

## More Than Just A Name: Jesus and the “I Am’s” (Part 2)

Over the past few weeks, we have looked at several places which work together to help us better understand that there is so much more to God and to Jesus. God is the great Creator. He is the one we were made to glorify. Jesus is the “Lord who is salvation.” And as we discovered last week, to say that Jesus is Lord invites us to consider everything that this means for those who choose to follow Him. If you recall: Jesus is our manna from heaven. He is the Bread of Life that sustains us and brings us life, abundant! He is the Light of the World. Even though we live in a very dark world, we can rest assured that a relationship with Him protects us from the darkness and gives us a hope that is eternal. And, speaking of eternal things, Jesus stands as the only doorway into heaven. Know this, without complete allegiance to Him as Lord and Savior, you cannot enter heaven and the presence of an almighty God. Jesus also told us about the seriousness with which He takes His role as Savior. Remember His words from John 10:11, “*I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.*” Jesus gave His life because He is good, and it pleases God that He stands as our redeemer.

Last week we looked at John’s Gospel and focused on four of the seven powerful metaphorical statements made by Jesus. You will recognize them as the seven I Am’s. Remember, these statements are powerful because they remind us that there is more to Jesus than just a name. They remind us of His nature, His power, and His purpose as God the Father intended Him to be. This morning, we are going to look at the remaining three statements, and as we do this, I want to encourage you to consider how these words from Jesus might impact your life.

In John 11 we find a story that puts on display for us, everything we have been talking about. Jesus, as Godman, full of mercy and grace and love and power. J. Vernon McGee asserts that “the big question in any religion concerns death.” Could it be that Jesus, truly has the power and authority to overcome death? McGee states that “life is practically meaningless if there is no resurrection of the dead.” Let’s read this story together beginning in verse 1. **Read John 11:1-16.** Now, let’s continue with verses **17-27**, paying close attention to verses 25 and 26.

Here in verse 25, we find the fifth “I Am” statement of Jesus. This statement is perhaps one of the most powerful because of what it promises and because of the hope we gain by trusting in the Son of God. Jesus, with this phrase, changed Martha from having a head knowledge about resurrection to, in just a few minutes later, having a genuine heart knowledge that He is the only with the power and ability to raise someone from the dead. You need to know and understand this truth as well. Jesus, the Son of God, who operates without a barrier of time or any barriers physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually, is the only one who possesses true resurrecting power. When we believe this and trust this, then we can rest assured that Jesus will one day raise us from death into eternal life. Even though we may end up dying a physical death, because of Him, we will live on spiritually, in His presence.

You know, we live in a world where the search for truth is something many people desperately pursue. They will go to great lengths and sacrifice many things to discover what they deem as

“absolute truth”. In the sixth “I Am” statement, Jesus makes no doubt about where this truth can be found. He removes any confusion on the topic when He states in John 14:6, *“I am the way and the truth and the life.”* Let’s read it together, in context, because I want you to see what I mean. **Read John 14:1-14.** Make no doubt about it: There are not multiple ways to gain access to God. There’s only One! The One, Jesus Christ! And any ideas, concepts, or philosophies you may have been taught that are contrary to this, are simply just not true. Only in Him do we find truth and true life! Jesus is not just someone who knows the way, but as He states here, He is, personally, the way. Either you have Him or you don’t. Likewise, Jesus said He was the truth. So, you can stop searching. Call off the hounds. Call off the search parties. Jesus isn’t stating that He is truthful or always tells the truth, but is stating that in His existence, He is “absolute truth!” And then, of course, we get a reiteration of His previously profound proclamation. Jesus is also life. He is the origin of life and the sustainer of life, All life! Amen!

Finally, in one of my favorite chapters in all the Bible, we come to the seventh “I Am” statement concerning the deity of Jesus Christ. It is through this powerful word we are given a roadmap for living up to our best as one of His followers. Jesus used a familiar agricultural reference of vines and vine crops, most likely grapes, to portray the importance of being a fruit bearing vine as opposed to one who bears no fruit. **Read John 15:1-17.** Jesus wants us to realize that only the genuine believer will produce genuine fruit. Those who claim Him as their Savior but do not genuinely believe and do not obey the commands of the Lord will not produce any type of fruit and will eventually be removed from the vine all together. I want you to take note, I said eventually. This passage gives us the image of a Savior who is patient and willing to give us plenty of time to get it right. However, this passage also gives us the image of a Savior who is just and if one tarries too long, will have no other option but to prune the unfruitful from the vine.

I absolutely love verses 9-11. Why? Because Jesus lets us know that having fun as a Christian is ok. A fruit-bearing follower of Jesus Christ will have fun every step of the way. Bible studies will be fun. Mission work will be fun. Serving food boxes will be fun. Teaching children’s SS will be fun. Everything involved with the true fellowship of believers will be fun. In fact, Jesus says it will be joyous. And then, Jesus concludes this discourse with wise words which mention, yet again, how we are to treat each other. Look again at verse 12 and then down to verse 17. This is what our relationships should be like. The world is constantly coming after us. We must stop coming after each other. One of the worst things to witness is a church filled with people who don’t really enjoy being around each other. Can we have our differences? Absolutely, but our love for Jesus which leads and guides our love for others should supersede all our differences.