This AM we’re going to embark on a 7 week journey into the person and work of Christ from the Gospel of John. We’re going to investigate Jesus’ description of Himself in what is known as the “I am” Discourses.

Throughout the Bible, God describes Himself as the “I am”. We first find this declaration in the O.T. when God meet Moses in a burning bush and tells him to return to the Israelites to lead them out of captivity. Moses asks what shall I tell them, and God says, tell them “I am” has sent you – tell them the God who has always been, always is, and always will be sent you.

God gives them a name that speaks of who God is in Himself – *I am that I am* – He tells them that He is self-existent; he has being of himself, and has no dependence upon any other. He is eternal and unchanging – immutable, the same, yesterday, today, and forever. He is faithful and true to all his promises, unchangeable in his word and in his nature.

As we come to the N.T. – we find that the “I am” has wrapped Himself in flesh and made His dwelling among men – Jesus is God incarnate. Jn. 1:14

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was w/ God and the Word was God... The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Jesus isn’t any man – He is the God/man (theos/anthropos) He is God in the flesh – the physical representation of the Godhead who stepped out of heaven and into humanity to seek and to save the lost.

*Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ: Who, being in the form of God, didn’t regard equality w/ God something to be grasped. But made himself of no reputation, and took on the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men. Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even the death on a cross.*  Ph. 2:5

As I shared last Sunday – Jesus had to be fully human so He could reach down and take the hand of a repentant sinner and he had to be fully God so He could reach up into heaven and unite it w/ the hand of God.
Throughout the Gospels we find that through His miracles and teachings Jesus is trying to reveal that He was God. In John, Jesus employs a tactic to reveal He’s the great “Iam” – that He is the God who has always been, always is, and always will be. These are the “I am” Discourses.

Over the next few weeks, we’re going to look at each discourse and in each case, we’re going to look at the message and the lesson behind the story.

I am the Bread of Life the Light of the World
the Gate the Good Shepherd
the Resurrection and the Life the Way, Truth, and Life
the Vine

This AM, we are going to look at John 6 as we look at the story of the Feeding of the 5000 and Jesus, the Bread of Life.

This discourse is often times considered the Discourse of the Disappointing Savior, b/c Jesus gives the Israelites what they need instead of what they want.

A few years ago, Dr. Robert Pine, professor at DTS, was driving w/ his family to California to speak at a conference. On their way they decided to stop at the Grand Canyon. Dr. Pine’s 5 year old son was pumped – he could hardly wait. All the way from Texas to Arizona his son kept asking questions about the size and power of the canyon. As soon as they arrived, the son jumped out of the car and ran to the canyon rim and careful scanned it. Suddenly his entire body language changed – from excitement to dejection. Confused, Dr. Pine asked him what was wrong. The son replied, “Dad, where is the cannon? I don’t see the cannon.” The son thought they were going to see the “grand cannon.” He was expecting a one mile high and one mile deep cannon – and he was hoping to shoot it.

Just as w/ Dr. Pine’s son, there was quite a bit of disappointment that day in Galilee some 2000 years ago. The Israelites were looking for one thing and got something else – and what a shock it was.

Jesus had become wildly popular, and there was quite the demand on His time and ministry. People were coming from all over to hear what He had to say and witness His miraculous deeds.
At this particular time, Jesus sent the disciples across the lake to Bethsaida in the hope of finding relaxation and rest, yet the crowds followed walking around the lake and meeting them on the other side, literally waiting for them. Jesus responded to them by ministering to them all day and then finished off the day by feeding them with five loaves and two fish from a boy’s lunch.

After the feeding of the 5000, Jesus sent the disciples across the lake again by boat—that was the night the storm hit and Jesus walked on the water. When the disciples finally made it to the other side, they thought that they had escaped the crowd—except they hadn’t.

They had followed b/c they were quite fond of the idea that Jesus had supplied them with the material things of life. He had satisfied their desires and they liked the idea that they had someone who could meet their needs on demand—so much so, that they looked to enthrone Jesus as their king—only Jesus was not about to go for that based on a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish—thus we pick up the story in John 6, where Jesus sets the record straight.

