

christ church
moreton

“I AM” sayings

Christ Church Small Groups
Summer 2022

Introduction

During this term we will be looking at the “**I AM**” sayings of Jesus.

The gospel of John has been described as the “profoundest book in the world” (Bishop John AT Robinson), “one of the most influential books ever written” (Stephen Gaukroger), “the most precious book in the New Testament” (William Barclay) and also “the simplest and yet the most profound of the Christian Gospels.” (RVG Tasker).

John’s gospel is certainly worth studying in some depth!

John’s gospel is very different to the other three gospels. John does not mention the birth, baptism or temptations of Jesus. He does not mention the institution of the Holy Communion at the Last Supper, Gethsemane or the ascension. Perhaps more remarkable is the fact that John doesn't write about any of the parables that Jesus told and that figure so prominently in the other gospels.

There have been many reasons given for these differences, but perhaps we should limit ourselves to the explanation given by John himself in John 20:30, 31. **Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name.**

John very carefully selected his material to fulfil his purpose - that of presenting Jesus as the Christ the son of God, who gives salvation to all who believe in him. John does this by presenting his readers with seven signs or miracles, pointing to Jesus, “the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world”. (John 1:29)

These studies are based on the seven “**I AM**” sayings of Jesus that are linked with these signs.

This material originally appeared as a series of studies at St. Andrew’s church, Bebington and is reproduced with permission.

Study 1: I am the Way and The Truth and The Life

Study 2: I am the light of the world

Study 3: I am the gate

Study 4: I am the bread of life

Study 5: I am the true vine you are the branches

Some of these studies are longer than others. Please feel free to omit some questions and focus on those that are of most value to your group.

I have also included a “Homework” question at the end of each study. This is for you to reflect over the following week upon how to apply what we have learnt. Feel free to start your next homegroup with any thoughts that you have had upon this.

I will not be marking the homework.

I am the Way and The Truth and The Life



John uses 7 “**I AM**” sayings of Jesus in his Gospel. This expression was first used in [Exodus 3:14](#) where God, speaking to Moses, describes himself as “**I AM WHO I AM**” and as the “**I AM**”. This comes from the verb ‘to be’ and could be translated as “I am”, “I was”, or “I will be”.

“No other words could so perfectly express the revealed truth and infinite mystery of the nature of a true God. “**I AM WHO I AM**” signifies that he is self-existent, the only real being and the source of reality. That he is self-sufficient. That he is eternal and unchangeable in his promises.” [J. C. Connell].

- 1) What is Jesus saying about himself when he refers to himself as the “**I AM**”?

Read [John 14: 1-7](#)

Note: This passage is part of the talk that Jesus gave to his disciples during the Last Supper. In other words, this is one of the last conversations that Jesus had with his disciples before being arrested, tried and crucified.

- 2) Explain what Jesus said in these verses about his second coming and heaven?
- 3) What did Jesus mean when he said that he was “the way and the truth and the life?”
- 4) If someone asked you if people from other religions will go to heaven, what would you say? Give reasons?

Read [John 14: 8-14](#)

- 5) What do you think Jesus meant when he said anyone who has seen me has seen the Father?
- 6) What do you think Jesus meant by his statement in [John 14:12](#)?
- 7) Do you think that it still applies to Christians today? (Link your answers with [John 14:13,14](#))

Homework:

Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’

As Jesus is the only way, is there anything more that Christ Church should be doing to show the people of Moreton this way?

I am the light of the world

Introduction

In chapters 8 and 9 of his gospel John picks up on the themes first mentioned in [John 1:4-5](#) “In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.” In [John 8:12](#) Jesus declares that he is the light of the world and in Chapter 9 he gives light to a blind man. The Jews do not understand this healing and excommunicate the blind man from the synagogue. This also illustrates [John 1:11-12](#), “He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right become children of God.”

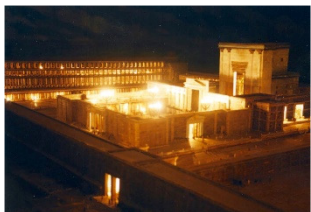
Read [John 8:12](#)

In [John 7:2-14](#) we're told that Jesus was in Jerusalem for the feast of the tabernacle's, or Sukkot, as the Jews call it today. This festival celebrates the completion of the late harvest, but also remembered



the time when the Israelites were travelling from Egypt to the promised land. For the week of the festival, Jews lived in temporary shelters like their ancestors in the wilderness.

