

It goes without saying that I love and care about you. It would mean a lot to me if you could trust me enough to come to my church again to “taste and see that the Lord is good” (Ps 34:8). You’re always welcome to come with me any time.

(Take A Step Closer To Following Jesus, Higher Ground, Spring 1998)

Questions to think about:

1. How did you come to believe in the Lord?
2. How did you first “see” God?
3. What is the level of your faith in God?
4. What are the things or events that convinced you that Jesus Christ is your Lord and personal Savior?
5. Were there any obstacles or doubts that you struggled with in your search for God? How did you overcome them?

REFLECTION & PRAYER



Through trials and suffering, Job was able to advance from “hearing about God” to “seeing” God. Today, have we merely heard about God or have we truly seen God in our lives? Let us press on to know and fully experience our Lord (Hos 6:3).

Lesson 12

The Gospel of John

Jesus Christ, the Answer to Everything

Listed Scriptures

Jn 6; 8:1-12; 10:1-18; 11:1-44; 14:1-7; 16:33; Eph 1-2:8; Ps 103:1-5; 13

Lesson Aim

- 1) To enable students to know that Jesus Christ is the almighty God who can solve the problems in our daily lives
- 2) To enable students to learn to trust and turn to the Lord regardless of what we face in life

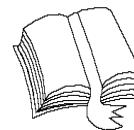
Memory Verse

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Mt 11:28-29)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

John 15-21

BIBLE BACKGROUND



Please refer to the Bible Background in Lesson 10 for additional information on the Gospel of John (Lessons 10, 11 and 12 are Bible studies based on the Gospel of John).



When we encounter problems, who is the first person we usually turn to? Why?

B I B L E S T U D Y



Due to the nature of this Bible study, the Check For Understanding questions can be found after each "I Am" section.

In the book of John, the Lord often used the phrase, "I Am" (ego eimi) to introduce Himself. In fact, Jesus Christ uses the phrase "I Am" seven times to show that He is the almighty and everlasting God. The first appearance of "I Am" occurred in the Old Testament, when God revealed Himself to Moses (Ex 3:13-14). "I Am" represents the very essence of God and was used absolutely by and for God. It referred to the eternal One, the true God, the Creator of the universe and the redeemer of Israel (Is 43:13; 44:6; 46:9; 48:12; 52:6; Deut 32:39; cf Ac 7:32; Mt 22:32). In adopting "I AM" (Jn 8:58; Mt 18:20; Jn 8:23), the Lord confirms that He is the eternal and invisible God who was manifest in manhood. Each time an "I Am" statement appears, the Lord Jesus reveals a unique aspect of His divine nature. Each of the seven phrases represents an aspect that the Lord fills in our lives.

A . I am the true bread from heaven (Jn 6:27)

Upon witnessing the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, the people were drawn to the Lord because of physical benefits and blessings. Christ corrected their wrong perspectives by proclaiming, "I am the bread of Life. Anyone who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst" (Jn 6:35).

The Lord reminded the people not to focus on food and drink or physical blessings that are perishable, but on the things that are imperishable. He reminds them that besides a physical dimension of life, there is also a spiritual dimension that requires nourishment and satisfaction. Often, this spiritual hunger and thirst manifest itself in different ways, such as loneliness, boredom, meaninglessness and emptiness.

Today, we make the common mistake of trying to fill this spiritual vacuum with physical means such as food, pleasure, enjoyment and an eventful life. The more we try to fill this vacuum with the things of the world, the emptier we will feel. Such people are like a man who is adrift at sea. He becomes delirious with thirst and decides to drink the seawater to quench his thirst. The more he drinks, the thirstier he gets. Eventually, he dies of total dehydration. It is impossible to gain true inner satisfaction from the world. However, the Lord offers us a solution. He says, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4). The only solution for emptiness and meaninglessness in our lives is coming before the Lord Jesus, believing in Him and performing His word. Only then will we find satisfaction in our hearts and rest for our souls.

