

GRACE IN
THE WORD

THE SEVEN I AM
STATEMENTS OF JESUS

This study guide belongs to:

Name & Contact Information:



About this Reading Plan

The Seven I Am Statements of Jesus

This reading plan walks you through the seven “I AM” statements that Jesus made in the book of John.

Each day’s reading includes:

- The “I AM” statement from Jesus and other related scripture references throughout the bible.
- A commentary, devotional, or reflection thought to process the message more intentionally.
- Space for you to write thoughts or questions from that day’s corresponding scripture or reflection.

Additional Study Resources

The study material in this guide was adapted from *Jesus in the Present Tense: The I AM statements of Jesus* by Warren Wiersbe, *“Finding I Am”* by Lysa TerKeurst, *Behold and Believe* by Courtney Doctor & JoAnna Kimbrel, *John: Verse by Verse* by Grant Osborne, *Jesus and the Gospels* by Craig Blomberg, and *Enduring Word Commentary* by David Guzik.

Check out graceclarkville.com/graceintheword for additional resources.

What is your hope for this study in God’s Word?



SCAN TO FOLLOW
ALONG ON OUR APP!

I Am the Bread of Life

John 6:22-59



I Am the Light of the World

John 8:12-30



I Am the Good Shepherd

John 10:11-18

I am the Gate

John 10:1-10

I Am the Resurrection and the Life

John 11:17-44

I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life

John 14:1-14

I am the True Vine

John 15:1-11



The Importance of the I Am Statements in Scripture

Many believers see the “I AM” statements as important revelations about Jesus. However, people in His time may not have recognized Him as the Messiah. Today, we understand these statements better, seeing their connection to the Old Testament. These statements reveal who Jesus is and reflect how God showed Himself to Israel. Jesus uses “I AM” in reference to Exodus 3:14, where God tells Moses to say, “I AM sent you.” In John 8:58, Jesus states, “Before Abraham was born, I am.” This claim upset Jewish leaders, leading to accusations of blasphemy and His crucifixion. As we study these statements as a church over the next 7 weeks leading up to Easter, we should consider what Jesus reveals about Himself and how these statements can impact our lives today.

No leader, no author, no organization, and no set of religious disciplines can do for us what Jesus alone can do, if we let Him. Jesus doesn't say, "I was." He is alive and says, "I AM." He can meet our needs today. He is alive this very moment and offers us a satisfying spiritual life in the present tense. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever". Past history, present reality, and future certainty all unite today in Jesus Christ, the great I AM. The I AM statements recorded in Scripture reveal the depths of the Christian life and how God's children can go deeper by living with Jesus in the present tense. The better we understand our Lord's I AM statements and by faith apply them, the more our strength will equal our days and we will "run and not grow weary [and] ... walk and not be faint". We will abide in Christ and bear fruit for His glory today—now. The seven I AM statements all relate to John's theme of spiritual life in Christ. Jesus called Himself "the bread of life" and "the light of life". Through the Word we can "feed" on Him and follow Him and experience this promised life. He is the door (gate) of the sheep that enables us to "go in and out" and enjoy freedom and abundant life. He is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life so that we might have eternal life. "I am the resurrection and the life," Jesus told Martha, and to the disciples He said, "I am the way and the truth and the life". Jesus is "the true vine," and we are the branches. Because of the life He imparts to us as we abide in Him, we are able to bear fruit that glorifies Him. In His I AM statements, Jesus not only tells us who He is, but He also tells us what He can do for us and what we can become through Him. Can our lives be fruitful for His glory? Yes, if we abide in Him and draw upon His life. In Jesus Christ, the great I AM, we have all that we need!

Warren W. Wiersbe, *Jesus in the Present Tense: The I AM Statements of Christ*

What is Lent?

Traditionally, believers use the season of Lent, which is the 40 days leading up to Resurrection Sunday, as a time to remember the life, death and resurrection of our Savior. This is often done through a variety of spiritual disciplines such as prayer, reflecting on Scripture and fasting. Many Christians also use this time for introspection, repentance, and personal growth. The Lenten season serves as a time for believers to renew their faith and draw closer to the core tenets of Christianity. It has become common for believers to think of Lent as a time to give something up in order to focus on our need for Jesus. This is a small act of self-denial and sacrifice that we can make in our lives as we reflect on the ultimate sacrifice Jesus made for us. If you choose to make that a part of your Lent season, think about choosing something in your life that would truly feel like a sacrifice and something that takes your focus away from the Lord or time with the Lord. Fasting, or abstaining, for certain activities and items in our days can point us in this season to focus more deeply on the life and sacrifice of Jesus. Throughout church history and across various Christian traditions, the Lent season is a time for sober reflection on our shortcomings, our need for salvation, but also a time to consider how merciful, loving, and forgiving our God is. It is a time to reflect on God's beautiful redemption story that culminates in the resurrection of His Son Jesus.

We are called to a life of self-control, that is why the practice of fasting is so important. Fasting historically is choosing to abstain from something good so you can enjoy something even better. It is mentioned all throughout scripture as a practice that people use to draw closer to the Lord.

So what might that look like for you to practice self-control in a specific area for the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Good Friday?

Be prayerful and ask God to show you what is a stronghold for you. Maybe you fast a certain meal each day, maybe a specific food or drink, social media, the news, TV, a certain type of music, book, or movie, or maybe it's unnecessary spending. Ask Him to guide you in this area. Choosing to observe Lent is counter-cultural. It goes against every voice out there telling us what we need, what we should watch, wear, eat, drink, and buy, but instead points us to the voice of the Lord telling us what we really need deep in our souls. It requires us to go against the flow.

G.K. Chesterton says,

"a dead thing can go with the stream, but only a living thing can go against it."

We pray that as you spend the next 7 weeks in God's Word, you will begin to see the beauty of Jesus in a new way. These seven "I AM" statements are a perfect lens to center our hearts on the person and work of Jesus to help us follow him more closely with our lives. They provide an excellent roadmap for our hearts and minds as we walk through the weeks leading up to Holy Week and Resurrection Sunday.

Prayers & Reflections

Before You Read God's Word Today, Seek His Help with these 5 Prayers

1. God, give me wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.
2. God, let any knowledge I gain help me love You and others more and not puff me up.
3. God, help me see something new about You i've never seen before.
4. God, correct any lies I believe about You or anything I misunderstand.
5. God, direct my steps according to Your Word.

** Prayers from *The Bible Recap Reading Plan* by Tara-Leigh Cobble **

Tips For Approaching Scripture

- Pray before you read (use the prayers above)
- Read the words in proper context, taking into consideration when it was written, to whom it was written, and what was happening when it was written (a good study bible is helpful)
- Look for God's character and faithfulness to His people
- Look for themes that point to Jesus
- Look for anything repetitive, unusual, confusing, hopeful, comforting, challenging
- Once you are finished reading, take a few minutes to meditate on what you have read:
 - Narrow down what you've read to just one or two main thoughts.
 - What did I learn about God in these passages?
 - How can I praise God for what this says about him?
 - What did I learn about the human heart in these passages?
 - What behavior/emotions come when I forget these things about God?
 - What is God revealing to me today that I need to listen to?
 - What sins do I need to confess in light of what God revealed today?
 - What next step can I take in light of what I have read today?

Weekly Checklist

Week One

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE - John 6:22-59

- Day 1 - John 6:1-58, John 6:35, Exodus 16:1-18, John 1:14
- Day 2 - John 6:1-15, John 6:22-27, 36
- Day 3 - John 6:28-33, Exodus 16:1-18, Ephesians 4:21-24
- Day 4 - John 6:32-51, 39-40
- Day 5 - John 6:52-58, Luke 22:14-20, 2 Corinthians 3:6
- Day 6 - Reflection Day
- Day 7 - Rest Day

Week Two

I AM LIGHT OF THE WORLD - John 8:12-30

- Day 1 - John 8:12-59, Psalm 27:1
- Day 2 - John 8:12-51, John 3:16-21, John 12:35-36, Colossians 1:10-14
- Day 3 - John 8:12-19, 2 Corinthians 11:14, Genesis 1:1-5, Psalm 119:105, Isaiah 9:2, John 1:1-10
- Day 4 - John 8:12, 2 Corinthians 4:6, Matthew 5:14-16, 1 John 1:5-7, Ephesians 5:8-21
- Day 5 - John 8:12, Isaiah 60:19-20, Revelation 21:22-25, Revelation 22:1-5, 2 Corinthians 4:3-13
- Day 6 - Reflection Day
- Day 7 - Rest Day

Week Three

I AM THE GATE - John 10:1-10

- Day 1 - John 10:1-10, John 10:7, Ezekiel 34:1-16, John 14:6
- Day 2 - John 10:1-10, 1 Peter 5:8, 2 Corinthians 4:4, Matthew 24:43
- Day 3 - John 10:1-10, Psalm 23
- Day 4 - John 10:1-10, Matthew 7:13-14
- Day 5 - John 10:1-10, Revelation 3:20
- Day 6 - Reflection Day
- Day 7 - Rest Day

Week Four

I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD - John 10:11-18

- Day 1 - John 10:11-18, Hebrews 13:20-21
- Day 2 - John 10:14-16, Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34:11-16
- Day 3 - John 10:11-18, Psalm 139:1-3, Ephesians 1:17-19
- Day 4 - John 10:14-16, Matthew 18:10-14, Luke 15:1-4
- Day 5 - John 10:11-18, Isaiah 53:4-7, John 3:16-17
- Day 6 - Reflection Day
- Day 7- Rest Day

Week Five

I AM RESURRECTION & THE LIFE - John 11:17-44

- Day 1 - John 11:17-44, Revelation 1:17-18, Hebrews 7:25, Romans 6:4, 1 Peter 1:3-4
- Day 2 - John 11:1-16, Colossians 3:4, Philippians 1:21
- Day 3 - John 11:30-44, Matthew 21:12-13, Mark 3:1-6, Ephesians 4:26-27
- Day 4 - John 11:17-44, 11:35, Psalm 34:18, Matthew 26:38, Matthew 5:4
- Day 5 - John 11:23-25, 38-44
- Day 6 - Reflection Day
- Day 7- Rest Day

Week Six

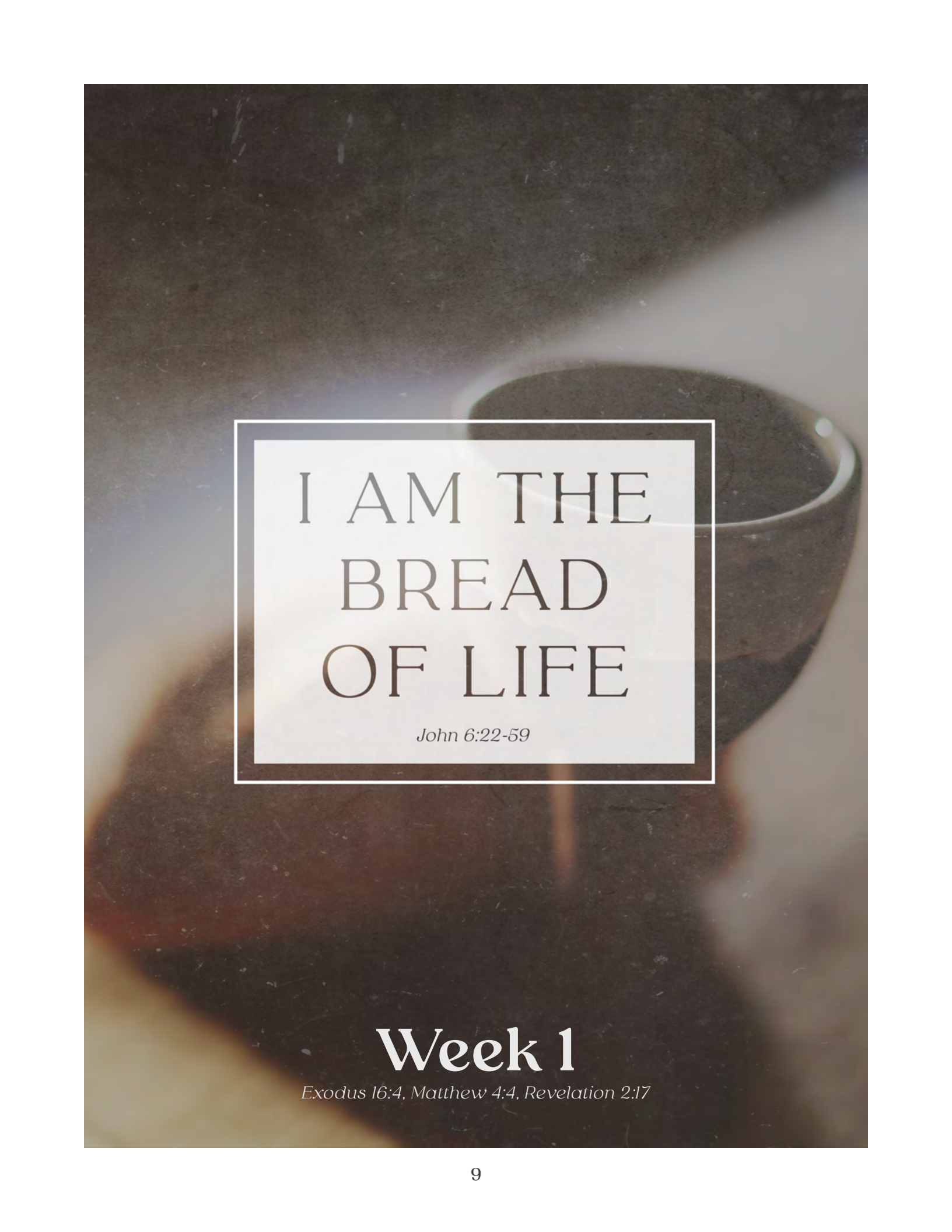
I AM THE WAY, TRUTH, & LIFE - John 14:1-14

