March 1st 2021 Joe's Journal

The

HOOLY FROG Honour Others, Lower Yourself and Fully Rely On God. Blog





Would you rather eat an elephant ...

Would you rather eat an elephant sized burger or a burger sized elephant? Whichever one you chose, eventually you would be hungry again! We know that what we eat has a big impact on our bodies. We know that our bodies need regular nourishment as we constantly have to deal with physical hunger and thirst. We all know where to get food and drink for our bodies but where do we find nourishment for our souls?

Would you rather... have free bread for life or bread that leads to eternal life?

How can bread give eternal life?! This same question arose in the minds of many people after witnessing Jesus miraculously feed a crowd of thousands. The next day, as the crowd gathered again, perhaps eager for more free bread, he spoke these words, "I AM the Bread of Life. He who comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35)



At first you might assume Jesus was just talking about being able to provide actual bread. However, he wasn't referring to the ordinary burger bun, loaf or baguette that fills your stomach and satisfies physical hunger but rather 'bread' that promises to satisfy spiritual hunger and leads to eternal life. What's more, he said "I AM that bread". But before we dive into that, a quick word about this 'I AM'

In John's Gospel we see that **Jesus made seven "I AM" statements,** about himself, giving an insight into his mission and purpose, which were extremely controversial and challenging statements. Controversial because in the Old Testament, the two words "I AM" described God Almighty himself. In Exodus chapter 3, Moses asks God "whom shall I say has sent me to Pharaoh?" To which God replies tell him "I AM" has sent you. The religious authorities considered it blasphemy for anyone to use these words to describe themselves; in making the statement "I AM," **Jesus was claiming to be God.**

As if that wasn't enough, in this "I AM" statement, Jesus also claimed that anyone who truly followed him would never be hungry or thirsty again. How could that be true? The Bible teaches that **God created humans with both body and soul** and, just as our bodies need nourishment, so do our souls. Sadly, people spend a lot of time and money looking after their physical side of life but neglect their spiritual side. **Where do you go for 'soul food'?** There are plenty of experts to be found that talk about the need to 'feed the soul' to 'find purpose' or 'achieve life fulfilment' by looking to things such relationships, hobbies, careers, and possessions. They advise us to live with gratitude, appreciation, love, laughter, joy and even spiritual practices such as daily meditation, prayer, reading inspirational books or walking in nature. Psychologists, therapists and lifestyle coaches encourage us to avoid self doubt, self judgement, stress, fear, insecurity, anger and hatred. All of these have some value but ultimately, Jesus says, nothing we do can satisfy our spiritual hunger and thirst.

















King Solomon (Ecclesiastes) went on a long quest to fill his empty heart with all these things and reached the conclusion that everything mankind pursues is "Meaningless! Meaningless! Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless!" The only thing that satisfies the soul, is to seek and serve God.



Buzz Aldrin, along with Neil Armstrong was the first man to set foot on the moon (1969) What an achievement! Surely that 'out of this world' experience would be enough to satisfy the heart! Sadly no. In his biography, he explains that as soon as the spacecraft returned to earth, he was struck with a "peculiar feeling of loss." Soon after this historic achievement, his life fell apart, "There was no goal, no sense of calling, no project worth

pouring myself into. I had started drinking more. Life seemed to have lost its shine. On some days I couldn't even find a reason to get out of bed. So I didn't ..."

So What? This first "I AM" statement reminds us that Jesus came into the world, not to meet our physical needs, but to meet our deeper spiritual needs forever. If our attempts to 'find spiritual food' fail to satisfy the God-shaped hunger Jesus talks about, perhaps it is worth spending time considering his claim that he is in fact the only one that does the job?! "I AM the Bread of Life. He who comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35) To receive this free 'bread of life', all we need to do is to believe in Jesus Christ, come to him and accept his word: or like the crowds who just focused on their physical needs, we can walk away. So, in this time of Lent, as you take time to consider Jesus statements about himself we come back to the question,

Would you rather have bread for life or bread that leads to eternal life?

Chaplain's Challenge:

- 1. Have a go at making some bread and share it with others *
- 2. What is you favourite "Would you rather..." question?
- 3. Name some other people who are connected with the words "I am."
- 4. Read the account of Feeding the 5000 in John's Gospel.
- 5. How does your faith 'feed your soul' and make a difference to life?
- 6. Take a few minutes in quiet and think about the Scriptures here as you allow God to 'feed your soul'.

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

Reflect:

"Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life which the Son of Man will give you." (John 6:26-27)



PRAYER



Send in your photos, stories of Christian faith in action, your prayer requests and anything else to

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