I They MISINTERPRETED the Miracle vs. 25-40

A Confrontation vs. 25-29

Jesus confronts the multitude— the only reason you seek me is b/c you want your stomachs filled— you are materially motivated. They wanted food but they didn’t want the truth—they had no interest in knowing Christ, they just wanted Him to provide for their wants and needs.

Sadly, for many people today, the only reason they follow Jesus is b/c they think there is something in it for them. They have an, “If I do this for God…then God will do this for me” mentality.

I want to make a statement you’re not going to agree w/ but I assure you is true— Jesus isn’t concerned w/ the details of your earthly life—he’s concerned w/ where you’re going to spend eternity. We’re more concerned about this life than we are about eternal life—something has to give.

B/c of their desire to be physically satisfied, the people failed to see beyond their desire for bread and fish to just what the elements represented.
Jesus attempts to correct them. Don’t focus on the things down here that rust and corrode – but rather seek things above – focus on that which has eternal significance – beginning w/ your relationship w/ God.

With this statement, Jesus began to reveal the spiritual truths he wanted the people to understand. He was saying there are two kinds of bread – material bread that is temporary and perishes or spiritual bread that is eternal. Make sure that you are seeking after that which has the power to save you.

They ask, “How do we get this bread?” Jesus says, “Physical food is earned by the sweat of your brow, but spiritual food is a gift of grace not of works.”

*For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourself, it is the free gift of God not of works, lest any man should boast.* Eph. 2:8-9

Suppose I invited you over for dinner. After a great meal including all of your favorite foods and dessert you turned and asked me, “How much do we owe you?” Of course, you wouldn’t owe me anything. But you press, “How much – we’re not a bunch of free loaders.” Just the mention of payment in such a setting would be a grievous insult. I’d neither expect you to pay nor work for your meal – it was a gift.

But the crowd didn’t catch on. Instead of receiving the truth they tried to manipulate it for their own well-being and conscience.

**B Correction** *(Manipulation)* vs. 30-34

Jesus, we’re not interested in all that, but we are interested in seeing you do another miracle – but can you make this one a little bigger.

They were trying to manipulate Jesus to get what they wanted. They wanted another miracle to meet their need, so they said, Jesus we’ll believe you if you do another trick – only this one has to be a good one. Maybe on the scale of the one Moses pulled in the wilderness w/ the manna. After all, his miracle fed the Israelites six days a week for 40 years. Do you think you can do something like that for us?

Jesus didn’t fall for their scheme, instead He corrected them. He informed them that the bread they wanted didn’t come from Moses – it came from God and that the Father still gives the true bread from heaven – only this time, the bread doesn’t sustain physical life but rather spiritual life.
And they looked at Jesus like a calf looking at a new gate – HUH! Jesus had them right where he wanted them. Well, where do we get this bread?

Well let me help you out… You’re looking at Him! I am the Bread of Life. I am the one that can meet the need your soul requires.

Did you know bread is the staff of life – the most common food on earth? According to Bread Facts – bread provides us w/ carbohydrates for energy; protein for growth; vitamin B for good health, steady nerves, and proper digestion; iron for healthy blood and calcium for strong bones and teeth.

Did you know that in Jesus’ day, bread was the centerpiece of the meal – for us it’s the entrée – meat, but in Jesus’ day, meat was a side dish and bread was the major part of the meal.

When Jesus says he is the Bread of Life, he is saying He is the most important part of life. He is available to everyone and indispensable for life. He is the living bread that gives life and anyone who will taste will see that He is good.

God provides and man responds. Jesus says I am bread from God – like manna but only better – and if you want me then you must come and believe.

Salvation is the result of God’s initiative and man faith response. God set into motion a plan to redeem that which was incapable of redeeming itself. We are all like sheep who have gone astray – condemned in our trespasses and sin – incapable of satisfying God’s wrath – but God in His great love for us demonstrated His love in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.

God provided a means – a single solitary way – for each of us to have our sin forgiven and be restored into a relationship w/ our Creator – through his blood – “in Him we have redemption through His blood the forgiveness of sin.”

Not only is salvation is accessible – it is also assured (secure). Jesus came to seek and to save the lost – not to lose what He rescued.

