



FACILITATOR GUIDE

& LESSON PLANS

Lesson Plans created by Ministry to Youth (www.MinistrytoYouth.com) – slight amendments in formatting for Nazarite Youth booklet

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW



Introduction to the Scriptures that will be covered in the session



This is the central message to be covered during a particular session.

icebreaker

These are ideas to open the lesson, and to have the students warmed up for the lesson. The *debrief* section is a good introduction as to what the lesson will cover.



Notes to the Facilitator.

These are guidelines / questions to the facilitator to help facilitate the message or assist in facilitating the session.



Stop and Think.

This is an opportunity to ask questions and have the students engage with the rest of the group.



Read the scriptures identified and answer any questions

WEEK 01

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE

WORLD



Scriptures: John 8:12; Genesis 1:4, 1 John 1:5, John 3:19



Jesus' light expels the darkness in our lives and our world

icebreaker

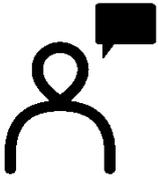
SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- Not applicable

RULES OF THE GAME: DESCRIBE THE OBJECT

- Students need to locate small items around the room.
- Have each student walk around the room for a minute or two to find a random object that can be easily held (or hidden).
- Students will then each take a turn describing their object without showing it to anyone else.
- They should not say the name of the object anywhere in their description.
- The student that calls out what items it is gets to keep it.
- The student with the most items at the end of the game is the winner.

Debrief with your students:



- What made describing and guessing the objects easy or difficult;
- Talk about how not being able to see the object added to the challenge.

LESSON:



Imagine living in a world of darkness.

That's probably impossible for most of us to even fathom!

Our world needs light.

We know the sun illuminates the day, while the moon and stars shine in the night.

Where there is light, there is no darkness.

Optional illustration:

If you have a candle or a flashlight, turn the lights off in the room and light a candle or shone the light from a flashlight on the ceiling to show that where the light is, the darkness flees!)

As we open this series, we're going to be studying about how Jesus is the light of the world.

We're going to dig into what that means for us today and how we can be changed because Christ's light in our lives.

Jesus' light expels the darkness in our lives and in our world.

Let's see what the Bible says about light.



Read John 8:12

Each time you read about Jesus teaching His followers in the Bible, He always links Himself to the Father, God.

Here, Jesus links to God as being the light of the world.

The word *light* used in this verse comes from the Greek work **phos** which means "light" or "anything emitting light".

It is profound that Jesus says, "I am" showing that light is actually a part of who He is.

- He is the light.
- He radiates light.
- The character of Christ is light.
- And anyone who walks with Him lives in the light.

STOP AND THINK:

Think how natural light impacts our lives.

- Each day, the sun rises
- It warms the earth
- It illuminates
- It aids growth on the earth
- At night, the moon and stars serve as navigators in the sky.
- They were navigational aids long before the smartphones.
- The world's first GPS!



When you walk into a room, the first thing you probably reach for is the light switch?



- **Right? And Why?**
- Because by design, we're drawn to light,

We instinctively depend on light in every aspect of our lives.

Light invades every crack and crevice of our lives as human beings, both tangibly (regarding warmth and sight) and spiritually.

Darkness, as mentioned in John 8:12, is the Greek work *scotia* which can be defined as "the darkness due to the want of light" and is used to describe ignorance of divine things.

That simply means that walking in the "darkness" is like having no knowledge of what it means to walk in the light.

Why would someone choose darkness when light is available?

Darkness is often associated with *wickedness*, because of that wickedness, misery in hell.

Genesis 1:4 says "God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness"

Jesus is the light of the world, and all who are unconnected or far from Him live in darkness.

You can't live both in the light and in the darkness.

God's word makes that very clear.

Being separated, ignorant or unaware of the dark leaves us wanting for something we cannot produce on our own.

In other words, we can't produce light on our own.

We come to the end of ourselves in frustration, hopelessness, or a distant sense of happiness and joy, when we navigate through life in darkness.

However, with Christ, we have the absolute fullness of life because He is the light we crave.

Jesus' light expels darkness in our lives and in our world.



Read 1 John 1:5

1 John tells us that in Jesus, there is no darkness at all.

It doesn't mean that darkness doesn't exist in our world, but that where Christ is, there is always light.