- Day 1 - John 14:1-14, Psalm 119:30
- Day 2 - John 14:6-14, Matthew 7:13-14, Acts 4:11-12, 9:2; 19:9, 23
- Day 3 - John 1:14, 8:31-32, 14:6-7, 16:13, 17:3, 1 Timothy 2:3-6
- Day 4 - Mark 10:45, John 11:33-36, 13:14-15, 34-35, Philippians 2:5-8, Ephesians 4:14-32
- Day 5 - John 14, John 6:63, 10:10, Deuteronomy 30:19-20
- Day 6 - Reflection Day
- Day 7- Rest Day

Week Seven

I AM THE TRUE VINE - John 15:1-11

- Day 1 - John 15:1-11, Isaiah 5:1-7, Psalm 80:8-19
- Day 2 - John 15:1-11, Matthew 7:16-20, Galatians 5:22-26, Hebrews 12:5-11
- Day 3 - John 15:1-11, John 6:56, John 14:23, 1 John 2:24
- Day 4 - Maundy Thursday John 15:9-11
- Day 5 - Good Friday- Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19
- Day 6 - Reflection Day
- Day 7- Rest Day



I AM THE
BREAD
OF LIFE

John 6:22-59

Week 1

Exodus 16:4, Matthew 4:4, Revelation 2:17

Day 1 - Monday

John 6:1-58, John 6:35, Exodus 16:1-18, John 1:14

The Promise of God in the Flesh

Metaphors can be confusing. “Bite the bullet,” “Let the cat out of the bag,” and “Spill the beans” sound confusing and bizarre without context. This is why we often find ourselves deeply confused when we examine the spiritual metaphors in Jesus’ “I AM” statements. During this study, we will examine the spiritual metaphors that Jesus used to help us learn more about Him, His work of salvation, and what this means for our lives.

We start this week with Jesus’ first “I AM” statement in the Gospel of John. It’s important to read the entire passage to understand the reasons behind this metaphor and His further explanation of this personal identifier. Jesus has just performed the miracle of feeding 5,000 hungry (physically and spiritually) people who have come to Him with little more than a basket of fish and bread. When He departs from them, they search for Him and find Him. It is at this time that He reveals who He is to them through a powerful metaphor: “Jesus replied, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.’” (v 35)

Jesus is obviously using a metaphor here. He is not bread but the fulfilling life that these people hunger for spiritually. Just as bread nourishes the body, Jesus explains that He heals and nourishes the soul. This is a promise hundreds of years in the making. The Israelite people experienced the miracle of God feeding them physically in the desert to remind them of the spiritual feeding He offers to all of them. Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s work in the desert through the Exodus of the Israelites. John 1:14 reminds us that Jesus is the promise of God in the flesh. Jesus is the promise of salvation, redemption, healing, and life. He is the bread of life for our weary and hungry souls.



Reflection

This week, we will unpack what Jesus’ words mean for our lives and souls. Today’s reading is longer, but if you haven’t already, make sure to use your reflection time to read today’s passages. Then, spend some time journaling or in quiet reflection about what your soul hungers for and how the Lord can bring life to this starved place.

Day 2 - Tuesday

John 6:1-15, John 6:22-27, 36

One and the Same

"People commit a serious blunder when they decide that the Bible is an outdated book about an ancient people who lived in a backward culture, and therefore the Bible has nothing to say to us today. But the reason most people ignore or totally dismiss the Bible isn't because the cast of characters and the script seem radically different from life today, but because Bible people and modern people are so very much alike!"

-Warren W. Wiersbe, *Jesus in the Present Tense*

The miracle of Jesus feeding the five thousand is so significant that besides the miracle of the resurrection, it is the only miracle of Jesus recorded in all four of the Gospels. And yet the people who witness this miracle seek Jesus out, not for spiritual feeding and healing, but for more food or to be near someone who performed such a great "trick" (v30). Jesus addresses this in verse 26. We may look at this passage and sadly or condescendingly shake our heads at their ignorance or lack of faith, but the truth is that we are just like them. As Warren W. Wiersbe addresses, we look to those in the ancient text of scripture and find ourselves, whether we want to or not.

We lack faith. We know this about ourselves but don't want it to be true. We want to believe that our faith in Jesus is rock solid, stronger than our circumstances, anxieties, and doubts. The fact is: Jesus knows this about us. This is why He pours out such profound spiritual truth to the ancient people He fed and why we get the joy of reading and wrestling with it today. "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." (v 35-37). The longing of our hearts is fed through the life we find in fellowship and salvation with Jesus Christ. Feast on this truth.



Reflection

Reflect/journal on this today:

- Where do you feel you are lacking faith?
- When do you find your faith most tested?
- How does Jesus' admission to being the bread of life change how you approach your areas of unbelief?

Day 3 - Wednesday

ASH WEDNESDAY

John 6:28-33, Exodus 16:1-18, Ephesians 4:21-24

The Work of God

As we continue to look at Jesus' claim that He is the bread of life, we read the people calling out to Jesus, asking Him to help them do miracles like Him. The people want to do great works, but Jesus clarifies what the Father wants: "Believe in the One He has sent" (v 29). God does, and always has done, great miraculous things. We are drawn to admiration and affection over His power and character. Of course, we (just like the ancient people of this passage) want to participate in this work. The people see Jesus perform this great work and want in on it. Jesus helps them to see that the work of the people, and all believers for the rest of time, is to believe in the One He has sent. The One of course being Jesus, the bread of life, Himself.

What this means for everyone today is that we need to be shaped and dedicated to doing the work of God, which is believing in the salvation, love, power, mercy, goodness, wisdom, and freedom found in Jesus Christ. When we do this work and commit our hearts and lives to it, we are transformed. We are changed. We can live in ways only possible through Jesus because we live in the reflection of His character and work. We reflect Christ's power, love, and mercy when we actively believe in Him. That active belief permeates everything about us and does powerful and miraculous works only possible through Him.



Reflection

Today's reading may have been hard on us. It was probably a challenge to what you thought your life was about. We tend to fall into a pit of anxiety and stress when it comes to thinking about what we are meant to be doing. We have so many expectations of ourselves, and we know that there should be some expected fruits that the believers' lives should produce (devotion to Christ, love/kindness to our neighbors, and forgiveness towards our enemies). Where we go so wrong is thinking that we do this work on our own. Our belief should lead us to obedience towards Jesus and His ways. Just as food doesn't simply satisfy hunger but also nourishes the body, salvation not only bring us right with God but also pours out into our thoughts, actions, and words.

Throughout your day today, try to recall the words of Jesus: "Believe in the One He has sent." Throughout your day, spend time in quick or timely prayer to remind the Lord of your belief in Him. At the end of the day, reflect on how doing this changed you.

Day 4 - Thursday

John 6:32-51, 39-40

The Will of God

The Trinity is confusing. The ways of God are confusing. That is intentional in many ways. He is far greater than us and our understanding. That is hard for us to accept because we desire to be in the know of all things, to have a say in all things, and to be able to do all things (this is what sin fosters in us). But one thing God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit seek to make abundantly clear is how much we are loved. These three persons pour out their love and mercy for us every moment of every day, which is why Jesus, while highlighting who He is (the bread of life), shines a light onto the Father to share how kind and loving He is.

"...this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. For it is my Father's will that all who see His Son and believe in Him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day."
(v 39-40)

"I want you all to believe." are essentially the words of God here. His will is for Him to be with us for all of eternity. He wants no man, woman, or child left outside His communion and embrace. These words should be life-shattering. There is no greater love. There is no greater hope. There is no greater purpose for us than to run toward the will of God!

But then again, the people (just like us) falter from that path. We see them question the work and identity of Jesus four times in this passage. (v. 28, 30-31, 41-42, 52) How many times do we do this each day? We fail Him. We forget Him. We push Him away. BUT He is still there. He is still the bread for our lives. His will is still being done each and every time we turn back and believe in Him. The will of God is ever-present in our lives. When we remember it, we find life.



Reflection

Take time today to remember the will of God. Remember His love and kindness for and toward you. Reflect at the end of the day on how remembering the will of God impacted your thoughts and actions.

Day 5 - Friday

John 6:52-58, Luke 22:14-20, 2 Corinthians 3:6

Take and Eat

“The symbols which we think are mere signs were given to us because we could not then understand the thing itself... But if they are only symbols, then all reality is in a sense present in them. The higher does not stand without the lower. In the act of being communicated, it is incarnated. The Letter, as St. Paul says, killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. The world is so full of a multitude of metaphors because reality itself is metaphorical.” -C.S. Lewis, *Transposition*

Just as Paul reminds the early church in Corinth, we are called to be workers (ministers) of God. We are called to share who Christ is, what He has done, and what this means for all of us. Paul, like Lewis, like Christ, first explains that this work we are enabled to do, this salvation we get to receive is not because we adhere to the law (the letter), but to the Spirit (the flesh/bread of life, Jesus Christ). When Christ urges the disciples of old and the disciples of today to take and eat His body and drink His blood, it is an invitation to make the metaphor of the bread of life a reality for our souls. It is an invitation to be welcomed in by Him, nourished, and made new again.

The greatest invitation we will ever know is to take and eat His body, for this is an invitation to live for and with Him.



Reflection

Have you ever thought of the act of communion as an acceptance of the invitation Jesus offers us of salvation? The thing about symbols, metaphors, and rituals is that they tend to lose their meaning; they tend to be forgotten. Our prayer is that through this week's study of the I AM statement of Jesus, "I am the bread of life," you would find and see new meaning in the good work of salvation that comes from Jesus. Our prayer is that the next time you partake in the symbolic work of communion, you would see it for the miracle it is, the receiving of the invitation of the bread of life.

Spend time today praising God for this invitation. As you enjoy a meal today, let it represent something more; let it be a token/reminder for you of the life, nourishment, and goodness that Jesus offers us all.

Day 6 - Saturday

Reflection Day

Reflection Notes and Questions

As we wrap up this week's study, reread John 6:1-58

Reflect on these words that Jesus spoke, "I am the bread of life." and what they mean about His character, His work on the cross, and how it should change how we see Him and how we live.

Reflect/journal your thoughts on this or these following prompts:

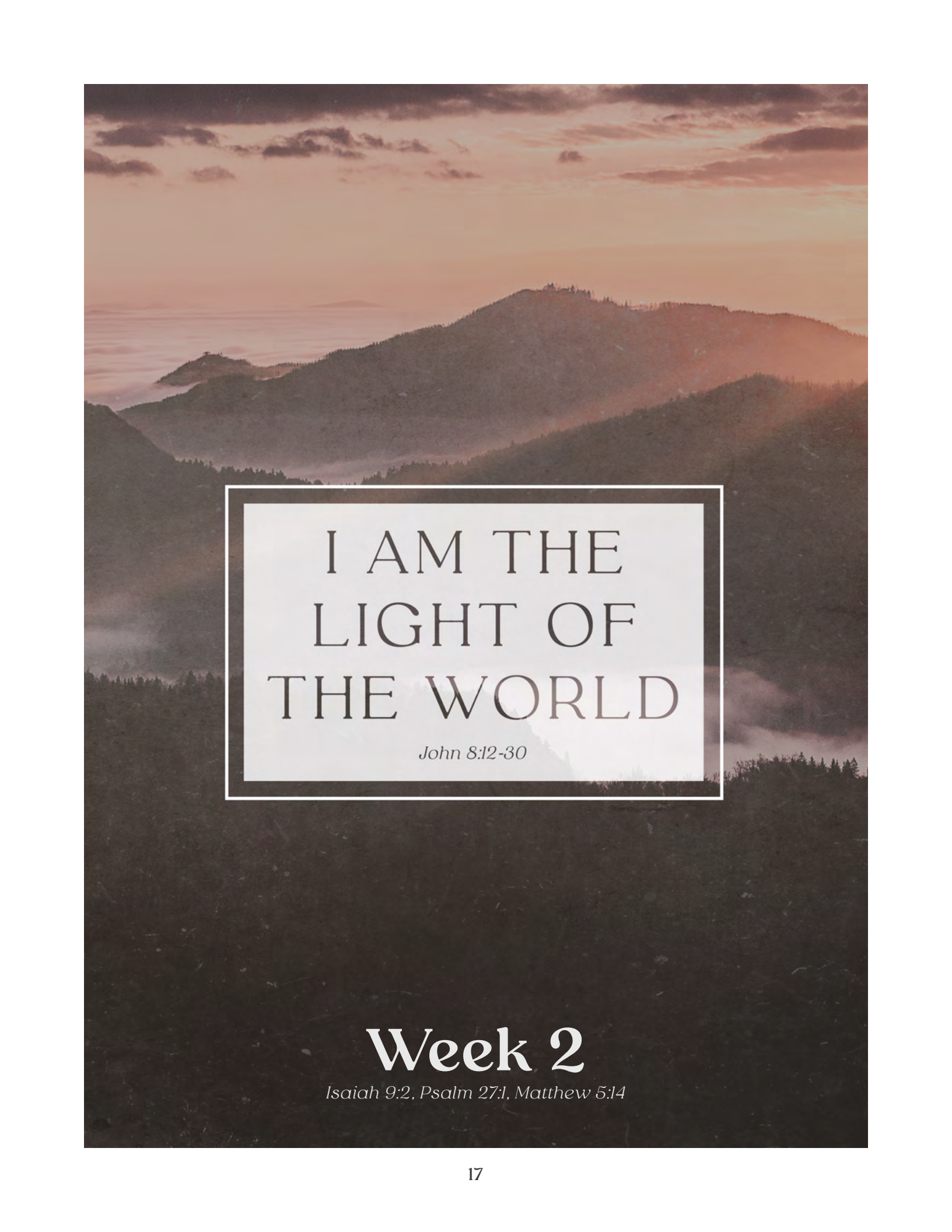
- Write down what you learned about who God is this week.
- What is something you learned this week that you want to remember? Why?
- How can you begin to posture your life to receive more from the Lord?

