

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

BANCROFT MISSION

THE "I AM'S" FOUND IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

These lessons are taken in part from Dr. Lynn Hile's book entitled "*The Great I Am.*"

Dr. Hiles has given verbal permission to use his book for Sunday School lessons. Where "*The Great I am*" is used, it will be noted. Otherwise, the contents of these lessons will be our own studies.

Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

Introduction, in part, from Dr. Lynn Hiles.

"Anyone who is a serious student of the Word will soon find that throughout the scripture God speaks to us through types, shadows, and symbols. It is the language of the Spirit to communicate spiritual things to our natural minds. The Old Testament is Jesus concealed and the New Testament is Jesus revealed. Hebrews 10:7 says, "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.'" The pictures, types and shadows are the language that God uses to speak to us. For instance, we know that the Passover Lamb in the book of Exodus was a type and shadow of Christ, who our Passover Lamb. Once we learn this language of the Spirit, it will become a key to open the Scriptures. They are powerful keys to understand and communicate God's purpose and His Kingdom.

John writes the purpose for his gospel in John 20:30&31, "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

In these lessons we will explore the nine times in the gospel of John that Jesus says "I Am." Seven of the nine times are in contrast to something from the old covenant. For instance, they thought the bread that fell in the wilderness was the true bread, but Jesus says to them, "Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness and are dead, but 'I Am' the true bread." They thought Moses and the law were the door into the sheepfold, but Jesus said to them, "'I Am' the door." They thought the corrupt shepherd of Israel were the true shepherds, but Jesus said, "'I Am' the Shepherd of the sheep." They thought that Israel was the true vine, but Jesus said to them, "'I Am' the vine, you are the branches." They thought their natural genealogy was the way to the Father, but Jesus said, "'I Am the way, the truth, and the life."

According to the book of Corinthians, the old was the administration of death (2nd Corinthians 3:7-11, "But if the ministry of death, written *and* engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was passing away, 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? 9 For if the ministry of condemnation *had* glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. 10 For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. 11 For if what is passing away *was* glorious, what remains *is* much more glorious."). That covenant did not produce life. It was a covenant of death. I believe what has robbed many Christians of enjoying the abundant life, the life provided by the Father through His Son, Jesus, has been a performance-based Christianity based on external laws and rules; trying to live out of the wrong covenant, or it is the mixture of law and grace. Paul calls the mixture of law and grace a perversion of the gospel (Galatians 1:6-9, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than

what you have received, let him be accursed.”). Jesus came to redeem us not just from sin, but from the curse of the law. Religion is a thief that will rob us of life. Jesus did not come to offer us religion. He came to offer a relationship; a personal and intimate relationship with Him. The gospel is not about a law to keep but about receiving a life that will keep us.

“I Am”

Some noteworthy facts of “I Am.”

“I Am” is always in the present tense. This is significant for believers. Jesus promised that He would always be with us, Matthew 28:20 KJV, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Hebrews 13:5, “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Psalm 46:1, “To the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of the sons of Korah. A Song for Alamoth. God *is* our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.”

These are just examples of the many times that Jesus assures us of His ever presence. There are no triumphs that do not point to Him and there are no struggles that He is not walking through with us. He gives us peace in the storms and a way out of temptations (1st Corinthians 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”).

When Jesus said, “I Am” the bread, the light, the door, the good shepherd, the resurrection, the master and lord, the way, the truth, the life, the true vine, and the king, He was referring to who He was now. Let us explore and enjoy the “nowness” of Jesus.

Lesson Two (The Introduction is Lesson One)

"I Am the Bread"

John 6:30-58, "Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? 31 "Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 "For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." 35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. 36 "But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. 37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. 38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. 40 "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." 41 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." 42 And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven?'" 43 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. 44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. 46 "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. 47 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. 48 "I am the bread of life. 49 "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. 51 "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." 52 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" 53 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 "For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. 56 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57 "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 58 "This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

I. Looking at some analogies.

A. Bread is one of the most common of all foods.

1. John 6:41&42, "41 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." 42 And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven?'"

2. Jesus did not come to them with pomp and circumstance; He was a common person among them.

3. John 1:14 NLT, "So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son."

4. One translation reads, "He pitched his tent among us."

B. Two significant comparisons of Jesus with bread.

1. Before bread can be made from wheat, the chaff has to be removed.

a. This shows us the purity of Jesus.

b. Matthew 1:18, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, **before they came together**, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit."

c. Hebrews 4:15, "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet **without sin**."