Light, by definition, has no darkness in it at all.

For there to be any darkness, there must be an absence of light.

God's design for us all along was to walk with Him in the light.

Sin casts shadows of darkness and separates us from the light of Christ both in our lives and our world.



STOP AND THINK:

There are **two areas** we should explore here:

1. Jesus' light expels the darkness in our lives.
2. Jesus' light expels the darkness in our world.

We can't tackle the darkness in our world until we begin to shine a light on the darkness in our own lives.

When sin entered the Garden of Eden through the deceptive nature of the serpent and Adam and Eve's rebellion, it not only cast a shadow on the perfection of creation, but it presented a problem that individuals throughout history would have to wrestle with.



God's divine plane was to draw us to Himself.

God desire to be in a close relationship with you and me.

Sin drives a wedge between us and keeps the light from shining in.

God's word says in John 3:19 that before we saw the light, we loved the darkness rather than the light.

God is not afraid of the darkness in our world, and He is not afraid of the darkness in you and me.

In the same way, He turned on the blinding sun in a galaxy in creation. He opens the eyes of your heart to see His glory in His Son, Jesus.

He expels your darkness and makes you a lover of the light.

Only when we recognise the darkness (sin) in our own lives do we begin to allow light to shine through and create a space for God's freedom to invade our lives.

The freedom in the light frees us from being trapped in the darkness.

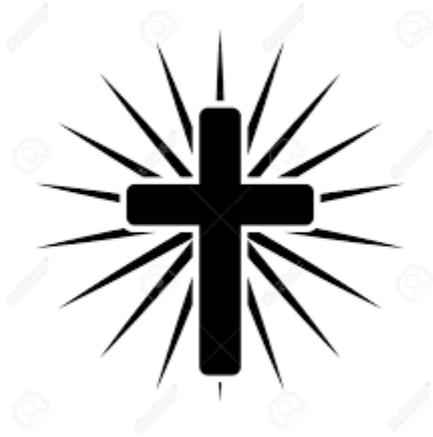
Light exposes that sin that is hidden in the darkness and heals us.

When we confess our sins, Christ can work through the light in our lives in restoring us to a relationship with Himself.

We are then free to walk in the light with Him.

As children of God who walk in the light, we are called to bring light to the darkness in our world.

Metaphorically speaking, as we walk in the light, so the light of our lives (Jesus) shines in the darkness of our world.



The light of Jesus shines when we love those who are hard to love, serve others, help the poor, share the Gospel, and live out God's Word in our day-to-day lives.

When Jesus' light expels the darkness in our lives, we walk in the light.

When we walk in the light, it illuminates a world darkened by sin, and people are drawn to Christ.

When Jesus declares, "I AM the light of the world", he speaks not only of who He is, but what He does.

The light brings freedom.

The light brings knowledge.

In the light alone can there be fullness of life.

WORKSHEET

I AM (W1)

1. What is the responsibility of those who are living in the light of Christ?

2. How has the light of Jesus overcome the darkness that used to consume your life? How has the light of Christ changed you?

3. How have you shared the light of Jesus with those who are walking in darkness?

4. What was the biggest challenge in sharing the light of Jesus?

5. When we proclaim accurately who Jesus is and what He has come to accomplish, should we expect people to believe?

6. Since Jesus is the light of the world, how can we reflect His light as you live your life this week?

7. Will others come to believe in Jesus based on the way you live?

8. When Jesus says, "I am the light of the world", how is He claiming the name of God for Himself?

9. How do you feel knowing that God is in the business of bringing light and life to the dark places in our lives and the world? Is that intimidating or inviting?

10. How do you feel knowing what Jesus said is true, then why do we still experience darkness in our lives? What can we you do about it?

WEEK 02

I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD



Scriptures: John 10:11, Psalm 23, Psalm 80:1, Ezekiel 34:1-4, Isaiah 40:11, John 10:24-30



Jesus guides and protects us every day.

icebreaker

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- n/a

RULES OF THE GAME: OPPOSITES

- Everyone can play this game.
- Have the students stand around the room/
- The leader will shout out one of six instructions; however, the students will have to do the opposite of what is said.
- For example, if the leader shouts "LEFT" the students will have to do the opposite of what is said.

