

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Jesus: The Bread of Life”
(Part III of the Lenten series “The great “I AM” statements of Jesus”)
March 08, 2026

Scripture

Deuteronomy 8:3
Psalm 78:23-25
John 6:35

Core Idea and purpose

Core theological ideas from earlier sermons in the series:

- (02/22/2026) To know Jesus is to know God on a first name basis
- (03/01/2026) We must let the light of Jesus illuminate our situations and hearts.

Core theological idea: Jesus is the bread of life. Through faith in Jesus, we have abundant & eternal life. So, no matter how hard it gets, we can say, “So What!? I have abundant & eternal life” and then take the first step.

Challenge/purpose: To encourage people facing trials and tribulations.

The Sermon

Many people argue that solitary confinement is cruel and unusual punishment. Going for several days without any human contact can cause serious mental, emotional, and even physical harm. According to a study conducted at the Pelican Bay Maximum Security Prison in California, all the people in solitary confinement experienced heightened anxiety, irrational anger, and confused thoughts. Seventy percent felt they were on the verge of a nervous breakdown and 40% experienced hallucinations.¹ The negative effects of solitary confinement on our well-being illustrate that we need more than just food, water, and oxygen to live & thrive.

Mothers and fathers already know this. For a child to live and thrive, parents must provide more than food, water, shelter, and clothes. Parents must also provide nurture, discipline, attention, guidance and, most of all, unconditional love.

None of this is new. Approximately 3,500 years ago, The Lord God spoke through the prophet Moses and told the Israelites, “...man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” (Deuteronomy 8:3)

¹<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2019/4/17/18305109/solitary-confinement-prison-criminal-justice-reform>

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Then approximately 1,500 years later, our Savior & Lord Jesus quoted this verse when the devil tempted Him to take matters into His own hands instead of following His Father’s plan. He suggested to Jesus, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus then responded, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’”²

A few years later, Jesus made an even more remarkable declaration. He fed 5,000 people with 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread. Then, during the night, Jesus and his Apostles crossed the Lake of Galilee to reach their home base of Capernaum. When the crowd that stayed on the opposite shore of Galilee woke up, they discovered that Jesus and a boat was gone. They figured Jesus must have crossed the lake to return to Capernaum. So, they got into some boats and sailed to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

When the crowd found Jesus, he did not shake his head and wonder if he would ever be rid of these people. (That is what I might have done) Instead, he lovingly spoke truth to them. He said, “I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill...” He then started to teach the crowd of people. The day before Jesus provided physical food but at this moment, he was providing spiritual food. Remember, people do not live on bread alone but on every word that comes out of the mouth of God.

During the consequent lesson, Jesus made a remarkable declaration. He said, “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.” Bread was the staple food at that time. By claiming to be the bread of life, Jesus was claiming to be the sustainer of life. This means that Jesus is divine because it is God who sustains life. Jesus is God in the flesh.

Let’s think about this. We live on the ‘every word that comes from the mouth of God’ and Jesus is ‘the Bread of Life’, which makes Him the sustainer of life. This means that Jesus is ‘every word that comes from the mouth of God’. As such, Jesus gives us abundant and eternal life. In other words, through faith in Jesus we have abundant & eternal life.

The resurrection proves this. Jesus was dead on Friday, but the ‘Bread of Life’ was not going to remain dead. On the 3rd day, Jesus rose from the dead. He rose with a glorified, resurrected body that will never die again. ‘The Bread of Life’

² Matthew 4:1-4 ; Luke 4:1-4

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conquered death and lives forever in a loving relationship with The Father and The Holy Spirit.

Jesus also said, “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” This is why we had communion last Sunday and will always have communion every month. When we eat the bread, symbolizing his body, and drink the juice, symbolizing his blood, communion reminds us that, through faith in Jesus, we have abundant & eternal life.”

No matter how hard life gets, we can always say, “So what!?! I have an abundant & eternal life.” And then take the next step. Turn to your neighbor and say, “So what!?! I have abundant and eternal life!” Now turn to your neighbor and say, “Take the next step!”

When we get the dreadful news from the doctor that it is cancer, we can say, “So what!?! I have an abundant & eternal life.” And then schedule the surgery or chemotherapy.

When we get laid off and still have a family to support, we can say, “So what!?! I have an abundant & eternal life.” And then begin the job search.

When people stab us in the back with malicious gossip, we can say, “So what!?! I have an abundant & eternal life.” And then pray for the gossipers, knowing that God has our backs.

On Memorial Day 2023, I got up early and went for a run. As I ran down the sidewalk, I started to feel a pain in my chest. At first, it wasn't too bad. I stopped running and started walking. The pain disappeared, so I started running again. A minute later, the pain returned and started to get worse. So, I stopped and called my wife. She picked me up and rushed me to the hospital. (The hospital was very close.) I was having a heart attack.

The heart attack was very annoying because I didn't want to deal with the consequential health issues and, more importantly, I did not want to leave behind a wife and teen-age son. But I had very little worry because I knew I could say, “So what!?! I have abundant and eternal life!” and then take the next step of receiving a heart catheter, finding a cardiologist and following his directions. So yes, I was concerned and annoyed, but not worried.