Day 7 - Sunday

Rest Day

Reflection Notes and Questions

Join us for worship today and prepare your heart to engage with next week's study of God and His word. Use your time today to rest, pray, and reflect on this week's readings.



I AM THE
LIGHT OF
THE WORLD

John 8:12-30

Week 2

Isaiah 9:2, Psalm 27:1, Matthew 5:14

Sermon Notes

I Am the Light of the World - John 8:12-30

Day 1 - Monday

John 8:12-59, Psalm 27:1

A Misunderstood Man

It's important to note the context surrounding the moment Jesus made this "I am the light of the world" statement. The Jewish people were celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles, a celebration to remember God's care of their people during the years they wandered in the wilderness. During the evenings of the festival, the priests would light four large candelabras, and the glow from the light could be seen across the city. These lamps served as reminders of the pillar of fire God used to lead Israel through the wilderness and pointed toward the promise of the Messiah to come. During this celebration of light, they would sing and dance joyously, worshipping their God who had been faithful. It was on the last night of the festival when the lamps were unlit that Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

Craig Blomberg says in his book *Jesus and the Gospels*,

"On the last night, the main candelabrum was deliberately left unlit as a reminder that Israel had not yet experienced full salvation. Jesus is now declaring himself to be the one who can provide that salvation. Jesus's claim is immediately challenged by the religious leaders (v. 13). For corroborating witness, he appeals again to his Father and to his coming departure (at his crucifixion and return to heaven) in verses 14-29. Many in his audience at first apparently believe in him, but, as the subsequent dialogue demonstrates (vv. 31-59), some have altogether misunderstood him. True faith will continue to hold fast to Jesus's teaching and thereby provide spiritual liberation. Particularly from the religious leaders among Jesus's listeners, however, some believe that their ancestral credentials as God's chosen people have already guaranteed that (v. 33), so Jesus and his audience debate who the true spiritual descendants of Abraham really are and who are, in fact, "children of the devil". When other approaches fail, the authorities resort to name-calling and abuse (v. 48). Tensions heighten as Jesus further defends his claims in language that makes him out to be, first, greater than Abraham; second, preexisting from before the time of Abraham; and, finally, worthy of the very divine name of Exod 3:14—"I AM" (vv. 49-58). The authorities are so outraged that they initiate mob violence and attempt to stone Jesus."

While celebrating the past and looking forward to the future, God's people were missing the true light, the one they were celebrating was presently in their midst. Jesus was essentially saying to the people, "I am right here with you in the flesh, and yet you do not recognize my presence."



Reflection

Are there times when you are celebrating the past or looking to the future and miss what Jesus is doing right now in your present? Spend some time today reflecting on how you can be more aware of God's presence in your days.

Day 2 - Tuesday

John 8:12-51, John 3:16-21, John 12:35-36, Colossians 1:10-14

People Loved Darkness More Than The Light

Light in Scripture often represents truth, holiness, and God's presence. By declaring Himself the Light, Jesus claims to illuminate the way to salvation and expose the darkness of sin.

Darkness is familiar. Whether we experience the literal darkness after dusk or the weight of a world darkened by evil, we have all become, as Robert Frost put it, "acquainted with the night." Darkness comes in many forms. You might be acquainted with the darkness of depression or grief. Maybe you know the darkness of persistent sin-yours or that of someone close to you. Most of us have experienced the darkness of confusion and chaos. We've all been impacted by the darkness and brokenness of this world. As the light of the world, Jesus illuminates the darkness. - Joanna Kimbrel

Warren Wiersbe describes the most dangerous darkness in our "enlightened age" as the dense spiritual darkness that blinds the minds and controls the hearts of people who have never trusted Christ or claim to know Him but don't follow Him. In John 3, we see that people often loved darkness rather than light. We each have a path to choose. A path of darkness or light. Jesus lays out the path of light in John 8: knowing the Father, believing he is the Messiah, and remaining faithful to his teachings. This light is our inheritance as children of light because he has rescued us from the darkness, but his inheritance is something we must take hold of as we turn away from the darkness and return to the path of light.



Reflection

"Dear friend, if you are afraid of light, be suspicious of yourself, for it is deceit that dreads detection."

Charles Spurgeon

"Jesus isn't trying to expose you to put shame on you. He's trying to expose the sin that has it's chains around you."

Lysa Terkeurst

Reflect today on what you need to bring into the light. If we can expose what's holding us back to the light of Jesus, we can begin to experience His forgiveness and freedom.

Day 3 - Wednesday

*John 8:12-19, 2 Corinthians 11:14, Genesis 1:1-5, Psalm 119:105,
Isaiah 9:2, John 1:1-10*

Submitting to the One True Creator of Light

God is the true Creator of light from the beginning. In Genesis, He brought light to a world covered in darkness by creating the lesser lights—sun, moon, and stars—not to be worshipped but to point to Him as the true Light. Pagan nations like Egypt and Canaan worshipped these lesser lights, seeking favor from creation instead of honoring their Creator. Similarly, Satan masquerades as an angel of light, but Jesus is the only true Light. Satan is a master at using these “lesser lights” to distract us. Shiny things such as money, fame, success, comparison, status, and comfort all move our hearts away from worshipping God. We begin to worship these created things rather than submitting our lives to the Creator.

Scripture often uses light to represent God’s presence and guidance for those who submit to Him. In Exodus, God led His people through the wilderness with a pillar of light. Psalm 119 describes His word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Isaiah 9 foretells the coming of a great Light, fulfilled in John 1, where the arrival of the promised Light is announced.

It can be easy to become overwhelmed when we see the darkness all around us- on the news, in our homes, even in our own bodies – but the darkness cannot overcome the light! Throughout the Old Testament, God promised light that would illuminate even the darkest places. Year after year, God’s people waited. Jesus’s announcement that he is the light of the world is not merely a helpful image but the fulfillment of a promise God made from the beginning. The light has come, and the light is coming. We can walk in the light now and for all eternity when we know the light of the world. He offers life, guidance, hope, and healing - Joanna Kimbrel



Reflection

Read Isaiah 9:2 and John 8:12 again. What stands out to you about the similarities in these verses?

Reflect today on places where you have worshiped “lesser lights” rather than the Creator of light. Are there ways you have been distracted by the “angel of light” to shiny things masquerading as truth? How can you begin to bring those things back to the light of Jesus so He can lead and guide you back to full submission to the Father?

Day 4 - Thursday

*John 8:12, 2 Corinthians 4:6, Matthew 5:14-16, 1 John 1:5-7,
Ephesians 5:8-21*

Walking as Children of Light

In John 8, Jesus confronts the Pharisees, challenging their belief that their lineage, knowledge of Scripture, and religious practices made them children of light. He calls them to believe in him, emphasizing that true light comes from daily fellowship with him, guiding both words and actions. True followers of Christ reflect his light through humility and actions that glorify the Father. The same divine light that appeared in the burning bush in Exodus and that led the Israelites in the wilderness now dwells in God's people, making each believer a carrier of his light. At his ascension, Jesus entrusted his disciples to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth, emphasizing that we are his plan to share his light with the world. Paul provides guidance on walking in the light in Ephesians 5.

Lynn Cohick, in her commentary on Ephesians 5, explains it like this:

This light is truth, holiness, integrity, and love. This light is the life of Jesus Christ, who declares "I am the light of the world". The Ephesians are the light, the witness of the gospel's reconciling power to a world darkened by sin. A life of light produces rich fruit, all manner of goodness, righteousness, and truth. And a believer who is light will produce that which characterizes Christ's life of love and kindness, charity and integrity. But works of darkness, Paul warns, are unfruitful. Paul commands them not to participate in such dark works, but rather he urges them to expose such behavior. Paul explains how the believers' godly demeanor and attitude, their "light," exposes the darkness, and transforms it. Light reveals darkness as evil; in so doing, people can see evil for what it really is, and be drawn to light. Paul orders that the Ephesians see very carefully how they walk, for they must be wise. They must realize that the present age is one governed by evil, by attitudes and practices that are antithetical to God's goodness, joy, and redemption. A third pair of commands enjoins the believer not to be drunk with wine, but to be filled with the Spirit. A Spirit-filled life is characterized by such deep joy that songs, psalms, and melodies will spring forth. Paul declares boldly that a Spirit-filled person gives thanks always, and for all things. Since he has clearly acknowledged that the days are evil Paul is certainly aware that bad things happen. Are we to be thankful for the bad things? No, but a thankful heart is a faithful one. Though the days are evil and darkness threatens, we walk as ones who see wisely, who know the end of the story, and thus can be thankful.



Reflection

How can we be children of light in a dark world, walking faithfully with thankfulness and joy? Reflect today on the places God has you right now and what it would look like to live out Ephesians 5 in those places.

Day 5 - Friday

*John 8:12, Isaiah 60:19-20, Revelation 21:22-25, 22:1-5,
2 Corinthians 4:3-13*

The Eternal Everlasting Light of the World

Isaiah 60 tells of a day when we will no longer need the “lesser lights” that God created in the beginning. It says, “The Lord will be your Everlasting Light, and the days of your sorrow will be over.” The question for us as believers today is, “What are we to do until this glorious day?” 2 Corinthians 4 shows us that we are to share the good news of this everlasting light to a world still looking to the lesser lights for answers. Paul’s message here is to the collective church at Corinth. As individuals, pushing back the darkness feels hard, but together in a community, it feels more attainable. This is why being a part of a community of believers is helpful. When your light feels dim, you can gather with other light bearers. When someone else’s light is dim, you can lend them some of your light. The world needs to see that we are not scared of darkness because we have the light of God in us. As a community, we can be light bearers to a dark world.

Jesus is not visibly walking our city streets today, but His people are here to represent Him and spread the light. Millions of people profess to be followers of the Lord, so there ought to be plenty of light in this world; yet things seem to be getting darker. Jesus promises that if we follow Him, we will walk in the light, not in the darkness, and that His light will give us life. Even more, we will be lights in this dark world and help others find the true Light. More than once the record tells us that Jesus turned from the crowd in order to minister to individuals, a practice that would bother believers today who measure ministry only by numbers. How we look at other people determines how much we can help them. The disciples wanted justice; Jesus opted for mercy. Furthermore, when we follow Jesus and walk in the light, we see this world and its dangerous illusions as they really are and we will not be deceived. Did you notice how Jesus moved from the universal (“the light of the world”) to the individual (“the one following me,” see John 8:12)? That’s because He brings His light to the world through the good works of His own disciples. To obey Jesus and follow the Light of the World means to become a living light and avoid the delusions that lead to the detours toward darkness. It means to become the kind of people who can point others to the Savior so that they too might experience “the light of life.”

Warren W. Wiersbe - *Jesus in the Present Tense: The I AM Statements of Christ*



Reflection

Think of a time when someone shared the light of Jesus with you in a dim season. Remember how their care uplifted you. Ask the Lord to reveal someone who needs His light this week, and commit to reaching out to them with love and encouragement.

Day 6 - Saturday

Reflection Day

Reflection Notes and Questions

As we wrap up this week's study, reread John 8:12

Reflect on these words that Jesus spoke, "I am the Light of the the World." Reflect on what they mean about His character, His work on the cross, and how it should change how we see Him and how we live.

Reflect/journal your thoughts on this or these following prompts:

- Write down what you learned about who God is this week.
- What is something you learned this week that you want to remember? Why?
- How can you begin to posture your life to receive more from the Lord?

