

# I Am The Bread Of Life

*Super Sayings of the Saviour*

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The Battle of the Somme was a battle of the first World War fought by the armies of the British and French empires against the German Empire. It took place between the 1st of July and the 18th of November in the year 1916 on both sides of the upper reaches of the river Somme in France. It was the largest battle of the first World War in the Western Front. More than one million people were wounded or killed, making it one of the bloodiest conflicts in human history. The British Army suffered over 57,000 casualties on the first day. The men of the 36th Ulster Division and then from the division in the British Army, suffered 5,000 casualties on the first day of July 1916, paying the ultimate sacrifice with their lives. Thousands of Irish troops serving in the British Army were among the casualties during that five-month battle of the Somme. People from Lurgan like Billy McFadzean, VC died at the age of 20 on the 1st of July 1916 at Thiepval, France. On Friday, our nation paused to give thanks to God for those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom and for our liberty, and I think it would be a miss of us today if we did not acknowledge the sacrifice that was made on our behalf that we might enjoy the liberty that we enjoy this evening. So I'm going to ask you just to stand for a moment's silence and thank God for those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in this battle of the Somme.

*O God, our Father, we bow before thee tonight and thank you, Lord, for those men and women who stood in the gap for us. Men from this town, men from our province, men from all over Ulster, men and women from the Republic of Ireland and from the British Isles. We thank you, our Father, that they stood against the foe, and we thank you, Lord, for the sacrifice that many of them paid on our behalf. We think, our Father, tonight of their loved ones and families and those who are still suffering the scars of war, those who bear in their body tonight, even as the result of the second World War, or as the result of the conflicts in our province, those who bear in body and mind tonight, the scars of war, we commend such to thee. And our Father, we realize that black in 1916, our nation stood at a crossroads and, Lord, in the year 2016, our nation stands at the crossroads again. Know, God, we would long that in these days, our nation would turn back to God. We long, our Father, for that outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God in revival blessing. We long, O God, that it might be said again that the secret of England's greatness is the open Bible. And to that end, O God, we pray tonight that thou wouldst*

*bless the royal family, save our queen and the members of the royal family, remember our Prime Minister tonight and the cabinet, remember, O God, the turmoil at Westminster. O God, we pray that in these days thou wilt raise up a man of righteousness, thou wilt raise up someone to lead our nation aright for thy word reminds us that righteousness exalts the nation but sin is a reproach to any people. We pray, Lord, for the leaders of Stormont, we pray for those who name thy name, irrespective of what party they fly under. Lord, we pray that they may be men of principle, that they may be men who will be guided by the word of God and not by the whims or notions of the flesh. Father, we pray that in our day, this wee land of ours again might see the blessing of God. O God, we pray for ourselves tonight as the people of God, for we feel, Lord, the apathy and the indifference and the unconcern in our own souls. We pray for this local church tonight. O God, we pray that thou will give us hearts aflame for Christ. Give us a burden for the lost. Give us a concern for perishing men and women who are going down into that liquid lake of fire. Father, have mercy upon such tonight. And know, God, remember, we pray of thee our land in this our great hour of need. Come and deliver us, we pray of thee. Send us a mighty revival. Lord, do it again. Lord, do it again. Send us a mighty revival. Lord, do it again. We thank you, Lord, for your word, it's infallible, it's inspired, it's errant, it's the indestructible word of the living God. And we pray, our Father, that as we turn to it now that you would speak to all our hearts, for Christ's sake. Amen.*

Let me invite you to turn again to John's gospel, chapter 6, please, in verse 35. John's gospel, chapter 6 in verse 35, things that only Christ could say. Here's what he says, John 6, and the verse 35.

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.

I want you to see in this verse tonight very simply the problem of man hungering, thirsting. I want you to see in this statement tonight the provision of God. Christ says, "I am the bread of life." I want you to see here the principle of faith, "he that cometh to me, he that believeth on me."