- Here are some ideas of commands you could use, or come up with your own:
 - "RIGHT" (hold up your left hand)
 - "UP" (duck down so your head can't be seen)
 - "DOWN" (stand up)
 - "TURN" (do nothing)
 - "STILL" (turn around)

- The faster you shout them out, the more fun it will be.
- If a player does it wrong, then he or she can lose a "life" *(you can decide on how many "lives" you allow them to have"



Debrief with your students the challenges in having to follow the opposite of what the leader was telling them to do!

We can be thankful that our leader, Jesus, won't lead us astray.

LESSON:

Have you ever had to rely on someone else to protect you?

As children, we depend on the adults in our lives to keep us safe and provide basic life necessities to keep us alive.

We trust that our parents will provide us and keep us safe.

As we grow up and build relationships with others, we often have a mutual trust that the other person has our best interest in mind.

If not, we're likely not in a relationship with them for too long!

As we continue to explore the "I AM" statements that Jesus made, we'll discover how can we trust Him because He is our good shepherd.

Today we are going to dive deep into how good the good shepherd cares for His sheep ... that's us.

Last week, we talked about how Jesus is the light of the world.

We talked about how the light invades the darkness and brings knowledge, freedom, and hope.

In the same way, Jesus as our good shepherd leads, guides and cares for us.



READ JOHN 10:11

Before we dig in, let's talk about a few important points that will help this passage come alive in us.

Sheep are mentioned for than any other animal in the Bible.

There are 232 references to sheep in the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible.

Three of the greatest men in the Old Testament – Abraham, Moses and David – were all shepherds.

One the most loved Psalm happens to be Psalm 23, which talks about God as our Shepherd.

The Old Testament prophecy of Jesus coming to save us by His death on the cross is found in **Isaiah 53**, which contains two separate images of sheep; one referring to us (v6) and one referring to Jesus (v7).

So, we can see that whether you're reading about the occupants of famous Bible characters, a well-loved Psalm, or the most popular prophecy, the imagery sheep and the shepherd runs deep throughout God's word.

Before we understand deeper the role of the shepherd, we need to first look at the characteristics of the sheep.

STOP AND THINK:



You may already know that sheep are not really the smartest animals. – They tend to do pretty dumb things.

- They may fall into a river, need to be rescued, then turn around and fall into the same river again the next day.
- Sheep also have poor eyesight but excellent hearing.

I wonder if perhaps, that's why Jesus said, "My sheep know my voice..." (John 10:27)

Sheep are poor leaders and great followers.

Sheep are mostly docile creatures, but they can butt like a ram if they are provoked.

Sheep are timid and fearful, so naturally, they stick together.

Sheep are mostly defenceless.

They normally cannot outrun their enemies and they have little options for fighting back (apart from ramming), so that are largely dependent on others for protection.

Sheep can be very stubborn.

They can stampede their feed and refuse to budge.

Sheep tend to wander and forget the way home.

Sheep *need* a shepherd... and a good one at that.

When God likens us to sheep, He isn't boosting our self-esteem.

However, sheep are particularly important to the shepherd.

That means that you are looked after by one great shepherd.

Dr. A.T. Robertson (in Roberson's Word Pictures) states that the literal Greek says, "I am the Shepherd, the Good One".

I am THE Shepherd... THE Good one.

So, who or what was Jesus alluding to here?

In the Old Testament, Yahweh was said to be the Shepherd of Israel. (See Psalm 23, 80:1, Isa 40:11) so Jesus was certainly alluding to this in saying "I AM THE Shepherd."

But also, in contrasting Himself with the hired hands and false shepherds of Israel at the time, Jesus was alluding to another great prophecy in the book of Ezekiel.



READ EZEKIEL 34:1-4 to gain further background for John 10.

What was happening in Ezekiel's day also happened in Jesus' day. In fact, it still happens today.

God's people (the sheep) can so easily be led by so-called "shepherds" who are just in it for themselves.

They'll only care about the flock to the extent that they can prosper from them.

While today there are many good shepherds, there are equally as many shepherds who aren't so good.

Jesus called people like this the "hired hands".

Since Jesus saw this happening, He promised that He would be Israel's shepherd.

In contrast to the many false shepherds, Jesus would be the one true good Shepherd.

