

# **A Message from Pastor Daniel**

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

Thank you for investing your time and effort to enhance your personal spiritual life by working through this devotion and discussion guide with many from your church family. Our strategy for making disciples includes a three-fold process. First of all, we hope you will work through the personal devotions for five days prior to hearing the sermon on the same subject matter over the weekend. Next, we hope you will be faithful in your worship service attendance and take careful notes from the preaching of God's Word. Lastly, we strongly encourage you to get involved in our Small Group Ministry and participate in the opportunity to further discuss and spiritually digest the truths you are exposed to each week with a few other believers on a weekly basis. If you will follow this plan I can guarantee you that you will grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

This particular study has been written with the hope that we as a congregation will grow in our understanding of who Jesus Christ is as our Savior. The study of Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah is called "Christology." During His earthly ministry, Jesus made several statements about Himself that started with "I AM". Through these statements, He claimed to be God, the perfect incarnational presence of the great I Am. We live in a world that maintains a high level of respect and admiration for Jesus, but are growingly unwilling to surrender to Him as Lord and Savior. Our world seems more than willing to "add Jesus to those they admire", but skeptical about His exclusive claim to being the only way to eternal life with God the Father.

The bottom line is that all other belief systems offer their claim of a path to eternal life, but only Jesus offered to be "the way, the truth and the life" and then came back to life after death. Jesus is a unique historical figure and stands

alone in direct contradiction to all other faiths. As His followers we must understand His claims and identity. I invite you to join me as we delve into the exclusive claims of our great Savior!

Many blessings as we learn together!

**Pastor Daniel Lambert**

## **Introduction**

This book uses a different learning approach than our former study guide developed for the “Kingdom Pulse” series. That book was framed as a study guide; this is written as a devotional. What you find here are a series of responses to four questions and one statement asked each week during the ten weeks of focus on His Names.

- What Bible knowledge can help with this “I AM”?
- What attributes of Christ are revealed in this “I AM”?
- What avenues of worship open up with this “I AM”?
- How can this “I AM” challenge my walk with Jesus?
- You and one other.

We trust you will work through this material with a Small Group. Each week on the fifth day there is a meditation titled: “You and one other.” This weekly offering seeks to illustrate the call of the Lord to share our giftedness; the act of taking yourself and connecting with one other person. The Small Group is a helpful and encouraging setting to discuss and assimilate the practical suggestions found in “You and one other”. We trust you will agree “You and one other” is the natural outworking of taking to heart each daily meditation on the Names of Jesus.

One final reminder: Truth comes from the Word of God enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Our best spiritual progress is made by (1) slowly reading each week’s passage; walk through the Word with your lead shoes on (!) and (2) taking the necessary time to think about what you read before you begin the daily studies. As you move through the devotion, take time at intervals to pause and speak words of praise and honor to the Lord. Create time for Him to speak to you. Live responsive to His promptings.

We respectfully submit, for your prayerful consideration and spiritual benefit, the ten weekly Names and where to find them:

Week One: I AM Messiah.....4

Week Two: I AM the Bread of Life..... 12

Week Three: I AM the Light of the World .....20

Week Four: I AM the Door .....28

Week Five: I AM the Son of God .....36

Week Six: I AM Teacher and Lord.....44

Week Seven: I AM the Vine .....52

Week Eight Before Abraham... I AM .....60

Week Nine: I AM One who Serves.....68

Week Ten: I AM the Alpha and the Omega .....76

Related Readings .....84

Blank Pages for Weekly Notations..... 85

# **Week One:**

# **I AM Messiah**

Selected Text:

John 4:4-26

Key Verse:

I know that Messiah is coming, who is called Christ... "I who speak to you am He."

John 4:25-26



This Week's "I AM":

I AM Messiah

Make a point of beginning this week's study with a time in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate the significance of this "I AM" to you. Then read the selected text (preferably aloud.) Our passage is the familiar episode of Christ's encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well.

## Week One/Day One – I AM Messiah

What Bible knowledge can help with this “I AM”?

The word Messiah translates to “Anointed One.” Messiah is the High-Title given to a specific Hebrew Person. This Person is Promised to work spiritual revival and establish Himself as government to the world through the Nation of Israel. Interestingly enough, the actual Name of Messiah is used only twice in the Old Testament: both times in Daniel (Chapter 9, Verses 24-25). Check out Revelation 11:15.

What do you know about the practice of anointing? What does it mean to be “anointed?” Do a word search for Bible people who’ve been anointed. Note their credentials. Here are two to get you started: Psalm 89:20, 1 Samuel 10:1

Often in Scripture, anointing segues into the conspicuous activity of the Holy Spirit: 1 Samuel 16:13. The practice of anointing is a Godly pursuit as evidenced by Who it is that guards the anointed: 1 Chronicles 16:22

Consider the social difficulties of Christ’s conversation with the Samaritan woman. This episode didn’t occur in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Their conversation was conspicuous enough for the Disciples to marvel when they saw Him talking to her. (Notice they were too chicken to say anything! John 4:27) It is especially telling that Jesus would share His Messianic identity with a woman who was a “Gentile” (or in the slang of the period: a dog). This woman comes from the apostasy of reprobate Israel. She values her poor morals and languishing religious rote. She quotes chapter and verse; but fails to see the Truth standing in front of her. That is until His persistence brings light to her understanding.

## Week One/Day Two – I AM Messiah

What attributes of Christ are revealed in this “I AM”?

Take time to study the passage looking for attributes of Jesus’ character that show themselves to you. Here are two to get you started.

One attribute to consider is Christ’s Availability:

The woman at the well lived without facing the Truth, so the Truth came to her. In the same way He comes to you, whether or not you like the person you’ve turned into (Luke 19:10). Pause now to remember a point in your personal history where you felt isolated and alone. All you had was Jesus there with you. He hears you right now. Glory in the Presence there with you even at this moment.

A second attribute to consider is Christ’s Tenacity:

Our passage takes place at Jacob’s well; not a good place for Jews. The families of 10 of Jacob’s 12 sons had left their faith and moved here (leaving Judah and Benjamin.) This was not a place for Jews; but it was exactly to these forsaken 10 tribes that Jesus decided to reveal this “I AM” to. Only John records what happened here among the “dogs.” How He spoke out His True and Honorable Title of Messiah. That it happened in Samaria shows the Lord Christ pursues people who forsake Him. People like us.

Sometimes we need pursuit. We don’t mean to disobey, but sometimes we are not fervent in our testimony for Christ. To be in His service means to sacrifice where it may hurt. There is pain and suffering in being fully His. However, He’s tenacious as a terrier (a critter of His own design) to bring you Power in the Truth of Who He is. There is no escaping His love for you.

## Week One/Day Three – I AM Messiah

What avenues of worship open up with this “I AM”?

Messiah is laced into your personal salvation experience. All Believers in Jesus are grafted into Israel. We share in the promises of their past and in the glorious future of the Nation of Israel (Romans 11:16). The One we worship the Hebrew King.

- Pause to still your soul, mind, will and emotions. (Hebrews 4:12)
- Confess your sins. (1 John 1:9)
- Call out the Name Messiah, to the One to whom every knee will bow and tongue confess. (Philippians 2:11)
- Adore Him for His Messianic attributes; be focused and in silence. (Psalm 130:6)
- Sing softly from your heart words which celebrate His Name. (Ephesians 5:19)

Consider this avenue of worship:

The Messiah paved the way for you to be brought before the Father without dread of judgment.

- Think about the things for which you deserve to be judged.
- Honor the Messiah right now for His deliverances.
- Open your heart in soft praise. Don't worry about what you might say – the Holy Spirit will instruct you.
- Call out to Messiah.
- Purpose to honor the Messiah and live victoriously.

What new (or refreshed) avenues of worship occur to you?

## Week One/Day Four – I AM Messiah

How can this “I AM” challenge my walk with Jesus?