2. Wheat has to be crushed into powder before it can be made into bread.

a. Mark 15:25, "Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him."

b. Isaiah 53:5 NIV, "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was **crushed** for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."

II. Jesus declares Himself to be the Bread of Life.

John 6:30-35, "Therefore they said to Him, 'What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?' 31 'Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, *'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'*" 32 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 "For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." 35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

A. These people were familiar with the exodus from Egypt and the supernatural bread that was provided in the wilderness. They believed this validated Moses and his generation as sent from God. Moses and the "bread" were surely sent from God. However, they did not bring life; the God kind of LIFE.

1. Jesus said, "...Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 "For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

2. The Old Testament, wilderness bread would only last for one day. After one day it would rot. Exodus 16:12-21, "'I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God.'" 13 So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. 14 And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, *as* fine as frost on the ground. 15 So when the

children of Israel saw *it*, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it *was*. And Moses said to them, “This *is* the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. 16 “This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: ‘Let every man gather it according to each one’s need, one omer for each person, *according to the* number of persons; let every man take for *those* who *are* in his tent.’” 17 Then the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less. 18 So when they measured *it* by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one’s need. 19 And Moses said, “Let no one leave any of it till morning.” 20 Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. 21 So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it melted.”

B Jesus gives the same promise as He did the woman at the well: John 4:7-15, “A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink.” 8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. 9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. 10 Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” 11 The woman said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? 12 “Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?” 13 Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, 14 “but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” 15 The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.”

1. What Jesus promises is eternal and ever filling.

2. Just as the woman at the well, those that heard about the bread responded, John 6:34, “34 Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.”

III. John 6:55-58, “For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. 56 “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57 “As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 58 “This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.”

A. Jesus is speaking of His substitutionary death on the cross.

1. Matthew 26:26-28, “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” 27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. 28 “For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

2. 1st Corinthians 11:23-26, “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” 25 In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.” 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”

B. Some beautiful analogies.

1. The deliverance of God's people from bondage.

In the Exodus Passover, there was a sacrificial lamb, the shedding of blood, and the eating of the flesh: Exodus 12:1-11, "Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2 "This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. 3 "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. 4 'And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take *it* according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. 5 'Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats. 6 'Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. 7 'And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. 8 'Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. 9 'Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. 10 'You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. 11 'And thus you shall eat it: *with* a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It *is* the LORD's Passover."

A. Shedding of blood.

b. Eating of flesh.

2. Our deliverance from the bondage of law.

a. Romans 8:2&3, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,"

b. Galatians 3:10-13, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." 11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." 12 Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them." 13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"

WHEN WE RECEIVE JESUS AS OUR SAVIOR, HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS AS OUR DEATH; WE ARE EATING HIS FLESH AND DRINKING HIS BLOOD. HE GIVES US ETERNAL LIFE; THE GOD KIND OF LIFE.

Lesson Three

"I Am the Light"

John 8:12, "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

John 9:5, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Introduction

John 1:1-5, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."

(from Dr. Lynn Hile's book entitled "*The Great I Am.*")

"The gospel of John does not begin like the other Gospels. It does not begin with the genealogy of Jesus. It begins with a striking comparison with the creation story in the book of Genesis. I believe the reason for this is the story of Jesus is the offer of life not just to the nation of Israel. It was for all of creation. It was God revealing his intention to include both Jews and Gentiles in the new creation. The life of the coming age was being offered to both Jew and Gentile."

Light requires an organ adapted for its reception (Matthew 6:22, "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light"). Where the eye is absent, or where it has become impaired from any cause, light is useless. Man, naturally, is incapable of receiving spiritual light inasmuch as he lacks the capacity for spiritual things, (1st Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned"). Hence believers are called 'sons of light, (Luke 6:8, "So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light"). Not merely because they have received a revelation from God, but because in the New Birth they have received the spiritual capacity for it.

I. Creation Comparisons

A. Genesis 1:1-4, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness."

B. In the book of Genesis, in His first creation, it was amid darkness that God said, "*Let there be light.*" When the light came it divided the light from the darkness and order began to develop.

C. The chaos of the Old Covenant (where man's sin and evil heart is "brought to light") was about to be replaced with the order of the New Covenant. God's Spirit was once again hovering over the darkness, but this time it He was about to give birth to a New Creation.

