

Jesus says, “I am Bread.”

Now, the word bread can conjure up thoughts of spongy wonder bread, or crackling whole oat bread. French bread. Italian Bread.

Bread has other meanings, too-- bread is also a slang term for currency, money—as in ‘That dude has a lot of bread, man..’ (Sorry teenagers—that reference will probably pass you by.)

We hear about *bread for the world*—feeding those who are desperately hungry on our planet.

We hear it in the Lord’s prayer: give us this day our daily bread. The Aramaic word we translate as “bread” has several meanings:

The original word in Aramaic would have been *Lachma*, which actually has two meanings: *Lachma* means Bread—as in the food that feeds your body-- and *lachma* also means **understanding** or **insight**- which feeds your soul.

“Give us this day our daily bread” would then mean we are asking for bread which grows our bodies, and at the same time we are asking for the understanding and insight which grows our souls.

I AM Bread. Let’s go back to the beginning.

When a baby comes into the world, it is cold, wet and hungry. The baby is dried off, wrapped in a blanket, and takes its first drink of milk. The baby is warm, held, and fed. This is the way all of us first encountered food—food that both fills our body with nourishment, and fills our souls with love.

In our family circle, food then becomes our symbol of love. As a family we share a birthday cakes, Thanksgiving feasts and breakfast in bed. We eat around the dinner table, or we go out to dinner together as a family. Our traditions around food bind us lovingly to our families.

Later in life we continue to join food and love together: we invite good friends over to share a meal—we “break bread” with them, or-- we share a cup of coffee with a friend at 3 Dog Café or Zoots. If someone new moves in to our church or into our neighborhood—we sometimes bring a loaf of bread in welcome. If a friend or family member dies, we bring the grieving food. And all this food, this bread, serves two purposes: to nourish our bodies, and to nourish our souls. Food demonstrates in so many tangible ways: love.

And it doesn’t end there. Think of all the expressions we use that show our connection to that which feeds us: if people earn money to support a family they are the “breadwinner”, a job

might be our “bread and butter”, the most fertile part of a country is known as the “breadbasket”. When we ponder new ideas, we are having-- and giving-- “food for thought.”

Lacham: bread for our bodies, and bread for understanding and insight.

One feeds the body. One the soul. Because it is not just our bodies that hunger.

I think we all hunger for something. Something we can't quite put a finger on.

Sometimes this hunger is elusive—we're not even quite sure what it is we hunger for, and sometimes it feels like nothing we do in life seems to satisfy it.

We go to exciting movies, thinking that will fill the hunger—but it doesn't. We think money will fill that hunger—if only we win that Powerball—if only I buy that outfit, if only I get that car, that home, that something—but it doesn't really fill the hunger either. Because we're soon hungry again.

But what is it we hunger for?

I can only answer that question for myself. I hunger for peace—both for the world and for myself.

I hunger for patience: for patience with people who I don't agree with, patience with my family, but mostly I ask for patience with myself.

I hunger for forgiveness—for the things I have done that inadvertently hurt or disappointed people and for my lack of forgiveness when others hurt me—that lack of forgiveness which hurts me more than them.

And I suspect we all hunger for acceptance. We all hunger for love.

What do you hunger for? How do you fill that hunger?

Jesus tells us: “I AM the Bread of Life.

I will give you the food that both fills your body with nourishment, and fills your soul with love, understanding and insight. I will teach you how to have the perfect freedom I lived. I will show you how to give yourself away with joy. I will show you the love that will fill all of you—mind, body and spirit.”

Jesus says, “Take this bread, and let *me* satisfy whatever it is in you that hungers. I AM the bread of Life. “ Amen.