Check For Understanding:



1. Have you ever felt a void in your life?
2. Do you find that your life is weary, burdened or without meaning?
3. What have you done to try to bring meaning into your life? Was it effective?

B . I am the light of the world (Jn 8:12)

In John 8:1-11, the scribes and the Pharisees brought an adulterous woman before the Lord for judgement. Christ, however, turned to them and said, "Let he who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." Everyone departed one by one from the eldest to the youngest. The Lord turned to the woman and commanded her to sin no more. He then proclaimed, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

From this incident we can see that Jesus Christ, the true light, had shone into the heart of the adulterous woman. When the light shines, it cuts through the darkness to unveil what is right and wrong, true and false. Once living in darkness and sin and without knowledge of God, the adulterous woman was now able to "see" and know the Lord. Lord Jesus showed her the error of her ways. He also showed the accusers that before God, they too were sinners and were not innocent. Those who live in darkness are confused, unable to see reality. Lost in a world of illusion, they make judgements based on mere appearances and are simply unable to grasp what is important and true. Only by acknowledging Jesus Christ and abiding by His word will we be able to truly "see" the direction of our life. With light, we can see the value of things clearly, and can see the world for what it actually is. By taking the word of God as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, we will not stumble or falter (Ps 119:105).

**Check For Understanding:**

1. How has the light of God shone into your life?
2. If the light of God shone on you what would it reveal?
3. Matthew 5:14-16 tells us to let our light shine on others. What does this mean? Reflect on whether your speech, conduct and your way of life have been a light to the gentiles.

C. I am the gate (Jn 10:7)

In the evenings in Palestine, the sheep were gathered into a sheepfold to protect them from thieves, harsh weather or wild animals. The shepherds themselves commonly slept in the single opening to the fold. The Lord uses this single opening to the fold to illustrate that only through Him can we receive eternal life. Today, there are many different forms of religion. Within Christianity alone, there are tens of thousands of Christian churches with different teachings about salvation. In today's pluralistic society, we are taught to accept all religions for they are basically the same; they teach us to do good and lead us to eternal life. But religions are not all the same nor do they all lead to eternal life. Only through the Lord Jesus can we obtain salvation (Ac 4:12). Jesus Christ is the one and only gate. Since there is only one Lord, there is only one way and only one gate to enter into this way that leads to eternal life (Eph 4:4-6). Therefore, two churches with two different beliefs about salvation cannot both be true, nor can both lead us to eternal life. Salvation is only obtained by believing in the Lord Jesus and finding the church that preaches the true gospel. This church will uphold and proclaim the truth that is taught in the Bible. In this end time, the Lord Himself has raised up the True Jesus Church to preach the only way of salvation.

**Check For Understanding:**

1. What does the gate refer to?
2. How do we enter this gate?

D. I am the good shepherd (Jn 10:11)

Shepherding was a common occupation in Israel, so when the Lord said, "I am the good shepherd," it was an analogy that people understood clearly. In the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the prophets castigated the false shepherds (false leaders) who perverted their spiritual role, "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture" declares the Lord (Jer 23:1). Ezekiel predicted that the true shepherd (the Messiah) would come and provide God's people with

care and leadership. Jesus Christ is the true shepherd of God's people.

How is the Lord Jesus the good shepherd?

- * The good shepherd will provide for his sheep (1 Pet 5:7; Ps 23:1). The Lord will lead us to green pastures and still waters (Ps 23:2). We can feast and live in abundance through the living word and spirit of God.
- * The good shepherd will walk in front of his sheep. The Lord has set us an example in every aspect of life so that we may follow in His steps—in word, love, conduct, virtue, spirit and suffering (1 Pet 2:21:24).
- * The good shepherd knows his sheep and his sheep know him (Jn 10:14). The Lord knows our conditions and needs. He knows our hopes and fears, our strengths and weaknesses. He knows us more than we know ourselves. He knows our entire person. He recognizes those who are strong and weak, sick and injured, and He will help us accordingly.
- * The good shepherd will lay down his life for the sheep. The Lord Jesus toiled and labored for us while on earth and eventually gave up His life for us. A true shepherd will do all he can to love and care for the sheep, whether it is night or day. He will love even to the point of laying down his life for the sheep. Unlike a hireling, a good shepherd does not serve because of personal benefits, but for the love of God.

