

The “I Am’s” of Jesus

(Part 2)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Who knows what a word picture is? (A word picture is a way of using words to describe an idea so that you can imagine it in your mind.) Can you think of an example of using a word picture to get an idea across? If I told you, “*I feel like a million dollars*”, you’d know I felt really great about myself; very valuable to you. If I told you I bought a car that’s *a real lemon*, what do you think I’d be telling you? (I got a sour deal, the car is no good, things are wrong with it.)

Word pictures use common, everyday things to describe feelings and other concepts that you can’t see with your physical eyes — things that you must use your imagination to understand.

This morning we’re going to look at some more word pictures that the Lord Jesus used to describe Himself.

Opening Prayer

Father, again today we want to know Jesus on a deeper and more meaningful level. Will you open the eyes of our understanding so that we might see Him for who He really is? In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)

Was Jesus saying He’s a plant? No! He was using a word picture to give you an idea of what He is like. We’ll be talking more about that in just a minute.

Lesson

Last week we looked at three-word pictures that the Lord Jesus used to describe Himself. Can anyone remember what they were? (Alpha and Omega, Bread of Life, Light of the World.)

When Jesus described Himself to people and said, “I Am”, what did people think He was telling them? (That He is equal with God.) Why? (Because God told Moses that His name is I Am.)

This morning we’re going to look at four more “I Am’s” of Jesus....

4. *The Good Shepherd*

When Jesus lived on earth, many of His countrymen kept sheep. Those who looked after the sheep were called shepherds. Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd, and He speaks of us who have received Him as His sheep.

John 10:11-15

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. (12) A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don’t belong to him and he isn’t their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. (13) The hired hand runs away because he’s working only for the money and doesn’t really care about the sheep. (14) “I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, (15) just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep.

Some shepherds took very good care of their sheep. Their animals ate well; they grazed and slept in safety. The Lord loves His “sheep.” As our Good Shepherd, Jesus makes a promise that He will provide us with everything we need (Psalm 23). As a shepherd protects his sheep from lions and bears, Jesus protects us from our enemy, the Devil, who is seeking to devour us (1 Peter 5:8).

Other shepherds were careless. Some shepherds were hirelings who did not own the sheep they cared for. When danger came, those shepherds would run away and leave the sheep unprotected.

A good shepherd, on the other hand, was willing to do anything to save his sheep — even if he had to give up his own life. Since Jesus,

your Good Shepherd, gave His life on the cross to pay for your sin, you can surely trust Him to stay with you throughout your life, supplying all your needs (Hebrews 13:5, 6)

5. *The Door*

Jesus compared Himself to the door or gateway into a sheep pen.

John 10:6-10

Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn’t understand what he meant, (7) so he explained it to them: “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. (8) All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. (9) Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. (10) The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

At night the sheep were kept in a pen that had only one opening. There was no gate (or door) across that entrance. The shepherd himself would lie in the opening — he became the door. Then no one could go in or out of the pen unless they went by him. The sheep were safe as long as the shepherd was at the gate. Jesus is the only One who can grant us entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Once you are in His kingdom, you can rest safely, knowing that Jesus is your protector. He has also promised to be your Provider.

6. *The Way, the Truth, and the Life*

Jesus is the only way to God.

John 14:6

Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

When you go on a trip, you have to choose the right roadway to travel so that you can reach the place you want to go. Jesus calls Himself the *Way* because only by accepting Him as Savior can we reach heaven.

The Lord calls Himself the *Truth* because He was the only human being who completely understood, spoke, and lived truth. During His life on earth, He lived out the teachings of God’s Word perfectly.

Jesus calls Himself the *Life* because He brings life to our spirits, which start out as dead in sin. Jesus told Nicodemus, “*you must be born again.*” Spiritual life enables us to live each day pleasing to God. And because we have this new life, we will join the Lord in heaven forever.

7. *The Vine*

Jesus tells us that He is the Vine, and we are the branches.

John 15:5

“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.

The vine is the main stem of a grape plant. It alone gives life and nourishment to the branches. Unless a branch is growing on the vine, it cannot live or produce fruit. Apart from Jesus, we do not have eternal life. Nor can we accomplish anything for Him. Without Jesus, we can do nothing.

One day one of Jesus’ disciples asked Him to show them the Father.

John 14:8-11

Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” (9) Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? (10) Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. (11) Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

When Jesus described Himself with the words “I Am”, He was telling people that He is equal with God.

John 10:30-31

The Father and I are one." (31) Once again the people picked up stones to kill him.

There was no doubt in the people's minds that He was telling them that He is none other than God Himself. Some people reacted in a negative way and tried to kill Him when He'd tell them who He was.

What do you think? Was Jesus the "I Am"?

Closing Prayer

Jesus, thank You for using so many great word pictures to describe Yourself to us. We can understand what it means when you say You are the door. We know You're not saying that you are a piece of wood that swings on a hinge, but that You are truly the only One who can grant us entrance into the kingdom of heaven. When You use word pictures to describe Yourself to us, it gives us a deeper understand of who You are. We always want to abide in You like a branch attached to a vine. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Have children draw pictures of the four ways Jesus described Himself in today's lesson: Shepherd, door, way (road or path), and vine. As they work on their pictures have them explain how Jesus is like these things.

Game Center

Have the children work on the "I Am's" of Jesus worksheet or send it home as a "Take Home" paper.

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. When Jesus said, "*I am the Alpha and the Omega*" what does that tell you about God? (He's the beginning and the end; He has always existed.)
2. When Jesus said, "*I am the bread of life*" what does that tell you about God? (Only God can satisfy the hunger of your soul.)
3. When Jesus said, "*I am the light of the world*" what does that tell you about God? (He shows us the darkness of our sin and shows us the right way to live.)
4. When Jesus said, "*I am the good shepherd*" what does that tell you about God? (He protects us from our enemy — the Devil, watches over us, and provides for our spiritual needs.)
5. How did Jesus prove that He was a good shepherd? (He gave His life on the cross to pay for our sin.)
6. Why did Jesus compare Himself to the door or gateway to a sheep pen? (He is the only One who can grant us entrance into the kingdom of heaven.)
7. Explain what Jesus meant when He said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life?*" (He is the only way into God's kingdom.)
8. What did Jesus mean when He said, "*I am the vine, you are the branches?*" (Apart from Jesus, we do not have eternal life; we'd be dead in our sins.)
9. Why do you know that Jesus is God? (He told us that He and the Father are one. And, because He rose from the dead, we can believe what He tells us.)
10. What are some word pictures Jesus used to describe Himself? (Bread, light, good shepherd, door, the way, vine)

11. If Jesus and the Father are one God, what are some qualities about God that you have learned as you have gotten to know Jesus better? (God will always be there for me. He will always provide for me and protect me from evil...)

The "I Am's" of Jesus

What "I Am" did Jesus use? Fill in the name and draw a picture.

1. Jesus protects us from our enemy — the Devil, watches over us and provides for our needs.

I Am _____ (John 10:11-15)

2. Jesus is the only One who can grant us entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

I Am _____ (John 10:7-10)

3. Jesus is the only way into God's kingdom.

I Am _____ (John 14:6)

4. Apart from Jesus, we do not have eternal life.

I Am _____ (John 15:5)

