



*KNOWING THE REAL JESUS*



<b>Table of Contents</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Series Overview</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Study 1</b>	<b>The Resurrection and the Life - John 11:17-27</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Study 2</b>	<b>The Bread of Life - John 6:22-59</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Study 3</b>	<b>The Light of the World - John 8:12-30</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Study 4</b>	<b>The Door - John 10:1-9</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Study 5</b>	<b>The Good Shepherd - John 10:10-21</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Study 6</b>	<b>The Way, the Truth, The Life - John 14:1-14</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Study 7</b>	<b>The True Vine - John 15:1-17</b>	<b>29</b>



## SERIES OVERVIEW

Everyone seems to have their own take on who Jesus is. Some will say he was a good man, some will say he was a wonderful teacher, some will say he was just a prophet, and others will say he was a crazy man (including his own family). Even those who confess that he is the “Son of God who takes away the sin of the world” will often soften him or try to form him into their own image.

But who does Jesus say that he is? Who is the REAL JESUS?

Someone’s name identifies who they are. In the Old Testament book of Exodus, Moses asks God what his “name” is – who is he? God answers “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” “I AM” comes from the Hebrew word “Yahweh,” which is the name – the identity – of the God of the Bible.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus identifies himself as I AM. And it’s not just Jesus; there are seven other witnesses in the gospel who rightly identify Jesus as God (John 1:34, 1:49, 4:42, 6:69, 9:38, 11:27, 20:28).

With that, Jesus doesn’t just say “I AM.” He shows us different aspects of his identity as the great I AM and how that brings us life. Warren Wiersbe put it this way—

“One of the key words in John’s gospel is life, used at least thirty-six times; and the seven I AM statements all relate to John’s theme of spiritual life in Christ. Jesus called Himself “the bread of life” (6:35, 48, see also verses 51, 58) and “the light of life” (8:12). 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 (see 10:7-10). He is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life so that we might have eternal life (10:11, 15, 17-18). “I am the resurrection and the life,” Jesus told Martha (11:25-26; see also 5:24), and to the disciples He said, “I am the way and the truth and the life” (14:6). 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 (15:1-5).”

Toward the end of the Gospel of John, John writes “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:30-31).

We invite you to explore and know the Real Jesus and find true life in his name.





## **Study 1 - I AM the Resurrection and the Life**

**Read: John 11:17-27**

**“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?’”—John 11:25-26**

### **Overview**

Jesus’ proclamation that he is “the resurrection and the life” appears in the account of his friend Lazarus’ death (v. 11). Upon hearing the news that Lazarus was ill, it says Jesus loved him but “stayed two days longer in the place where he was” (vv. 5-6). This was not in fact contradictory, as Jesus was using this to bring glory to God and display his power as the resurrection and the life (vv. 4, 25).

Verse 17 establishes the magnitude of the sign that Jesus is about to perform. Lazarus is dead, and many people from Jerusalem were coming to console the family. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, in an act of faith and grief (as opposed to anger and rebuke), she confesses that if Jesus would have been there, he could have healed him. Jesus assures her that her brother will rise again. She assumes this will be in the future; however Jesus has a more immediate resurrection in mind.

In referring to himself as the resurrection and the life, we see that Jesus promises eternal life with him — that one day those who have died will be fully resurrected to eternal life with Jesus. But Jesus also promises more — he gives us eternal life NOW (see also John 8:51). We can experience life with God in his kingdom NOW. When Jesus replied “I am the resurrection and the life,” he moved resurrection out of a statement of faith and into a person, and out of the future and into the present. He did not nullify the doctrine of future resurrection, but he did tell Martha (and us) that his resurrection power is available to his people today. (Wiersbe)

Martha’s answer to Jesus’ question of “can you believe this?” reflects the state of her confident trust. Her faith is a rich mixture of personal trust and of confidence that certain things about Jesus are true: that he is the Christ, that he is the Son of God, and that he is the one who was to come into the world. (D. A. Carson)

Jesus came as the resurrection and the life to awaken to new life those who are dead in their trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:5), bring resurrection life to the present (Romans 6:13) and eternal life with him forever (John 6:40).



## **Message notes and application**

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

## **Passage questions**

1. In everyday conversation, what might someone talk about as being "resurrected" or "given new life"? What do people mean when using these phrases?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Read John 11:1-16. How do Jesus' words and actions in this passage further emphasize the truth of his declaration that he is the resurrection and the life?