Check For Understanding:

1. How has the Lord provided for you in your life?
2. In what ways have you experienced that the Lord, the good shepherd, knows His sheep, and His sheep know Him?
3. Give examples (without mentioning names) of people you have encountered who have shown the qualities of being a good shepherd.

E. I am the resurrection and the life (Jn 11:25)

Before the Lord Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He assured Martha's faith in Him by saying, "I am the resurrection and the life," to let her understand that He has power over life and death. But what is the significance of the resurrection of Lazarus for us today? It proves that the Lord is the source of life and that life and death are in His hands (Jn 1:4). Jesus Christ is not only the source of physical life, but is also the source of spiritual life. He did not promise the prevention of physical death; He promised to give us abundant life, including resurrection and eternity with Him. Raising Lazarus from the dead proved that He had the power to retain

life. Only He can overcome death. So we have wonderful assurance and certainty that because Christ lived, we also will live.

The event is a further demonstration that His resurrection power is available to His people both now as well as in the future. Martha did not fully grasp the fact that the Lord could resurrect her brother then and there. Sometimes, we may also wrongfully limit the Lord's life-giving power to the future. We may believe that in the future we will rise from the dead and be transformed into spiritual beings. But we can also experience Christ's power in this present life. There is no situation or problem in our lives that is beyond His power to transform. There is no weakness in us that is too great for Him to change.

Check For Understanding:



1. How much do we believe in the the power of resurrection of the Lord?
2. Have we ever experienced the life-transforming power of God in our lives?

F. I am the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6)

Before the Lord Jesus was crucified, He comforted the disciples saying, "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?" Thomas then asked the Lord, "We do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" (Jn 14:1-4).

Jesus Christ is the way

Thomas asked a good question. How can the Lord Jesus be the way that people walk on to get to the heaven? It all seems very abstract. In concrete terms, a way is an actual path that takes us from one destination to the other. In abstract terms it refers to a method that would take us to a certain spot. Jesus Christ is the way to the heavenly kingdom, meaning He is the only method by which we can get to heaven. Why is Jesus Christ the only way? Why can we not be saved through Confucius or Mohammed or other such great men? The answer lies in the problem of sin. Only God, who is without sin can redeem us from the penalty of sin. He came to die and shed His blood so that a new and living way could be opened for us (Heb 10:19). So by believing in the Lord Jesus, repenting of our past sins, baptizing in the water and spirit, obeying His commandments and being sanctified, we can be saved (Ac 2:38; Tit 3:5).

Jesus Christ is the truth

According to Webster's Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, truth is defined as: "conformity with fact or reality; the true or actual state of a matter; a verified or indisputable fact." The definition of truth in the Bible, however, is drastically different. In John 1:1, 14 it reads, "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." Also in John 14:6, Jesus Christ clearly reveals that He is the truth. The word of God is truth (Jn 17:17). The Lord Jesus is the word manifest in the flesh, so the Lord Jesus is the truth. By abiding in the word of God, we will be sanctified and set free from sin, and we will receive eternal life (2 Tim 3:15).

Jesus Christ is the life

How is the Lord Jesus the life? How can Jesus Christ save us and give us eternal life? The Lord Jesus is the eternal living God, who has no beginning or end (Jn 1:1-2; Heb 7:22-25). He is the "fountain of life" (Ps 36:9), the bread of life (Jn 6:35) and the Author of life (Ac 3:15). Because of this, Jesus Christ is in absolute control of life and can grant us physical as well as eternal life (Jn 10:28). Through His name, washing of regeneration and partaking of His blood and body, we can obtain everlasting life.