Ever wish things would go just the way you want them to? Do you grow weary and up against one thing after another? There are many reasons why things happen; but stopping to consider “Messiah” is very helpful.

As Messiah, what is outside His domain? Are there countries or personal circumstances beyond His authority or rule? Okay so let’s say you believe He is King over everything. How would you classify your submission to His authority? How about your obedience to what He prompts you about? Are you a model citizen? If you can’t describe yourself as “submissive” to the Lord’s authority because of how you choose to live, then the Bible view is clear. Everything against the sovereign authority of Messiah is willful rebellion. Have you thought about those personal or family practices God would want you to stop; and this time for sure? With Christ we all can succeed. But we must repent.

Consider this: How might your prayers become changed when mentioning the Kingly authority of Messiah? Would you make a visit to the White House without preparation and a sense of awe? Kick in your imagination. Visualize Him high up and on His Throne. He is Messiah, King and Ruler. Jesus lacks no power to see you through your most difficult challenges. But we must not grow impatient. The Lord is working a good work in you. He will deliver you, He will protect you, He will answer your prayers. But remember God is seldom early; He is always right on time.

Would you stop now to meditate on these or other challenges you see posed by this “I AM”?

## Week One/Day Five – I AM Messiah

You and one other.

It's a wondrous thing, the relationship between Christians and Jews, and we will study more about it in Week Eight. But there is much confusion among the lost about the Believers connection with Israel. We should know enough to help explain it to someone else.

Most non-Believers take a genuine interest in the Christian's "over-concern" for the nation of Israel. Many suppose Christians hate Jews, the "Christ Killer's". You will hear the Holocaust cited as Christians warring against Jews. Most have no experience with the moral and political ties between the nation called Israel and Biblical Christianity. They wonder why America "wastes money" on them. They wonder why Arabs shouldn't have legal rights to Palestine. These are things we need to be ready to dialog about.

Keep this topic in mind. If your conversation with your "one other" seems to lag, ask what they think about Israel. Learn what they know. You should dig up the promises made to Abraham and Israel. Remember how Christians (the wild olive) have been grafted into Israel (the cultivated olive - Romans 11:17-24). Point to the doorway of faith through which Believers may partake of the promises.

Make careful study of the following references.

Romans 4:16, Romans 9:8, Galatians 3:14, Galatians 3:29, Ephesians 3:6, 2 Peter 1:4, and 1 John 2:25.

What other insights might be helpful in sharing Messiah with the lost?

# SERMON NOTES

# GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

## **Week Two:**

## **I AM the Bread of Life**

Selected Text:

John 6:35-58

Key Verse:

I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.

John 6:35



This Week's "I AM":

I AM the Bread of Life

Make a point of beginning this week's study in a time of prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate the significance of this "I AM" to you. Then read the selected text – preferably aloud. Our passage is fairly long this week; good for us! Make time to work through it. Jesus is holding His longsuffering discourse with "the multitude." In His efforts to describe His mission and identity He spoke in rich word pictures. Prepare yourself.

## Week Two/Day One – I AM the Bread of Life

What Bible knowledge can help with this “I AM”?

It can be difficult for those blessed with grocery stores to picture a society and lifestyle where bread was as highly valued as it was in Bible times (or for that matter in other parts of the world today.) Bread is called the “Staff of Life.” We need bread to live. This dependency is a wonderful starting point to richer understandings of this “I AM.”

Manna is the bread God gave to Israel in the Wilderness. But how much do we know about manna? Read Exodus 16:31; how is manna described? How was it provided? Numbers 11:9.

Read John 6:31 and notice the antagonistic Jews claiming their lineage as proof of piety. They testify kinship to the miracle of Manna; just people acting superior to others (nothing new there.) They demanded a sign from Jesus before they committed to belief. They sought temporary means to happiness “Lord, evermore give us this bread” – thinking with their bellies.

Jesus’ replies are instructive, culminating twenty verses later in John 6:51 (please read it.) What are the main truths about Himself that Jesus reveals in this verse?

## Week Two/Day Two – I AM the Bread of Life

What attributes of Christ are revealed in this “I AM”?

This week’s “I AM” brims with applications about the powerful attributes of Christ. There is the dependency of all mankind upon bread, the generous provision of Christ Himself to meet our most basic needs; just to name two.

One attribute to consider is the bread is ALIVE:

Bread that comes out of the oven smells so good; lather on the butter (or manufactured low-fat, butter-like spread) and you’ve got a party! However, bread only meets needs commensurate with its intrinsic and nutritional qualities. Tasty, as it is, it is still just bread.

Jesus on the other is “the Living Bread”, the bread that came down out of heaven. This bread has the special quality of continuous, vibrant, and effusive action. The flesh of Jesus became the gift of eternal life to all who believe. The Living One, giving life.

One other quick thing: Living Bread means He never grows “stale” or stuck with one approach to helping you in your circumstances. His solutions, like His nature, overflow with creativity! All the creative power of the Creator remains at work. He knows no obstacles. He freely enables the action of the Holy Spirit to work within us. He is alive to help through our difficulties as well as through our successes.

What other attributes occur to you?

## Week Two/Day Three – I AM the Bread of Life

What avenues of worship open up with this “I AM”?

Consider the Title of the “Bread of Life”

- Pause to still your soul, mind, will and emotions. (Hebrews 4:12)
- Confess your sins. (1 John 1:9)
- Call out the Name “Bread of Heaven”, to the One to whom every knee will bow and tongue confess. (Philippians 2:11)
- Adore Him for His life giving attributes; be focused and in silence. (Psalm 130:6)
- Sing softly from your heart words which celebrate His Name. (Ephesians 5:19)

Consider this avenue of worship:

Remember the Bread of Life Himself promised those who eat His flesh shall “not hunger.”

- Think about the things for which you hunger.
- Ask the Bread of Life to sharpen your hunger for things of eternal worth; that He will honor you with opportunities to labor with other Believers and collect treasures “where neither moth nor rust destroys.”
- Ask the Bread of Heaven to help your understanding of Truth and how He is alive and at work in you.
- Give Glory to the Bread of Life.

What new (or refreshed) avenues of worship occur to you?

## Week Two/Day Four – I AM the Bread of Life

How can this “I AM” challenge my walk with Jesus?

The Lord taught the Disciples to ask: “give us this day our daily bread.” Set aside the physical necessities for a moment to ask how that prayer affects you spiritually.

We are to ask for daily bread; we are to be in prayer. Prayer is one of the four activities the Acts 2 church, were “continually devoting themselves” to. (Examine their other three practices – Acts 2:42) Sometimes it’s a challenge to be consistent in prayer.

Are you routine in your devotions? In Job we find these words: “I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.” (Job 23:12) Is it possible you neglect to ask the Bread of Heaven to Minister His life-giving ways to you every day?

Take this week’s “I AM” as a challenge to remember Who is Master. It is not you, yourself. Not over your efforts, plans or exertions. It is not the works of your hands which offer holy sustenance. It is the Lord Jesus Christ and Him alone Who brings health and vitality to your mind, will and emotions.

Would you stop now to meditate on these or other challenges you see posed by this “I AM”?

## Week Two/Day Five – I AM the Bread of Life You and one other.

One thing people tend to admire in someone else is consistency. Showing a steady attention to the task at hand, no matter what they're doing. This is also true in the spiritual domain. A common complaint of non-Believers is that Christians are "hypocrites." When we accommodate earthly living we make their point. Jim Putman said the key to effective outreach is simply a track record of faithfulness. Be the person God intended; remember that you are not your own.

This week's "I AM" offers a very unique discussion point for you and your "one other." What if you shared you totally rely on the feeding from the Bread of Heaven to sustain you at work; to guide you at home? That the Living Bread of Christ is the sole support you have; "more than your necessary food." That is radical stuff to people living like they do today.

