

Sermon Notes: August 18, 2024 **Focus:** I am enough.

[Readings](#)

You will hear one of the seven “I AM” statements made by Jesus at the beginning of today’s gospel (John 6:35). “I am the bread of life” he says. I want to stay connected to today’s gospel and then broaden out to the seven “I AM” statements and then finish with an active prayer.

Bread and Manna

Jesus was not so subtly referring to himself as new manna when he says, “I am the Bread of Life.” Manna is an Old Testament thing. The Hebrew’s fleeing Egypt needed food in the desert. Each morning, when they woke up, manna covered the ground and all they needed to do was eat it. A few verses of the gospel reading make this connection clear:

*John 6: 29-34 Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the **manna** in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the **bread from heaven**, but it is my Father who gives you the **true bread from heaven**. 33 For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” 34 “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”*

He was being metaphorical and practical. He will sustain us, feed us, and he is the new manna that we crave. He is not denigrating the Exodus experience but expanding on it.

51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

He will feed us daily bread, heavenly bread, and even his life.

In his day, all this talk of being bread from heaven was outrageous and to some blasphemous, but I don’t want to spend time on that aspect of the story.

I AM **The** seven “I AM” statements in John are below.

The Greek for I am is ἐγώ εἰμι (Ego eimi). Jesus says, I am the:

The Bread of Life	<i>John 6:35</i>
The Light of the World	<i>John 8:12</i>
The Gate	<i>John 10:9</i>
The Good Shepherd	<i>John 10:11 & 14</i>
The Resurrection and the Life	<i>John 11:25</i>
The Way and the Truth and the Life	<i>John 14:6</i>
The Vine	<i>John 15:1 & 5</i>

Each of these is a piece of the puzzle. He is big enough, generous enough, stable enough, open enough to be enough for each of us to live a far bigger life than we settle for.

I AM too much

We make “I am” statements about ourselves all the time. ‘I am terrible’ or ‘I am the greatest’ can run like a tape loop in our minds. *We are not our thoughts*. Our brains are miraculous blobs in our skull, but untrained can become deeply distracting. It’s your brain’s job to generate thoughts. It’s your soul’s work to sort through the pile to find what is valuable.

The brain never stops generating thoughts and unchecked, it is a bully. It’s always offering up memories and worries. When you lock onto anxious, angry, and self-aggrandizing spots, the brain starts repeating and amplifying that very thing you locked into. For example, you are minding your own business, chilling with your dog and out of nowhere your brain will say, “Remember that time you _____, now...this is most important thing for you to obsess on.” In psychological terms, this is a form of “thought fusion.” You become indistinguishable from your thoughts.

I don’t think an overly positive view is necessarily healthier than an overly negative self-assessment. Knowing you are enough for the life you’ve been given is enough. It’s like the goldilocks effect: not too much, not too little, just right. We can overidentify with our thoughts and become fused to them whatever flavor they are. Expansive “unfusing” takes work and does not happen by accident.

A practice

If you never have ruminating, repeating thoughts about yourself, that’s amazing and the practice below might not be helpful. If you have experienced “thought fusion,” I want you to imagine God’s view of you. This is a separate reality from your internal commentator. What if every time the narrator in your head yells for you to obsess on the latest random thought say: “I am not my thought, but who am I?” I AM ENOUGH can be the response you need to get through your day, project, or difficult relationship.

I *don’t* want you to try and shout down the commentator inside. But *do* get distance from it. You’re not required to run back to your ruminating thoughts asking for another beating. Eckhart Tolle says, “What a liberation to realize that the “voice in my head” is not who I am. Who am I then? The one who sees that.” You might feel stupid saying positive affirmations of enoughness, but what can it hurt?

Jesus, I am

Jesus was unfused and free to engage his life with a full heart. That might require a miracle for some of you to believe that you can too. But it is exactly this miracle that God provides. You are enough now, in the future, and in the past. This I know to be true. You’re not your thoughts – good or bad. You’re not your accomplishments – great or small. You’re not your body - strong or weak. You are enough. You are enough because God is enough.

Todd