So, what does “good” mean anyway?

Jesus is saying, “I am THE shepherd, the good One, the ONE who was prophesied”.

So, let’s look closer at this word *good*.

Good in the English language doesn’t exactly fill one with wonder.

If you ask someone how they are, they’ll often say, “yeah good”.

It means they are doing all right.

It doesn’t tell us a whole lot of information at all.

If someone goes to the movies, and you ask how it was and they say “good” then it’s three apples out of five.

Not going to go on and on about it but certainly not a dud.

So, is that what Jesus meant when He said He was the “good” Shepherd?

He’s a pretty good Shepherd but let’s not get too excited?

Not likely.

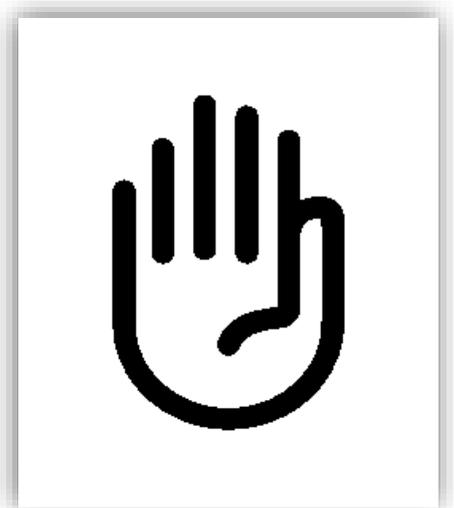
The English word *good* doesn’t do the Greek word *kalos* any justice here.

Kalos means “beautiful” or “excellent, preeminent, lovely, honorable”.

I AM the One who looks after ALL MY SHEEP.

So, what is the job of the Good Shepherd?

- A good shepherd know his sheep better than they know themselves.
- A good shepherd cares for, feed, and leads the sheep in the way they should go.
- A good shepherd disciplines, corrects, and guides the sheep when necessary for their well-being.
- A good shepherd will carry the sick and the hurting.
- A good shepherd gathers strays and find the lost.



- A good shepherd protects and defends his sheep and fights off the enemies.

All the special roles perfectly define what God, our good Shepherd is to us and for us.

It gives us a snap shot for us to slip into the thinking that because we have a good shepherd, only good things will happen to us.

If you've been following Jesus for any length of time and living day-to-day life with all the turmoil and strife surrounding you, you'd likely agree that that's not true at all.

Sometime bad things happen.

Even Psalm 23 says that along the journey we may walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

Since God is good, does that means He is Safe?

Having a good shepherd means that God sometimes allow things we may not like now for our eventual good.

Is that regard, God may not be considered "safe".



There is a great interchange in the *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* where Susan and Lucy first hear Aslan, and they are somewhat shocked to hear he is a Lion.

Leader Option:

The excerpt is included below to read aloud. If you can show this scene from the movie – Narnia – it will be a great addition to the lesson.

"Is – is he a man?" asked Lucy.

"Aslan a man!" said Mr. Beaver sternly. "Certainly not. I tell you he is the King of the wood and the son of the great Emperor-beyond-the-sea. Don't you know who is the King of the Beasts? Aslan is a lion – the lion, the great lion."

"Ohh!" said Susan, "I'd thought he was a man. Is he – quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about a meeting."

“That you will, dearie, and make no mistake,” said Mrs. Beaver, “if there’s anyone who can appear before Aslan without knees knocking, they’re either braver than most or just silly.”

“Then he isn’t safe?” said Lucy.

“Safe?” said Mr. Beaver, “don’t you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King. I tell you.”

The Lord may allow things we wouldn’t consider to be “safe”, but He is still good.

He’s the King, I tell you!

So “good” doesn’t necessarily mean “safe” for God allows some things in our lives, as He did with Job all those years ago, that doesn’t exactly put Him in the “safe” category ... at least not as we would define safe.

But if “good” doesn’t mean “safe” then it does mean “secure” (eternally speaking)



READ [John 10:24-30](#)

These verses share one of the greatest promises Jesus ever made.

If we are God’s sheep, then we can rest assured that we are known by the Shepherd.

We can trust our Shepherd and follow Him.

In John 10, we see the relationship between the sheep and the shepherd.

