement because he had said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.”

 42 They said, “Isn’t this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and mother. How can he say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

 43 But Jesus replied, “Stop complaining about what I said.

 44 For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up.

 45 As it is written in the Scriptures, ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.

 46 (Not that anyone has ever seen the Father; only I, who was sent from God, have seen him.)

**Verses 47–51**

 47 “I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life.

 48 Yes, I am the bread of life!

 49 Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died.

 51 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.”

**Verses 52–59**

 52 Then the people began arguing with each other about what he meant. “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” they asked.

 53 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.

 54 But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day.

 55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.

 56 Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.

 57 I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me.

 58 I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever.”

 59 He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

**A video clip:**

 This video segment is filmed near the Mount of Beatitudes in Capernaum and on the bank of the Jordan River. Rob will be talking about the context of Jesus’ words *“I am the Bread of Life.”*

 Listen for the Old Testament background about God’s providing manna to the Hebrews

 Let’s also listen to how Rob connects the Hebrews’ experience with Jesus’ word

**Discussion of video:**

**Exodus 16:11-18**

 11 Then the Lord said to Moses,

 12 “I have heard the Israelites’ complaints. Now tell them, ‘In the evening you will have meat to eat, and in the morning you will have all the bread you want. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.’”

 13 That evening vast numbers of quail flew in and covered the camp. And the next morning the area around the camp was wet with dew.

 14 When the dew evaporated, a flaky substance as fine as frost blanketed the ground.

 15 The Israelites were puzzled when they saw it. “What is it?” they asked each other. They had no idea what it was. And Moses told them, “It is the food the Lord has given you to eat.

 16 These are the Lord’s instructions: Each household should gather as much as it needs. Pick up two quarts for each person in your tent.”

 17 So the people of Israel did as they were told. Some gathered a lot, some only a little.

 18 But when they measured it out, everyone had just enough. Those who gathered a lot had nothing left over, and those who gathered only a little had enough. Each family had just what it needed.

Q = When you think of the Hebrews complaining about the manna God provided in the wilderness, what reaction do you have?

Q = How do we compare to them when we complain?

**Lessons to Learn:**

**John 6:30-31**

 **30 They answered, “Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do?**

 **31 After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, ‘Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”**

1. Spiritual Blindness led them to ignorance and dissatisfaction
* The feeding of the 5,000 [20,000] should have been enough to convince them of whom Christ claimed to be.
* In their minds, Christ’s miraculous feeding was a small miracle compared to what Moses did for their ancestors in the wilderness.
* If Jesus could outdo Moses, they would believe in Him.

**John 6:32**

 **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 manna God gave to their ancestors was temporary satisfaction because they still died
* Food is designed to satisfy the physical body’s needs in a nonpermanent way
* The manna received in the wilderness was a shadow *[semblance or a form of Something to come]* of Jesus Christ
* Jesus, in this text, is declaring Himself to be **the true bread from heaven**
* Bread that will satisfy the soul
* Your soul is your mind, your self-will, and your emotions
* Your soul is the part of you that thinks, chooses, and feels
* Your soul determines who you really are

**John 6:35**

 **35 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.**

* Jesus declared himself to be the gift of eternal life

**John 17:2-3**

 2 For You granted Him authority over all people that He might give eternal life to all those you have given Him.

 3 Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.

* Those who come to Jesus will satisfy their spiritual hunger forever.

**Luke 6:21**

 Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied.

* Those who believe in Jesus Christ will satisfy their thirsty soul

Q = Give an example of a nonbeliever’s thirsty soul.

* A nonbeliever’s thirsty soul is controlled by the flesh [sinful nature]—**Ephesians 5:19-21**

 19 When you follow the *desires of your sinful nature*, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures,

 20 idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division,

 21 envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Q = Give an example of a believer’s thirsty soul.

* A believer’s thirsty soul exhibits a strong spiritual desire that cannot be satisfied by the products of the old nature.

**Psalms 42:1-2**

 1 As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.
 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

* David had a longing [a thirst] for fellowship with God like a thirsty deer craving life-sustaining water
* David had a yearning to meet with God who was the source of his spiritual nourishment.

Q = How do you satisfy your thirsty soul?

Q = Why is lasting satisfaction hard to find?

* We’re human and imperfect, and we make wrong decisions that damage our souls. Therefore, we thirst for God.

When we thirst for God, Jesus provides restoration for our souls:

* **1) Unaddressed Grudges**—when one has persistent feelings of ill will or resentment towards another person resulting from a past insult or injury.

**Job 18:4 (Good News Translation)**

 “You are only hurting yourself with your anger. Will the earth be deserted because you are angry? Will God move mountains to satisfy you?”

* **2) Unconfessed Guilt**—If we can’t hide our sins from God, we can’t hide our guilt over sin either. God knows about the condition of our souls.

**Psalms 38:4, 6 (New Century Version)**

 4 My guilt has overwhelmed me; like a load it weighs me down.

 6 I am bent over and bowed down; I am sad all day long.

* **3) Jesus Feels Our grief and pain—He heals our soul**—There is no hurt, pain, or grief we can experience that Jesus doesn’t understand. He experienced all our emotional pains of life and all the rejections and misunderstandings. The good news is that Christ came to heal and restore our souls

**Isaiah 53:3-5 (NLT)**

 3 He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.

 4 Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!
 5 But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.

**A closing litany/prayer:**

**One:** When we feel hungry for more of something—even when we’re not

 sure what that something is, we can remember that Jesus said,

**All:** “I am the Bread of Life. Come to me and never be hungry.”

**One:** When we feel distracted by other means of fulfillment in the world,

 help us to remember that Jesus said,

**All:** “I am the Bread of Life. Come to me and never be hungry.”

**One:** When we find ourselves feeling inadequate or incomplete in our daily

 lives, remind us that we fill ourselves up on Jesus’ sustaining words,

**All:** “I am the Bread of Life. Come to me and never be hungry.”

**One:** When we look around at friends and strangers, assessing how we

 measure up to others, help us to remember that we are enough and

 are satisfied by God’s grace because Jesus’ words are true,

**All:** “I am the Bread of Life. Come to me and never be hungry.”

**One:** When we worry that the satisfaction we have now may one day run

 out, let us rest in the truth and fullness of Jesus’ promise,

**All:** “I am the Bread of Life. Come to me and never be hungry.” Amen.

Dear Lord, Our God,

 My soul needs Jesus Christ, the “Bread of Life.” I don’t always think right. I don’t always choose right. I don’t always feel right. Would You do what only You can do? Would you satisfy my thirsty soul? Thank you Jesus for taking all my sins on Yourself at the cross. Your sacrifice means that I can be forgiven, restored and my soul renewed. In Jesus’ name, I pray. **Amen**