Helen Keller was born on the 27th of June in the year 1880 in the state of Alabama. She was born with the ability to see and to hear here, however, when Helen was 19 months old, she contracted an illness that brought deafness and blindness to her life. It was not until she was 10 years of age, but she began to have meaningful communication with those around her. It occurred when her gifted teacher Anne Sullivan taught her to say "water" on the palm of her hand, and from that pivotal experience Helen Keller entered the wonderful world of words and names, and it transformed her life. And once Helen was accustomed to this new system of communication with others, her parents arranged for her to receive religious instruction from the eminent Boston Minister Phillips Brooks. One day during her lesson, Helen Keller said these remarkable words to Phillip Brooks. She said, "Mr. Brooks, I knew God, I knew about God before you told me, only I didn't know his name. I knew about God before you told me, only I didn't know his name."

The Greek philosophers wrestled with the problem of knowing God. Plato said, "But the Father of Maker of all this universe is past finding out." Aristotle call God the prime mover. No wonder Paul in the city of Athens coming before the Athenians, they dedicated an altar to the unknown God and Paul says, "Those whom you ignorantly worship, I declare unto you." The Greek philosophers of Paul's day were those having no hope and without God in the world, and our modern thinkers today any better. And yet, tonight the Lord wants us to know him because knowing him is the most important thing in life.

You remember what the Lord Jesus prayed in John 17, he said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent." Knowing the Lord as our Savior is the only way we can be saved and how can we know the Lord but through his name? Here the Lord Jesus declares himself to be the great "I Am." This is the first of seven marvelous statements in the gospel of John, all beginning with the words "I am." In them, Christ introduces us to himself by means of a phrase translated "I am" followed by a description of himself. You say to me tonight, "Preacher, who is Jesus Christ?" He answers, "I am the bread of life." Who is Jesus Christ? He answers, "I am the light of the world." Who is Jesus Christ? He answers, "I'm the door of the sheep." Who is Jesus Christ? He answers, "I'm the Good Shepherd." Who is Jesus Christ? He answers, "I am the resurrection and the life." Who is Jesus Christ? He answers, "I am the true vine."

Twenty-three times in this gospel of John, Christ uses that mighty statement. In the book of Exodus when God said to Moses, "I Am That I Am," it's a declaration of absolute deity. You say, "What does it mean, preacher?" When God says, "I Am That I Am," he means, "I am a person. I am not impersonal." God says, "I want to have fellowship and communion with thee." He says, "I am self-existent." God doesn't need anything or draw from anything for his existence. He says, "I am eternal." He always has been, and he always will be God. He says, "I am unchangeable. What I was yesterday I am today, and I will be tomorrow."

And you see here the Lord Jesus takes one of the distinctive names of God and he applies it to himself. He says, "I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, he that believeth on me shall never thirst." You say, "Denise, what does Christ mean?" He's simply saying, "I am all you need. I am all you need." I wonder tonight are you here hungry in heart with the feeling of emptiness in your life, dissatisfied with things as they are, longing for something tonight that will bring peace to your soul and pardon to your heart and a prospect for the future where Christ says, "I'm the bread of life for the hungry one, for the empty one, for the unsatisfied one, for the disillusioned one."

Christ is all your need and that's what I want to talk to you about tonight. I want to talk to you simply about man's problem and God's provision and faith's part. Look at the verse. Notice the problem with man. The Lord Jesus describes it in terms of hungering and thirsting. You see, my friends, because we're born in sin and shapen in iniquity, we're all naturally helpless and perishing. I wonder if I were to ask you tonight what's man's greatest need, how would you respond? Would you say, "Well, it's physical, it's moral, it's intellectual, it's educational, it's emotional, it's financial." No doubt there are many

who would say that these things are our greatest needs but all of those things are temporal and our greatest need is spiritual.

A Christian believer was traveling abroad one day and saw a poor woman among the ruins of her home staring in defeat into space. She had lost four sons. She had lost all that she had due to an earthquake, and though food was available, she hadn't eaten in five days. And she said, "I cannot eat. My hunger is deep within my heart where no bread can reach." She was looking for someone, she was looking for something that could satisfy the deep longings of her soul. Wonder, dear friend, tonight, can you identify with her? Is there a spiritual lack in your life or spiritual deficiency? You see, if you look at John 6 tonight, the Lord Jesus tells us two things about man. He tells us there's a lifelessness in the soul of man, he says, "I am the bread of life," verse 51, he says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." You see in these great "I am" statements, Jesus Christ not only tells us what he can do for us but what we can do through him. He says, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life," implying that without him we ain't got it.