And what does the Shepherd promise His sheep?

They shall never perish.

They cannot be taken out of His hand nor His Father’s hand.

We often look at salvation from man’s point of view with our struggles and occasional trip-ups.

From man's point of view, there is always confusion because we are inconsistent creatures.

But Jesus looked at salvation from God's point of view and that is a far better vantage point.

He knew and clearly stated each believer – each of His sheep – was a gift from the Father to Him.

And He promised that of those that He was given, He would lose none.

WORKSHEET

I AM (W2)

1. As our good shepherd, Jesus goes ahead of us and provides us with guidance.

What are some ways that Christ has guided you in the past? Is your current life more about following Christ or making your own path?

2. Who is the hired hand that Jesus talks about? What does the hired hand do when the sheep are in danger?

3. How can you show love and devotion to Jesus because He is your good shepherd?

4. How important is it for us to remember that all Christ's sheep are part of one flock?

5. Is someone were to refer to you as sheepish or sheep-like, would you view that as a compliment or an insult? Why?

6. Why is it important for the sheep to know the voice of the shepherd?

7. What can happen when the sheep do not recognise the voice of the shepherd?

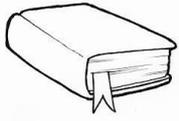
8. Think about someone who has been a guide or helper for you in your life. What did that person do or say that helped you or provided guidance when you needed it?

9. Jesus says, "I know my sheep, and the sheep know Me" (10:14) and also "the sheep listen to his voice (10:3). What do you think it looks like for us, as Jesus's sheep, to have that sort of relationship with Him, our good shepherd?

10. Consider one specific area of your life where you need Jesus to be your shepherd. Talk with Him about it. *(If you are in a small group, discuss this with one another and pray for one another about these things)*

WEEK 03

I AM THE TRUE VINE



Scriptures: john 15:1-11, Romans 7:4, Galatians 5:22-23, Philippians 1:9-11, Colossians 1:10-11, Hebrews 13:15



Jesus is the source for everything we need.

icebreaker

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- Sheets of Paper
- Markers/Pens

RULES OF THE GAME: Connect the thoughts

- The leader gives the group 3 categories;
- Also they announce a letter of the alphabet.
- Give the group a specific amount of time (i.e. 2 minutes).
- In that time, they need to write down 3 answers under each category that all begin with the letter that was announced.
- The **OBJECT** of the game is to get answers that no one else writes down.
- When the time has ended, go around the group asking them to read their answers one category at a time.
- If somebody else has also written down their answers, then everyone who has that answer must cross it off their list.
- By the end, only unique answer will remain the lists.
- Everyone get a point for each unique answer.



Debrief by talking about how we are all different, yet connected by the way everyone answered.

Today we are going to talk about how we should be connected spiritually to Jesus because He is our source for life.

LESSON:

Throughout this study, we have been talking about the character of Jesus through His “I AM” statements.

We’ve learned that Jesus is the light of the world and that not only does He bring light to our broken world, but He also desires to invade the darkness within our hearts with His glorious light.

Last time we talked about how Jesus is our Good Shepherd.

We studied how He is THE good shepherd, not just A good shepherd.

We learned about how our tendencies mirror those of sheep and why we need a shepherd who loves and cares for us as a good shepherd should.

Today we’re going to continue looking at another “I AM” statement that Jesus made.

Jesus says, “I am the true vine”.

We will explore how our spiritual lives are connected to the vine and the relationship between the vine, the branches and the gardener.

We will discuss what it is like living connected to the vine and being taken care of by our heavenly gardener’s care.

Have you ever seen a grapevine growing in the wild?

Or perhaps where you live someone you know grows grapes in their backyard?

Either way, true grapevines are a spirally, winding tangle of vines and pods of fruit.

Grapevines twist and tangle and intermingle along a trellis that provides support and allows the vines to spread out and grow so they’re healthy.

JOHN 15 provides the analogy of the vine as a starting point for understanding what life with Jesus should look like.

As we begin to unpack the themes in the passage, let’s gain a little contextual knowledge by reading what the Word actually says.



READ John 15:1-11

Some background to the scripture would help us understand why Jesus would even need to relate who He is to being a true vine.