But it remains for you to make that connection. God is not going to "grow" you into the habit of speaking to lost people. The Word says He is "at work" in you (Philippians 2:12-13.), but He leaves us the task of living like we need Him. We need to be about placing our trust. Do you trust Him to turn what feels like risk (in talking to the lost) into the sweetest joys? Can you imagine if this idea of sharing your "daily Bread of Heaven" with another person really took off in you? What if it did in all of us?

You have something powerful to say to someone who relies solely upon themselves for their decisions; to someone who misunderstands the Christian worldview and needs to hear about the personal and active role the Lord Jesus takes with His children. You can share how His bread contains nutrients and guidance you cannot get anywhere else; Jesus is life.

# SERMON NOTES

# GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

# **Week Three: I AM the Light of the World**

Selected Text: John 8:12

Key Verse:

I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.

John 8:12



This Week's "I AM": I AM the Light of the World

Make a point of beginning this week's study with a time in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate the significance of this "I AM" to you. Then read the selected verse aloud. It is taken from Jesus' discourse with the Leaders of the Jews. Consider the nature and characteristics of light before you begin the daily devotions. Work at it, meditate

## Week Three/Day One – I AM the Light of the World What Bible knowledge can help with this “I AM”?

The first words spoken by God that Moses recorded are in Genesis 1:3 “Let there be light.” Is that significant?

One helpful item in our knowledge toolkit is to remember Jesus was there when those words were spoken. Read Genesis 1:26, Colossians 1:13-17, Hebrews 1:1-2, 1 John 2:13, Revelation 3:14. Note too, what Paul writes to Timothy about the Father (1 Timothy 6:16).

Consider this: Light belongs to God. It’s His, it’s personal. Read Genesis 9:13. Notice the personal pronoun. And what then is a rainbow but the spectrum of visible light. When Jesus claimed the title of “Light of the World”. He meant it in its most personal sense; that He understands light, that He is sourced and united in Light with the Father, that He is light.

Consider the context from which Jesus draws this “I AM.” The Pharisees took exception that He named Himself “the Light of the world” (read John 8:13). Note the word “therefore.” One of the reasons they objected is because of the direct implication of His Own divinity in the Title. Let’s remember that although the world today is muddled about Jesus, the religious leaders of His time knew exactly Whom He claimed to be.

## Week Three/Day Two – I AM the Light of the World What attributes of Christ are revealed in this “I AM”?

One thing to think about with this week’s “I AM” is the contrasting nature of light and darkness. You might have a candle’s little circle of light in a dark room; but you cannot have a “little circle of darkness” in a lighted room. Light obliterates darkness.

One attribute to consider is Jesus obliterates sin:

Light obliterates darkness. Jesus promised that those who “follow Me shall not walk in the darkness.” (John 8:12) He obliterates obstacles to Christian living; darkness cannot co-exist with Him. But remember His words, for this Truth to be active we must follow Him. Perhaps this very day you can find greater strength to follow as you meditate on the Light of the World.

An additional attribute is that Jesus gives the Light of Life:

The Lord Jesus is generous and gives freely to all Believers (Romans 8:32.) And what He gives is Himself. He will crush all sin in its path. His Light is sourced in “the stuff of life”! The Light of Life is therefore life-giving to you and I. His Light is like the world’s substitute: a shimmery glare of confusion and abandonment. He does not fail or forsake.

What attributes occur to you?

## Week Three/DayThree – I AM the Light of the World What avenues of worship open up with this “I AM”?

Consider the Title of the “Light of the World”

- Pause to still your soul, mind, will and emotions. (Hebrews 4:12)
- Confess your sins. (1 John 1:9)
- Call out the Name “Light of the World”, to the One to whom every knee will bow and tongue confess. (Philippians 2:11)
- Adore Him for His illuminating attributes; be focused and in silence. (Psalm 130:6)
- Sing softly from your heart words which celebrate His Name. (Ephesians 5:19)

Consider this avenue of worship:

Remember how the Light of the World is daily with you

- Think about the things which overwhelm you.
- Ask the Light of Life to help your understanding of Truth and how obedience brings light more fully.
- Ask the Light of this World to clear your life from the pulls and traps of darkness.
- Give Glory to the Light of Life!
- Sing softly, holding up His Name – express your admiration for Him, thank Him for His guidance through His Light.

What new (or refreshed) avenues of worship occur to you?

## Week Three/Day Four – I AM the Light of the World How can this “I AM” challenge my walk with Jesus?

It is not always pleasant to have the light of Truth shine in. When facing Truth the state of the saved or the unsaved is identical: two words: “now what?”

The nature of Truth is that we respond to it. Either (1) we ignore or retreat from what the Light of the World reveals to us about ourselves or (2) we begin the process of healing through strengthening our fellowship with Him.

What does the Light of Life show you about yourself? Are you intentional to place yourself under its radiance or are you one who avoids the discomfort of conviction and hassle of routine Christian service? No matter that answer, the Light is shining all the same; even now, full strength. The only thing left is to decide what to do about it. Truth asks “Now what?” Meditate.

Consider too, the lamp of Bible times. In order for there to be light, the lamp needed oil. The Lord has contrived to have His Work performed by Believers. Our body and souls are the oil, which if pure and unadulterated, sends out the unrestricted Light of the resurrected Christ. But if our oil is contaminated by the world our flame of witness and testimony burns low and indifferent; tainted with sulfur. Take time now to assay the quality of your “oil.”

Would you stop now to meditate on these or other challenges you see posed by this “I AM”?

## Week Three/Day Five – I AM the Light of the World You and one other.

Non-Believers have a wide assortment of compasses they use to mark their direction and progress in the world. Their viewpoints shift regularly based on circumstance. The Christian model is so very different from that. We begin with Truth as our bedrock; the One in Whom there is no shifting shadow. That is why what you have sounds so refreshing to one who has no footing, no guidelines, and no boundaries.

Here's where we come in: you and "one other." We need to bring the Light of the World to the front of the line, where it will do the most good. Larry Osborne said, "If we hold back in reaching out to the lost we will soon lose our compassion for them; that we should live at the front of the line or get out".

The Light shows the way. It is the source of all direction. Non-Believers will marvel at the relevancy of the Word of God once they hear how Believers use it to shine a light to their path – paths that have been just as tangled and messed-up as theirs. Consider the ways God has helped you; the right turnings He has provided after you sought His face. The Word is filled with examples of people turning such experiences into sources of testimony; giving lost people something to think about. Go ahead and share them.

Lessons from the "school of hard knocks" serve to illustrate the practical use of the Bible in setting prisoners free. People get comfort by the assurance of the Presence of God in personal relationship. But they have to hear. We need to claim our voice. Let's not become what Ed Stetzer describes as "a consumer of religious goods and services". Let's take our faith to the streets; let's make connection with the lost.

# SERMON NOTES

# GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

## **Week Four:**

## **I AM the Door**

Selected Text:

John 10:1-18

Key Verse:

So Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

John 10:7-9



This Week’s “I AM”:

I AM the Door

This week’s “I AM” is packed with power and promise! Be reverent in your approach to the Throne of God. Act with intention and honor. Make this a point of private prayer. Begin to pray – right now. Ask the Holy Spirit for life-abundant insights into this “I AM.” Now kindly read the selected text – preferably aloud. Go slowly. Walk through the Word with lead shoes on.

## Week Four/Day One – I AM the Door

What Bible knowledge can help with this “I AM”?

The door or gate to the city was a significant place in Bible times. It was the where elders would meet, where civic contracts were struck. You’ll remember the story of Ruth when Boaz determined to “redeem” her, he sat at the gate to await her “close relative” who by rights had the obligation to take Ruth into his family and perpetuate the name of Ruth’s deceased husband. Boaz waited for the man to pass through the gate and then took ten men of the elders of the city and sat them down as a court of witness. (Ruth 4)

Christ redeemed us when we already stood compromised in sin before the Great Judge. Jesus bought our redemption with His own Life. Paul writes: “Having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” (Colossians 2:14)

The door or gate was also a heralding place, the perfect location to spread news to the great concentration of people flowing in and out. The Lord often sent His prophets to the gate. The Lord commanded Jeremiah: “Stand in the gate and proclaim there this Word. . .” (Jeremiah 7) What Jeremiah spoke was not all fuzzy and warm. He rebuked the people in their sins. But very importantly too, he spoke of the Lord’s lavish redemptive love. Simply repent. God offers an eternal dwelling away from the lake of fire in exchange for repentance.