II. Jesus declares Himself to be the “Light of the World.”

A. Let’s establish first that the Law of Moses is not sinful: Romans 7:7, “What shall we say then? *Is the law sin?* Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “*You shall not covet.*”

1. The Law of Moses is not sinful; it exposes the heart of man: Galatians 3:24, “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”

2. We cannot end with Galatians 3:24, we must go on to Galatians 3:25, “But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”

B. John chapter eight (8) is one sermon and there are many truths to be learned that are relevant to Jesus being the “light of the world.”

JESUS, THE “LIGHT”, MAKES MANKIND AWARE OF HIS DARKNESS

1. The scribes and pharisees wanted to expose Jesus as a liar and demon possessed. Instead, He exposed them (He was the “light of the world.”

a. John 8:3-6, “And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, 4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? 6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.”

b. Although the “accusers” left (John 8:9&10, “And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?), there were other pharisees there to have their hearts exposed by the “light.”

- John 8:25&26, “Then they said to Him, “Who are You?” And Jesus said to them, “Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. 26 “I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him.”
- John 8:42-47, “Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 “Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 “You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. 45 “But

because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 “Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? 47 “He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”

2. The Jews believed themselves to be the “light bearers”, but Jesus says He is the true “light.”

a. Romans 2:17-19, “Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, 18 and know *His* will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,”

b. John 8:12, “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

JESUS, THE LIGHT, MAKES MANKIND AWARE OF TRUTH

3. The truth is, Jesus has made us New Creations. Just as the “light” in Genesis 1 began the creation, the “light”—Jesus—makes us New Creations.

a. 2nd Corinthians 3:7-18 Message Bible, “⁷⁻⁸The Government of Death, its constitution chiseled on stone tablets, had a dazzling inaugural. Moses’ face as he delivered the tablets was so bright that day (even though it would fade soon enough) that the people of Israel could no more look right at him than stare into the sun. How much more dazzling, then, the Government of Living Spirit? ⁹⁻¹¹ If the Government of Condemnation was impressive, how about this Government of Affirmation? Bright as that old government was, it would look downright dull alongside this new one. If that makeshift arrangement impressed us, how much more this brightly shining government installed for eternity? ¹²⁻¹⁵ With that kind of hope to excite us, nothing holds us back. Unlike Moses, we have nothing to hide. Everything is out in the open with us. He wore a veil so the children of Israel wouldn’t notice that the glory was fading away—and they didn’t notice. They didn’t notice it then and they don’t notice it now, don’t notice that there’s nothing left behind that veil. Even today when the proclamations of that old, bankrupt government are read out, they can’t see through it. Only Christ can get rid of the veil so they can see for themselves that there’s nothing there. ¹⁶⁻¹⁸ Whenever, though, they turn to face God as Moses did, God removes the veil and there they are—face-to-face! They suddenly recognize that God is a living, personal presence, not a piece of chiseled stone. And when God is personally present, a living Spirit, that old, constricting legislation is recognized as obsolete. We’re free of it! All of us! Nothing between us and God, our faces shining with the brightness of his face. And so we are transfigured much like the Messiah, our lives gradually becoming brighter and more beautiful as God enters our lives and we become like him.”

b. Luke 2:29-32, ““Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.”

Lesson Four

"I Am the Door"

John 10:1-10, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 "But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 "Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." 6 Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. 7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 "All who *ever* came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly."

Introduction:

Parables are designed to bring one message. While many truths may be ascertained, let's not miss the intended message.

Jesus says, in verse 7, that He is the door. In verse 11 He is the "Good Shepherd", but that is for another lesson.

I. Thieves and Robbers

A. Many identify the "thief and robber" as the devil.

1. The devil is surely the epitome of evil.
2. However, he is not the thief and robber in verse 10.
3. Nowhere, in this sermon, is the devil mentioned.

B. Thieves and robbers are anything and anyone that tries to provide another way to Jesus.

II. Thieves and Robbers identified.

A. Jesus had just healed the blind man, but the Pharisees had excommunicated him (John 9:1-34)

B. Among the congregation were the Pharisees (John 9:40&41, "Then *some* of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?" 41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains."

C. Pharisaical teaching.

1. "Right" with God based on genealogy.

a. Luke 3:8, "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as *our* father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones."

b. Romans 4:13-16, “For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, 15 because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression. 16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.”