3. What do we learn from the details John includes in verses 17-19 and from Martha's response to Jesus in verses 20-22?

4. What does Jesus mean when he says that he is the resurrection and the life?

How does Jesus being the resurrection and the life shape both your present life and future (eternal) hope?

5. Read Colossians 2:6-15. What does it look like to live by faith through the resurrection power of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit now?

### **As you go...**

- Where do you feel like God is "not there" (v. 21) in your life? Why? Cry out to him.
- Think about and discuss how you would answer Jesus' question to Martha, "Do you believe this?" How does that bring you life?
- Who do you know who is struggling with the pain of sin and death in their life? How can you share with them the good news of Jesus being the resurrection and the life?



## **Prayer**

Jesus, we thank you that you are the resurrection and the life. Father, we recognize that you are the creator and sustainer of all life. We recognize our sin and the sin of humanity that has rebelled against you and brought sin, destruction, and death into this world. We confess, Father. We thank you and praise you for your grace and mercy in sending Jesus to resurrect us from our death and bring us eternal life with you. We pray for your Holy Spirit to empower us to live what is true – eternal life with you now and forevermore. Amen.

## **Prayer requests**





## Study 2 - I AM the Bread of Life

**Read: John 6:22-59**

**“Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.’” — John 6:35**

### Overview

Jesus had just finished feeding the multitudes with five barley loaves and two fish when they came to him seeking another sign so that they might have reason to trust him. They wanted to be provided with bread always — the way their ancestors had been provided with manna from heaven while wandering in the desert. They were looking to Jesus to meet their immediate needs, completely ignoring the much greater miracle he was offering to them. Jesus came down from heaven to save them. If they would only feast on him, they would never hunger or thirst again.

When we are saved from death by accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior, our famished souls are immediately filled. We have the hope of future glory and the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. But the truth that Jesus is the bread of life becomes a more vivid reality the longer we walk with him and seek to know him. When we’ve walked through seasons of joy as well as seasons of deep suffering in the secure arms of our loving Savior, we can declare as David does in Psalm 63:

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;  
my soul thirsts for you;  
my flesh faints for you,  
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.  
So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,  
beholding your power and glory.  
Because your steadfast love is better than life,  
my lips will praise you.  
So I will bless you as long as I live;  
in your name I will lift up my hands.  
My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food,  
and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips

Jesus is the bread of life, broken for us so that we can live with the hope of eternity in our hearts. If we believe in him, we have the security of knowing he will never cast us out. Our deepest need has been met. The hunger that nothing in this world can satisfy has been satiated for all eternity.



## **Message notes and application**

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

## **Passage questions**

1. Have you ever failed to notice ways God was providing for you and protecting you because you were so focused on wanting him to prove himself through a specific miracle or the fulfillment of a specific desire?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. The crowds looked to Jesus for what he could do for them but were unwilling to accept him for who he was and is—the giver and sustainer of true, eternal abundant life. In what ways do we, as individuals and as the church, sometimes act more like the doubting multitudes than as those who have tasted and seen Christ's goodness?



3. In verse 56, Jesus says “Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.” In your life, what does it look like (or what could it look like) to abide in the Lord and know that the Holy Spirit abides in you?
  
4. Read the following verses. In what ways does the Lord provide for those who follow him?
  - . Psalm 145:15-17
  - . Isaiah 58:11
  - . 2 Peter 1:3-11
  - . Matthew 5:6
  
5. Look again at John 6:37-39. Jesus says that he will never cast out those who come to him. How does knowing this allow us to rest and be satisfied in him?

### **As you go...**

- . Who in your life needs to know the satisfaction and peace of knowing God? Reach out to them and encourage them this week.
- . This week, take time to be still with God. Consider what it means for you to abide in him and he in you – for him to be your home.
- . If you’re having trouble experiencing a hunger for Jesus as the bread of life – as the one who fills and sustains you – consider spending some time fasting and praying. Ask the Lord to help you know his great love for you and the depth of your need for him.



## **Prayer**

Heavenly Father, you alone give us life. Forgive us for ever doubting that you know our needs. We so often fail to recognize that you are providing in ways that are beyond our understanding. By your grace, allow us to taste and see that you are good. Jesus, thank you for being our bread. By living a perfect life, suffering the punishment and death we deserved, and rising from death to life, you've offered us fullness of joy and life in you. Lord, increase our hunger for you, knowing that only you can satisfy our every need. Teach us what it means to abide in you. Help us to recognize your love and provision in times of joy as well as times of sorrow. Lord, we praise you because you satisfy us with your steadfast love.

