

Bible Study for Small Groups WB. 6th October.

This week we continue to look at the I AM saying of Jesus.....

I AM the Bread of Life

Last week Paul talked about the importance of bread for sustaining and satisfying our physical daily life. He reminded us of several uses of bread in the Old and New Testaments and explained how the Bread of Presence was placed in the Temple as a reminder of God, the source of life and His power to rescue from slavery. When Jesus called Himself the Bread of Life, He aligned Himself with the Temple bread.

- When we mention Elijah what kind of person comes to mind?

1 Kings 19:1-8

Before this reading Elijah had obeyed God and come against the prophets of the god Baal who Jezebel worshipped. This made her angry and she threatened Elijah's life. He ran away into the wilderness and, exhausted, he sat under a bush and complained to God that he had had enough and wanted out.

- Have you ever come to that point? What did you do?

God knew how exhausted.... physically, emotionally and spiritually Elijah was and provided exactly what he needed at that moment. He let Elijah sleep before waking him with bread.

Jesus said I AM the **Bread of Life**. The bread that **feeds** you. The bread that **satisfies** you. The bread that saves you. The bread that says you are welcome in my presence. The bread that **strengthens** your body. The bread that **empowers** your spirit. The bread that **comes down from heaven**. The bread that is **fresh every day**. The bread that is a **sign** to everyone of God's presence and glory in you.

- Look again at those definitions of the activity of Jesus the Bread of Life. Are there any there that you have benefitted from?

God was watching over Elijah and realised he needed longer to recuperate so he gave him time and more bread until Elijah was restored and strong enough on God's provision to travel for 40 days and nights.

Although God's instructions had been to go to Kerith and Zarepath, he went to Mount Horeb which some think could be another name for Mount Sinai where God gave His covenant promises to Moses. He needed to go back to the place where God's promises had been secured. He was holding fast on to the promises of God for himself and his people. Elijah was just like us, a man with fears and hopes. He had strengths and weaknesses. A man who longed for God and desired to serve Him. And God stayed with him.

Deuteronomy 30:19-20

God tells us to hold fast to Him. It is the same word used when talking about a man being united to his wife and Ruth clinging to Naomi.

Jesus is the Bread of Life. When we hold fast to Him and choose Him, we choose life and everything that He is. Last week Paul told us that the people around Jesus just wanted another miracle fix. But He wants a deep and lasting relationship with us. Eating bread one day then ignoring the loaf for the rest of the week will not sustain us. Having the occasional visit to Jesus will not sustain us. We need to be in His presence every day in order to choose life.

- How can we encourage each other to keep holding fast to Jesus?
- How will the whole church be strengthened when enough of us eat the Bread of Life on a regular basis?