2. “Right” with God based on the Law of Moses.

a. Romans 3:21, “But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,”

b. Galatians 2:16, “knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”

3. “Right” with God based on self-righteousness: Matthew 5:20, “For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”

4. “Right” with God based on religious observances: Colossians 2:16-23, “So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. 18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God. 20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— 21 “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” 22 which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.”

D. These (A-C, and many others) rob God’s people of Life—the “abundant” life in John 10:10.

III. Jesus is the door.

A. Genealogy, Law of Moses, Self-righteousness, Religious observances, etc. are not the door; they are thieves and robbers.

B. John 14:6, “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”—Notice “through” me: Jesus is the Door.

In 1903, George A. Young wrote a beautiful song entitled “*God Leads Us Along.*” The first verse and the chorus are:

1. In shady, green pastures, so rich and so sweet,
 God leads His dear children along;
 Where the water’s cool flow bathes the weary one’s feet,
 God leads His dear children along.
 - *Refrain:*
 Some through the waters, some through the flood,
 Some through the fire, **but all through the blood;** (highlights mine)
 Some through great sorrow, but God gives a song,
 In the night season and all the day long.

C. Romans 5:12-21, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— 13 (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. 15 But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. 16 And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. 17 For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) 18 Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. 19 For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous. 20 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, 21 so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

D. “Life” now and for eternity: Psalm 73:24, “You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory.”

Lesson Five

“I Am the Good Shepherd”

John 10:11-14, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 “But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 “The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. 14 “I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.”

Introduction:

No teaching on “the Shepherd” could be complete without reading Psalm 23:1-6, “A Psalm of David. “The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You *are* with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.”

Jesus constantly brought truth in contrast to the four Jewish sects of His time (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots). He never defended the truth; He just proclaimed it. This gives us a great lesson for today. We don’t have to defend; just proclaim.

I. Let us first look at the “bad shepherds.” (Because Jesus says He is the “Good Shepherd” it must be in contrast to a “bad shepherd”),

A. Jeremiah 23:2, “Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: “You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings,” says the LORD.”

1. The NLT says, “Therefore, this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to these shepherds: “Instead of caring for my flock and leading them to safety, you have deserted them and driven them to destruction. Now I will pour out judgment on you for the evil you have done to them.”

2. The “bad shepherd” does not care for the sheep; they care for themselves.

3. They do not lead the sheep to safety; they enact rules that they themselves aren’t able to keep.

4. They are mere hirelings (John 10:13) and desert the sheep.

4. The “bad shepherd” drives the sheep to destruction; they terrorize the sheep with demands and control.

B. Isaiah 56:11, “Yes, they are greedy dogs Which never have enough. And they are shepherds Who cannot understand; They all look to their own way, Every one for his own gain, From his own territory.”

II. The "Good Shepherd."

The precious people that Jesus was speaking to had only experienced the corrupt, self-gaining, controlling "shepherd" or leaders of the Jewish nation. Jesus now proclaims Himself to not just be "the shepherd" but the "GOOD Shepherd."

Isaiah 40:11 gives us a beautiful picture of a true shepherd. "He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young."

A. Jesus "feeds" the sheep. Not just physically as in the "feeding of the multitude" but in feeding their soul.

1. When Jesus was about to leave, He gave instructions to Peter: John 21:15-17, So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." 16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."

2. John 7:14, "Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught."

3. Acts 1:1-3, "The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

a. When Luke was writing to Theophilus, the Holy Spirit led him to emphasize that Jesus was a teacher (verse 1).

b. Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He taught ("speaking of things") the disciples about the Kingdom of God (verse 3).

B. Jesus "gathers the lambs."

1. What a "Good Shepherd" that He would not forget the "lambs": the young and innocent.

2. From Matthew Henry: He will gather them in the arms of his power; his strength shall be made perfect in their weakness, (2nd Corinthians 12:9, "And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." ...). He will gather them in when they wander, gather them up when they fall, gather them together when they are dispersed, and gather them home to himself at last; and all this with his own arm, out of which none shall be able to pluck them, (John 10:27-29, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 "And I give them

eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 “My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father’s hand.”).

C. Jesus “carries them in His bosom.”

Footprints In The Sand

One night I dreamed a dream.
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,
there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.
"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,
You'd walk with me all the way.
But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,
there was only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.
When you saw only one set of footprints,
It was then that I carried you."