## **Prayer requests**



## **Study 3 - I AM the Light of the World**

**Read: John 8:12-30**

**“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’” — John 8:12**

### **Overview**

The Old Testament is filled with references to God as light. When the Israelites were fleeing from Egypt, “the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night” (Exodus 13:21). When Moses had been in the presence of God, even the skin on his face would shine (Exodus 34:29-33). In Psalm 18, David declares “for it is you who light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness,” and in Psalm 36 he proclaims that “in your light do we see light.” Isaiah prophesies that “the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone” and that “your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended” (Isaiah 9:2, 60:20).

When Jesus states in John 8:12 that “I am the light of the world,” it’s significant that he is teaching in the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles, which was a time for the Jewish people to celebrate and remember God’s provision. Those listening knew what was written in the Old Testament and were participating in traditions meant to remind them of the ways God provided light in the darkness. Yet the leaders who were challenging Jesus were blind to the fact that they were standing in the presence of the light that had come to cast out all darkness.

In his kindness, God provided a light that would lead us to repentance by showing us our own sin and depravity (Psalm 90:8, Colossians 1:13-14). Greater still, he offered us a light that would illuminate the beauty of who he is so that we can proclaim his excellencies (1 Peter 2:9). He gave us his Word to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105). Through Christ we are made children of light so that we will never again walk in darkness (Ephesians 5:8). And one day, the light of his glory will be our only light: “They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever” (Revelation 22:5).



## **Message notes and application**

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

## **Passage questions**

1. What are some things that seem frightening in the darkness or the night but are far less scary in the light of day? Why do you think the same thing can seem so drastically different depending on the presence or absence of light?
  
2. Read Psalm 139:11-12, Daniel 2:22, and John 1:5. How do these verses bring hope and comfort?



3. As the light of the world, Jesus both brought great hope to mankind and made it clear that some who thought they were righteous were actually walking in darkness (John 8:19). Why do you think it can be difficult for those who think they are good to recognize Jesus as the Son of God?
  
4. Read Hebrews 10:32-39. How does being enlightened — knowing the light of the world — change the way we endure struggle and suffering?
  
5. In Matthew 5:14, Jesus says that his followers are the light of the world. We have been given the light, and we are called to give light to the world. Where have you seen the effects of God shining through in your life and the lives of others?

### **As you go...**

- Psalm 34:5 says that “those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed.” Spend some time dwelling on this truth and asking God to show you areas where you are not allowing his light to enter.
- Through his Word and Holy Spirit, God continuously illuminates truth for us to walk in. What has God been showing you recently? Is there anyone else you can think of who would be encouraged by this truth this week?
- If you're not already, challenge yourself to read God's Word daily. Allow it to be a lamp to your feet and a light to your path.



## **Prayer**

Lord, you light up the darkness and nothing is hidden from you. Illuminate our sin so that we can repent and turn to you, accepting the grace you freely give. Thank you for calling us out of the darkness and into your marvelous light. Thank you for making your light to shine upon us. As was sung in Psalm 43, "send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and your dwelling!" Lord, you are glorious. We praise you, Jesus our Savior. Teach us to walk in your ways so that your light will shine forth through us.

## **Prayer requests**





## **Study 4 - I AM the Door**

**Read: John 10:1-9**

**"I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture." – John 10:9**

### **Overview**

Doors have significance in scripture. The Ark in Genesis 6 only had one door and, when it was shut, those on the outside were lost to the waters. In many ancient cities, to sit by the door of the gate meant you were respected enough to act as a judge in civil disputes. The doorposts of the Israelite houses in Egypt were to be covered in blood so that the angel of death would not enter. Those inside such houses were kept safe, while those outside such houses felt the loss of their firstborn. The door to the Tent of Meeting, the Tabernacle, and the Inner Sanctuary of the Temple all bore the weight of being a passage to greater holiness and access to God. When Nehemiah rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem, he set about consecrating each door, beginning with the Sheep's Gate, the entrance to the city used for bringing in sheep for the ceremonial sacrifices.

When the Psalmist is recounting the graciousness of God toward the children of Israel in the wilderness with manna to eat, he does so by saying God "opened the doors of heaven." And when John is on the Island of Patmos, he receives a vision where, once again, the doors of heaven are opened and he sees the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, standing as a slaughtered lamb and opening the locked scroll.