Day 7 - Sunday

Rest Day

Reflection Notes and Questions

Join us for worship today and prepare your heart to engage with next week's study of God and His word. Use your time today to rest, pray, and reflect on this week's readings.



I AM
THE
GATE

John 10:1-10

Week 3

Psalm 118:20, Matthew 7:13-14, Hebrews 10:19-20

Day 1 - Monday

John 10:1-10, John 10:7, Ezekiel 34:1-16, John 14:6

He is the Gate

"I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep" (v 7). Here we see Jesus' third I AM statement. He tells us that He is the gate for the sheep, but what does this mean? Like most of Jesus' I AM statements, he ultimately highlights how He is the fulfillment of what has been longed and hoped for in the Old Testament. To understand this fulfillment statement, we have to look at Ezekiel 34:1-16. God speaks through Ezekiel to the people (specifically the leaders and priests). He tells them that they have abandoned or led their sheep (their people) astray because of their selfishness, laziness, and cold-heartedness.

Ezekiel is telling the people to return to God and be good shepherds to their people. He is telling them to help the people, keep them safe, be a protection. Of course, they fail. We all do. Jesus' revelation that He is the Gate fulfills what the priests, rabbis, and leaders could not do. Jesus is making it clear that He is the protection, salvation, and safety for all of us, His people, the sheep.



Reflection

Jesus is the gate for our souls. He closes us in His protection, love, and goodness. We are safe with Him, and we are safe by walking through the gate of His love and salvation. Identify an area where you need to trust Jesus as the "Gate."

- Is there a decision where you need His direction?
- Is there a habit that is pulling you away from Him?
- Is there an area of fear or doubt you need to step through in faith?

Wherever you struggle to believe in Him as your protector and salvation, take time to write a prayer of trust in Jesus in that area today.

Day 2 - Tuesday

John 10:1-10, 1 Peter 5:8, 2 Corinthians 4:4, Matthew 24:43

The Appeal of the Thief

Jesus makes clear in verse 10 that a cosmic battle lies before the people of this world. He says, "The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life" (v 10). The thief is a metaphor for Satan. He is the cosmic and spiritual opposition to Christ and His work of protection and love in our lives. The ways of the thief are powerful. Biblical commentator David Guzik describes the enemy's work in this way: *"Thief implies deception and trickery; robber implies violence and destruction. These take away life but Jesus gives life and He gives it abundantly. These are the con men and muggers of the spiritual world."*

Satan works to deceive us into thinking that our safety and salvation are found in wealth, possessions, and selfishness. He manipulates us into thinking that culture or the world is meant to define our actions and morals. He deceives and manipulates through what appeals to our hearts. Ultimately, when he has worked and led us astray, he destroys us. His work is the work of leading us away from the gate of protection that is found in Jesus Christ.

The good news of Jesus' declaration that He is the Gate is that He is the protector of our souls. When we enter the gates of Christ, we find protection, direction, and salvation. He steers us back into His love and safety when the thief tries to take us away. He is our guardian, and nothing can be more appealing once we enter his gates than the sound of His comforting voice.



Reflection

One of the most important things with any Bible study or spiritual examination is to allow the truth the Lord is putting before you to be received with an open heart, reflected upon honestly, and applied faithfully in your life. That is why these reflections during this study are so very important. With that understood, make two columns in a journal if you journal. If you don't, just reflect on these two questions:

- **Column 1:** What are the "thieves" in my life? (fear, anxiety, sin, distractions, unhealthy relationships, materialism)
- **Column 2:** How is Jesus inviting me to live abundantly? (peace, joy, purpose, freedom, love)

Next, end your time by asking: What do I need to surrender to Jesus to experience His fullness?

Day 3 - Wednesday

John 10:1-10, Psalm 23

The Sheep

Sheep wander and are easily led astray. David and the Lord knew this, which is why they both refer to God as a shepherd. A shepherd herds, guides, and protects his flock by bringing them through a gate into a protected pen. Jesus's role as the gate complements His status as shepherd because it reminds us that He steers us into protection while also actively protecting us.

In the devotional study, *I Am: Who Jesus is Changes Everything* the visual that David gives in Psalm 23 of God steering us and protecting us is explained beautifully. "God's rod and staff also remind us how He is with us. A shepherd's rod and staff were used for both defense and control. These objects describe security. When God's presence is with us, we can rest securely, even in places of darkness..."

Jesus is the Gate. He is our protector. He is the One who steers us towards His love and goodness. Psalm 23 reminds us that He is both the Gate and the Good Shepherd (more to come on that next week).



Reflection

Psalm 23 is one of the most powerful and healing chapters of all scripture. It is a song, a word of power, and a message of hope for our hearts. Take time right now to read Psalm 23. Then read it again, slowly. Take in each word. Read it and try to memorize certain verses, phrases, or even just the overarching ideas. Today, go back to Psalm 23, either by reading it or remembering its words. At the end of the day, read it again before you sleep. Let this be your day's driver and your heart's lullaby as you sleep.

Day 4 - Thursday

John 10:1-10, Matthew 7:13-14

The Challenge of the Sheep

The image of Jesus as this open gate welcoming us in for protection and salvation is naturally appealing. Our hearts ultimately long for it, but then the question arises: Why isn't the pen full? In other words, why aren't our churches overflowing? Why isn't obedience to God the way of the land? Why is culture more influenced by self than sacrifice reflective of Christ? The answer is found in Jesus' words in Matthew 7:13-14: *"You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it."*

As we've already studied, the appeal of the thief (Satan) is great. He is a master manipulator and deceiver. He presents us the rotting treasures that our sinful, selfish nature craves. We know, and have experienced, that this way never brings us to what is good, but only to destruction, but that doesn't deter our foolish hearts from still pursuing its broadly appealing pleasures more than the narrow gate of righteousness found in Jesus.

The challenge of the sheep (us) is the work of letting us be led toward the Good Shepherd to the Gate (both being Jesus and His protection). This work requires us not only to let go and follow but also to make sure that we do this in the direction of the One who is the Gate, not the thief. The thing with sheep that we have discussed is that they are easily led, and they are followers, but the sheep who follow the thieves find only heartache, death, and destruction. The sheep who follow the Good Shepherd find The Gate and His good and loving embrace and salvation.

The challenge of the Sheep is to continue to follow the sweet voice of Jesus back home.



Reflection

Our hearts are drawn to many things, some good, most self-serving. Today, reflect, keep inventory, and be willing to journal where you feel your heart is drawn. What are the things you are thinking about? What are the things you long for? What are the destructive things you find yourself thinking or tempted to do?

At the end of the day, reflect on these things and ask God to help you continue pursuing Him and His gate of goodness. Ask Him to shepherd you through the narrow gate.

Day 5 - Friday

John 10:1-10, Revelation 3:20

The Gate Will Be Opened

Throughout the week, our study of Jesus' declaration "I AM the Gate" has pointed to one unfailing truth that stands out. The ultimate reminder of Jesus' metaphor here is that there is a way to Him, which requires knocking on the door or gate, which is to say: the way to Him is to seek Him. He promises to always be at the door waiting for us and opening wide to let us in. One glorious day, we will be invited into His kingdom and embrace forevermore.

As discussed in this study, Jesus' I AM statements point to how He fulfills the Old Testament promises of a Savior. His statements also fulfill the future that awaits us all. He has won the war against sin and death. We are invited to the victory celebration of eternity, where we are rewarded with the goodness of His presence forever. The good news that Jesus offers us in His I AM statements is that we can begin to experience a taste of these things even now.

When we seek Him, we find Him. As hard as it may be to believe, Jesus is at the gate of our hearts at all times, holding the door open for us to experience His healing presence. We have to be willing to walk through. To seek is to enter the Gate of His love. When we seek Him, we fulfill a promise since creation, and we taste of a future that awaits us all.



Reflection

What is it you hope for? Think deeply about this question. Don't answer with simple earthly platitudes like more money, influence, a better job, etc. These things are important and matter to Jesus too, but they're small compared to what is ultimately at the foundations of our hearts' desires. What does your heart ultimately hope for? Peace? Love? Rest? Joy? Understanding?

Reflect on how seeking Jesus gives us a taste of this. How do you think this is true and reveals itself through what we have learned about Jesus? Finally, pray and ask God to help you see your future home with Him. Ask Him to help you pursue the path to the Gate of His love and goodness.

Day 6 - Saturday

Reflection Day

Reflection Notes and Questions

As we wrap up this week's study, reread John 10:1-10

Reflect on these words that Jesus spoke, "I am the Gate." and what they mean about His character, His work on the cross, and how it should change how we see Him and how we live.

Reflect/journal your thoughts on this or these following prompts:


- Write down what you learned about who God is this week.
- What is something you learned this week that you want to remember? Why?
- How can you begin to posture your life to receive more from the Lord?

Day 7 - Sunday

Rest Day

Reflection Notes and Questions

Join us for worship today and prepare your heart to engage with next week's study of God and His word. Use your time today to rest, pray, and reflect on this week's readings.



I AM
THE GOOD
SHEPHERD

John 10:11-18

Week 4

Psálm 23:1, Ezekiel 34:11-16, Hebrews 13:20

Sermon Notes

I Am the Good Shepherd - John 10:11-18

Day 1 - Monday

John 10:11-18, Hebrews 13:20-21

The Good Shepherd

The Greek word for shepherd used in John 10:14 is used 18 times in the New Testament, and John uses it six times in John 10. The same word is used in Hebrews 13:20. This imagery of a Good Shepherd would have been familiar to the Jews and those in the early church because it was used throughout the Old Testament scriptures. Scripture shows shepherds play a significant role in God's story. The first recorded shepherd was Abel in Genesis, and later in Genesis, Jacob tended sheep. Before becoming king, David was a shepherd caring for his father's sheep (1 Samuel 16-17). The prophet Amos was also a shepherd before God called him to speak to Israel (Amos 1).

Shepherding in biblical times wasn't just a job—it was a relationship. Shepherds knew their sheep, cared for them, and protected them. If a sheep was lost, the shepherd went after it. The shepherd carried the sheep on his shoulders if it was weak or hurt. The sheep trusted the shepherd's voice and followed his lead. In Psalm 23, David beautifully captures this image, showing us that God is our Shepherd—providing, protecting, and guiding us through every season.

Jesus takes this even further when He calls Himself the Good Shepherd. He doesn't just lead us; He lays down His life for us. Unlike earthly shepherds, whose death meant disaster for their sheep, Jesus' death brings life to His flock. He came not just for one group but for all people, uniting us as one flock under one Shepherd. And like sheep, we need a shepherd. Left to ourselves, we're prone to wander, to follow the wrong voices, or to get stuck in places we can't escape. But Jesus doesn't leave us lost. He pursues us, rescues us, and restores us. His rod protects us from harm, and His staff gently pulls us back when we stray. He is always leading us to places of rest, provision, and life.



Reflection

Reflect today on the voices that lead and guide the decisions you make. Whose voice are you listening to? The voices of culture, fear, or your emotions? Or the voice of our Good Shepherd? Ask him to help you turn down the volume on those other voices so you can hear His voice more clearly.

Day 2 - Tuesday

John 10:14-16, Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34:11-16

OUR Good Shepherd

In his book *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, Philip Keller paints a vivid picture of the profound relationship between a shepherd and his sheep. He explains how sheep are entirely dependent on their shepherd for survival. Without guidance, they easily wander into danger. Without protection, they are defenseless against predators. Without care, they lack food, water, and rest. This imagery gives us a powerful understanding of Jesus as our Good Shepherd.

Jesus declares in John 10:11, *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."* Unlike a hired hand who might abandon the flock in times of trouble, Jesus remains steadfast, watching over us with unwavering love. He not only leads us to green pastures and still waters, but He also restores our weary souls. When we face trials, His rod and staff—symbols of His authority and care—bring comfort and protection.

Keller describes how a shepherd takes great care to ensure his sheep are content. They will not lie down unless they feel safe and free from fear, hunger, and distress. In the same way, Jesus tends to our deepest needs, giving us peace in the midst of life's uncertainties. Even when we walk through dark valleys, we can trust His presence and guidance, knowing that He will never leave us. Yet, as sheep, we must choose to follow our Shepherd. Keller emphasizes that a good shepherd calls his sheep by name, and they recognize his voice. Jesus calls us to trust Him, listen to His voice above the voices of the world, and follow Him wherever He leads. When we do, we lack nothing—because we have everything we truly need in Him.



Reflection

Are you allowing Jesus to shepherd your life today? Are you resting in His care or wandering, trying to find your own way? Take a moment to surrender your fears, struggles, and uncertainties to Him. He is faithful to lead, provide, and protect.

