



Sermon for Sunday, March 6, 2022  
First Sunday of Lent  
Pastor Charlie Berthoud | John 6:30-35

The Bible is filled with food.

It begins with Adam and Eve eating an apple, continues with God providing manna in the wilderness, as the people journey toward a land flowing with milk and honey. The prophets denounced injustice and hunger, and the Isaiah spoke of a heavenly feast on a mountain, with rich foods and choice wines (Isaiah 25.6-9).

Jesus shared meals with Pharisees and sinners and everyone in between. He called his disciples to feed hungry people. And all four gospels tell of Jesus feed a crowd of 5000, and all four gospels describe a meal that Jesus shared with his disciples shortly before his arrest, trial, and death.

Food is all over the Bible and for good reason: Food is essential to life.

Unless you're doing some serious fasting for medical or spiritual reasons, you've have eaten in the last 24 hours, and probably within the last hour or two. Maybe some of you online are eating right now! And I would imagine most of us have had bread or some bread-like product.

In biblical times, bread was even more central than it is now. So when Jesus says "I am the bread of life" he is saying he is essential to nourishment, to survival to life. He offers this teaching shortly after feeding the 5000, when the disciples are hungry for food and hungry for meaning and purpose.

Listen for God's word:

“So they said to him, ‘What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing?’<sup>31</sup> Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”<sup>32</sup> Then Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.<sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’<sup>34</sup> They said to him, ‘Sir, give us this bread always.’<sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.’”

Lent is a time for us Christians to consider being more attentive and intentional about practicing our faith. It's a time for prayer and fasting and scripture and for a renewed sense of following Jesus.

So we're inviting you to prayerfully read the gospel according to John, with particular attention to the “I am” statements of Jesus, like “I am the bread of life” with the hope to more fully experience the teaching of Jesus, the love of Jesus, the presence of Jesus.

Over these weeks, I hope you'll find one or more images or new authentic ways to understand and listen to and follow Jesus—as the bread of life, the light of the world, the good shepherd.

Or maybe as Teacher, Friend, Lord, or Savior.

Today as we remember Jesus as the bread of life—the one who nourishes with grace and feeds our deepest hungers—we gather at the communion table to share the bread of life.

For a Lenten practice this week, consider being more prayerful and intentional about your eating, especially when you have bread.

If you're not in the habit of praying before you eat, give it a try this week. Even a simple "thank you God for this food" is fine. Or maybe you want to say "Thank you God for this food, and thank you for Jesus who is the bread of life."

In Jesus Christ God has come into this world to urge us to repent, to proclaim good news of forgiveness, to call us to live with new purpose, and to nourish us with all that we really need. Thanks be to God.