Up until Jesus's death on the cross, He spent a lot of time teaching both Jews and Gentiles more about who He was and what He had to come to earth to do.

However, in their sinful and fleshly nature, the Jews had failed, and sin's power was strong.

The Gentiles failed, too.

In fact, Man's best attempt at religion had failed.

Jesus was pointing out that here is only ONE who wouldn't fail.

That is the context and why the passage starts with Jesus saying, "I AM the True Vine".

He is saying "I AM the only One who gives you life. I won't fail. I will bring forth good fruit".

And the miracle here is not that He did it in His own life on earth two thousand years ago, but that He still brings forth good fruit in those who experience His life today.

That's why being connected to the true vine is so important.

One of the most clearly emerging themes from this passage of scripture is the theme of bearing fruit.

What does it mean to bear fruit?

As Christians, we learn about how important it is that our life's "fruit" be evident in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

But is that truly the heart of the matter here?

I wonder what might happen if you found an apple tree and walked up to demanding that it bear fruit.

Would it be fair for you to get angry because the apple tree didn't bear fruit when you demanded it?

That would be absurd.

That fact is that a tree will bear fruit in its season, in due time.

It is designed to bear fruit and we can trust that it will, just not when we demand it to. The tree bears fruit when the conditions are right, and it doesn't need you or me to continuously yell at it to bear fruit.

So, bearing fruit is important there in the passage. It is important and is repeated throughout the scripture But it doesn't start here.

STOP AND THINK:

Let's dig a little deeper:

- The next word that pops out is the word *abide*.
- What does it mean to abide, and why would Jesus use this word to teach his people?
- Jesus said that without abiding there can be no fruit.
- Abiding speaks to communion and fellowship with God.
- It means that we are to remain united and joined to the Lord so that the life of the Vine can come through the branches which will result in fruit.
- If the branch detaches from the vine, there's no way for it to bear fruit because the life source is removed.



READ Roman 7:4

This is why abiding in Christ – our true vine – is so important.

Jesus says that abiding can only happen in Him.

So, only in Christ do we truly have what we need to bear good fruit.

It really speaks to our dependence on Him.

It serves as a reminder to us that apart from Jesus, we can do nothing.

So, what good fruit should we be producing if we're abiding with Christ, our true vine?

- Our character is fruit.



READ Galatians 5:22-23 as it tells us what the fruit of the spirit is.

- Practical righteousness is fruit.



READ Philippians 1:9-11

- Our good works are fruit.



READ Colossians 1:10-11

- Our thankfulness is fruit.



READ Hebrews 13:15 – it says that the fruit of our lips is giving thanks to his name.

With every healthy, growing vine, pruning is necessary.

The Father is the gardner.

He is the one who takes care of the branches in the vine.

Some of the branches He takes away.



READ John 15:1-2 again

The Greek word for “take away” literally means “to lift”.

So, it can be translated as “takes away” or “lifts up”.

One speaks of discipline for the fruitless branch.

The other speaks of encouragement, lifting it up to help it to produce.

Both fall into the hands of our divine gardener who knows what is needed.

The other action mentioned is one that all true believers experience at some point: the pruning.

Grapevines can grow very unruly, especially during the spring and summer months.

One day the branches may be neat and tidy, and it seems that the next time you look branches are growing everywhere and in all directions.

If left to grow on its own, without pruning, the vine would not produce any fruit because it requires sunlight to grow.

When there are too many branches, the light is blocked, preventing new, healthy growth.

The branches of the vine represent our fallen and sinful nature in that we, too, are wild and if left uncared easily get out of control.

The branches grow on and on in different directions, and they must be managed to be fruitful.

There's no one better to do it than the gardener.

So, in John 15, God is calling us to abide in Him and bear fruit.

With this formula, we will be able to produce good fruit in our lives.

Jesus is the source for everything that we need.

When we remain connected to the vine (spiritually), we have a direct line to the source of life, and we can be confident knowing that connection to the vine, although it may bring pruning, is God's intended plan for our lives.

WORKSHEET

I AM (W3)

1. How has God provided for and cared for you?

2. Have you ever undergone the pruning process so that you can produce more fruit?

3. Was that process painful? Was the result worth undergoing the pruning process?

4. What is the key to producing fruit in the life of a Christian?

5. What does it look like for someone to “abide” in Jesus?

6. When Jesus talks about bearing much fruit, is He talking only about evangelism? What other fruit could He be talking about that is important to see in the life of a Christian?