The Lord Jesus, as the door, calls each passerby to repentance. All must walk through this gate, each will face the question, each must respond. And one day all men will declare Him as Lord. (Philippians 2:10)

## Week Four/Day Two – I AM the Door

What attributes of Christ are revealed in this “I AM”?

Take time to study the passage looking for attributes of Jesus’ character that show themselves to you. Here are two to get you started.

### Jesus as Gathering Place

They began to bring all who were ill and those who were demon possessed. And the whole city had gathered at the door. (Mark 1:33-34). So the question to be answered is where do people in the Flathead gather for hope? Many people are not likely to drive up to a church building with parking lot and stylized cross. Let’s purpose to “make ourselves a gathering place” like Jesus did. What might happen if all of us could found one person and share the Way and the Truth and the Life?

### Jesus as Encourager

Paul was himself a gathering place throughout Scripture. He gathered the church together and “they began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles” (Acts 14:27) Note how Paul behaves, his example is how we should live “strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith.” (Acts 14:22) Let us focus on our role as encourager to someone else. Sometimes even an old grouch can live Christian virtue by sitting quietly with the weak. By that measure, all of us should be an encourager.

What other attributes occur to you?

## Week Four/Day Three – I AM the Door

What avenues of worship open up with this “I AM”?

Consider the Title of the “the Door”

- Pause to still your soul, mind, will and emotions. (Hebrews 4:12)
- Confess your sins. (1 John 1:9)
- Call out the Name “Door of the Sheep”, to the One to whom every knee will bow and tongue confess. (Philippians 2:11)
- Adore Him for His life giving attributes; be focused and in silence. (Psalm 130:6)
- Sing softly from your heart words which celebrate His Name. (Ephesians 5:19)

Consider this avenue of worship:

Stop to hold up His holy Name: the Door. Jesus as Door is the way of your escape from trial. He is the direction you take when confused. He is your security. Close your eyes and praise His Name for His glorious provision of direction and protection.

What new (or refreshed) avenues of worship occur to you?

## Week Four/Day Four – I AM the Door

How can this “I AM” challenge my walk with Jesus?

The thing about being in a tight spot is that we tend to feel trapped and cornered; we focus on the walls all around. We grow tense and begin to look for a way out. Why is it that when Jesus says He is the door that we often crawl out the window? We want the quickest way out; we want things "back to normal". Such a motive ignores two great truths (1) by taking matters into our own hands we forgo the “new strength” gained by those who wait on the Lord and (2) when we act to “get out” of the situation; we never come to grips with the Truth that all life is constant change; that every day is a "new normal." We struggle against change and chaff in the traces. And instead of gaining spiritual traction by seeking the door (the way out), we take matters into our own hands. No wonder we take pathetic paths instead of walking upon our high places.

Stop to consider:

Have you been tense about certain situations in your life lately? Are you impatient with the speed at which the Lord works after hearing your prayers? How do you deal with that? And if you never wondered about how God expects you to pray, that might be a wonderful beginning place.

Would you stop now to mull over these or other challenges you see posed by this “I AM”?

## Week Four/Day Five – I AM the Door You and one other.

Craig Groeschel says that, “what holds us back from being where we should be from where we are is the pain of making a decision”. It’s a risk to step out and begin a conversation with a stranger. But think a minute; don’t you suppose when the Holy Spirit prompts you that He’s serious about it? That He does so because He only entrusts His most precious occupation to those in whom He can rely? That He assumes your loyalty and obedience or He wouldn’t have called upon you to engage that person?

Most of us feel embarrassed, ill-equipped or even frightened. But stop here to remember Gideon whose army God stripped down to a mere 300 to remind them and all generations Who was at work.

One reason we feel tense and fearful in engaging a lost person is because at that point God has stripped us of our false-securities and left us with only Him, the unseen God to rely on. When we live more openly for Him, we grow more trusting in His security. Trials send us to the Lamb. This is the stuff of faith, the fruit all Believers should bear.

# SERMON NOTES

# GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

## **Week Five:**

## **I AM the Son of God**

Selected Text:

Luke 22:70

Key Verse:

And they all said, "Are You the Son of God, then?" And He said to them, "Yes, I am."

Luke 22:70



This Week's "I AM":

I AM the Son of God

The Trinity is a difficult conception for Believers and non-Believers alike. This calls for a special season of prayer. Take a peek at a clock. Pray for 5 minutes. Get your heart ready.

## Week Five/Day One – I AM the Son of God

What Bible knowledge can help with this “I AM”?

This week’s “I AM” is a statement of relationship with God the Father. Some off-shoot religions maintain Christ as Son, which means Jesus is less than God, and so reduces His eminence. Still others assert that the Holy Spirit makes three separate Deities we serve. Clearly Believers should be deft in finding Bible references about the Trinity.

A thorough review of John 7 is most helpful in understanding the roles and activities of “the Godhead Three in One.” Focus on John 7:16-17. In these verses we find what Spurgeon calls a united agency. This is Jesus talking to the Father, the Father giving the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit companioning Believers. All three occupied in united purpose to save mankind from the curse. All are One and all are in agreement.

In John 16: 7-16, Jesus elaborates on the function (or office) of the Holy Spirit; why He was sent to Believers. He further states (v15) that “all things that the Father has are Mine.” Jesus says He is the full equivalent to the Most High God of Israel. (Look up John 10:30 and John 17:22)

## Week Five/Day Two – I AM the Son of God

What attributes of Christ are revealed in this “I AM”?

Take up your Bible to consider 1 John 3:8. For what purpose does John state that the Son of God “appeared”? Consider the impact of that statement.

One attribute to consider is Jesus as Destroyer:

The Heavenly Destroyer came and completely demolished every act, every contrivance, every design and every work of the devil. How many of the works will remain after the Son of God has finished? The answer is none. Pause to consider what this means to you as Believer.

One attribute to consider is Jesus as Emissary:

John 7:29 gives three statements about the Father’s relationship to the Son. Let’s stop at the last one. The Father sent His trusted Son to seek and to save the lost. He sent Him into a world plagued by selfishness and hard-heartedness. He sent Him as His representative to reveal the Father to us. Stop now to do some spiritual work on this, be in awe of His humility and His service.

What attributes occur to you?

## Week Five/Day Three – I AM the Son of God

What avenues of worship open up with this “I AM”?

Consider the Title of the “the Son of God”

- Pause to still your soul, mind, will and emotions. (Hebrews 4:12)
- Confess your sins. (1 John 1:9)
- Call out the Name “Son of God”, to the One to whom every knee will bow and tongue confess. (Philippians 2:11)
- Adore Him for His life giving attributes; be focused and in silence. (Psalm 130:6)
- Sing softly from your heart words which celebrate His Name. (Ephesians 5:19)

Consider this avenue of worship:

One aspect to mill over is that “son” is a term humans have experience with. He didn’t come to us in difficulty of language or custom. He came to us where we were, as we were and to make His message more plain He used words like “son” which is something most of us know about. Think about how plainly the Father instructs us. Stop to consider this. Let your heart soar with admiration for Jesus.

Consider the role of “son” in terms of submission to authority. Don’t you ever wonder how He could have left paradise to come die on a cross? He was obedient. He did everything He was told by the Father. “I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. (John 5:30). Stop to praise and thank His holy Name for His humility, for His obedience, for His example to you.

What new (or refreshed) avenues of worship occur to you?

## Week Five/Day Four – I AM the Son of God

How can this “I AM” challenge my walk with Jesus?