Paul talks about those who are dead in trespasses and in sin. Wonder, do you realize tonight that without Jesus Christ, certainly you're physically alive but you're spiritually dead. You're unable to know God. You're unable to communicate with God. You're unable to enjoy God. You're unable to have fellowship with God. You're the enemy of God tonight. You're spiritually dead. That's why John pens his gospel.

In John's writings, he always puts a key at the door. In this gospel, he puts the key at the back door. Some of you have come out tonight and you've left the key at the back door. Our neighbor, she went out the other day and she just left the door open. She doesn't seem to care. And her husband, he left it open too. And then one day, they locked themselves out, and so she came across to Catherine the other day and she says, "Will you keep that spare key? I'm sure we'll lock ourselves out again."

You see, John takes the key and he puts the key at the back door of his gospel. Here's why he writes. He says, "These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life through his name." Inspired by the Spirit of God, he wrote his gospel to declare who Jesus is, the Son of the living God, and that ye might live through him.

John wrote five books in the New Testament. He wrote the gospel of John. He wrote 1 John, 2 John 3 John, the book of the Revelation. Those five books divide into three parts. He wrote the gospel of John, that has to do with our past, it has to do with our salvation. He wrote 1, 2 and 3 John, that has to do with our present, our sanctification. He wrote the book of the Revelation, that has to do with our future, our glorification. Every time John writes a book, he's got a definite purpose in mind and his purpose in writing this gospel is this, "that you might believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through his name."

Now let me ask you, have you got that life? Are you saved? Do you know Christ? You see, it's not enough to know about Christ, it's not enough to know of Christ, it's not

enough to know what Jesus Christ did. Many tonight could tell me about his virgin birth, his virtuous life, his vicarious death, his victorious resurrection, his visible return, they know him intellectually, they know him mentally, they know him academically, but as to a deep sense of their sin and a sincere trust in him, there's no place in their life. Listen, do you know Christ personally, savingly experimentally?

Jesus Christ says there's a lifelessness in the soul, man, but he tells us something else, verse 35, he says there's not only a lifelessness in the soul of man, he says there's a longing in the soul of man. He expressed it in terms of hungering and thirsting. You and I know that we have and when we haven't eaten for a long time, we soon become hungry. There's a craving on the inside that needs to be satisfied. If we go through periods of hot days, there's a longing for a cold drink that will quench our thirst. But the Lord Jesus is not speaking here of physical things. He's not talking of physical hunger. He's not talking of physical thirst. He's speaking here about spiritual hunger, about spiritual thirst.

You know what the world's population is tonight? 7.4. billion. Do you know what they have in common tonight? They have a longing to be satisfied. Way back in the 1960s, the Rolling Stones sang this song, "I can't get no satisfaction." Freddie Mercury entitled one of his songs, "Does anyone know what we're living for?" James Rockefeller said, "I have made millions, but they have brought me no happiness. I would barter them for this, I sat on the office stool in Cleveland and counted myself rich on \$3 a week." All of you who are into Wimbledon. You're watching the tennis. Boris Becker said, "I had won Wimbledon twice before, once as the youngest player. I was rich. I had all the material possessions I needed. I had cars. I had money. I had women. I had everything. But I had no inner peace. I was a puppet on a string." Princess Diana said, "Being a Princess is not all that it's cracked up to be."

A little five year old boy set off for school one day, it was his first day at school. You know what it's like when you go to school for the first time. He was really excited and he was a wee bit apprehensive. But he was determined to have a lot of fun at school. Mommy kissed him bye, bye at the school gate, and then he went back home at lunchtime. There was a familiar knock on the door. It was her son. There he was. He was standing there, and the mother said, "What are you doing here, Johnny?" The wee boy said, "I've quit school." The mother said, "Why?" "Well," he said, "it's too long and it's too hard and it's too boring." The mother said, "Johnny, we need to get back on the bus. You have just described life."