Day 3 - Wednesday

John 10:11-18, Psalm 139:1-3, Ephesians 1:17-19

The Shepherd Knows His Sheep

In Scripture, "to know" means much more than to be able to identify a person or a thing by name. In Bible language, "to know" involves intimacy, a deep understanding of the person or object involved. It means to be chosen, to be loved. In the original Hebrew text, the word "know" describes the intimate love between husband and wife. At the time of judgment, Jesus will say to those who masqueraded as believers, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!" (Matt. 7:23). Eastern shepherds knew the name of each sheep and could call it out of the fold each morning. But the shepherds also knew the nature of each sheep: those that were prone to wander, those that wanted their own way, those that delayed obeying their shepherd's commands. Because the shepherds possessed this kind of knowledge, they were better able to care for the flock. But the sheep also knew their shepherd! Just as children come to understand their parents better and pupils their teachers, so sheep learn to "read" their shepherd's voice and gestures. They know when he is warning them, when he is calling them together, and when he is simply reminding them that he is watching. For Jesus to compare His relationship with His sheep to His relationship with His Father is quite remarkable. It reminds me of what Jesus said to His Father when He concluded His prayer recorded in John 17: "I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them" (v. 26). The Father loves us as much as He loves Jesus! The better we get to know Jesus and the Father, the more we will love God and experience His love in our hearts, and the better we will obey Him. The shepherds had a loving relationship with their sheep, the kind of relationship we should have with our Good Shepherd. As we study the Word, worship, fellowship, and obey the Shepherd, we come to know Him and also ourselves better. It encourages me to know that my Shepherd knows and understands me thoroughly and still loves me and cares for me. "You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways" (Ps. 139:1-3)

Warren W. Wiersbe, *Jesus in the Present Tense: The I AM Statements of Christ*



Reflection

As Paul prayed in Ephesians 1, pray this over your heart today.

"I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, would give me the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened so that I may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the mighty working of his strength."

Day 4 - Thursday

John 10:14-16, Matthew 18:10-14, Luke 15:1-4

The Good Shepherd Who Seeks

Have you ever felt lost? Not just physically, but spiritually—like you’ve wandered too far to be found? Maybe you’ve believed the lie that you’re beyond God’s reach, too broken, too distant for Him to come after you. Maybe you feel like you disappointed him or you haven’t been seeking his wisdom and guidance in your days. But let me remind you of something beautiful: Jesus is the Shepherd who seeks.

In John 10, Jesus tells us, *“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.”* His voice is the one that calls out to us, even in our wandering. He doesn’t wait for us to find our way back—He pursues us. Just like in Matthew 18 and Luke 15, where the Shepherd leaves the ninety-nine to find the one lost sheep, Jesus goes after the ones who feel unseen, unworthy, or forgotten.

Maybe today you feel like that one lost sheep. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, is already searching for you. Maybe shame or fear has kept you from believing He would come after you. But hear this: He does. And when He finds you, He doesn’t scold you. He doesn’t tell you that you should have tried harder to stay close. Instead, He rejoices. He lifts you up, carries you on His shoulders, and celebrates because you belong to Him. Jesus is not a passive observer. He is an active rescuer. No matter how far you think you’ve strayed, He is already on His way to you. Rest in that truth today. Let yourself be found.

No matter where you find yourself today. Maybe you’re strong in your faith, resting safely in the fold. Maybe you’ve drifted, caught up in distractions, doubts, or struggles. Or maybe you feel too far gone, convinced that you’ve wandered past the point of return. There is no “too far” with Jesus.

The Shepherd is seeking you right now, calling your name. He isn’t waiting for you to fix yourself or find your own way back. He is coming for you with love, with grace, with arms open wide. And when He finds you, He lifts you onto His shoulders, carrying you home. You are worth seeking. You are worth saving. And you are loved.



Reflection

Sit with this truth today that Jesus, the Good Shepherd is actively seeking your heart and calling you by name to come home. Ask God to show you an area of your life in which you need to return to Him and let him guide your path.

Day 5 - Friday

John 10:11-18, Isaiah 53:4-7, John 3:16-17

The Mission and Authority of the Shepherd

Jesus has been talking about this relationship with the Jewish people, and in verse 16 he turns to "other sheep that are not of this sheep pen." The sheep pen would be Judaism, and the "other sheep" are the Gentiles...The Gentiles too are known by Jesus, and he will "bring them also" into his sheepfold when they "listen to my voice" calling them to the gospel. The Gentile mission is seen here as a divine necessity and part of Jesus' mission. The coming of the Gentiles into the people of God was proclaimed in the Abrahamic covenant, where God told Abraham that a major purpose for his choice of Israel was so that "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen 12:3)...It was always God's plan to bring the Gentiles into his larger fold...While the world hates God and rejects Jesus, God loves the world, and the mission of Jesus and the disciples is to the world. The result of this redemptive activity is that "there shall be one flock and one shepherd," uniting his people the remnant of Israel with the "other sheep," the Gentiles, into a new Israel...Such unity must be hard-fought, for human nature tends toward divisiveness, and that has been the case for the church in all the two thousand years of its existence... The Spirit at work in our midst must forge oneness out of our differences, and this takes place when the love and unity of the Godhead works itself out in the midst of such divisions. The basis for everything—from creation to redemption—is the Father's love. Salvation is possible because "God so loved the world", but that salvation is anchored in the Father's love for the Son, and Jesus' mission was the outgrowth of that love within the Godhead. Here the Father's love is intertwined with his Son's submission to his will, Christ's perfect union with the divine plan, the salvation that flows out of his vicarious sacrifice for sinful humankind. The wondrous truth, however, is that his death was not an end in itself. The purpose of his death is "so that" he might "take it up again"... Certainly the Jews condemned Jesus to death on the cross, and the Romans carried out the sentence, but the reality is that "no one takes [Jesus' life] from" him, but rather he "lays it down of [his] own accord". He voluntarily gave himself up on the cross as the substitute for our sins, and all that transpired took place on the basis of his divine "authority." Neither Satan nor the Jewish leaders nor the Romans were in charge. Jesus was, and his authority combined with his obedience to produce this salvific act. Christ perfectly controlled these final scenes and at the same time perfectly obeyed his Father's "command," so it was Jesus' authority and God's command that actually led to the cross.

Grant R. Osborne, *John: Verse by Verse*



Reflection

"This is surely one of the high points of the entire passion narrative in John and beyond. No one takes Jesus' life; he voluntarily lays it down." - Kenneth E. Bailey - The Good Shepherd

Reflect on what it means to you that Jesus voluntarily, on his own authority chose to lay down his life for you.

Day 6 - Saturday

Reflection Day

Reflection Notes and Questions

As we wrap up this week's study, reread John 10:11.

Reflect on these words that Jesus spoke, "I am the Good Shepherd" and what they mean about His character, His work on the cross, and how it should change how we see Him and how we live.

Reflect/journal your thoughts on this or these following prompts:

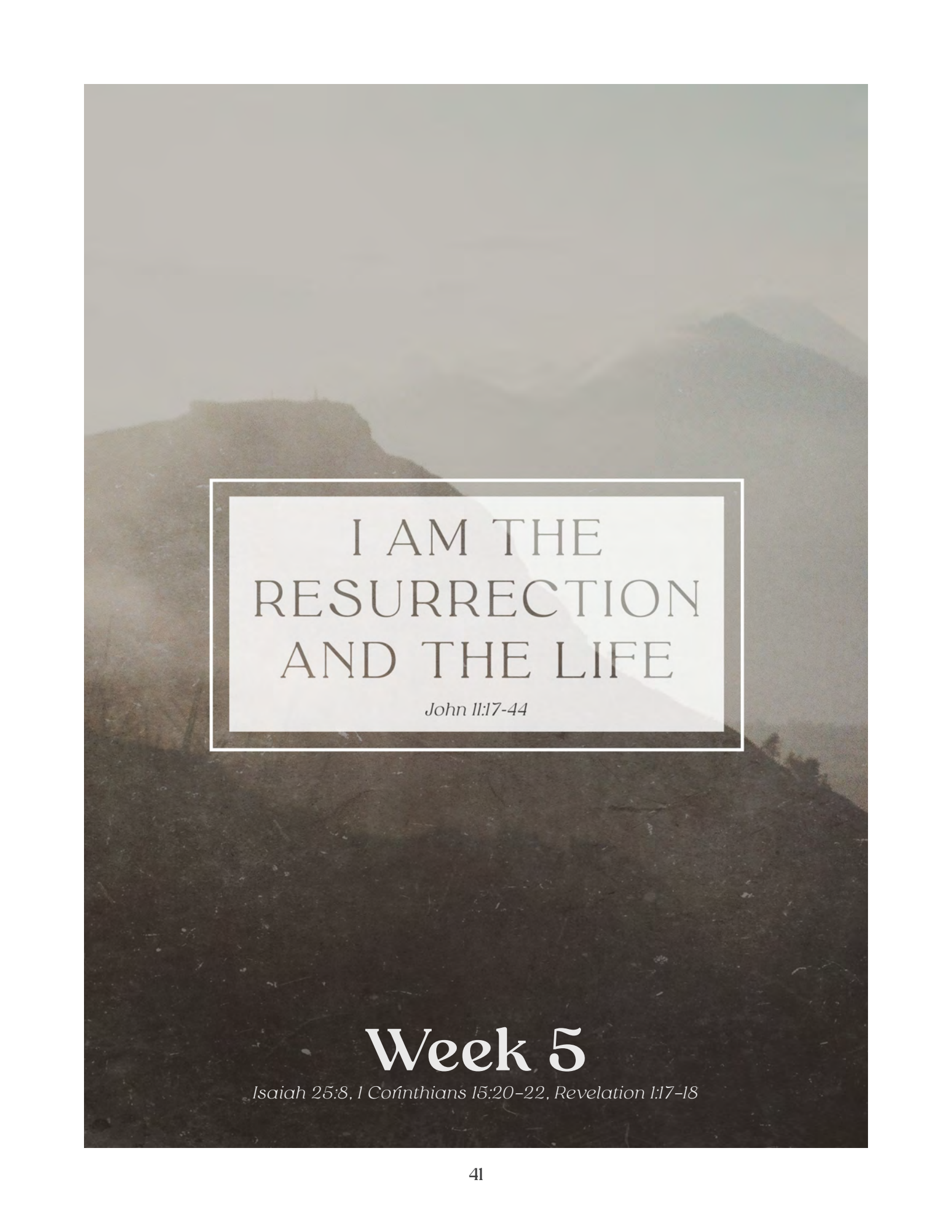
- Write down what you learned about who God is this week.
- What is something you learned this week that you want to remember? Why?
- How can you begin to posture your life to receive more from the Lord?

Day 7 - Sunday

Rest Day

Reflection Notes and Questions

Join us for worship today and prepare your heart to engage with next week's study of God and His word. Use your time today to rest, pray, and reflect on this week's readings.



I AM THE
RESURRECTION
AND THE LIFE

John 11:17-44

Week 5

Isaiah 25:8, 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, Revelation 1:17-18

Day 1 - Monday

John 11:17-44, Revelation 1:17-18, Hebrews 7:25, Romans 6:4, 1 Peter 1:3-4

The I AM of Easter

At this point in our study, it should be clear that Jesus' I AM statements share the same general message: He is our salvation from a world that only leads to destruction. Each statement comes with its unique fulfillments of the Old Testament, promises towards a future state, and a glimpse into the character of Christ. But each I AM statement is also building more and more toward the most powerful work of Christ, His resurrection.

At the beginning of this week, we see in John 11:17-44 that Jesus boldly declares this to be who He is. "I am the resurrection and the life." If we have any experience in church, we know that Jesus rose from the dead three days after His crucifixion. It's a true story many of us grew up hearing as children and celebrating yearly at Easter alongside bunnies and egg hunts. Jesus' words here clarify that the resurrection is far more than just a work of miracle, but a definer of who the Lord is.

Jesus's resurrection means that when we come to Him, we find life on this side of heaven and on the other side, too. Jesus being the resurrection means that His work of salvation is not limited to an invitation towards a future glorious event, but a promise to raise us back to real life in Him as we walk, limp, and struggle through this life. In other words, Easter is not simply a day of remembering Jesus' good work of resurrection and salvation for our future selves, but a day of remembering that Jesus is raising us to new life each and every day, because to be in His presence is to have life again like Lazarus.



Reflection

Today, reflect on a pretty big idea: what is the resurrection? As you just read above, the resurrection is a miraculous work of Jesus that has seriously glorious implications for our future. However, it also carries much more weight for us in our relationship and life with Jesus today and tomorrow. Take an extended period right now to journal what the resurrection means and what it shows us about Jesus, life, and the world around us.

Day 2 - Tuesday

John 11:1-16, Colossians 3:4, Philippians 1:21

The Life

Most of this week will be spent looking at one specific piece of Jesus' I AM statement in John 11. Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life." These two things work with one another, and both separately mean many powerful and unique things, but we will look in detail at Jesus's point of saying that He is the life.

The I AM statements of Jesus are filled with the reminder that He is life (the bread of life, the light of life, the shepherd who brings life). On the one hand, the most obvious point Jesus makes by His assertions of life means that He is the One who brings us life. He saves us, He gives us a future, He gives us hope and purpose.

