

The AUDACITY of JESUS:

Embracing His Offensive Identity

Who was Jesus, really? Almost everyone, regardless of their religious affiliation, admires Jesus as a brilliant teacher, a great prophet, or a moral role model. But Jesus never claimed to be any of those things; instead, he insisted - repeatedly - that he is the one true God in the flesh. His own words leave us with only two choices: to take him at his word and accept him as God, or to reject his claims of divine identity and dismiss him as a fraud. All month long in February, The Story Church will explore some of the clearest and most controversial claims that Jesus made about himself. As always, our aim will be to pursue the truth about the most important man who ever lived.

February 8, 2026 - I Am the Bread of Life

Welcome to our brand new message series on the audacious claims of Jesus. Let's begin with a definition:

AUDACITY (noun) - courage or confidence of a kind that other people find shocking or rude

Why is "audacity" an appropriate descriptor of Jesus' message about his identity? (See John 5:18)

Jesus made seven "I AM" claims in John's Gospel. What's the significance of "I AM" in the Bible? (See Exodus 3:14)

John 6:25-29 - When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

What great "sign" or miracle had Jesus done just prior to this passage?

What was the meaning of *works* in the context of 1st-century Judaism? (See Ephesians 2:8-10) What is the only "work" that saves according to Jesus in v.29?

Are Christians expected to do good works beyond believing in Jesus as the Son of God? (See Titus 3:8, 14)

John 6:30-36 - So they asked him, "What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "Sir," they said, "always give us this bread." 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. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe."

Why did the people ask Jesus for a "sign" when he had *just* given them one the day before? What does this suggest about people who depend on signs from God instead of a faith-based relationship with Him?

"The People have abdicated our duties; for the People who once upon a time handed out military command, high civil office, legions — everything, now restrains itself and anxiously hopes for just two things: *bread and circuses*." - Juvenal (Roman poet), ~100 AD

What point was the poet Juvenal making about human nature?

How did Jesus respond to the people's request for another sign? (v.32-33)

How did the "bread of life" that Jesus offered differ from the "bread from heaven" that God had given the people of Israel in the days of Moses (see Deut. 8:2-3)? What does it mean that "man does not live on bread alone"?

The only time in the gospels that Jesus used the word *audacity* is found in Luke 11:

Luke 11:5-10 - Then Jesus said... “Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’ And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet **because of your shameless *audacity*** he will surely get up and give you as much as you need. “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”

What was Jesus encouraging his followers to do with this parable?

John 6:41-45,48-56 - At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, “*I am the bread that came down from heaven.*” They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven?’” “Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered. “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. *I am the bread of life.* Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. *I am the living bread* that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them.”

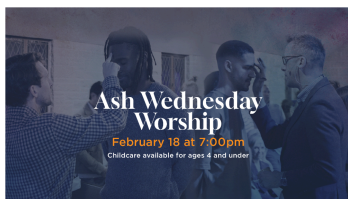
What does it mean to “eat” the flesh and “drink” the blood of Jesus? (see v.56)

In what ways are you tempted in everyday life to “settle” for things (like bread) that only offer temporary satisfaction instead of “eating” and “drinking” that which can satisfy you forever? How, practically, can you choose to “remain in Christ” by *rejecting* this world’s lies and *remaining* in Christ? Be specific.



Women's Retreat with Wendy Speake

Save the date to join us for a spring women's retreat on Saturday, March 21 from 10am to 2:30pm! This retreat is open to women of all ages and life stages. Learn more and register: thestory.church/events



Ash Wednesday Worship

Join us on Wednesday, February 18 at 7pm for a special time of teaching and worship to mark the start of the season of Lent. Nursery care available for ages 4 and under. Learn more: thestory.church/events



Serve on Sunday Teams

Stop by the Teams table on your way out to learn about our current volunteer needs & get plugged in serving with a Sunday team this new year! You can also learn more about the teams on our website: thestory.church/serve