In the time of Jesus, on the evening of the first day of the festival, there was a ceremony called “The illumination of the temple”. Four big candelabra were placed in the centre of the court of women.



As darkness fell, these candelabra were lit, as a reminder of the pillar of fire that guided the Israelites in the wilderness. See [Exodus 13:21](#). The blaze could be seen all over Jerusalem.

- 1) Discuss what Jesus meant when he claimed to be the light of the world. Take into account the setting and [Exodus 13:21](#).
- 2) In [John 8:12](#) Jesus claimed to be the light of the world. In [Matthew 5:14](#) Jesus said that his disciples are the light of the world. Discuss how both are true.

Read [John 8:57-59](#).

- 3) What did Jesus mean by this statement?
- 4) Why did the Jews pick up stones to stone him?

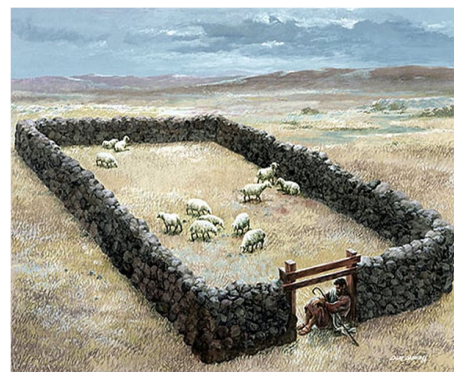
Read [John 9:1-5](#).

- 5) When the disciples saw the blind beggar what do you think their first reaction should have been?
- 6) What was their first reaction?

Homework:

When you see, for example, a homeless person selling the big issue, how do you react? How do most people react? Should a Christian be prepared to show more sympathy than others and help such people? What should have help should / could we give?

I am the gate



Read [John 10:1-6](#)

This passage is a link passage. John 9 ends with a blind man that Jesus had just healed being thrown out of a synagogue. That is, excommunicated, by the Pharisees, the leaders of the Jews.

John 10 starts with a comparison between Jesus, the gate for the sheep, the Good Shepherd, and the leaders for people, the thieves and robbers, the hired hand who cares nothing for the sheep. The Old Testament frequently pictures the leaders of Israel as shepherds who did not do their jobs properly. Here's just one example:

“Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!” Declares the Lord. Therefore, this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: “Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done,” declares the Lord.’ [Jeremiah 23:1-2](#).

There were two types of sheepfold in Palestine:

First there were communal sheepfolds which were often found in towns and villages. These were used mainly in the winter. Shepherds would bring their sheep down from the hills and leave them in fold overnight in the care of a watchmen. In the morning the shepherd would return and call his own sheep out and lead them to a new pasture.

Secondly, there were sheepfolds out in the hills which, during the warm months, the shepherds would use overnight. The shepherd would sleep across the opening.

- 1) What type of sheepfold was Jesus referring to in [John 10:1-6](#)?
- 2) Discuss the meaning of this 'figure of speech', e.g. who were the strangers in the thieves?

Read [John 10:7-13](#)

- 3) Which type of sheepfold was Jesus referring to [John 10:7-10](#)?
- 4) In what way is Jesus the gate for the sheep?

Read [John 5:1-9](#).

This is the third sign recorded by John. As in other instances, the sign is followed by a detailed conversation, this time between Jesus and the Jewish leaders who had criticised his action.

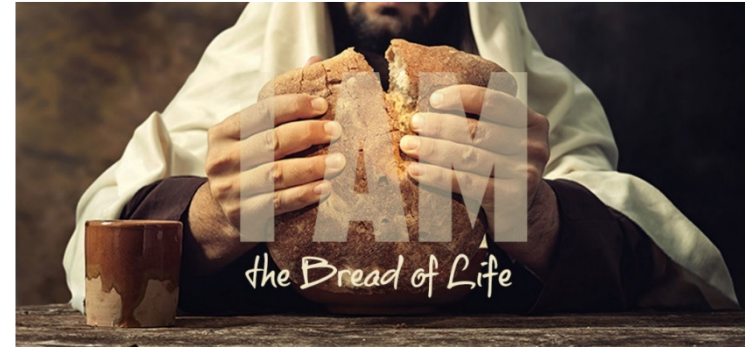
The sign has clear links with John chapter 10 where Jesus describes himself as the gate to the sheepfold. All who came before him, the Jewish leaders, were thieves and robbers.