Warren W. Wiersbe highlights this in his book *Jesus in the Present Tense*:

"To the Christian believer, life is not merely a physical condition or a social experience so much as a person, and that person is Jesus Christ. Paul says that "Christ is our life" (see Col. 3:4), and he wrote to the believers at Philippi, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). Life is what we are alive to! People "come alive" to that which excites, delights, and satisfies them, that which is at the heart of their very being; and Christians should come alive to anything that relates to Jesus Christ."

However, the other less studied or reflected upon implication is that Jesus perfectly experienced and directs us in life. Meaning, every emotion, every burden, every heartache He Himself walked through perfectly. Sickness, He saw that. Injustice, He endured that. Gossip, He was followed by that. Difficulty, He strained through that. Death, He saw and experienced that. Jesus is the life because He participated in and perfectly engaged with it.

The implication for us today is clear: Jesus is the life who shows us how to navigate through this life to find resurrection life. Each day, when we embrace and reflect upon Christ's life, we infuse our day with the life that brings renewal and hope. We walk in Christ's footsteps and find the life He is for us and the life we have been missing.



Reflection

Take a moment to read John 11:17-44 again. Reflect on or write down the experiences Jesus goes through that resonate with life as you know it (e.g., anger, sadness, questioning). How does He handle these emotions? What does His life reveal about how you can experience life differently when you lean on Him?

Day 3 - Wednesday

John 11:30-44, Matthew 21:12-13, Mark 3:1-6, Ephesians 4:26-27

Anger

As we look at Jesus' claim that He is the life, let's look at one of the emotions experienced in His life: anger. This is an emotion we are all far too aware of. Anger is one of our earliest emotions. Arguably, it is our first witnessed emotion. When we were ripped from the wombs of our mothers, we screamed and cried out in anger and frustration. Our warm, dark home was removed abruptly, and we were thrust into this world's cold, harsh light. So, how did we respond? With anger.

Our anger grows as we grow. If we're lucky, we have parents and helpers who show us how to address our anger in healthy, safe, and most importantly, righteous ways. Far too often, though, we let our anger take over, and we say things, do things, and think things that are wrong or hurtful. Our anger can lead us to bad places. Anger is such a misunderstood emotion that when we see anyone, especially Jesus, express it, we question it. We become suspicious or distant over it, so to hear Jesus' claim that He is the life, while moments later seeing Him get angry is very important for us to understand.

Jesus is not passive or indifferent to the curse of sin. It angers Him deeply. We have an advocate for the emotions we feel in this life, for the troubles we face, for the heartache we endure. Jesus in John 11:30-44 is angry. His anger is not sinful. The emotion of anger is not sinful; what we do with it can be. When Jesus felt anger, it was righteous. Righteous anger is anger that is justified and aligned with God's will. Often, righteous anger is a response to sin. We know this and go through this in our lives each day: someone lied to us- we get angry; someone said something about someone we love- we get angry; your son eats the last Oreo- VERY angry.

The difference with Jesus is that His righteous anger never steers toward unrighteousness. He doesn't let His righteous anger lead Him to an unrighteous response. We see in Jesus here a righteous anger towards the brokenness of the world and how it has led us to disbelief in Him and who He is. Jesus is angry here that death exists in the world, that it took His friend, and that because of it, it has led others to doubt in God/Him.

Jesus is the resurrection, meaning He brings life to the dead. We see here in Jesus' life-affirming character that He feels anger and handles it with righteousness.



Reflection

What makes you angry? How do you typically respond? Reflect today on how Jesus' righteous anger and response to the anger-fuel of our broken, sinful world can lead us toward life and a righteous response to our own anger.

Day 4 - Thursday

John 11:17-44, 11:35, Psalm 34:18, Matthew 26:38, Matthew 5:4

Sorrow

"Jesus wept." You've probably heard about this verse in John 11 before. It's pretty famous. It's the shortest verse in scripture, but these two words carry a lot. We receive rich insight into the life that Jesus is and claims to be in these words reflecting Jesus' response to His friend's death.

As discussed yesterday, Jesus feels righteously about all the same things we do in a broken life. We can see that in His anger, which may be easier for us to understand since we see qualities of righteous wrath in God throughout the Old Testament. We see His kindness, mercy, empathy, and humanness throughout the gospels, but what we may struggle to see is how deeply He felt and was moved by the destruction sin brings to our world and lives.

Most of Jesus' adult life was spent healing people plagued by sin. He is still doing this work even today, but in John 11:35, we see Him emotionally struck by it. C.S. Lewis famously lost the love of his life, his wife Joy Davidman, after only four years of marriage. Joy was diagnosed with bone cancer before they were married, but it quickly progressed within just a year of their marriage. When she passed, Lewis wrote in His personal journal, later published in a book called *A Grief Observed*. In this book, he laments and ponders the spiritual implications of the emotions that come with grief, sorrow, and loss.

I think it's important to read Lewis' wise words from one of his many essays about death to get a glimpse into how Jesus weeps while still knowing that life is to come. He writes,

"The world, knowing how all our real investments are beyond the grave, might expect us to be less concerned than other people who long for what is called Higher thought and tell us that 'death doesn't matter'; but we are not 'high minded', and we follow the One who stood and wept at the grave of Lazarus-not surely, because He was grieved that Mary and Martha wept, and sorrowed for their lack of faith (though some thus interpret) but because death, the punishment of sin, is even more horrible in His eyes than in ours..."

Jesus is life, meaning He experienced sorrow, just as we do, but on a deeper and more perfect level than we can even fathom. There has been, maybe currently is, and will be sorrow and loss in your life. Finding comfort in these difficult times is hard, but know that the Lord who brings life weeps with you. Matthew 5:4 says, *"God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted."*



Reflection

What do you mourn today? Where does sorrow hold to your heart? Take time to reflect on this and ask God for His comfort, embrace, and perfect sorrow to bring you home and back to life in Him.

Day 5 - Friday

John 11:23-25, 38-44

Hope

This week, we looked at the implications of Jesus' I AM statement that He is "The resurrection and the life." Ultimately, this entire statement can be narrowed down for us and what it means for us today in one word: hope. We have hope for our broken and dead future. We have a home and life in Christ. Hope is a beautiful thing to carry in our hearts because it speaks to a future contentment and toward a present healing and peace.

In the devotional study *I AM: Who Jesus is Changes Everything*, the authors point to this truth of hope:

"Until the day when we are glorified and sin and death are removed forever, we are to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in the present. We are to live as the made-alive people Jesus has made us to be, not living as if we were still dead but living for the One who has made us alive. This is only possible through the help of the Spirit given to us through Jesus."

We are not yet resurrected and in life with Christ for eternity, but our souls are secured for that future work, and the work that Christ is doing in us now is birthing in us a hope: a life and resurrection that would never be possible without His presence in us.



Reflection

What do you hope for? Feel free to be selfish with this. What is on your heart right now? How does Jesus, as our resurrection and life, give you hope, not necessarily for that thing you hope for but for the deeper reality of what we ultimately hope for? Reflect on this today and end your time in prayer, thanking God for the hope of His resurrection and life for our lives.

Day 6 - Saturday

Reflection Day

Reflection Notes and Questions

As we wrap up this week's study, reread John 11:23-25.

Reflect on these words that Jesus spoke, "I am the Resurrection and the Life" and what they mean about His character, His work on the cross, and how it should change how we see Him and how we live.

Reflect/journal your thoughts on this or these following prompts:

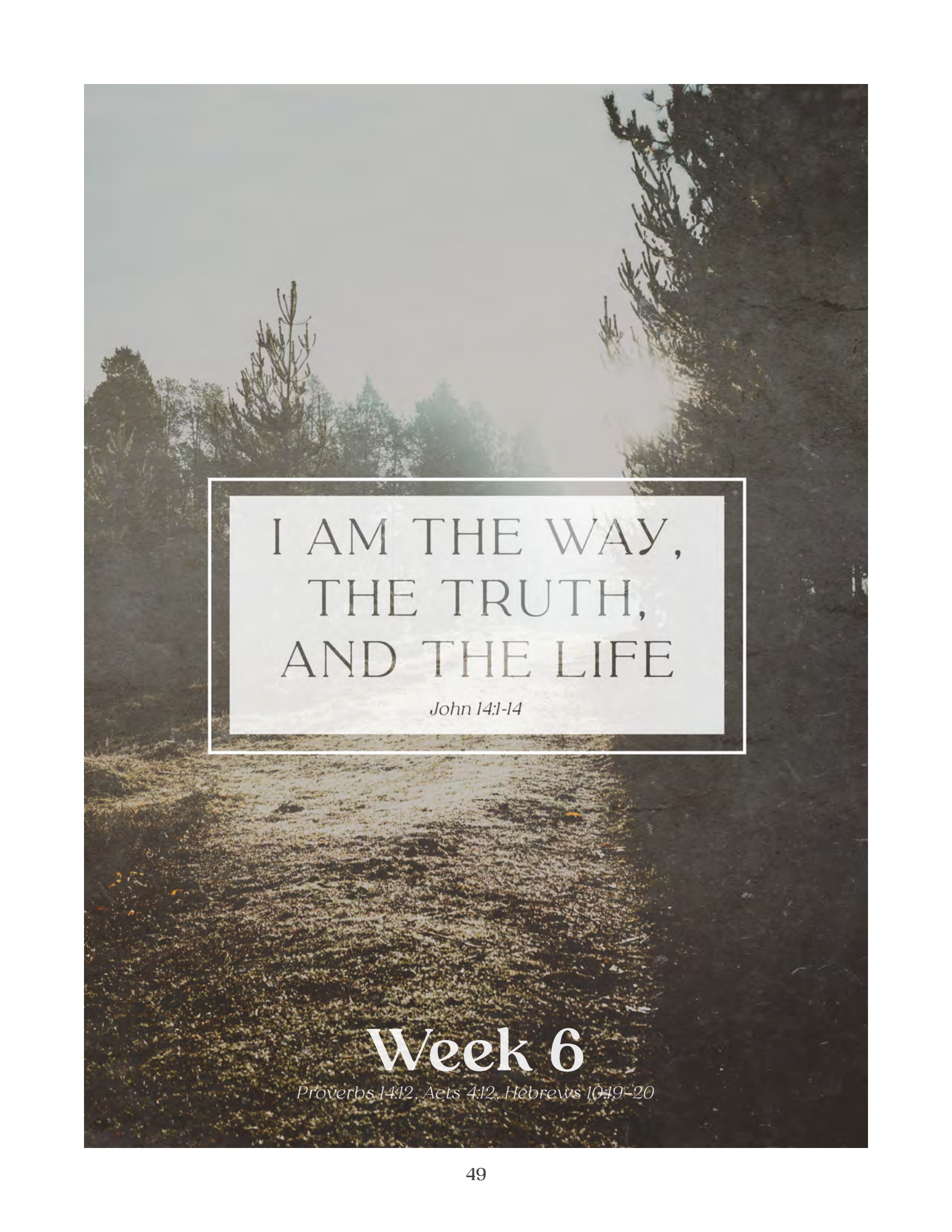
- Write down what you learned about who God is this week.
- What is something you learned this week that you want to remember? Why?
- How can you begin to posture your life to receive more from the Lord?

Day 7 - Sunday

Rest Day

Reflection Notes and Questions

Join us for worship today and prepare your heart to engage with next week's study of God and His word. Use your time today to rest, pray, and reflect on this week's readings.



I AM THE WAY,
THE TRUTH,
AND THE LIFE

John 14:1-14

Week 6

Proverbs 14:12, Acts 4:12, Hebrews 10:19-20

Sermon Notes

I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life - John 14:1-14

Lined area for sermon notes, consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

Day 1 - Monday

John 14:1-14, Psalm 119:30

The Way for our Troubled Hearts

Before we jump into this week's study, it is important to place these words of Jesus in context. In John 13, Jesus is in the Upper Room, sharing the Last Supper with his disciples. The room was likely filled with confusion, anger, and desperation when Jesus spoke the words we read in John 14. In these words, we hear the compassion of Jesus. Because Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, he is able to minister to our troubled hearts.

The words troubled (14:1, 27) and grieved (16:6) indicate that the atmosphere in the upper room was serious and sober. While the disciples didn't fully understand all that was transpiring that night, they knew enough to be concerned; and they were troubled for several reasons. To begin with, they were grieved because their Master was going to leave them and they didn't feel adequate for the work that lay ahead. Even more, Jesus had announced that a traitor sat at their table, and they wondered who he was. But they were all shocked when Jesus said Peter would deny Him three times! They saw Peter as their leader, and if a bold and important man like Peter failed his Lord, what might the rest of them do? We have these same sources of sorrow in our lives today...These experiences hurt, and they hurt us the most when we are the ones who have failed. Our Lord assured the hearts of His disciples by speaking to them about the Father. Jesus had told them that He had come to glorify the Father (Jn 8:49), and that night He told them that the Holy Spirit would glorify the Son as they served Him (16:14). Children know that father and mother are there to encourage and assist them, and they call for their parents whenever trouble arises. In a similar way, our heavenly Father cares for us. When Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father, the Lord replied, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (14:9). This helps us better understand the familiar statement in John 14:6. Jesus is the way and takes believers to the Father's house. Jesus is the truth and reveals the Father's heart. Jesus is the life and brings the Father to us so we can have His help...The key truth is incarnation—"Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). God's Son, God's Word, God's grace, and God's Spirit don't simply encourage us; they enable us!...Some people call this "the deeper life," others "the higher life," "the victorious Christian life," or "the exchanged life." Whatever name you give it, it is simply the life of God at work in and through us as we follow Jesus the way, believe in Jesus the truth, and surrender to Jesus the life.