1. Jesus has promises to NEVER leave us nor forsake us: Matthew 28:20 KJV,
“...lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.”

2. He “carries” us when:

a. We are tired—Matthew 11:28-30 MSG, “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

b. When we face “impossible” situations—Mark 10:27, “But Jesus looked at them and said, “With men *it is* impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.”

c. When the “world” is pressing in on us—John 16:33, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

d. When we forget how valuable we are to God—Matthew 6:26, “Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”

D. Jesus, the “Good Shepherd”, “leads” His sheep.

1. Matthew 9:36, “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.”

The sheep were weary and scattered because they had no “Good Shepherd” to lead them.

2. John 10:3&4, ““To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 “And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.”

a. Jesus knows us personally; He knows our strengths and weaknesses, our triumphs and downfalls, the secrets of our hearts—AND HE BRINGS HEALING “ON HIS WINGS.”

b. Following the “Good Shepherd”, Jesus, will result in green pastures and still waters.

Lesson Six

"I Am the Resurrection"

John 11:20-27, "Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. 21 Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 "But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection** and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

Introduction:

From Dr. Lynn Hilles' book "*The Great I Am*".

The first thing I want you to notice is that Lazarus was in the grave four days. Lazarus to me is a picture of humanity that had been dead four days. Think of it in terms of thousand-year days. Peter said, "...a day with the Lord is 1000 years and 1000 years is as a day..." (2nd Peter 3:8). When Jesus came on the scene humanity had been dead four thousand years or, if you will, four days. Jesus came to awaken from the sleep of death all that would believe. For by one man death came upon all men—Romans 5:12-15, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— 13 (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. 15 But the free gift *is* not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many."

Yes, humanity had been dead for four days. Then they said to him, "by now he stinks." Truly the smell of the bondage of decay was everywhere. Dead rotten stinking flesh had permeated the human family. But Jesus is the only one I know that can be four days late and still be on time. Jesus said to them, show me where you have laid him. This is the only place in the Scripture that is recorded that Jesus wept. The Jews thought he wept because of how much he loved Lazarus, but I believe he was weeping because of their unbelief.

The stone in this story represents the law of Moses. The law was written on stone tablets—Exodus 24:12, "Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them." **AND** 2nd Corinthians 3:3, "clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, *that is*, of the heart."

Jesus came to roll the stone away. I believe it is the job of every valid five-fold new covenant ministry to roll the stone away. It is our job to remove the grave clothes of a religious system that has kept people bound for centuries. We must loose them and let them go. I am not suggesting we roll the stone of the law to release dead, stinking flesh. I am suggesting we roll the stone of law away to release the power of the resurrected life. Once again, the comparison that I want to make...is they search the

Scriptures. For in them they thought they had eternal life. They were looking in the old covenant texts for life, but I could not give them life. It gave sin power and death a sting. In other words, you thought the old covenant was the source of life, but that is not the source of resurrection life. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

I. The intent.

A. John 11:4, “When Jesus heard *that*, He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the **Son of God may be glorified** through it.”

1. That an opportunity may be given for the manifesting of God's glorious power.
2. Lazarus must be sick and die, that Christ may be glorified as the Lord of life.
3. Wonderful message and reminder to us—2nd Corinthians 12:9&10, “And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

WHILE GOD DOES NOT CAUSE THESE THINGS, HE WILL SURELY ENTER INTO THEM AND BRING HIS GLORY.

B. John 11:15, ““And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, **that you may believe**. Nevertheless let us go to him.”

1. Jesus was constantly instilling in them the necessity of faith.
2. Faith is what pleases God—Hebrews 11:6, “But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”
3. Faith is what would carry them, and us, through the trials of life.
4. Faith is what causes works to go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit.

II. Resurrection and Life.

A. Now!

1. Jesus told Martha, “I Am the resurrection and the Life.” He didn’t say “I Am going to be the resurrection and the life.”

2. Martha referred to the resurrection as an event in the future—John 11:24, “24 Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

3. Yes, there will be a resurrection in the future.
4. Experiencing resurrection life now:
 - a. Rest.

- Hebrews 4:1&2, “Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.”
- Hebrews 4:9&10, “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.”

b. Peace.