Be still a moment and invite the Holy Spirit to help you to explore this “I AM.” Reflect upon the dependencies of youth, the stages of growth from childhood through adolescence and finally the coming of age into maturity. Assess your personal faith journey. Be honest with yourself; where are you on the pathway to spiritual boldness and availability in Christ?

Let’s self-assess using a passage from Hebrews:

“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.” Hebrews 5:12-14.

Take the necessary time to work through the passage again, one phrase at a time; thinking about what each statement means. For example, “you ought to be teachers” means that no one is supposed to sit on the sidelines as student. Every Believer must assist and train others in the Way. Can you name someone with whom you have teaching relationship?

In that manner then, prayerfully meditate on each phrase in the passages.

Would you stop now to meditate on these or other challenges you see posed by this “I AM”?

## Week Five/Day Five – I AM the Son of God You and one other.

It is the Divine progression of the Christian walk to move from training in discipleship to reaching out to the lost. We've grown indifferent to the needs of others because we take the Christian walk for "sit and listen" rather than "go and do." We are not intentional in taking what we've learned to the street. We sentence ourselves to spiritual adolescence. Neil Cole says, "we don't see spiritual multiplication in our communities because God does not want any more of what we're making".

Real church is just you and one other. Real disciples get "sent out" by their Master. Real Christianity is visiting shut-ins. Real faithfulness is caring for orphans and widows. Real motivation is a dread awareness of the fate of the lost.

This week's "I AM" speaks of relationship, of belonging. This theme is easily brought up to non-Believers by simple questions. Demonstrate your authentic interest by asking about who supports them; who is there when the "chips are down." Segue into your personal experiences of how sources of support let you down; witness to the faithfulness of the Savior in giving you deliverance. Be real.

Another topic to take head-on with an unbeliever is the idea of the Son of God and ultimate authority. Many people see Christianity as a bunch of rules to keep from having a good time. This is an opening is for you to share how Believers come to willingly lay aside things preventing a closer relationship with Jesus. And yes, it is a struggle. Christians, of all people, struggle. But in the Lordship of Christ there is hope, meaning, and purpose; none of which your lost friend has without Jesus.

Be human with your "one other."

# SERMON NOTES

# GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

## **Week Six:**

## **I AM Teacher and Lord**

Selected Text:

John 13:12-14

Key Verse:

You call Me Teacher and Lord and you are right, for so I am.

John 13:13



This Week's "I AM":

I AM Teacher and Lord

Remember in school, the mayhem among the kids in the final moments before the class started (before the bell)? As you approach this week's "I AM" hear the "bell" go off. It is time to sit still in your seats, to stop talking, and to await the Teacher. Be still. Work at it. The Holy Spirit is always present, but He needs your complete attention, your willing cooperation. Dwell a moment on this "I AM." Then read the selected text, again, preferably aloud.

## Week Six/Day One – I AM Teacher and Lord

### What Bible knowledge can help with this “I AM”?

Read Luke 2:41-47. Rabbinical protocol stipulated that during religious training the teachers would sit while the students stood. Note the position of the twelve year old Jesus in v46. Not standing among the students, but sitting among the teachers. And not just with the local Rabbi in the small town synagogue, but sitting in the Temple of the Living God among the brightest and best. Linger on v47 to make note of the affect He had on them (Do you have your Bible open to the passage?).

The process of learning and discipleship is well described in the Scripture. Consider the testimony of Paul in Acts 22:3.

“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today.”

Glance through the verse again to get a sense of the discipline. Note the submission, the strict adherence, the honoring of parents, the zeal. This is in contrast to today’s schoolroom environment.

In our society less is expected of the student. Principles of education have assumed the form of entertainment. In the church setting for example, “success” now may come to mean a tight sound system, gifted musical talent, entertaining video clips, and the electrifying charisma of the Preacher. We come to sit and absorb; unless we don’t like what we hear, then we simply leave.

Our Teacher and Lord does not picture His students as slothful sponges, soaked and satiated. We are created as vessels; containers to transfer learned Truth. Let’s work at it!

## Week Six/Day Two – I AM Teacher and Lord

What attributes of Christ are revealed in this “I AM”?

Take time to study the passage looking for attributes of Jesus’ character that show themselves to you. Here is (an obvious) one to think about.

### Jesus as Instructor:

Have you ever had a teacher who really influenced your life? Someone who helped you to learn (or better understand) a process, trade, or way to think about things? What feelings come to mind with that memory? Likely you’ll remember personal caring and investment of time.

Take a moment to think of the Savior of the World as Teacher. He will train you up, perfect and improve you, He will encourage and support every effort at righteous living. That’s His job description; He’s your Teacher.

### Jesus as Sovereign:

Jesus laces this next attribute directly to His role as Teacher. Christ is Sovereign of all Truth. His teaching does not have a shelf-life because what He speaks is absolute. He makes it clear how the Christian walk is supposed look – how we are supposed to behave toward Him, self and others. What’s more, He has absolute authority to empower Believers to live in obedience.

And though we can choose to ignore Him, what He teaches is not optional. So as we train in righteousness, let’s work to perfect our obedience to the Sovereign.

## Week Six/Day Three – I AM Teacher and Lord

What avenues of worship open up with this “I AM”?

Consider the Title of the “Teacher and Lord”

- Pause to still your soul, mind, will and emotions. (Hebrews 4:12)
- Confess your sins. (1 John 1:9)
- Call out the Name “Teacher, Lord” to the One to whom every knee will bow and tongue confess. (Philippians 2:11)
- Adore Him for His life giving instruction; be focused and wait in silence. (Psalm 130:6)
- Sing softly from your heart words which celebrate His Name. (Ephesians 5:19)

Consider this avenue of worship:

Notice from this week’s text that Jesus calls Himself Teacher and Lord after He had just washed the disciple’s feet. Pause to honor Him for that! Consider the implications of His actions. Let that be a source of praise for you

Praise Him for His instruction to you, that you are student of the One to Whom there are no mysteries or unanswerable questions. Raise your heart to Jesus; ask Him to train you up in those areas where your “grades” are not stellar. Pause to listen and learn.

What new (or refreshed) avenues of worship occur to you?

## Week Six/Day Four – I AM Teacher and Lord

How can this “I AM” challenge my walk with Jesus?

How well do you take advice? Are you patient when someone has something to say to you – even when you might not want to hear it? When Jesus instructs however, the situation is different. People can offer bad advice; bad suggestions. But not so with Christ; we are being schooled by the Teacher. All His words are Truth. The challenge for Believers is universal, but academic. Once He has spoken to you, once you know the Truth about Godly living – it becomes simply a matter of obedience.

Has the Teacher been instructing you, the student, about your personal commitment to daily devotions, to working harder at broken relationships, to addressing presumptuous sin habits, to stepping up your commitment to Christian service in your Church or Community, to becoming a better Christ like example in your home or to giving the Lord full reign over your time and personal resources? Now then, the time for prayer and commitment has come. The Holy Spirit has already made some things evident to you. Act!

Secondly, consider the next part of this weeks’ “I AM”: the Title of Lord. The Bible word is Adonai – Master. Now life in the Flathead valley does not offer extensive personal experience and insights into the master and slave relationship. However, in its basic sense; the master speaks and the servant obeys. Sometimes we view instruction from a Teacher as worth considering but optional. This is not the case with a Master. You cannot call Him Lord and continue to forsake His call for sanctification. You have been called apart. You are not of this world; you belong to the Master. The question becomes: does your life reflect your relationship with Jesus?

## Week Six/Day Five – I AM Teacher and Lord You and one other

Wayne Corderio says, “It takes a mind to reach a mind, and a heart to reach a heart”. What is our true view of the lost? Are we thinking about risk or are we pained in our hearts? Stop to consider your non-Believing neighbors. They’re not the enemy. They are simply you and I before we met Jesus; content to make spiritual conclusions of their own senses and experiences. It’s not their fault, they were born that way – we all were.

The one thing our Valley most needs is the framework for living offered by the Truth. Look carefully. There are no shared absolutes; no moral compass that faithfully and unerringly point the way: all is relative. What is okay for me may not be okay for you. Who cares?