But doors don't simply have significance on the grand scale of scripture; they had significance (and have significance) in people's everyday lives. You and I have a door on the front of our houses, doors on our cars, and doors on practically every building we've ever gone into. Doors function to keep certain things in and certain things out: people, animals, even certain kinds of atmosphere. They allow controlled access. Doors keep us safe. And doors have been keeping people safe for a long time.

So when Jesus pulls this metaphor out of his rhetorical bag of tricks, nobody has to stop and ask what a door is. But as we see in John 10:6, while they knew what a door was they didn't know why Jesus was talking about it. They didn't know that the one who had already changed the water to wine and cleared the temple courts, who had healed an official's son and had healed an invalid on a mat by a pool, and who had fed the five thousand with five small barley loaves and two small fish, this one was the door. He was the only one given to discern who was on the inside and who was left outside.



## **Message notes and application**

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

## **Passage questions**

1. Jesus depicts a scenario in verses 1-9 that employs a few different characters. Who are they, and who do you think they represent? How do they relate to one another?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What do you think is meant by the “sheepfold/sheep pen” and the “pasture”?



3. What comfort can we find in seeing the kind of relationship the shepherd has with his sheep?
  
4. Jesus says the sheep are able to both come in and go out of the sheep pen (v. 9). What makes it possible for the sheep to have this freedom without fear of being lost?
  
5. Jesus talks about the “thieves and robbers” in both verse 1 and verse 8. Who would be considered the thieves and robbers trying to lead people astray today?

### **As you go...**

- Take time this week to ask the hard question of how well you know the shepherd’s voice. While many of us would claim to know Christ and be part of his flock, Christ insists that “his own” know him personally.
- Confess your own tendency to enter apart from the door and apart from the shepherd’s direction.
- Ask Christ to give you wisdom in discerning his own voice as opposed to the voice of the thieves and robbers who would seek to make you their own.



## **Prayer**

Lord, there is no door but you. There is no safety but what you give. There is no freedom to pasture unless you are with us. Keep us from the robbers and thieves that seek only to steal and kill and destroy. Keep us from our own tendency to look to other means of entering your fold. Keep us from our tendency to wander to other doors. Keep our ears attentive to your voice as you call us by name. Keep us for yourself, as yours alone.

## **Prayer requests**



## Study 5 - I AM the Good Shepherd

Read: John 10:10-21

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”  
— John 10:11

### Overview

Modern American life doesn't afford much interaction with sheep, especially if you reside in a suburban or urban context. For many of us, the closest we come to pastoral settings like Psalm 23 is the gyro we had a few weeks back at the Greek restaurant down the road. Herding animals can be seen as a wholly “other” type of experience.

So when we come to passages like John 10, are we to skim through and simply assume Jesus' expectations of us for understanding this passage are lessened? Or should we look for that Groupon that offers us a few practical sessions of sheep-herding experience, just so passages like this “come to life” in real and unexpected ways? While I would choose the latter over the former (given only these two options), they are both sitting at the extremes of where we find ourselves when faced with unfamiliar biblical territory. And that's OK. We were never meant to live out every possible biblical experience before we read about it.

In his book, Jesus in the Present Tense, Warren Wiersbe offers this helpful summary for understanding the sheep's role in Scripture. “Sheep are mentioned in the Bible over three hundred times, more than any other animal. It may be embarrassing to some believers to learn that sheep are defenseless animals and prone to go astray. (They have poor eyesight and tend to follow other sheep without thinking.) Sheep can also be very stubborn.”

When I read through this description of sheep, points of comparison aren't really all that hard to see, especially the ones about being defenseless, prone to go astray, and of poor eyesight. And, oh yeah, there's that part about being stubborn. I mean, couldn't Jesus have picked dogs as his animal of choice? At least they're loyal. But truth is...I'm a sheep, through and through.

So when Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd, it only makes the kind of sense he intended if I already see myself as a sheep, if I already see myself as defenseless and stubborn. It only makes the kind of sense he intended if I already know my own state is pitiable, wandering far from a gracious God and in need of rescuing. It only makes sense if I recognize his voice when he calls. It only makes sense if I am his.



## **Message notes and application**

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

## **Passage questions**

1. Read through Psalm 23. What benefit do we see in the Lord being our shepherd? How does Psalm 23 help us understand what Jesus means by his sheep having “life and having it abundantly”?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Jesus makes a clear distinction between the shepherd and the hired hands in verses 11-13. While the hired hands aren’t there to do the sheep harm, they certainly don’t have their best interest in mind. So who are they? How would we know if we were dealing with someone like this in our own life or in the church?



