

Over seven weeks, we'll look at the seven special, metaphorical "I am" statements recorded in John's gospel. With each one, Jesus himself tells us "who" he is...and in telling us that, he tells us who we are.

These statements explain both who Jesus is and his divinity. They all are closely linked to God's description of Himself in the OT. Jesus understood himself to be divine.

When Moses, the great deliverer of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, ask God how to explain his mission, -- *God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'*" (Exodus 3:14)

This title is what Jesus alludes to when he declares throughout John's Gospel, "I am..." It was clearly understood that this is what he was doing. He said in response to questions about his relationship to Abraham, "*Very truly I tell you, Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"*" (John 8:58) When people heard this, they immediately picked up rocks to stone Jesus for blasphemy! They knew he was claiming to be God. So did He.

In addition to the metaphorical statements, Jesus also made other declarative statements in saying "I am he!" See 8:24, 28, and 58 mentioned above. And with each metaphorical statement Jesus makes about himself, *he also tells us who we are.* He is the bread of life. We are people with deep hunger and thirsts. He is the light of the world! We are people who live in darkness. Actually we like darkness (John 3:19). He is the gate into God's fold. We are on the outside needing to get in. He is the good shepherd who lies down his life. We are people who need someone to die for us. He is the resurrection and life. Without Jesus, we die an eternal death. He is the way to the Father. We need to know the way, because we are given so many false options. He is the true vine that provides fruit-bearing life to all who remain attached to it. We must remain in his life through the HS to be able to bear a fruitful life that pleases God.

- Kevin McKee

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FIRST WEEK OF THE FALL

The first Community Group of the semester often looks much different than your normal week. You want to accomplish two things: *Get to know one another* and *set expectations*. To get to know one another, spend extra time in fellowship or consider playing a game that helps you learn more about each person. To set expectations, share The Chapel's vision for Community Groups (Belong, Believe, Become) and what you want the group to provide for both the people in the room and the people who aren't there yet. Lastly, share with your group what a normal meeting will look like and what week of the month you will have your Hangout Night.

Below is our weekly curriculum. Normally this study will include more questions and leader notes, but we wanted to make this week simple to create enough time for you to get to know one another. As a leader, you can either walk through all these questions or just ask the last two questions of the guide:

- **What do you long to see Christ do in and through your group this Fall?**
- **Who in your life would benefit from a group like this?**

Don't try to do too much on the first night. If your people connect with one another, get an expectation of what the group is about, and leave thinking about who they can invite to join them next week, then you are off to a great start! We are praying for your groups as they start this semester!

- Vick Green



LEADERS GUIDE – September 8

PRIMARY PASSAGE

John 6:25-40

²⁵ *When* they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” ²⁶ Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.

²⁷ *Do not work* for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

²⁸ *Then* they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” ²⁹ Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

³⁰ *So* they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

³² 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.” ³⁵ **Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.**

³⁶ But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. ³⁷ All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

ICEBREAKER:

Short Icebreaker: What is your name and “If you could live any sitcom what would it be?”

Long Icebreaker: Play a game like Clan/Empire or Two Truths and A Lie.

1.) What is going in? Describe what is happening in the passage leading up to Jesus’ “I AM” statement.

This passage includes the feeding of the 5,000. Take time as a group discussing this miracle. It really is an amazing scene to think about.

2.) In v.35, what does Jesus claim? What does this metaphor say about who Jesus is? Jesus claims to be the Bread of Life. Just as bread fulfills your hunger and sustains you, so does Christ. He meets our ultimate cravings and longings: to be known and loved.

3.) What does this mean for us? Whatever we are longing for in life, we find its ultimate fulfillment in Christ. Whether it is feeling loved or being known or something else, Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of those longings.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

Jesus’ statement, “I am the Bread of Life,” tells us that Jesus satisfies our deepest hunger. What we long to find from others can only be found in him. Take a moment in think about what that is for you personally. Also, think about your Community Group, what do you long to see happen in your group this Fall.

- **What do you hunger for currently and how can Christ fulfill that hunger?**
- **What do you long to see Christ do in and through your group this Fall?**
- **Who in your life would benefit from a group like this?**