Warren W. Wiersbe, *Jesus in the Present Tense: The I AM Statements of Christ*



Reflection

When your heart is troubled, how does it help to know that Jesus is at work within you?

Day 2 - Tuesday

John 14:6-14, Matthew 7:13-14, Acts 4:11-12, 9:2; 19:9, 23

Following The Way

The Greek word for “way” used in John 14 is *hodos* and means the road, path, or journey. This word doesn’t often appear in the New Testament, but it does appear in Matthew 7 when Jesus says, “Enter through the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who go through it. How narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few find it.” When Jesus says, “I am THE way,” he indicates that we can take other roads, paths, or journeys. The early church considered themselves as followers of The Way.

“The way” describes the very heart of early Christian consciousness, as in the core Isaiah 40:3 passage that opens Mark 1:2-3 and parallels: “Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.” The first title the Christian movement used for itself was “the Way,” as seen in Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23. They viewed themselves early on as a messianic sect of the Jews, joining the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes as another philosophy in first-century Judaism. This self-understanding lends support to Jesus’ identification of himself as the way to the Father and to salvation.

Grant R. Osborne - *John: Verse by Verse*

Life is full of paths. Some lead to success, some to disappointment. Some promise fulfillment and some leave us feeling empty. We spend so much time searching for meaning, purpose, and assurance that we are on the right path. Jesus doesn’t say, “I will show you the way” or “I’ll give you a roadmap.” He says, “I AM the way.” In other words, the way to God is not found in a moral checklist or a self-improvement plan. The way is found in a personal relationship with Jesus. Like Thomas in this passage, we can doubt that Jesus is the only way, but he brings those doubts to Jesus. This is what a personal relationship looks like.

How often do we strive to find our own way—to fix ourselves, earn our worth, and secure our future? And yet, Jesus invites us to stop striving and start trusting him. He is the way. We don’t have to figure it all out. We just have to follow Him. Jesus boldly claims, “No one comes to the Father except through me.” Many people want to believe there are many paths to God, but Jesus isn’t a way among many. The truth is Jesus is the only way to the Father. Here’s the beautiful part: though the way is narrow, it is open to everyone—to the broken, the lost, the sinner, the weary. No matter where you’ve been or what you’ve done, Jesus is inviting you to come. Following Jesus as the way isn’t just about where we’ll end up one day—it’s about how we walk with Him right now in our everyday decisions. He is the way through our doubts, struggles, failures, and fears. Jesus is the way to peace, joy, purpose, and the Father’s love. The question isn’t whether we know about Jesus as the way. It’s whether we’re following Him as the way.



Reflection

Reflect on what your personal relationship with Jesus looks like.

Have you surrendered your own plans and paths to trust Him and His way completely? Today, Jesus is still speaking those same words: “I am the way.” What does it look like for you to follow “the way”?

Day 3 - Wednesday

John 1:14, 8:31-32, 14:6-7, 16:13, 17:3, 1 Timothy 2:3-6

The Truth that Sets Us Free

Truth is more than a concept—it's a person. In a world where truth often feels subjective, Jesus is the unchanging, absolute Truth. He doesn't just point us to the truth; He is the truth. Everything He says does and calls us to aligns perfectly with the heart of God. But truth can be uncomfortable. It confronts our sins, exposes our weaknesses, and calls us to surrender. The religious leaders of Jesus' day rejected Him because His truth disrupted their traditions and self-righteousness. Many today resist Jesus for similar reasons—His truth demands a response. Yet, Jesus' truth isn't just about correction; it's about freedom. He says in John 8:31-32, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." The enemy, Satan, is called the "father of lies" (Jn 8:44), always seeking to distort truth and keep us in bondage. But Jesus, the Truth, breaks those chains and leads us into abundant life. When we accept Jesus as the Truth, it changes everything: Truth replaces lies - The enemy tells us we are unworthy, unloved, and too broken. Jesus tells us we are chosen, redeemed, and made new. Truth brings clarity - In a culture of confusion, the truth of God's Word brings clarity. Truth strengthens us - Life's trials can shake us, but the truth of Christ anchors our souls.

Freedom isn't just knowing the truth—it's living in it. That means:

- Reading and believing God's Word
- Surrendering areas where we've believed lies
- Trusting Jesus' truth even when it challenges us
- Sharing His truth with others in love

The more we walk in truth, the more we experience the deep, unshakable freedom Jesus offers. Accepting Jesus as Truth means more than believing in Him—it means living in His truth. That requires daily surrender, a heart that listens, and a willingness to trust even when His truth challenges us.



Reflection

Are there areas in your life where you are resisting God's truth? Are you in His Word and allowing His truth to shape you?

Pray: Jesus, You are the Truth. In a world of uncertainty, I choose to trust You. Replace the lies I have believed with the truth of Your love and grace. Help me to walk in Your light and share Your truth with others. Amen.

Day 4 - Thursday

Mark 10:45, John 11:33-36, 13:14-15, 34-35, Philippians 2:5-8, Ephesians 4:14-32

Sharing the Truth of Jesus with the World

There is something deeply unsettling about Jesus' words in John 14:6: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." In a world that celebrates options, personal truths, and self-made paths, Jesus' statement is a direct challenge. It's not an opinion or a suggestion—it's a claim of exclusivity. And that can feel offensive. But before we dismiss it as arrogance, let's look at the Jesus who spoke these words. Jesus is the One who bent down to wash his disciples' feet, the lowest of tasks. He is the One who knelt beside the broken, healed the sick, and welcomed sinners to his table. He is the One who wept at the grave of his friend and walked willingly to the cross. There is no arrogance in his love, only humility. There is no self-serving agenda in his claim, only an invitation.

The truth Jesus proclaims is not meant to puff up his followers or create a sense of superiority. Instead, it should drive us to our knees in awe and gratitude. If Jesus is the way, as Jesus' followers, our lives should be marked by following him—by serving, loving, and laying ourselves down for others. If he is the truth, we should walk in honesty and grace. If he is the life, then we should be people who bring life into the world around us. The beauty of Jesus' claim is that it is both exclusive and radically inclusive. He is the way, but his arms are open wide. He is the truth, but his truth is an invitation, not a weapon. He is the life and calls us to experience it fully in him.

So the question to ask ourselves is, are we walking in the way of Jesus? Are we living the truth with humility? Are we bringing his life into the places he has called us? The world will believe that Jesus is the way when they see us living the way of love. Let's follow him with hearts full of grace, walking in the humility he modeled beautifully. Be ready to speak the truth in love and to "let all bitterness, anger, and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice. And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ." Living out this truth that Jesus modeled for us will compel others to want to know more about Jesus.



Reflection

Are there people in your life who need to hear the truth of Jesus? How can you begin to share the truth of Jesus with others in love with humility and grace?

Day 5 - Friday

John 14, John 6:63, John 10:10, Deuteronomy 30:19-20

The Abundant Life

The Greek word for “life” is used in John 14, and John uses it 36 times in his gospel. This word encompasses both our present life and our future eternity. Jesus is the source and power of abundant life here and for eternity.

Life. It’s what we’re all looking for. We want more than just existence—we long for a life that has meaning and satisfies. We chase after things that promise fulfillment: success, relationships, comfort, and adventure. Yet, no matter how much we achieve, acquire, or experience, something always seems to be missing. Jesus understood this about us. He spoke these words in John 14 on the night before He would go to the cross. His disciples were anxious and uncertain about the future. They had left everything to follow Him, and He told them He was going away. Fear must have crept into their hearts. They didn’t understand what was coming next. Jesus gave them one of the most powerful and comforting truths in all of Scripture: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” Jesus wasn’t just giving directions or offering wisdom—He was making a bold claim about His very identity. This means that real life—eternal life, abundant life—can only be found in Him. Not in our accomplishments. Not in our relationships. Not in the fleeting comforts of this world. But in Jesus alone. If we’re honest, we often look for life in other places. We think, “If I could get that promotion, I’d feel complete.” Or, “If my circumstances were different, then I’d have joy.” But Jesus gently reminds us: “Come to me. Let me be your life.”

Everything else in this world fades. Careers end, money runs out, and health declines. Even the best relationships, as beautiful as they are, can never fully satisfy the deep longing in our souls. But Jesus offers something different. He promises to leave us with the gift of the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us in truth and an abundant life. The Spirit lives in us, and Jesus says it “will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.” This gift is better than anything the world can offer. In John 10:10, He says, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” This is the kind of life we were created for. A life rich with purpose, peace, and joy—not because of our circumstances, but because of His presence.

When Jesus says He is the life, He invites us into a relationship with Him, a life rooted in His love, sustained by His grace, and filled with His peace. This life is not just about the future in heaven, but about walking with Him right now—in the ordinary, the struggles, the joys, the unknown. Jesus invites you to stop striving and searching and simply rest in Him. He is enough. He is the life your soul has been longing for.



Reflection

Reflect on these questions: Where are you seeking life apart from Jesus? How could leaning into your relationship open you up to find a more abundant life filled with His joy, His love, His peace and His strength?

Day 6 - Saturday

Reflection Day

Reflection Notes and Questions

As we wrap up this week's study, reread John 14:1-14.

Reflect on these words that Jesus spoke, "I am the way, the truth and the life." and what they mean about His character, His work on the cross, and how it should change how we see Him and how we live.

Reflect/journal your thoughts on this or these following prompts:

- Write down what you learned about who God is this week.
- What is something you learned this week that you want to remember? Why?
- How can you begin to posture your life to receive more from the Lord?

Day 7 - Sunday

Rest Day

Reflection Notes and Questions

Join us for worship today and prepare your heart to engage with next week's study of God and His word. Use your time today to rest, pray, and reflect on this week's readings.



I AM THE
TRUE VINE

John 15:1-11

Week 7

Isaiah 5:1-7, Psalm 80:8-16, Galatians 5:22-23

Holy Week

Prepare Your Heart

As we enter Holy Week, let's reflect on Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. The crowds welcomed Him with palm branches and shouts of "Hosanna!" expecting a conquering king. Yet, He came on a humble donkey, fulfilling Zechariah 9:9: "Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey."

This week leading to Easter invites us to consider: What kind of king is Jesus? His "I AM" statements reveal His identity and mission as revealed throughout the Old Testament.

"I AM the Bread of Life"

Jesus satisfies the deeper hunger of the soul, offering eternal life. Do we seek Him for temporary relief or lasting nourishment?

"I AM the Light of the World"

While the people sought a political leader, Jesus provides light in the darkness of sin. Will we follow His light, even when we feel exposed?

"I AM the Gate"

Jesus invites us into His kingdom through faith, not military might. Have we recognized our need for His grace?

"I AM the Good Shepherd"

Instead of seeking power, Jesus cares for us and lays down His life for His sheep. Do we trust Him to lead, guide and care for us?

"I AM the Resurrection and the Life"

Jesus knew of His impending suffering but also the victory beyond the grave. Do we live with this resurrection hope?

"I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life"

Jesus is the only way to freedom and eternal life. Are we embracing His truth and following His path, rather than our own way?

"I AM the True Vine"

Our connection to Jesus is vital. Are we relying on Him daily and bearing fruit in our lives?

As we begin this week, let's prepare our hearts. Jesus, the humble King, came not to meet our expectations but to fulfill our greatest need. Will we follow Him beyond the celebration and into the cross, knowing that through Him, we find true life?

Day 1 - Monday

John 15:1-11, Isaiah 5:1-7, Psalm 80:8-19

The True Vine

Jesus didn't just say He was a vine; He said He was the true vine. In a world full of substitutes, false hopes, fleeting pleasures, and temporary sources of strength, Jesus clarifies that He alone is the source of abundant life.

The imagery of the vine wasn't new to Jesus' audience. In the Old Testament, Israel was often described as a vineyard or a vine planted by God. Psalm 80:8-9 says, *"You transplanted a vine from Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land."* God had chosen Israel to bear fruit, to be a light to the nations. But time and again, the people turned away, producing wild grapes instead of the good fruit of righteousness (Isaiah 5:1-7). Jesus enters this story and makes a bold claim: He is the fulfillment of what Israel was always meant to be. Where Israel failed, Jesus remained faithful. He is the true vine, and through Him, we are given the opportunity to bear lasting fruit.

Jesus continues in John 15:4, *"Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine."* Think about a branch on a vine. It doesn't have to strive to bear fruit—it simply stays connected. The same is true for us. When we remain in Jesus, His life flows through us, producing in us the fruit of Spirit. The call to abide in Jesus is not about mere survival but flourishing. When we remain in Him, we are nourished, strengthened, and empowered to love as He loves. Apart from Him, we can do nothing (John 15:5), but with Him, our lives will overflow with fruit that brings glory to the Father.



