

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

'Jesus says 'I AM'' Lent series - Week 1
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Reading: John 6:35

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."

In this teaching, Dr Janice McRandal reflects on the theme of liberation which runs through Jesus' statement: "I am the bread of life".

Against the backdrop of colonisation, Jesus ministered to people who were disadvantaged and excluded from dominant religious practices. As Jesus proclaims the bread of life, he provides physical bread: a manifestation of inclusion and freedom.

The bread of life goes beyond a spiritual ideal: it filled hungry tummies, sated physical beings. Jesus' invitation extends to us today: come and be satisfied, come and take part in bringing liberation to the here and now.



[Watch the video here: https://youtu.be/yHpBib73ib8](https://youtu.be/yHpBib73ib8)

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Reflection Questions:

“There’s a real temptation to reduce the language of this statement to solely spiritual connotations, when in fact, this chapter is entirely about our materiality, our fleshly bodies and the earth beneath our feet”

- What is it like for you to consider Jesus’ statement as a physical reference, as opposed to solely spiritual?

This reflection touches on the idea of liberation for people who are excluded or disadvantaged because they don’t fit into the mainstream system (eg - not having the means to participate in the Passover meal, or being religiously excluded).

- Have you ever experienced feeling disadvantaged or excluded from religious practice?
- As you consider your community, who are the people you think are disadvantaged or excluded? Reflect on this question in the context of your church, local community and wider society.
- How might you go about inviting them to eat the bread of life with you as equals?

Daily Bible Readings:

Day 1	John 6:1-10	Consider the materiality of this scene - the physical place, the crowd.
Day 2	John 6:11-14	Watch and notice Jesus’ actions and words
Day 3	John 6:25-34	Observe the different perspectives of Jesus and the crowd
Day 4	Exodus 16:6-15	What is similar and different in this passage to the feeding of the multitude in John?
Day 5	John 6:35	Sit with this text, mulling it over slowly today
Day 6	John 6:35-40	How is Jesus the bread of life?
Day 7	John 6:41-59	What does belief in Jesus the liberator look like?

Pray:

Lord Jesus, thank you for coming with the good news of liberation and provision. We acknowledge the pain of exclusion felt by many in our communities. We are sorry for the times we have ostracised others. We recognise the times when we have felt excluded and hurt. Thank you for the love and hope you give us. Please continue to teach us what it means to partake of the bread of life. Help us to show your love to those around us and work for liberation. AMEN

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Dr Janice McRandal is the Director of The Cooperative, a soon to launch centre for public collaboration and theology at Wesley Mission Queensland. Previously the director of systematic theology at Trinity College Queensland, Janice is a feminist theologian who has been teaching and publishing theology for the last decade. Her publications include *Christian Doctrine and the Grammar of Difference: a contribution to feminist systematic theology* (Fortress Press, 2015) and *Sarah Coakley and the Future of Systematic Theology* (Fortress Press, 2016). She is currently completing a book on sport and theology, and approaches all her scholarly work as work toward liberation.

We acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians and their stewardship of the land

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