*I give to you eternal life and you will never perish, and neither will any man pluck you out of my hand.*  
Jn. 10:28
1Cr. 6 says that He has purchased us through His blood. Eph. 1:13 says that He has sealed us unto the day of redemption – he has branded us w/ the H.S.

But note the essential ingredient – a faith response. The Father wills that sinners be saved, He provides a means for salvation through His Son, and when the transaction of faith and grace are complete – the Son cannot lose those whom He has rescued. How is that for clarification.

II They **MISJUDGED** the Message vs. 41-51

They began to grumble among themselves. Isn’t it amazing how some things never change? When God acts in a way contrary to the way we think He should act, we often begin to complain. In fact, for many of us, we don’t pray we whine – like a bunch of spoiled children – we think if we whine and grumble long enough, then maybe God will give into our desires.

Here we find the real problem behind their complaints. They had grown too familiar w/ Him. Is this not Jesus the son of Joseph? How can he say he came from heaven?

Some of us are in danger of doing the same thing. Maybe you’ve grown up in church – you know all the Bible stories, have walked an aisle, and made all the right moves – but you religion is keeping you from a relationship.

A Salvation is the Result of God’s **INITIATIVE**

You do not choose when you are going to approach God – He chooses. When He calls though, you had better respond – b/c there is no guarantee that He will call again.

Yes, God wishes that none will perish, but not all will come to repentance – not all will turn from their sin toward God and many will face a Christ-less eternity b/c they said “no thanks” to God when He called to them.

B Salvation is the Result of Man’s **RESPONSE** to God Initiative

There is but one response man can have to secure His redemption – faith. You must believe. Not in my words but God’s truth. To eat is simply to properly appropriate – Jesus wasn’t saying come gnaw on my arm – believe.
It is not my job to convince or convict, but simply to convey. It is God’s job to convince and convict as the H.S. draws you to the Father – will you surrender to His call or will you reject it and risk another day w/out Him.

III They MISCONSTRUED the Meaning vs. 52-58

The Jews began to argue among themselves over this difficult teaching.

I love what Jesus does. I’d have probably backed off and tried to explain myself better – but not Jesus… He throws down the gauntlet. Good teacher.

I tell you the truth, unless you eat my flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

Jesus was not being literal but He was certainly being emphatic. Unless there is a deep partaking of Him – a life-changing transformation – then your salvation is not genuine – you have religion w/out relationship.

If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old is gone, behold all things have become new. 2 Cr. 5:17

Do you have new desires, motivations, values, and ambitions that are different form the one’s you had before and different from the ways of this world? If not, then you have reason to question the validity of your salvation.

Is He as real to you spiritually as something you can taste or handle? Is He as much a part of you as that which you eat? Do not think me blasphamous when I say He must be as real and as useful to you as a hamburger and French fries. I say this b/c, although He is obviously for more real and useful than these, the unfortunate thing is that for many people, he is much less. Boice

As the Bread of Life Jesus was telling us that when we partake of Him, we will find that He is substantial and indispensalbe for life.

There is an old saying spoken for the purpose of promoting good nutrition – “You are what you eat!” This idea fits well into this context. When I was a boy, I heard my S.S. teacher make that statement and John Foot exclaimed, “Oh no, I’m a chicken leg!”
Truth is, you are what you eat. Let me ask, what have you feasted on this week? Who has had the greatest influence on you – the election? Talk Shows? Falcons? Jesus? Who? Taste and see the Lord is good. Jesus came to be all that you would need to satisfy your soul.

There were many people disappointed that day when Jesus decided not to be there cosmic bellhop. Their theology and philosophy of God was intensely challenged – many of them hung up the sandals and decided to follow something else other than Jesus b/c Jesus seemed to be more concerned w/ eternity than w/ meeting their earthly needs. What about you? Are you going to stop following now that you know that God isn’t as concerned about you earthly life as He is your spiritual life?

For me, when I moved beyond expecting Jesus to feed me what I wanted and accepted what He offered, I found that He didn’t just offer eternal life, but He also offered abundant life. And I take great comfort and peace in that truth.