Check For Understanding:



1. How is Jesus Christ the way, the truth and the life?
2. In light of John 14:6, how would you respond to someone who says, "There are many ways to God"?

G. I am the vine (Jn 15:1)

In this statement, the Lord Jesus uses the analogy of a vine to describe the intimate relationship between the believers and Himself. The Lord Jesus said that He is the vine and we are the branches. When we abide in the Lord Jesus in the church, in His word and in His love, we are connected to the vine. When a branch is connected to the main trunk, it will receive water and minerals necessary for growth. Similarly, by being connected to the Lord we will receive spiritual food and drink which is the word and spirit of God. Through the word and spirit of God, our spirituality will live, blossom and bear fruit.

On the other hand, if we are not connected with the vine, we are like a grapevine branch which has been cut off from the main branch. Although it may continue to

survive and produce foliage, it is only for a little while. Soon, it withers away and dies. This tells us that a branch cannot fulfill its purpose of bearing fruit unless it remains in intimate connection with the vine. Many people try to be good, honest people doing what is right, but the Lord Jesus says that the only way to live a truly good life is to be connected to Him, as a branch to a vine. Often, we use our own standards to measure what is good or right, but they are not absolute. What is good in the eyes of men may not be good according to the truth. Only the word of God is the absolute truth, and righteousness needs to be measured according to biblical standards. As branches, let us therefore remain totally connected with the true vine, our Lord Jesus. Consider how empty our lives would be if we failed to remain in the Lord Jesus? As empty as that of a branch torn from the vine, with no potential to bear fruit and live.

Check For Understanding:



1. How can we test ourselves to see if we are connected to the main vine?
2. How can we bear fruit?

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G

The questions can be found in the Bible study section, after each "I AM" segment.

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Have students get into groups and examine the following scenarios carefully. Identify each problem and then match up each case with an aspect of the Lord Jesus' divine nature that will resolve the problem(s). For example, case 1 is the Lord Jesus, the Bread of Life. Physical pleasures cannot satisfy the emptiness that we sometimes feel. Only the Lord Jesus brings meaning and satisfaction to the spiritual void that exists within us. After identifying each scenario, choose one scenario and suggest ways to remedy the problem.

Case 1

It's a Saturday night, and Emma finds herself alone in front of the TV. There is really not much on but there is nothing else that she feels like doing. With remote in hand, she switches from one channel to another and continues doing this for a couple of hours.

(The spiritual void within us manifests itself in different ways, such as loneliness, boredom, meaninglessness and emptiness. Emma is alone and bored and she makes the common mistake of trying to fill this spiritual vacuum with physical means as in this case, surfing the TV. The Lord Jesus is the bread of life. The only solution for emptiness and meaninglessness is to come to the Lord. Through His word and spirit we will find true satisfaction for our souls.)

Case 2

Mandy has a neighbor called Jan. One day the topic got around to religion, and they ended up having a heated discussion on Sabbath worship. Mandy had tried to convince Jan that Saturday, not Sunday is the Sabbath. Jan told her that worshipping God on Saturday or Sunday makes no difference. Every day is the same to God. Just as a thousand years is like one day to God, so is Saturday the same as Sunday to Him. It's not when we worship God that's important, but whether our hearts are right before Him. What can Mandy say to help Jan understand?

(A true follower of Christ would obey the true gospel and the teachings of the Lord Jesus. Unfortunately today, many churches and religions are "ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God. They seek to establish their own and they did not submit to God's righteousness" (Rom 10:3). Jan has been misled, and she tries to justify her arguments. The Lord Jesus is the way, the truth and the Life. Only by having complete submission to the commandments of God and walking in the way that Jesus Christ has paved can we obtain everlasting life.)