7. What does Jesus say about those who choose not to abide in Him?

8. Do you know people who have chosen to live a life apart from Jesus? What would you say to them if you had the opportunity?

9. As you live connected to Jesus and bear fruit in your life, how can that serve as a witness to unbelievers around you?

10. When Jesus saus, “apart from me you can do nothing” what is He talking about? What things are impossible to accomplish apart from Jesus?

WEEK 04

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE



Scriptures: John 11:1-26; Romans 5:10; Romans 8:11



Because Jesus died and rose from the dead, we can have eternal life.

icebreaker

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- Strips of paper with famous people written on each piece, (Optional, the facilitator to include their own name)
- A bowl or hat

RULES OF THE GAME: Who Am I?

- Choose one student to pick a name from the bowl/hat.
- They will read the name on the paper and without saying anything or giving away any clues, answer “yes” and “no” questions to see if their characters can be guessed.
- The student who calls out the name will be the next player to draw.

Another option for the game:

- Choose one person to start the game. This person is to walk out, and wait outside the room.
- The rest of the group must decide on a famous person, The person that is waiting outside, will “become” this famous person.
- The “famous” person will re-enter the room and proceed to ask the group “yes” and “no” questions to determine WHO that are representing.



Debrief with your students by discussing how we have learned that Jesus “I AM” statements shows us more about His character and who He is.

We can read God’s Word to discover more about him.

LESSON:

What a journey we've been on discovering more about who Jesus is by studying the "I AM" statements in His Word.

Last week, we learned about how Jesus is the true vine.

Apart from that, we have a divine gardener who keeps the branches pruned and healthy so they can produce fruit.

However, we discovered how important it is that we abide in Christ and remain connected to the true vine so that we can produce good fruit.

Branches that become disconnected from the vine wither away, but those who abide live.

In our final week of this study, we are going to explore perhaps the greatest "I AM" statement that Jesus made.

Jesus said, "I AM the resurrection and the life". (John 11:25)

Because Jesus died and rose from the dead, we can have eternal life.

We will unpack this "I AM" statement and learn more about how this applied to our own lives.

As a little bit of background, we need to take some time and read more about what was going on in this passage of scripture.



READ John 11:1-26

This statement was pretty bold for Jesus to make.

To prove the validity of it, He would have to literally raise someone who was dead back to life.

That man, of course, would be Jesus' friend, Lazarus.

This is a well-known story.

Today, let's look at it in two parts.

When we think about “resurrection” and “resurrection life”, it brings up the question as to whether they’re the same thing or two separate things.

How are they related?

What is Jesus really saying here?

This is present and a future reality that Jesus is talking about.

The Bible talks about the resurrection as something that will happen in the future but also something that we can experience right now.

It speaks about life as something that we can enter into when we die, but also as a reality and a hope for this present life.

In John chapter 10, Jesus said, “I am the door” and “I am the good Shepherd”

In all these teachings, the Jews listening to Him became angry and began to gather the nearest stones to throw at Jesus to try to kill Him because they didn’t like what He was saying.

After that, Jesus left Jerusalem, and travelled across the Jordan to a place where John the Baptist had started his ministry.

It was approximately a 40-kilometer trek and one that would have taken about two days for Jesus to walk.

While Jesus, as He always was and is, was panic-free and didn’t get worked up at all.

He already knew from the beginning how things would end.

He didn’t need to worry.

In the face of a life-or-death situation, Jesus calmly responded. “This sickness will not end in death”.

Notice here that Jesus didn’t say that the sickness wouldn’t cause death.

No!

Jesus said that the sickness invading Lazarus’ body would not *end* in death.

And it wouldn’t.

Jesus also said that this was for the glory of God. (v4)

Sometimes, Christians think that sickness is from the enemy or that it is always caused by sin in someone's life.

They might believe that if they have faith, then they won't get sick.

But this story tells quite the opposite tale.

Jesus loved his friend Lazarus.

There is no thought at all here that Lazarus' sickness was caused by his sin.

Instead, we see that the sickness itself can easily be used for God's glory.