Jesus is the Bread of life. We can always say, “So what!?! I have abundant and everlasting life!” and then take the next step.

Let's pray.

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Sermon Outline

- I. Many people argue that solitary confinement is cruel and unusual punishment.
 - A. Going for several weeks or even days without any human contact can cause serious mental, emotional, and even physical harm.
 - B. According to a study conducted at the Pelican Bay Maximum Security Prison in California...
 - , all the people in solitary confinement experienced heightened anxiety, irrational anger, and confused thoughts.
 - 70% felt they were on the verge of a nervous breakdown
 - 40% experienced hallucinations.³
 - C. The negative effects of solitary confinement on our well-being illustrate that we need more than just food, water, and oxygen to live & thrive.
 - D. Mothers and fathers already know this.
 - For a child to live and thrive, parents must provide more than food, water, shelter, and clothes.
 - Parents must also provide nurture, discipline, attention, guidance and, most of all, unconditional love.
- II. None of this is new.
 - A. Approximately 3,500 years ago, The Lord God spoke through the prophet Moses and told the Israelites, “...man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” (Deuteronomy 8:3)
 - B. Then approximately 1,500 years later, our Savior & Lord Jesus quoted this verse when the devil tempted Him to take matters into His own hands instead of following His Father’s plan.
 - He suggested to Jesus, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

³<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2019/4/17/18305109/solitary-confinement-prison-criminal-justice-reform>

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- Jesus then responded, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’”⁴

III. A few years later, Jesus made an even more remarkable declaration.

A. He fed 5,000 people with 2 loaves of bread and 5 fishes.

- Then, during the night, Jesus and his Apostles crossed the Lake of Galilee to reach their home base of Capernaum.
- When the crowd that stayed on the opposite shore of Galilee woke up, they discovered that Jesus and a boat was gone.
- They figured Jesus must have crossed the lake to return to Capernaum.
- So, they got into some boats and sailed to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

B. When the crowd found Jesus, he did not shake his head and wonder if he would ever be rid of these people. (That is what I might have done)

- Instead, he lovingly spoke truth to them.
- He said, “I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill...”
 - The day before Jesus provided physical food but at this moment, he provided spiritual food.
 - Remember, people do not live on bread alone but on the very words that come out of the mouth of God.
- During the consequent conversation, Jesus made a remarkable declaration.
 - He said, “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.”

⁴ Matthew 4:1-4 ; Luke 4:1-4

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- As the bread of life, Jesus is the source and sustainer of life.
- This makes him divine – God in the flesh.

C. Now, let’s think about this.

- We live on the ‘very words that come from the mouth of God’ and Jesus is ‘the Bread of Life’.
- This means that Jesus is ‘the very words that come from the mouth of God’.
- As such, Jesus gives us abundant and eternal life.
- In other words, through faith in Jesus we have abundant & eternal life.

IV. The resurrection proves this.

A. Jesus was dead on Friday, but the ‘Bread of Life’ was not going to remain dead.

- On the 3rd day, Jesus rose from the dead.
- He rose with a glorified, resurrected body that will never die again.
- ‘The Bread of Life’ conquered death and lives forever in a loving relationship with The Father and The Holy Spirit.

B. Jesus also said, “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

- This is why we had communion last Sunday and will always have communion at least every month.
- When we eat the bread, symbolizing his body, and drink the juice, symbolizing his blood, communion reminds us that, through faith in Jesus, we have abundant & eternal life.

V. No matter how hard life gets, we can always say, “So what!?! I have an abundant & eternal life.” And then take the next step.

A. Turn to your neighbor and say, “So what!?! I have abundant and eternal life!”

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- B. When we get the dreadful news from the doctor that it is cancer, we can say, “So what!? I have an abundant & eternal life.” And then schedule the surgery or chemotherapy.
 - C. When we get laid off and still have a family to support, we can say, “So what!? I have an abundant & eternal life.” And then begin the job search.
 - D. When people stab us in the back with malicious gossip, we can say, “So what!? I have an abundant & eternal life.” And then pray for the gossipers, knowing that God has our backs.
- VI. On Memorial Day 2023, I got up early and went for a run.
- A. As I ran down the sidewalk, I started to feel a pain in my chest.
 - At first, it wasn’t too bad.
 - I stopped running and started walking.
 - The pain disappeared, so I started running again.
 - A minute later, the pain returned and started to get worse.
 - So, I stopped and called my wife.
 - She picked me up and rushed me to the hospital. (The hospital was very close.)
 - I was having a heart attack.
 - B. The heart attack was very annoying because I didn’t want to deal with the consequential health issues.
 - More importantly, I did not want to die and leave behind a wife and teen-age son.
 - But I had very little worry because I knew I could say, “So what!? I have abundant and eternal life!” and then take the next step of finding a cardiologist and following his directions.
 - So yes, I was concerned and annoyed, but not worried.
- VII. Jesus is the Bread of life. We can always say, “So what!? I have abundant and everlasting life!” and then take the next step.

Let’s pray.