This "I AM" of Teacher and Lord offers a startling difference to the lost. Jesus is the unwavering foundation for understanding the world around. With Jesus the non-Believer can (for the first time) know why they exist. They can (also for the first time) be fully known; that there is Someone who completely “gets” them. This is revolutionary stuff. Your nonbeliever friend is thirsting for it. This is a great area to explore with them.

# SERMON NOTES

# GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

## **Week Seven:**

## **I AM the Vine**

Selected Text:

John 15:1-11

Key Verse:

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

John 15:5



This Week's "I AM":

I AM the Vine

This week's "I AM" deserves an extended time in prayer. The church in Acts chapter 2 was "devoted" to prayer. Let that be the term which describes your preparation this week. The Holy Spirit of God offers life changing insights, but just to those found ready. Read the selected passage aloud. It is lengthy so read with lead shoes.

## Week Seven/Day One – I AM the Vine

What Bible knowledge can help with this “I AM”?

Read Romans 11:17-24. This passage speaks of how the Almighty took His cultivated olive tree (Israel) broke off some of its branches and grafted in a wild olive (the Church). As you read, note what happened to the branches of the cultivated tree. Does that lead you to evaluate your walk with Christ? Note too that the grafting in of Believers did not replace the natural branches; we were “grafted in among them.” Does that affect your spiritual and political ideas about the nation of Israel? Should it? What is it that both the natural and grafted branches “partake” in? Ask God for personal applications.

Work through your various thoughts about Christ as the “rich root.” Ask yourself what the root provides the tree. Stop to speak to the Lord (yes, even now) about what His being root means to you. Note the root, like our Lord Christ, is also unseen. Yet the evidence of His Presence is clear enough. Work through that thought. How manifest is Jesus in the branch named “you”?

## Week Seven/Day Two – I AM the Vine

What attributes of Christ are revealed in this “I AM”?

Take time to study the passage looking for attributes of Jesus’ character that show themselves to you.

Jesus takes Responsibility:

What is the task of the root of the vine? It exists to supply nutrients and essentials to the branches. Do you find yourself worrying over how you will be "sustained" through circumstances? Are you anxious about outcomes in certain challenges in your life? Remember Whose you are! You are supported by the glorious “Root.” You can access and draw deeply from His wealth of supply. He will stream life-giving essentials to you. He knows what you need to get through, so let’s get over ourselves and get to believing He seeks our obedience. The Root takes responsibility to supply and support; ours is to bear fruit consistent with our repentance.

What attributes occur to you?

## Week Seven/Day Three – I AM the Vine

What avenues of worship open up with this “I AM”?

Consider the Title of the “the Vine”

- Pause to still your soul, mind, will and emotions. (Hebrews 4:12)
- Confess your sins. (1 John 1:9)
- Call out the Name “Vine”, to the One to whom every knee will bow and tongue confess. (Philippians 2:11)
- Adore Him for His life giving attributes; be focused and in silence. (Psalm 130:6)
- Sing softly from your heart words which celebrate His Name. (Ephesians 5:19)

Consider this avenue of worship:

Rejoice in Whose you are! We not only belong as a lamp belongs on a table; but we are an essential part in the unfolding of His glory to the world! We are His workmanship; created in Christ Jesus for good works!

Praise His Holy Name that He chose you to participate in His mission and Holy essence! He considers you essential; He holds you close and offers an intimate and sustaining bond between you and He! How can this be true? Oh Glorious One. Your People seek to rest content in You, Oh Vine.

What new (or refreshed) avenues of worship occur to you?

## Week Seven/Day Four – I AM the Vine

How can this “I AM” challenge my walk with Jesus?

What part of the Vine does the Master Gardener reserve for His people? The branches! And what do you find at the end of the branches: fruit. The Holy Vine has placed the vital business of propagation of the plant – the responsibility for multiplying descendents – square into the hand of you and I. Although the Word teaches the Lord governs the work of drawing all men unto Himself. We are the ones responsible to speak the message of the gospel (the Good News) into the lives of those around us.

This challenge is a simple one to describe. Are you about the business of bearing fruit unto salvation? Do you perform service to The Lord in your church and community? Are you mindful to share your faith in Christ through your actions and deeds? Or do we resemble the state of the vine Isaiah describes in his 5<sup>th</sup> chapter? Not cool.

Would you stop now to meditate on these or other challenges you see posed by this “I AM”?

## Week Seven/Day Five – I AM the Vine

You and one other.

John Burke said, “The key to relational momentum is to go out where people live and make friends; then they will come to the cross”. Too often we expect our “leaders” to reach out to the lost, but discipleship making is for everyone. Small Groups don’t make disciples, disciples make Small Groups. It is our individual job to share with the lost.

There is a loneliness epidemic in America today. People are doing everything they can to fill their time; to make life more interesting. They can hardly stand a moment without the interaction of their smart phone. But at the end of the day when alone with themselves, most don't enjoy their own society. This is one reason why the message of Christ as Vine is so powerful.

Believers belong; they are part of something bigger than self. And unlike the fractured human relationships rampant in the world around, Believers are grounded in the Vine who made them. They are part of the vital and life giving source in Jesus, the One Who gives the fruits of purpose, meaning, significance and dignity to living.

This is water to the thirsty. It’s just you and one other.

# SERMON NOTES

# GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

# Week Eight

# Before Abraham... I AM

Selected Text:                      John 8:51-58

Key Verse:

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM.

John 8:58 (KJV)



This Week's "I AM":              Before Abraham. . . I AM

This week's devotion considers an almost overwhelming "I AM". So ready yourself; be purposeful. Give more time doing what you are doing now; spending time alone with the King of Kings. Read the text reverently, like you were reading it before the One who Spoke it (which, by the way, is exactly what you are doing).

## Week Eight/Day One – Before Abraham... I AM

What Bible knowledge can help with this “I AM”?

This week’s “I AM” is potent in every way. Pause here to come up with one or two Bible teachings to underscore this immeasurable Name. Let’s get you started with two:

One path is to appreciate the connection this Name has with the Heritage of Israel. Jesus’ reference to Abraham gave listeners a definite time to grab onto. You and I can (almost manage to) get our arms around two thousand years ago. The time span from Abraham to Jesus is right at 2000 years. Jesus stood before them, fully human, and declared He was older than two thousand years. He did this to help them cipher that He was already part of every moment of time. Christ’s connection to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob advances our own purpose and meaning in life. We can begin to live assured of Christ’s Personal Presence throughout any circumstance.

Another thing accomplished through Christ’s use of this particular “I AM” is to highlight His Identity as God. Moses is the first person recorded to have heard this Name. Pause to remember the scene. Early in his recruitment Moses wasn’t too keen on running back to Egypt. For one thing he is a fugitive from Egyptian justice. For another, who’d be quick to lead People who hate you? (It was because of Moses that the slave labor output of the entire nation was raised and mercilessly enforced.) But the Lord answered and supplied courage and strength to Moses throughout his ministry.

He can and He does. We must remember He “can”, and leave the “does” in His Hands.

Let’s turn our wills to study this Name.

## Week Eight/Day Two – Before Abraham... I AM What attributes of Christ are revealed in this “I AM”?

Take time to study the passage looking for attributes of Jesus’ character. Do a thorough job of it. Here are two to prime the pump.

### Jesus as Faithful:

We serve a promise keeping God! Jesus’ identity as the “I AM” of the Old Testament is a statement of His legal and ethical ties to the covenants made to Israel – and importantly, to the promises made to Abraham. His promises are immutable – they are absolute and forever. This means what He said to the ancient fathers of the faith, He says to us. Give praise to Him that He always does what He says. “And Abraham believed and God reckoned it to him as righteousness.” Meditate on this wonderful attribute of Jesus, the “I AM.”