Because we are focusing today on the moment of Jesus being the resurrection and the life, it would be worth pausing for a moment to recognise the fact that the ways of God are opposite from the ways of the world.

With God, the way up is down.

Jesus said that he who loses his life will find it.

John the Baptist said that "I must decrease so that He can increase".

Lazarus and all those involved in this story would come out with an entirely new revelation concerning the glory, power, and majesty of Jesus Christ.

It shouldn't surprise us that this great revelation comes from sickness and even death.

The ways of God are not the ways of this world.

This story, where physical life comes through physical death, is a picture of how spiritual life also comes through death- the death of ourselves as we lay our natural ability to live this Christian life on our own without Christ.

May we never underestimate what God can do through sickness or any difficult thing for the matter.

God can use all things for His glory whether we are delivered quickly or asked to endure it.

As we continue to read on in the scripture, we find that Mary and Martha become more confused because Jesus didn't arrive right away.

Lazarus dies, and Jesus shows up four days after his death.

Yet, Jesus is right on time.

When Martha goes out to meet Jesus the first thing she says to Him is, “If you had been here, my brother would not have died”.

I can imagine that both Mary and Martha could have been a little frustrated with Jesus for not coming right away at the news of Lazarus’ illness.

I think they both believed that Jesus could have healed their brother, but Jesus’ slow arrival confused them.

Did Jesus even really care that Lazarus was sick?

Everyone was confused at this point.

Why?

Why didn’t Jesus come sooner?

Why didn’t He save Lazarus when He could have easily done so?

The enemy was probably having a field day with their mind, whispering subtle to them.



READ John 11:25-26

So, all this confusion and sadness over the death of Lazarus leads us to this point.

In response to Martha, Jesus replies, “I AM! I AM LIFE! Whoever believe in me will never die!”



READ Romans 5:10

There is hope in knowing that born-again believers have been reconciled to God by the death of His son Jesus on the cross.



READ Romans 8:11

Mortal means that we are subject to death, and you and I are very much subject to death!

Spiritually speaking, we are subject to death if we have not found life through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Thank God that He has given Himself, who is life, to give to life to our mortal death-producing bodies.

There's also a component to this "I AM" statement that deals with hope for the future.

Jesus said, "He who believe in me is alive and well spiritually even though he dies physically; and whoever has my life, through believing in Me, will never die spiritually".

That is a wonderful promise!

Some theologians believe that Jesus was looking down through the ages when He made this statement, right up until the moment of His return.

Some believe there are two different groups of believers addressed here.

Group one is for most believers throughout this age of grace who have die physically.

They are alive and well even though they have died.

The second promise addresses those that are alive at the end of this age when Jesus returns.

They shall never see death – any type of death.

So, we could paraphrase it as

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even if he dies physically at this age. And everyone who is alive at my return and believes in Me will never die physically or spiritually.

You may not have thought about death very much yet.

Because of Jesus' resurrection, those that are in Him have His life and that life cannot die or end.

Our hope is not in vain!

However, Jesus' words offer no hope to those that do not believe.

They will not pass from death to life.

If you are only born once (just a physical birth), you die twice (physically and spiritually).

If you are born twice (physical and spiritually) you will die once (physically)

And if you are a believer at the time of the Lord's return, you will never see physical or spiritual death!

Because Jesus died and rose from the death, we can have eternal life.

The death and resurrection of Lazarus sealed the deal and pointed His coming battle – and victory – over death.

This also points to how His victory and resurrection will also be played out in the life of every believer when He returns.

WORKSHEET

I AM (W4)

1. How would you respond if you heard that a good friend was very sick?

2. In what way has God used sickness in your life or the life of another to bring someone to Himself?

3. Under what circumstances have you doubted the power of God?

4. In what way has God "raised you from the dead"?

5. If you had been there when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, how do you think you might have responded?

6. Meditating on the fact that Jesus is the resurrection power and the resurrection life, and that He dwells within all who believe how does this changes your perspective in life, suffering, and even death?

7. Describe the raising of Lazarus. What does this last miraculous sign reveal to us about Jesus?

8. How does this lesson encourage or build up faith in Jesus?

9. For the Christian, what are the benefits of Jesus defeating death?

10. What does it mean to be resurrected into eternal life?