Case 3

Tracy is one of the leaders of the youth group. She often shows concern for the brothers and sisters by helping them out in various ways. One thing she likes to do is treat the youths by providing them with snacks and desserts after their weekly meetings. However, all this has begun to upset her husband, who feels that she is spending too much time and money on others. He feels the youths are capable of dealing with their own problems. If not, other brothers and sisters can help them out instead. He has even begun to restrict her from being too involved with the group. Tracy wonders what she can say to her husband to help him be more understanding.

(The Lord Jesus is the good shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep. While on earth, the Lord toiled and labored night and day and eventually gave up His life for us on the cross. As shepherds of God, we need to do our best to care for

and love the sheep. This may mean giving up our wealth, our time and personal enjoyment. The Lord has set us an example in every aspect of life and as shepherds, we need to follow.)

Case 4

Jess has just gotten out of RE class where her teacher has been talking about the importance of preaching to people around her. She plucks up the courage to talk to a friend who is a Buddhist. Her friend tells her that all religions are the same, as they all teach us to do good and lead us to eternal life. No matter what religion we believe in, we can still experience God. Jess begins to wonder if there is some truth in what her friend says.

(Today, there may be many religions, but it is only through the Lord Jesus that we can obtain salvation and eternal life (Ac 4:12). Other religions may be able to experience signs and miracles, but that does not mean they have the truth and the way to salvation. The Lord Jesus is the one and only gate. Since there is only one Lord, there is only one gate to enter into the way that leads to eternal life.)

Case 5

Bob is thinking of settling down. Knowing that he should seek God's will in his choice, he prays and asks God, "Lord you know the kind of girl I like, big eyes, tall, slim and beautiful. Please help me find such a girl." Meanwhile, some brothers and sisters in the church try to help him find a suitable spouse. He turns them all down because none of the candidates meet his requirements.

(Bob's criteria and judgement are based on mere appearances and values of the world (1 Thess 4:4). He is unable to see the biblical qualities that are important in a spouse and fails to recognize what is valuable in God's sight. The Lord Jesus is the light of the world. With the true light, we can discern the value of things clearly, see things for what they really are, and therefore, we will make correct decisions and judgements.)

Case 6

Rick has just started university. There are many things that are new and fascinating to him—new faces to meet and clubs to join. He's also gotten himself involved in a Christian fellowship on campus. He finds the people there very nice and active in doing charitable works. He begins to wonder how members of his church are not even as devout or charitable as these people. His church talks a lot about love, but not much is being done. He wonders whether it's worth

going to church when a person can do just as much good or more without going to church.

(Rick needs to understand that we cannot depend on good deeds or good character to receive eternal life. People may try to lead good, honest lives, but our standard of what is good is relative. Our righteousness needs to be measured according to biblical standards. The Lord Jesus is the true vine. Only by remaining connected to the Lord and the church will we receive true nourishment through His spirit and His word.)

Case 7

Dave and his family were recently baptized into the church. They have been fervent believers since then. One day, however, Dave goes in for his medical checkup and discovers that he has cancer. Dave is emotionally devastated by the shocking news. Dave, who feels the news is as good as a death sentence, goes through a stage of serious depression. He begins to blame God for his misfortune. He decides that he will never go to church or worship God anymore.

(The Lord Jesus is the resurrection and the life. He is the source of life, and both life and death are in His hands (Jn 1:4). Jesus Christ did not promise the prevention of physical death, because we all will die at some point. But He did promise to give us abundant life, including resurrection and eternity with Him. However, the Lord's life-giving power is not just limited to the future. We can also experience the Lord Jesus' power in this life too. There is no situation or problem in our lives that is beyond His power to transform and to change, so long as He is willing.)

REFLECTION & PRAYER



In this life, there are endless problems. But where there is the presence of God, there will always be an answer to these problems. Isaiah 30:15 exhorts us to return to God for "in returning and rest, we shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be our strength." Have we come to Him with our doubts and fears?