- Philippians 4:7, “and the **peace of God**, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
- Romans 5:1, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ,”

c. Comfort—John 14:16&17 KJV, “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

d. No sting in death or victory in the grave—1st Corinthians 15:55-57, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

B. Future.

1. Corruptible to incorruptible/mortal to immortality—1st Corinthians 15:50-54, “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

2. 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18, “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are

alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

Lesson Seven

“I Am the way, the truth, and the life”

John 14:5&6, “Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Introduction:

From Dr. Lynn Hiles’ book, *“The Great I Am”*.

Before we get into the meat of this verse let me set the context once again. The disciples have gathered in an upper room to keep the feast of Passover. It was the final Passover of the old covenant. Jesus said to them, “with great desire have I desired to keep the Passover with you.” Jesus knew that he would be the fulfillment of the feast of Passover and that after this Passover they would never again have to kill another Lamb. He would show them at the covenant table that this is the end of the old covenant and the beginning of the new covenant. The death of the Lamb of God in this final Passover would be the beginning of a brand-new Exodus out of the slavery of an Egyptian religious system. No longer would they experience the whips and chains of the taskmasters of religion. He was about to deliver them into the glorious liberty of sonship.

He washed the feet of the disciples to demonstrate to them that in this new Kingdom that the greatest of them would be able to humble themselves and serve others. In this new covenant we are not servants who are trying to become sons. We are sons who desire to serve. He was demonstrating to them that ministry is not about a title. It is about a towel. He was demonstrating to them that the Kingdom of God does not function like the kingdoms of men. It does not function from a hierarchical system. It functions from sons that have a heart to serve.

As Jesus served the Passover meal, he raised his cup and said, “this cup is the new covenant in my blood. I will not drink wine again until I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” In Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost, he popped the cork on a vintage of new wine that had never been drunk before and toasted the coming of the Kingdom. Remember, the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink. It is righteousness, peace and joy located in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17).

Please note that you cannot put new wine into an old wine skin. That does not mean you cannot sing charismatic songs in a Presbyterian Church. It means you cannot put the new wine of the new covenant into the old wine skin of old covenant thinking. Most church splits I am aware of have come as a result of trying to mix the two covenants. They will not mix. It will break the old wine skin and the wine will run out. Paul calls the mixture of law and grace a perversion of the gospel. We cannot preach the parts of law that fit our culture and call that the gospel. We must truly become able ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter that kills but of the spirit that gives life.

I. The Way.

John 14:1-20, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 “And where I go you know, and the way you know.” 5 Thomas said to Him,

“Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. 7 “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.” 8 Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. 11 “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. 12 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. 13 “And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 “If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. 15 “If you love Me, keep My commandments. 16 “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— 17 “the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18 “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. 19 “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. 20 “At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”

WHILE IT IS COMPLETELY ACCURATE THAT JESUS HAS A NEW HABITATION FOR HIS PEOPLE, THERE IS ALSO A GREAT TRUTH IN THESE VERSES CONCERNING THE “NOW.” LET’S NOT GET SO FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE THAT WE OVERLOOK WHAT JESUS PROMISED FOR US NOW.

THE WAY

I. Thomas, Philip, and Jesus—Verses 5-20.

A. Thomas’s question and Jesus’ answer.

1. “How can we know the way?”

2. “I am the way...”

3. THE WAY TO THE FATHER!

4. FROM NOW ON YOU KNOW HIM...

a. “know” is from the Greek word “ghin-ocē'-ko.”

b. It is the same as in Genesis 4:1 (from the LXX) Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, “I have acquired a man from the LORD.”

c. It speaks of intimacy.

JESUS SAYS THAT HE IS THE WAY INTO INTIMACY WITH THE FATHER.

B. Philip asks to see the Father—Verse 8.

1. Jesus answers, “he who has seen Me has seen the Father...”

2. Jesus then gives a profound teaching—Verses 19 and 20, “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. 20 “At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”

a. “at that day” = the day that I am alive again (“Because I live...”)

b. “at that day” = the day that I am alive again, “you will know that **I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.**

C. Jesus is the Way, the only Way into the Father AND the only Way for the Father to indwell us.

1. John 17:21, “that they all may be one, as **You, Father, are in Me, and I in You;** that they also may be one **in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

2. 1st Corinthians 3:16, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

D. The future holds a glorious day for God’s people. However, the Way to the Father has been completed through the finished work of Jesus and we can experience and enjoy a Father/Child relationship now.