Reflection

What are the "false vines" in your life that you've relied on for strength or identity? What would it look like for you to intentionally abide in Jesus today?

Day 2 - Tuesday

John 15:1-11, Matthew 7:16-20, Galatians 5:22-26, Hebrews 12:5-11

Bearing the Fruit of Righteousness

This passage highlights the intimate relationship between Christ and His followers. The imagery of the vine and branches conveys dependence on Jesus for a life that bears fruit. This imagery isn't all beautiful and easy, it contains some harder images as well, vine dressers often have to prune the branches in order for them to grow. Pruning is a significant part of spiritual growth. God, as the vinedresser, removes what hinders growth, sometimes through trials or discipline (Hebrews 12:5-11), so that believers may bear more fruit. Verses 9-11 emphasize the result of abiding: experiencing the fullness of Christ's joy and love.

Pruning can feel like a loss, like cutting away what seems good. But a gardener prunes with purpose—to produce more fruit. Maybe you're in a season where God is pruning distractions, comforts, or even relationships. Trust that His hands are wise and loving. He is making room for something greater. Warren Wiersbe comments that "abiding" is not a one-time event but a continuous, conscious dependence on Christ. He writes:

"To abide in Christ means to keep in fellowship with Him so that His life can work in and through us to produce fruit. Fruit-bearing is not the result of human effort but of abiding in Christ and allowing His life to flow through us."

Wiersbe also notes that pruning can be painful, but it is necessary for spiritual maturity:

"God is never nearer to His people than when He is pruning them. Sometimes He cuts away the dead wood that might cause trouble, but often He cuts off living tissue that might hinder growth. This does not mean God is angry with us; rather, He is preparing us for greater fruitfulness."

Ultimately, John 15:1-11 teaches that true spiritual vitality comes not from striving in our own strength but from remaining deeply connected to Christ. The more we abide in Him—through His Word, prayer, and obedience—the more His love, joy, and life flow through us.



Reflection

What distractions or "branches" in my life might God be pruning so I can grow closer to Him?

Day 3 - Wednesday

John 15:1-11, John 6:56, John 14:23, 1 John 2:24

Remain in Me

It is important to remember when Jesus says this I AM statement in John 15:1-11. His path to the cross is growing nearer to its end, so He takes a moment with His disciples to share one more I AM statement. He is the True Vine. He repeats over and over for us to “remain” in Him. I love this word. Like everything with Jesus, it is a gentle word of comfort. In Greek, the word remain can also be translated as abide or dwell. Jesus is here, calling for us to stay with Him.

Sometimes, I feel needy. I will call a friend to talk, I will hold my spouse, I will tell a parent what I’m struggling with. The greatest gift the people in my life give me is their presence and comfort. Jesus calling us to remain in Him is a call for us to give Him our presence, to stay with and near to Him. He is the Vine (the source of life), and we are the branches (the results of His love and favor). He tells His disciples this message at a critical time. His time with them is almost up, but He wants them to remain faithful to Him after He is gone. He wants them to draw near His presence to experience His life and comfort. The same is true for us.

No matter what trials or long, lonely roads we may walk in this life, we have a comforter who remains with us and invites us to remain in Him.



Reflection

Reread John 15:1-11. Highlight how many times Jesus says “remain in me”. Next, either write down or silently repeat Jesus’ words “remain in me.” Finally, take a moment to sit quietly and reflect upon these words. When you are ready, pray and thank Him for this good word for our hearts.

Day 4 - Maundy Thursday

John 15:9-11

I Love You

John 15:9-11 is the culmination of the I AM statements of God. It culminates not so much because of the metaphor (as discussed in this study, most of the I AM statements generally point to the same truth about Jesus) but because of what He says about the metaphor. Verses 9-11 of John 15 are some of the warmest, most heartfelt, and most spiritually impactful words we have recorded from Jesus. *"I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!"*

He expresses the great depths of His love for us by relating the love that the Father God has for His Son Jesus Christ. A love so deep and mighty that it flows and permeates into all of creation. The love of the Father is so great for Christ that it frees us from sin and saves us from Hell. Jesus makes it clear that the shared love that the Father has for Christ is the same measure of love that He has for us. How powerful is that?

One of the greatest gifts we can experience in this life is love. For many of us, that gift is taken for granted, but what Jesus encourages here is that not taking Christ's love for granted means following Him and His ways (commandments). When we pursue the ways of the Lord, we take His love and live it out. Another way to say this is that we take His love and invite others to experience it when we seek the Lord. Jesus makes clear what this leads to: joy! "You will be filled with my joy." The joy of the Lord is what we experience when we don't take His love for granted and instead live in it.

To sum it all up, to live in the love of the Lord is to remain in Him.



Reflection

Today, live in the love of the Lord by actively seeking to love others like Jesus. How? Reflect the characteristics you know of Jesus. Be sacrificial. Be kind. Be patient. Be true. Be loving. See how this work brings greater joy to your day.

What is Good Friday?

Often we wonder why the day of Jesus' crucifixion is called "Good Friday", Isaiah 53:5 gives us an indication of why it is good: "But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed."

Eugene Peterson paraphrases Isaiah 53 in this way:

The servant grew up before God—a scrawny seedling, a scrubby plant in a parched field. There was nothing attractive about him, nothing to cause us to take a second look. He was looked down on and passed over, a man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand. One look at him and people turned away. We looked down on him, thought he was scum. But the fact is, it was our pains he carried—our disfigurements, all the things wrong with us. We thought he brought it on himself, that God was punishing him for his own failures. But it was our sins that did that to him, that ripped and tore and crushed him—our sins! He took the punishment, and that made us whole. Through his bruises we get healed. We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost. We've all done our own thing, gone our own way. And God has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong, on him, on him.

HE was beaten, so WE could be whole. HE was whipped, so WE could be healed.... that is good news!

May we spend today reflecting not only on the good news but also grieving the weight of our sin and the suffering it caused our Savior. May we spend today reflecting again on these seven I AM statements that Jesus gave to us about who He is, what He was doing, and what He ultimately fulfilled from the Old Testament and our eternal future.

John 6:35 - "I AM the bread of life."

John 8:12 - "I AM the light of the world."

John 10:7 - "I AM the gate."

John 10:11 - "I AM the good shepherd."

John 11:25 - "I AM the resurrection and the life."

John 14:6 - "I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

John 15:1 - "I AM the True Vine."

Day 5 - Good Friday

Choose one Bible account or read them all:

Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19

JOIN US TODAY FOR GOOD FRIDAY REFLECTION TIME

The Ultimate Act Of Love

Following Jesus' betrayal, arrest, desertion, false trials, denial, condemnation, beatings and mockery, Jesus was required to carry his cross to "the place of the skull", where he was crucified with two other prisoners. Jesus' body was placed in the tomb before 6:00 p.m. Friday evening, when the Sabbath began and all work stopped.

Jesus volunteered for His sacrifice. And He didn't face the pain of the cross unknowingly. Why would He willingly suffer this fate? Because He loves us. He feels compassion for us. Instead of staying away from us, He runs toward us, embraces us, and pays the cost of our sins - even though it meant deep pain for Him. Today, reflect on how much worth you have in God's eyes. So much worth that He endured the cross, with joy, so that you could be forgiven, known, and loved.



Reflection

Today is an ideal time for personal reflection to silently and prayerfully contemplate Jesus' death and resurrection.

Father, today I celebrate the life I live in your freedom. Because of the sacrifice of your Son and because of the gift of His life, I can walk this earth knowing that I am fully known and accepted by you. Let my celebration of this life be something worth talking to others about in the days to come. Amen.

Day 6 - Saturday

Reflection Day

Reflection Notes and Questions

As we wrap up this week's study, reread John 15:1-11.

Reflect on these words that Jesus spoke, "I am the True Vine." and what they mean about His character, His work on the cross, and how it should change how we see Him and how we live.

Reflect/journal your thoughts on this or these following prompts:

- Write down what you learned about who God is this week.

- What is something you learned this week that you want to remember? Why?

- How can you begin to posture your life to receive more from the Lord?

Day 7 - Resurrection Sunday

Join us for our Easter Services today and prepare your heart to engage with next week's study of God and His word. Use your time today to rest, pray, and reflect on this week's readings.

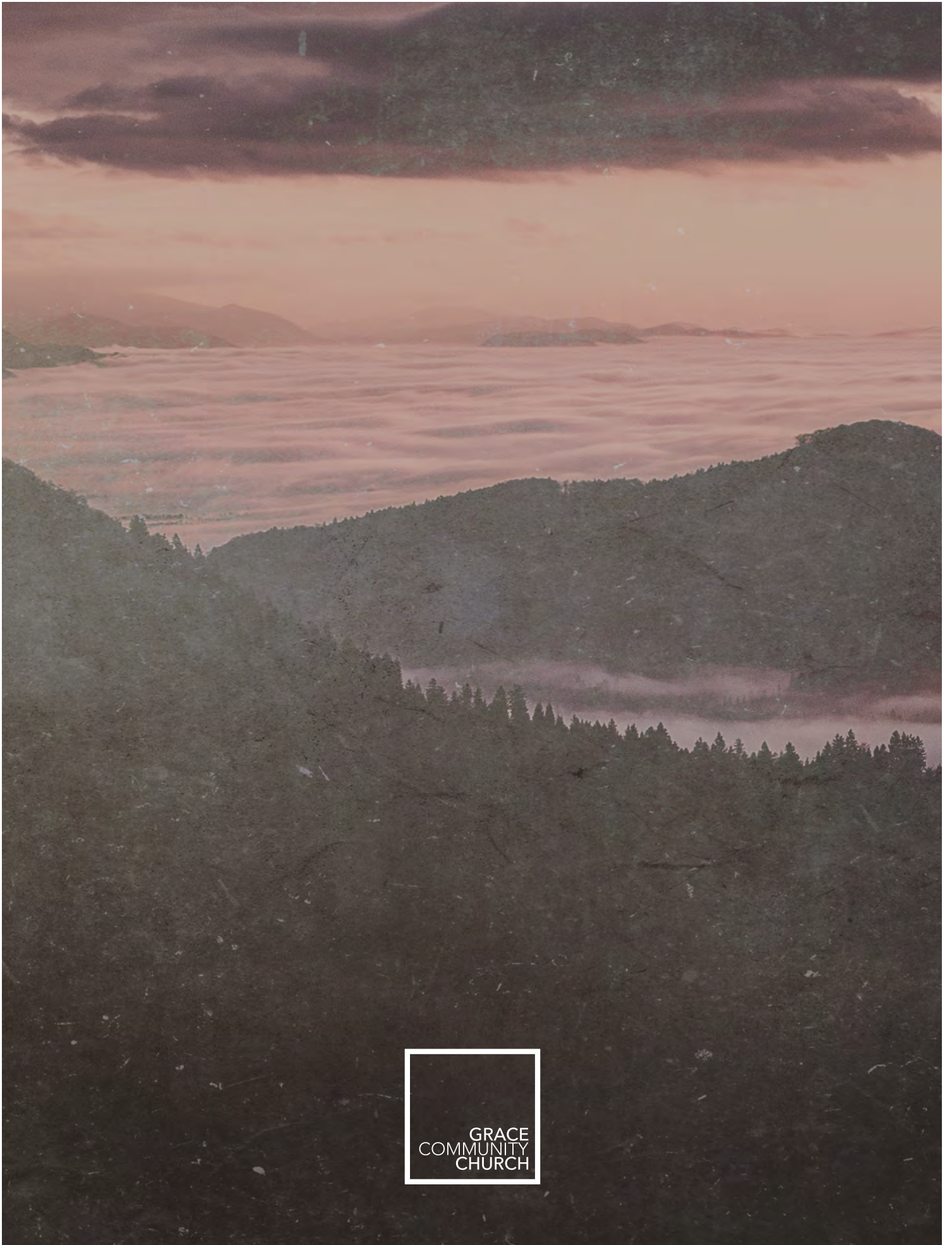
What Now?

"If I go, who will I say sent me? Asked Moses. God replied to Moses, "I am who i am. Say this to the people of Israel: I am has sent me to you." (Paraphrased Exodus 3:13-14)

Jesus came and declared through His I AM statements that He and the Father were one. He also declared an invitation to you and me to be fulfilled in Him through His I AM statements. To be resurrected, to be made new, to find life, light, protection, direction, and salvation in Him. We now stand at a crossroads as we do each day and every moment of every day. What do we do with this? Where do we go? Or as Moses asked, "Who will I say sent me?"

Our church's prayer is that the I AM statements of Jesus have grown you, deepened your understanding of our Lord, and, most importantly, that it has transformed you. Jesus offers transformation to us all through living out the promises of a relationship with the I AM of scripture and life. The most crucial question of reflection remains: Are you ready to follow?

- Van Riggins
Spiritual Formations Pastor



GRACE
COMMUNITY
CHURCH