### Jesus is God of the Living:

Matthew 22:32 reminds us that in God’s economy, death presents no serious boundary. Further, that through His grace as “I AM”, you and I are fully part of this great Truth. We have no boundaries with the Lord of Life; we have no obstacles which He cannot overcome, we have nothing to threaten our eternal status with Him. He is forever life-giving and we are His forever. Meditate on this absolute. Stop to consider ways to thank Him for salvation from death and decay to “abundant life.” The Divine “I AM” translates into courage and comfort to us.

What attributes occur to you?

## Week Eight/Day Three – Before Abraham... I AM

What avenues of worship open up with this “I AM”?

Consider the Title of the “I AM”

- Pause to still your soul, mind, will and emotions. (Hebrews 4:12)
- Confess your sins. (1 John 1:9)
- Call out the Name “I AM”, to the One to whom every knee will bow and tongue confess. (Philippians 2:11)
- Adore Him for His Self-Sufficiency, lift up and honor His Self-Existence.
- Sing softly from your heart words which celebrate His Name. (Ephesians 5:19)

Consider this avenue of worship:

Wayne Corderio suggests that when your personal Marathon is about to begin, don't line up with the Kenyans. Not that we shouldn't challenge our “spiritual pace”, but don't overreach and fall prey to self-loathing at real (or perceived) failure. God loves you for what you alone can do (praise Him!); not you as compared to anyone else (but Christ). Raise your voice to Him. Tell Him you are honored to offer Him a life that's a living sacrifice. Think about areas where you lack. Ask the Divine “I AM” to cleanse your soul in the Blood of the Lamb. Bring your deepest affections to bear; think of His mercies. Give Glory to “I AM”

What new (or refreshed) avenues of worship occur to you?

## Week Eight/Day Four – Before Abraham... I AM

How can this “I AM” challenge my walk with Jesus?

Consider for a moment the “bookends” of Christ’s call to His disciples. When He first met them His command was “Come.” Then after His ministry on earth, His command was “Go.” The way of the Savior is an invitation at the beginning, then a command to proceed. We have been called to the Cross, made ready in our discipleship and so now are ready to share the gospel – the good news. We have been custom made, each Believer totally unique, to touch and to minister to the needs of others. Their needs correspond to your gifts. You are blessed of God to bring the power of Christ into the lives of the lost.

How does this Name challenge you? Are you weak in routine personal prayer? Stop and speak with “I AM.” Remember He seeks for you, if your heart for Him is right. “For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose hearts are completely His”  
2 Chronicles 16:9.

We face the personal challenge of getting our hearts “right”; in making them completely His. But once we do, we are invited to ask Him to apply His “strong support” to the issues we face. He will accomplish what His Word says.

Would you stop now to meditate on these or other challenges you see posed by this “I AM”?

## Week Eight/Day Five – Before Abraham... I AM You and one other.

The Believer's eternal bond to the Nation of Israel is confirmed by this "I AM." Remember when Christ commands to His disciples to "go to lost sheep of Israel" (Matt 10 and Luke 10). He says: "Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves". Why on earth would a shepherd send his sheep among wolves? Andy Hawthorne quips, "Do you *know* what wolves do to lambs?"

Neil Cole explains that wolves are designed by God to find lost sheep better than we can; that Jesus sends us to witness for Him in the dark places of our Community because the wolves are there and they know where to find lost sheep.

How can each of us improve (or commence) searching for the lost? Our hearts must no longer be content with "doing church." We need hearts intentional with speech to strangers – not to holy roll them, not to embarrass others or our self, but to speak a word of encouragement to connect with a stranger. All He asks is that we speak a few simple words to just one stranger; just you and one other.

We rise above our self-concern in Christian witness proportional to our attentions to Jesus.

# SERMON NOTES

# GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

## **Week Nine:**

## **I AM One who Serves**

Selected Text:

Luke 22:27

Key Verse:

For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the One who serves.

Luke 22:27



This Week's "I AM":

I AM One who Serves

Prayer offers the most meaningful beginning to this week's study. Be purposeful in your time alone with the Holy One. Speak directly to the Holy Spirit; sit in His Presence. Consider the word "servant" as you wait on the Lord. Read this week's text aloud. Let this be a special week in your time with the Lord.

## Week Nine/Day One – I AM One who Serves

What Bible knowledge can help with this “I AM”?

Life in the Flathead doesn't offer many insights into the nature of the servant/master relationship experienced in Bible times. Thankfully the Word Itself has much to say which will better help us understand the full import of this amazing “I AM” statement of Jesus.

Turn in your Bible to Luke chapter 17; study verses 7-10. We learn here about the expectations of the master even after the slave has been working all day long. The master does not invite the servant to sit down to dinner; instead he says “get cleaned up, prepare food for me and serve me until I am satisfied.” The master does not thank the slave for doing what it is the slave is supposed to do. “So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have only done what we ought to have done.’” From these verses it's easy to see the obligation the servant owes the master; being obedient to every command of the master.

It is key to note Jesus shared this description of servant and master in response to the disciples asking for increased faith (read verses 5-6). In this teaching, Christ carefully ties growth in Christian faith to the sense of duty and obligation the slave owes the master. Faith grows with obedience.

Christ Himself, the “I AM” Servant, is the apex of faith; the apex of obedience. Hebrews tells us Jesus learned obedience through the things that He suffered. We too must suffer the loss of our willfulness to become more obedient to the Master – the One among us Who Serves.

Think a moment about your obedience and service to Jesus.

## Week Nine/Day Two – I AM One who Serves

What attributes of Christ are revealed in this “I AM”?

Most things take time to improve. This week’s passage holds deep insights if we would only take the time to consider it. Look for attributes of Jesus’ character that show themselves to you. Here is one you might have thought of.

Jesus is Humble:

Pause just a moment and still your heart; permit silence to hold your attention. Picture the Throne of the Almighty God and there, seated at His right hand is Jesus our Lord and Savior. He is resplendent in His glory, the angels sing His praises. He is soon our coming King who will establish universal rule over all creatures.

Now picture Him humble and on His knees before you. He makes ready to wash your feet. He has come to you from a place resplendent with power. He has come from there to serve you from His knees; you who had no power at all. It would be honoring to Him, if you would to stop and speak with Him about this.

What attributes occur to you?

## Week Nine/Day Three – I AM One who Serves

What avenues of worship open up with this “I AM”?

Consider the Title of the “One who Serves”

- Pause to still your soul, mind, will and emotions. (Hebrews 4:12)
- Confess your sins. (1 John 1:9)
- Call out the Name “Jesus, Servant”, to the One to whom every knee will bow and tongue confess. (Philippians 2:11)
- Adore Him for His emptying out of Himself for you.
- Sing softly from your heart words which celebrate His Name. (Ephesians 5:19)

Consider this avenue of worship:

Note the phrase: "I AM among you." Consider the access He offers in His servant-hood. He is not far away in some remote celestial palace, but He is here, within your reach. Call this Truth out to Him in worship, thank Him. Remember His being among us; His humanity made available! Shout joyfully that our God has so acted as to serve the needs of such as us.

What new (or refreshed) avenues of worship occur to you?

## Week Nine/Day Four – I AM One who Serves

How can this “I AM” challenge my walk with Jesus?

One obvious aspect about being a servant bears repeating. A servant was absolutely a servant. It was not a question of having "options." You do what you are told to do, when you are told to do it, and for as long as it pleases the Master.

If our Lord Christ who is the King of King calls Himself “Servant” that sets the bar pretty high for us. But two things we know:

(1) Do you have any questions about what is expected of the Believer in terms of obedience? We are to serve the Lord. Don't operate in gray areas by ignoring the Word's revelation against sinful practices.

(2) We are to serve others. With what spirit do you meet announcements asking for volunteers? Are you prompted to see how you can help or will someone else handle it? No surprise what a servant would do. There are plenty of people at EBC to meet the needs of our congregation and to make meaningful outreach to our community; but how many servants are there?

Would you stop now to meditate on these or other challenges you see posed by this “I AM”?