3. Verse 14 stands out as one of the most poignant verses in this passage because it sets up the reader for understanding Jesus' intention for himself as well as his followers. What does it mean for Jesus to say "I know my own"?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Read through Revelation 7:15-17. What is happening in this passage? Why is it significant that Jesus is both the Lamb and the one who leads his people as their shepherd?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Seeing how Jesus' original audience reacted to his statements is rather helpful for understanding the impact of his words. In verses 19-21, the Jews jumped into a quick debate about whether Jesus was demon-possessed after he was done talking. Why would Jesus' words in verses 10-18 spark a conversation like that? Would his words still have that same kind of impact on you and your culture?

### **As you go...**

- Spend some significant time this week in prayer, both to speak and to listen, so that you might become more fully accustomed to the Shepherd's voice.
- Confess your tendencies to wander, to be defenseless, and to be stubborn.
- Take time this week to think through your day-to-day experience and ask if it has been altered or shaped in any way in light of Christ actually laying down his life for you (his sheep) and rising from the dead.



## **Prayer**

Lord, I only need to step back for a moment to recognize my great need for you as my Shepherd. I am prone to wander. I am prone to seek pastures that are not your own. I am prone to forget your voice, or dismiss it altogether. And yet I know these things to be true, that you are a shepherd like no other, that your pastures are all I need, that your voice calls to me in love. So like the father in Mark 9, I cry out, "I believe, help my unbelief!"

## **Prayer requests**





## **Study 6 - I AM the Way, the Truth, the Life**

**Read: John 14:1-14**

**“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’” –John 14:6**

### **Overview**

While it is Jesus who is facing his imminent death on the cross and whose heart is and should be troubled, it is also he who is bringing comfort to the troubled hearts of his followers. They are confused, uncertain of what Jesus means, and threatened by references to his imminent departure (Carson). Jesus calms their troubled hearts by calling them to trust – to trust and believe him and God (which are one and the same), to trust that it is actually GOOD that he leaves, and to trust that he is going to prepare a place for them and will come again and take them to be with him (v. 3). Jesus must leave in order to defeat Satan, sin, and death through his death on the cross and resurrection from the grave, and he must leave to prepare the place in the presence of God for his followers to go.

Jesus answers Thomas’ question about where he is going and how to get there by saying “I AM the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (v. 6). Jesus is the way to God, because he is the truth who embodies God and the one who has life in himself. “He is the very way to God, the one who alone can say, ‘no one comes to the Father except through me’” (Carson). Because of God’s holiness and our sinfulness, the only way to be in the presence of God is through the sacrifice of Jesus.

As his followers still try to grasp who he is and what he is saying, Jesus clearly and succinctly tells them that he is God and in him they have seen the Father. Jesus has shown them again and again that he is Emmanuel, God with us – that he has fully revealed the glory of the Father. Jesus closes by saying that because he is going to the Father, he will have shown the complete glory of who he is through his death and resurrection. Because of this, the followers will have a fuller picture of who God is and will be able to more truly reveal the Son. The mission will expand beyond Jesus’ humanness and his particular location to the ends of the earth through the power of the Holy Spirit in his disciples. Through Jesus’ life, death on the cross, resurrection, and the ministry of his followers, the Father’s name will be glorified!



## **Message notes and application**

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

## **Passage questions**

1. Where is your heart currently troubled, and how does that affect you?

Write down some of God's promises so that you can help one another apply his truth to your trouble. (Romans 8, Psalm 34, and Isaiah 61 are good places to start.)

2. Read John 11:1-16. How do Jesus' words and actions in this passage further emphasize the truth of his declaration that he is the resurrection and the life?



3. What does it mean that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life? How does this bring focus and clarity to our knowledge of God and his character?
  
4. Read John 14:8-11. What questions do you have about Jesus the Son and God the Father? Where do you have confusion or unbelief?
  
5. How do Jesus' promises in verses 12-14 allow us to experience God's presence now? In light of these promises, what should we be about?

### **As you go...**

- Make a list of things that are currently troubling your heart (big and small). Take time to discuss them with someone, and go to the Father with your trouble.
- Dwell on Jesus' words: "From now on you do know him and have seen him." What do we learn about who God is through Jesus?
- Discuss what it would look like to daily focus on Jesus as the way to the Father's kingdom, saturate yourself in the truth of his Word, and recognize the power of the life of the Holy Spirit in you.