Wonder, do you feel like that little boy tonight? Maybe you've tried the wells of this world and the water of this world, and you've searched here and there, and you've tried this and that, but you're still hungry and you're still thirsty. I think of Ernest Hemingway who took his life. One of his biographers, a close friend of Ernest Hemingway for 14 years, was perplexed by the writer's suicide. In the forward, the biographer had listed what Hemingway had going for him. He won the Nobel Peace Prize. He won the Pulitzer Prize. He had a home in Idaho in Sawtooth Mountains. He had a specially rigged yacht to fish the Gulf Stream. He had apartments available at the Ritz in Paris and the Gritti in

Venice. He had a sturdy marriage. He had friends everywhere. And in 1961, he put a shotgun into his mouth and blew his brains off.

My friend, do you realize tonight that the things of this world will never satisfy? What have you got tonight, financial stability, social standing, sinful pleasure? I wonder tonight are you satisfied, or is there still that vacuum in your life, that God-shaped hole, that emptiness in your life, or have you come to the place tonight where you realize that only Jesus can satisfy the longing of your soul?

Look very quickly at the provision of God for Christ says, "I am the bread of life." You see it, Spurgeon said, "God's inexhaustible fullness is treasured up where all the needy reach it and without Christ countless souls are starving daily, pained by hunger deep within. Christ alone can satisfy their longing, fill their hearts, forgive their sin." My friend, tonight in the words of the chorus, Christ is the answer to your every need.

You know in John 6, John tells us three things Christ is able to do. Let me share them very quickly. He's able to save. He's able to save you. He says, "All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me. Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Jesus Christ is able to save. Do you know why? Do you know why he's able to save you? Because he came. Time and time again in this passage he talks about coming down from heaven. What amazing condescension. What a stoop this was from the highest in heaven to the lowest on earth, from the sovereign of all to the servant of all, from the crowns of glory to the cross of Golgotha. Jesus came down from his glory, ever living story, my God and Savior came, and Jesus was his name. Listen, he's able to save because he came. He's able to save because he did. He did go to dark Calvary for guilty sinners.

I'm sure you're aware of the process through which bread passes before it becomes food. It springs up the blade of the ear, the full corn in the ear, and then it's cut down, its winnowed, it's separated from the chaff, it's ground into flour, it's finally subjected to the fiery process of the oven. And so it was with Jesus Christ. On Calvary's cross, he was smitten, stricken of God, and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. The sinless, spotless Son of God was made a curse for us. He was subjected to the holy fires of God's righteous wrath as he took your place in judgment in order that he might become to you the bread of life.

Field Marshall William Slim was leading the British forces during the Burma campaign in the second World War. He was very concerned about the men under his authority and under his control. He learned that one soldier was extremely despondent over some news that he had received from home, so he asked the senior chaplain to go and have one of his men speak to this man. And shortly afterward, the Field Marshall sent for the senior chaplain and he seemed to be dissatisfied with what had gone on, and he said, "One of your chaplains went to see the man and he was very nice and had a cup of tea with him, but he never showed the soldier what he needed to see." "And what was that," asked the surprised chaplain. Field Marshall Slim said, "He never showed him the man on the cross. He never showed him the man on the cross."

Wonder when you think of the cross tonight, what's your response when you think of this submissiveness that Christ expressed? When you think of the sufferings of Christ endured, when you think of the sacrifice that Christ offered, how do you react? How do you respond? Did you know tonight that Adam ate the forbidden food and all mankind fell into sin, Christ ate the spiritual food and all mankind can come into salvation. Listen, tonight, he's able to save. Because he came, he's able to save. Because he did, he did go to Calvary's cross. He's able to save tonight because he is. He says, "I am the very bread of life," the name that was given to God at the burning bush under the authority of Moses. Moses wanted to know, he wanted to know who it was that was sending him, He said, "Lord, they'll never believe me. The children of Israel never believe me. Tell me, whom will I say, has sent me?" And God spoke out of the bush that burned with fire and was not consumed and he says, "Tell them I AM has sent thee, the infinite, self-existent, eternal, unchanging, omnipotent God."

And my blessed Savior takes one of these distinctive names of God and he applies it to himself. Why? Because he is God. He is God. Do you think tonight that your heart is too hard? Do you think tonight that your sin is too great? Do you think tonight that your life is too wicked? The Bible says he's able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him. Listen, Christ is able to save. Secondly, Christ is able to satisfy. He says, "I'm the bread of life." He's using a familiar object to teach a spiritual truth. He's using a metaphor here as Christ is speaking here, he's saying just as bread brings life to the body, so Christ brings life to the soul.