THE TRUTH

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

It seems odd that Jesus would insert “truth” in this teaching. However, these disciples had known only the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees that demanded they be sought for truth.

A. John 10:31-33, “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. 32 Jesus answered them, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?” 33 The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.”

1. Blasphemy has to do with evil speaking or slander or the opposite of something PURE and HOLY.

2. When Jesus said that He was the Son of God he was called a blasphemer.

B The basic truth that results in an intimate relationship with the Father is believing and trusting in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus—We cannot mix works of any kind to this.

C. Jesus did not say He was teaching truth, but that He is TRUTH.

WONDERFUL SONG FROM LAUREN DAIGLE ENTITLED, "YOU SAY." HERE ARE SOME OF THE LYRICS:

I keep fighting voices in my mind that say I'm not enough
Every single lie that tells me I will never measure up

Am I more than just the sum of every high and every low
Remind me once again just who I am because I need to know
Ooh-oh

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing
You say I am strong when I think I am weak
And you say I am held when I am falling short
And when I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours
And I believe (I)
Oh, I believe (I)
What You say of me (I)
I believe

The only thing that matters now is everything You think of me
In You I find my worth, in You I find my identity

THE LIFE—TAUGHT IN LESSON SIX UNDER "II, A, 4"—PAGES 19&20.

Lesson Eight

"The True Vine"

John 15:1-8, "'I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 "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. 6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

Introduction: (1)

Normally, we start at verse one and then continue. However, in this lesson we will start at verse eight. "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." We emphasize "US" so much that we sometimes forget that one of the main purposes of "US" is to glorify our Father. Yes, we are redeemed, yes He has made us His beloved, Yes He has given us a glorious identity, and many, many others; we never want to forget these truths. Verse 8, "...My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit..." must be the starting point. At Bancroft Mission we sometimes sing a song entitled: "*The Heart of Worship*." Here are some of the lyrics:

When the music fades
All is stripped away
And I simply come

Longin' just to bring
Something that's of worth
That will bless Your heart

I'll bring You more than a song
For a song in itself
Is not what You have required

You search much deeper within
Through the ways things appear
You're looking into my heart

I'm comin' back to the heart of worship
And it's all about You
It's all about You, Jesus

I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it
When it's all about You
It's all about You, Jesus

King of endless worth
 No one could express
 How much You deserve?

Though I'm weak and poor
 All I have is Yours
 Every single breath

I'll bring You more than a song
 For a song in itself
 Is not what You have required

You search much deeper within
 Through the way things appear
 You're looking into my heart, yeah

I'm comin' back to the heart of worship
 And it's all about You
 It's all about You, Jesus

Introduction: (2)

From Dr. Lynn Hiles' book, *"The Great I Am."*

He makes clear in John chapters 14 and 15 that the new commandment is to love one another. Love is the result of our union with him because God is love. Love is not something you fake or manufacture. It is a fruit. It is a result of being connected to the right root. I want to emphasize that this is not the old commandment from the law of Moses. This is a brand-new commandment. Jesus made the statement throughout the Scriptures if you love me keep my commandments. He is not talking about the law of Moses.

Have you ever been to someone's home for dinner, and they had a beautiful centerpiece on the table that looked like fresh fruit? It was so beautiful that you thought, I will have one of those peaches. But to bite into it you found out it was plastic with peach fuzz. Religion is much like that centerpiece on the table. It looks good on Sunday, and it almost looks real. However, when you bite into it, it has no substance. I personally would rather have vine-ripe fruit that had a blemish or a bug bite in it than I would to eat fake fruit.

Have you ever walked out into your yard and looked at your apple or peach tree and then stood there and preached to it, demanding it to grow fruit? Of course, you have not...I am concerned that is what we have made of our church gatherings. Preachers stand in pulpits and yell at fruit trees trying to get them to produce fruit. You can pressure them and threaten them all you want, but fruit is not a result of being threatened. You can get people to act like they are bearing fruit, only to find out it is fake. They may pretend like they you or their neighbor. They may even say to your face; I love you brother. Although, in fact they are thinking, I hope you fall and break your neck on the way out of here. Love is not something that you manufacture. **Love is a result of being connected to him who is love.** The Scripture clearly says, "God is love." I love him because he first loved me (1st John 4:19). He initiated something that created a

response. It is like receiving a love note when you were an adolescent. Someone wrote a note saying, I love you. Do you love me? Check yes or no. When you received that note you may not have been aware that person even had feelings for you. It may have awakened a response in you, wow, I am loved. Then you checked the yes box, and a relationship began.