## Week Nine/Day Five – I AM One who Serves You and one other.

Caesar Kalinowski says, “Believers in most churches are living out the old covenant. We come to the tabernacle and leave our tithe and offering”. The church today has morphed into a “come and see” organization. But the Christian walk is not like that. The new covenant in Christ is not “come and see” but “go and make.”

Remember when John the Baptist was in jail and he sent his posse to ask if Jesus was the One or should they look for someone else? Note carefully Christ’s response: tell John what you see and hear – the signs showed who He was; they pointed to His life-giving engagement with the people.

Today, people in our community ask the same question: “Can the church help me or do I look for someone else?” We need to live deployed among the lost. They are missing out on the Savior because we fail to come among them and live out who He said we should be. Just you and one other.

The Christian faith is unique in teaching God is personal. Much of the secular world holds that God is distant, judging and condemning. They reject God or face the absolutes of Truth. But at this point Believers can help. We know what can happen after Truth is faced. The Walk is not a burden, but a joy. You don’t do the same things as before not because you’re forced to stop (not because sin lacks its attractions) but because you want to do the things pleasing to Him. The regeneration brings with it new capacities and new motivations. This is the Good News!

# SERMON NOTES

# GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

# **Week Ten: I AM the Alpha and the Omega**

Selected Text: Revelation 21:1-8

Key Verse:

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

Revelation 21:6



This Week's "I AM": I AM the Alpha and the Omega

This "I AM" is perhaps one of the most sweeping statements our Lord ever made about Himself and it comes at the climax of the age. This "I AM" is pronounced as earth and heaven are totally destroyed and made new. Let's pay particular attention to our preparation time before we begin our devotions. The Holy Spirit can bring new meanings to light if we still ourselves and ask Him to illuminate the significance of this "I AM" to us. Read the selected text with reverence – remember Who is speaking.

## Week Ten/Day One – I AM the Alpha and Omega

What Bible knowledge can help with this “I AM”?

It profits to meditate on the infinite Jesus: on His being from eternity past and existing in eternity future. He is without endpoints. But shift from that sense to consider Him in terms of specific points; in terms of beginnings and endings; in terms of first and last. From the first words of Genesis “In the beginning” to the last words of Revelation “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all, Amen” – the entire Bible from beginning to end points to the Son of God, Jesus.

Consider the Bible teaching about the starting points, the beginnings. Jesus was there with the Father when this whole thing we call “existence” began (John 1:2). He was the agent through Whom the world was “framed” and the “ages” incepted (Hebrews 1:2). He is firstborn of all creation, the basis for all things created, and the glue which holds all creation together (Colossians 2:15-17). He is the fullness, the sum total of all things created in heaven and in earth (Ephesians 1:10). He is the source and beneficiary for everything: the “from”, “through” and “to” of all that is (Romans 11:36). He is the avenue for and the sustainer of all things (1 Corinthians 8:6). Nothing which exists is excluded from His bringing it into existence (John 1:3).

Now you search for Bible teachings about how Jesus is also the Omega, the “end.” Search for verses that express (1) His role at the end of what we call time and (2) His being “the end” in terms of His totality; of nothing missing, of His being complete.

## Week Ten/Day Two - I AM the Alpha and Omega

What attributes of Christ are revealed in this “I AM”?

Take time to study the passage. Are you prompted to notice insights into the character of Jesus by this “I AM?” Here is one for you to consider:

Jesus is totality:

When coming upon the word “all” in the Bible, a Preacher friend would always ask: “Now what’s missing from the word ‘all’?”

There is nothing missing from the phrase “the beginning and the end.” Christ is all things and everything in between. Which of your struggles are outside of “everything?” Which difficult circumstance lies beyond His total understanding and active participation? Stop to think on this some.

Don’t let a word like “all” be too simple to apply. Jesus said we access the Kingdom like a child. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Take deep comfort in knowing that Jesus is first and last, all encompassing; there is nothing you can dream up (or get into) that is beyond His ability to minister to.

What attributes occur to you?

## Week Ten/Day Three – I AM the Alpha and Omega

What avenues of worship open up with this “I AM”?

Consider the Title of the “Alpha and Omega”

- Pause to still your soul, mind, will and emotions. (Hebrews 4:12)
- Confess your sins. (1 John 1:9)
- Call out the Name “Alpha and Omega”, to the One to whom every knee will bow and tongue confess. (Philippians 2:11)
- Adore Him for His life giving attributes; be focused and in silence. (Psalm 130:6)
- Sing softly from your heart words which celebrate His Name. (Ephesians 5:19)

Consider this avenue of worship:

Consider your "alpha" state. The way you were before you turned to Christ. Got that picture in mind? Now stop and envision your "omega" state. The way you will be when you stand before your Savior in a robe of white while holding a stone upon which is written your new name (a name known only to you and to The Lord).

Meditate on the difference. Raise up holy hands in praise of His mercies toward you. Consider how far you've come, and only at His bidding and through His grace.

What new (or refreshed) avenues of worship occur to you?

## Week Ten/Day Four – I AM the Alpha and Omega

How can this “I AM” challenge my walk with Jesus?

Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the "all in all", "the beginning and the end." That being said, stop to consider some things that He is not.

Jesus is not selfish, nor does He do evil. Pause to take a critical look at yourself. Are you holding onto a lifestyle which embraces the world's values? Do you accept living outside of the Alpha-Omega continuum? Are you far from godliness, faith and trust in our Lord? This is the time to pause and reflect. Self evaluate. Act upon what the Spirit instructs.

Jesus is not a liar. He did not speak a single untruth. What happens when you match yourself to that standard? Do you find yourself speaking promises like “I’ll pray for you”, but fail in the action (or worse, offer only spindly rote – unworthy to be called prayer)? Ask the Father to help you be a person of your word.

Jesus did not live outside the will of the Father. His was a life of obedience. Have you found yourself being prompted about certain features of your life which you have not acted on? When you stop to consider, would you say your walk was more a battle of wills than a subjection to His will? Keith Green wrote “to obey is better than sacrifice, He wants more than Sundays and Wednesday nights.”

Would you stop now to meditate on these or other challenges you see posed by this “I AM”?

## Week Ten/Day Five I AM the Alpha and Omega You and one other.

Andy Hawthorne suggests we need to stop and determine who are the equivalent of the demonized and lepers in our community. Who are the outcasts living out of the main stream? Or, in light of increasing national moral neglect, who are the new mainstream?

The key questions then are: (1) Where do you find them, and (2) How often are you personally in their spaces? Do you go out where they live and recreate? How much contact do you have with the lost – the ones Christ died to save; the ones He commands us to “go out” to?

This "I AM" is potent to share with the lost because they live without boundaries. There are no limitations, no fences to protect, restrain, and secure human living. When you share the comprehensive and all inclusive I AM, you bring structure and order to an otherwise chaotic existence.

It's just you and one other.

# SERMON NOTES

# GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

## Related Readings

Ed Stetzer (cited on page 25)  
Breaking the Missional Code  
Find him at: [edstetzer.com](http://edstetzer.com)

Craig Groeschel (cited on page 33)  
Altar Ego  
Find him at: [LifeChurch.tv](http://LifeChurch.tv)

Larry Osborne (cited on page 25)  
Accidental Pharisees  
Find him at: [larryosbornelive.com](http://larryosbornelive.com)

Neil Cole (cited on pages 41, 65)  
Organic Church  
Find him at: [cmaresources.org](http://cmaresources.org)

Wayne Corderio (cited on pages 49, 63)  
Sifted  
Find him at: [enewhope.org](http://enewhope.org)

John Burke (cited on page 57)  
No Perfect People Allowed  
Find him at: [johnburkeonline.com](http://johnburkeonline.com)

Caesar Kalinowski (cited on page 73)  
Find him at: [caesarkalinowski.com](http://caesarkalinowski.com)

Andy Hawthorne (cited on pages 65, 81)  
Find him at: [message.org.uk](http://message.org.uk)