What an appropriate title. You see, like bread Christ cannot be done without. Bread is a necessary food. Some of you have lived today on rich deserts and fancy stuff, but we need the bread. Bread nourishes life. Bread sustains life. Bread imparts life. Bread is the food that we cannot dispense with and so it is with Christ. We must have Jesus Christ or die in our sins. We must have Jesus Christ or die and go to hell. Christ cannot be done without. He cannot be done without in life and death and eternity in the bread, and like the bread Christ cannot be done without, like the bread Christ is suited to all. You know, bread's a food that suits all. There are some of you tonight and I'm looking down at you and you're vegetarians. I don't know how you stick it. But I want to tell you tonight that Christ is the bread that meets all. He's just the Savior that every man needs. Unlike bread, tonight Christ is fulfilling. We quickly tire of other things but not bread.

I wonder tonight if you've come to the place where you've begun to realize that possessions will never satisfy your soul, and plenty will never satisfy your soul, and power will never satisfy your soul. Only Jesus can satisfy your soul. He's standing before you tonight and he says, "I'm the bread of life. I'm the living Son of the living God. I'm able to save. I'm able to satisfy." But that's not all. This passage tells me that Christ is able to save, he's able to satisfy, he's able to secure. He says, "him that cometh to me I will no wise cast out." The Greek is strong, once inside there's no casting out. The Lord Jesus said, "and this is the Father's will which has sent me that of all of them which he hath given me, I should lose nothing."

Maybe you're afraid, tonight, if you come to Christ, he'll not keep it. Listen, he does the keeping. Thank God tonight he does the saving. He does the keeping. He does the security.

My time is gone. The problem of man, there's a lifelessness in the soul of man. There's a longing in the soul of man. The provision of God, Christ is able to save, to satisfy, to secure. Look at the principle of faith. You see, on the one hand tonight you've got your need. On the other hand, tonight you've got God's provision. How do we get the need? How do we get the supply to meet the need? Very simply, the sinner must accept the Savior. Look at the terms that Jesus uses. He says, "he that cometh to me, he that believeth on me."

I wonder tonight, have you ever accepted the Savior? Have you ever come to him? Someone has said that "come" is one of the most beautiful words in the Bible. Save is for the children, always for the old people, and it's for the middle-aged people. He is for everyone, all the simplicity of it tonight. You've just got to come.

The sinner must accept the Savior. Ah, but listen to this a wee bit. The Savior will accept the sinner. If you come, he'll never cast you out. How many times I've sat down with people trying to explain the gospel and have said to them, listen, if you come, he'll never cast you out. Now, if he doesn't cast you out, what does he do? He takes you in. "Him that cometh unto me, I will absolutely never reject." I wonder tonight, will you come to the Savior?

Now, I was reading about a man who got a coasting steamer bound for Florida. He was very poor a long time ago. He had a little money left when he paid for his ticket. And with the little money left, with the little money that he had left over, he bought some crackers and cheese, thinking that the food in the dining room was far too expensive and that he couldn't afford it. And as that coasting steamer made its way to Florida, after a time the crackers, well, they tasted flat and the cheese, well, it started to go off. To make matters worse, he was obliged three times a day to inhale the odors that were coming from the kitchen, and finally within one day of reaching Florida, he grew desperate and he saw the waiter carrying this large turkey with all the trimmings into the dining room, and he stopped the waiter at the entrance of the dining room, and he said, "Sir, how much will a dinner like that cost?" "Cost," exclaimed the waiter? "Why, Sir, it won't cost you anything. It's all paid for in the ticket."

My friend, the provision that God has made for your soul's salvation tonight will cost you nothing. Christ has already paid the price in drops of ruby blood and all that you have to do tonight is to appropriate God's provision and God's provision is Christ. Christ sees your emptiness tonight, and he offers you his fullness. Christ sees your deadness tonight and he offers you his life. Christ sees your hell tonight, and he offers you his heaven. Will you come to him? He's the key to life. He alone can satisfy your hunger. He alone can quench your thirst. He says, "I'm the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, he that believeth on me shall never thirst." Will you come to him, to him who is

the Son of God, to him who is the Savior of sinners, to him who is the substitute of Calvary? Will you come? And you can come now.

Let's pray.