## Prayer

Meditate on the following words from Thomas à Kempis' Imitation of Christ:

"Follow thou me. I am the way and the truth and the life. Without the way there is no going; without the truth there is no knowing; without the life there is no living. I am the way which thou must follow; the truth which thou must believe; the life for which thou must hope. I am the inviolable way; the infallible truth, the never-ending life. I am the straightest way; the sovereign truth; life true, life blessed, life uncreated."

## Prayer requests



## **Study 7 - I AM the True Vine**

**Read: John 15:1-17**

**"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." — John 15:5**

### **Overview**

In what is known as the farewell discourse, Jesus makes his disciples aware that he will soon depart from this earth but will return again from heaven. Jesus explains to his disciples that the most important thing to do as they await his return is to remain in him. In using the metaphor of the vine, Jesus describes how his disciples could continue serving him and bear fruit for his glory.

This metaphor was used to describe the nation of Israel, the covenant people of God. Israel is depicted as a vine planted by God. As we see in several places in the Old Testament (Psalm 80:8-19; Isaiah 5:1-7, Jeremiah 2:21), Israel is described as a degenerate and corrupt vine that was fruitless and unfaithful. Israel should have been bearing fruit for the glory of God, but it was doing the opposite; Israel had forsaken God for idols and foreign gods. The prophets of the Old Testament looked forward to a future day when the vine would finally be fruitful. When Jesus says that he is "the true vine," he is claiming that he has fulfilled that prophecy. Israel, as a vine, only foreshadowed this reality. Unlike Israel, Jesus successfully accomplished what he was meant to do. Therefore Jesus is the one and only true vine in which there is real fruit, and we are the branches.

A branch must remain connected and dependent on the vine. Jesus explains the results of remaining in the vine and the consequences of not remaining in the vine. Any branch who remains in Jesus will bear fruit, and any branch who does not remain in Jesus will be unable to bear any fruit at all. Bearing fruit can simply mean growing in holiness, and it can also represent the people we help lead to Christ. Ultimately, the purpose of the vine and the branches is to bear fruit and bring glory to the Father (v. 8).

This passage concludes by describing what a life that remains in the vine looks like. This life is characterized by loving obedience to his commandments. We don't obey God in order to earn his love and blessing, but we obey God because we want to obey him, out of love for him. We see here that obedience is associated with joy. D. A. Carson states that "Jesus experienced the joy of a completely fruitful life because he was obedient to his father; and he desires that his followers share to the greatest extent that same fruitful joy by being utterly obedient to Him." Through the person and work of Jesus, we can now enjoy a relationship with God and enjoy the blessings that arise out of that.



## **Message notes and application**

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon and read the text. What is the main point of the text? What catches your attention, challenges, or confuses you?

## **Passage questions**

1. Can you identify a season of your life when God was pruning you so that you could grow in him and bear more fruit? How does the amazing truth of John 15:9 allow us to accept seasons of painful pruning with grateful hearts?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. In the context of the vine metaphor, how can we relate to Old Testament Israel (Ps. 80:8-19; Isa. 5:1-7 and Jer. 2:21)?



3. How is God's purpose for the vine going to be achieved (v. 8)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What does this passage say in regard to what the Word of God has to do with us remaining in the vine (vv. 3, 7)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What does a life that remains in Christ and bears fruit look like in your marriage, home, work, community, etc.?

### **As you go...**

- Remember and reflect on the person and work of Christ. He lived the perfect and obedient life that we could never live. Let that truth shape how you view your relationship with God.
- Think of your intentions in obeying God. Do you obey God out of love or out of fear or greed?
- Think of how you can make an impact on another person's life today by doing something out of love for them and not expecting anything in return.



## **Prayer**

Lord, I humbly recognize and confess my need for you. Your Word says that apart from you we can do nothing. I realize that attempting to live for you without walking with Christ in the Spirit is futile. I thank you for Christ and his work on my behalf. It is only through him that I have eternal life and can enjoy a true relationship with God. I pray that you enable me to walk in light of your grace so that I may enjoy the life that you have purposed for me, which is to grow into Christ likeness. I also pray that you will allow me to grow more passionate for the gracious gifts of your Word, prayer, and community. I pray these things for your glory and for my good.

## **Prayer requests**