When you truly fall in love with him all your service will flow from that love. You will no longer serve because you must. You will serve because you want to. Love is a powerful force. It will make you drive through a snowstorm or get on an airplane in the middle of the night to go see the one you love. It will make you spend money you do not have, etc. You may not have much material wealth or possessions, but **if you have love, you are a wealthy person.**

I. The “true vine.”

A. Contrast with “strange vine.”

1. Jeremiah 2:20-22, “For of old I have broken your yoke *and* burst your bonds; And you said, ‘I will not transgress,’ When on every high hill and under every green tree You lay down, playing the harlot. 21 Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me Into the degenerate plant of an alien (“strange” in KJV) vine? 22 For though you wash yourself with lye, and use much soap, Yet your iniquity is marked before Me,” says the Lord GOD.”

a. Jeremiah prophesied about 650 years before Jesus came on the scene. Yet, Israel had become progressively worse.

b. Verse 22 explains the problem; they looked good on the outside but were “whitewashed tombs” (Matthew 23:27).

c. Not only had the leaders become corrupt, but they also brought “strange” or poisonous teaching to others.

- Matthew 16:6, “Then Jesus said to them, ‘Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.’”
- Hebrews 13:9, “Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines...”

2. “Strange” vine does not bear fruit.

a. Notice in our text that Jesus said, “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).

b. Jesus, who was a master of Old Testament scripture, was referring to Jeremiah 8:13, “I will surely consume them,” says the LORD. “No grapes *shall be* on the vine, Nor figs on the fig tree, And the leaf shall fade; And *the things* I have given them shall pass away from them.””

B. The “true vine.”

1. According to Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, “true” here is defined: “that which has not only the name and resemblance, but the real nature corresponding to the name, in every respect corresponding to the idea signified by the name, real, true genuine”

2. Jesus declared Himself, to His followers, to the Pharisees, to the Scribes, to the Sadducees, to the Essenes, to the Zealots, and to us, that He is the TRUE VINE; THE REAL, TRUE GENUINE VINE.

From Dr. Lynn Hilles’ book, *“The Great I Am”*.

I believe that is why the gospel of John starts with the Genesis motif. It is because it is not just about God restoring 12 tribes. It is about God restoring all of creation and bringing them back into relationship with himself. God had chosen the nation of Israel to be the kingdom of priests that would be the vehicle by which he would reach creation. In the new covenant God raised up a priesthood after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:17, “For He testifies: *“You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”* (PLEASE READ THE ENTIRE 7th CHAPTER OF HEBREWS) This order was made up of both Jew and Gentile believers. He tore down the middle wall of partition that separated them (Ephesians 2:14, “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation”). Where there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female. (Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” AND Colossians 3:11, “where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.”) we have been made one in Christ Jesus. A revelation of our inclusive union with him will break down all prejudice. We are now called as a holy nation to fulfill God’s mandate to make disciples of all nations. What you serve as a priesthood will draw a line in the sand to determine whether you are an old covenant priest after the order of Levi, or you are a new covenant priest after the order of Melchizedek. If you are an old covenant priest, you will serve up the same fear and judgement (“strange vine”). If you are a new covenant priest, you will serve bread and wine. Bread and wine are the symbols of the covenant table and of the finished work of Jesus Christ. I ask, what are you serving?

II. The “vine”.

A. Matthew Henry explains the “vine”: “Jesus is implying that He is the vine from which all life comes, ... Every life in the created order came through Jesus (John 1:3), and the new life of the Kingdom now flows out of Him as well.”

B. Jesus declares His desire for His people to bear fruit; fruit from Him: John 15:8, “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

C. The greatest fruit:

1. 1st Corinthians 13:1-13 NLT, “If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn’t love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God’s secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn’t love others, I would be nothing. 3 If I gave everything I have

to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing. 4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud 5 or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. 6 It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. 8 Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! 9 Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! 10 But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless. 11 When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. 12 Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the **greatest of these is love.**"

2. 1st John 3:14, "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death."

3. John 13:34&35, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Theodore Roosevelt famously said, "**People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.**"