- 5) List the problems that the invalid had.
- 6) Note carefully the order of events that led to his healing.
- 7) Why do you think Jesus chose to heal this particular invalid?

Homework.

"Do you want to get well?" We all need to ask ourselves whether we really want to be whole, healed people, or are we content with being emotionally, physically, and spiritually sick and crippled? The message from this passage is that God can heal us from whatever we need to be healed but do you want to get well?

I am the bread of life



Introduction

In this study we will be looking at both the saying of Jesus: "I am the bread of life" and the related conversation that Jesus had with the crowd. The two topics cannot be separated. They are closely related to the sign of the feeding of the 5000. The purpose of a sign was that he might preach the sermon.

In other words, the sign pointed to Jesus, the bread of life. This is in keeping with the general theme of John's gospel "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John 20: 30 31.

Read [John 6:22-29](#)

- 1) Why was Jesus not very impressed by the inquisitiveness of the people and the enthusiasm that they showed for him?
- 2) How did Jesus respond to this misplaced enthusiasm, and what did he mean?

God's seal of approval ([John 6:27](#)). 'There is a wealth of meaning in the phrase: "On him God the father has placed his seal of approval."' [H.B. Tristram]. It was not the signature, but seal that authenticated in the ancient world. In commercial and political documents it was the seal, imprinted with the signet ring, which made the document valid.

- 3) What does it mean that God the father has placed his seal of approval on Jesus?
- 4) Look up the following verses and discuss what it means for Christian to be sealed by God.

[Ephesians 1: 13,14](#)

[Ephesians 4:30](#)

[2 Corinthians 1: 21-22](#)

Read [John 6: 30-40](#)

Manna in the desert: When the children of Israel were travelling from Egypt, where they had been slaves, through the desert to the promised land, God rained down bread from heaven to feed them.

[Exodus 16](#).

There was a strong Jewish belief that the Messiah would do the same thing: "As the first Redeemer (Moses) caused the manna to fall from heaven so shall a second Redeemer cause the manna to fall."

[William Barclay]

- 5) What mistake did the Jews make about the manna in the desert?
- 6) What mistake did the Jews make about the bread that Jesus spoke about?
- 7) Discuss what Jesus meant when he described himself as the bread of life, and what this means for Christians today.

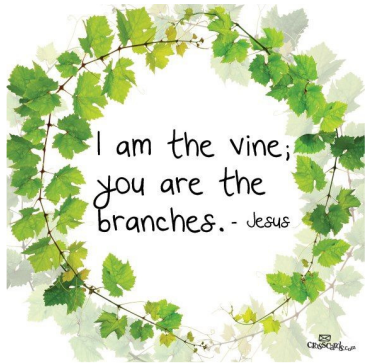
Read [John 6: 41-59](#)

- 8) Why did the Jews complain about Jesus? [John 6:41- 42?](#)
- 9) What mistakes did they make about Jesus?

Homework:

The crowds followed Jesus for a number of reasons. Why do you follow Jesus? How do you show this by your actions?

I am the true vine you are the branches



Introduction

The illustrations that Jesus uses in John's gospel, especially the I AM sayings, are frequently based on passages and themes from the Old Testament. The picture of a vine is no exception. And the disciples, to whom Jesus was speaking at the time, would have understood this new teaching on

the illustration.

Look at the following passages and indicate who is meant by the vine (or the vineyard) and what is its "condition".

[Isaiah 5:1-7](#)

[Ezekiel 19:1,10-14](#)

[Hosea 10:1-2](#)

1. In the light of above passages, discuss why Jesus referred to himself as the true vine.

Read [John 15:1-8](#)

2. How is this thought (of replacing old with something new) seen in the statement of Jesus that "He is the true vine?"
3. Compare and contrast a picture of gardening with being Christian.
4. What particular lessons are there for here for us individually and as a church?
5. What degrees of fruit bearing are mentioned in this passage and which applies to you? What do you think it means to bear fruit?

Read [John 15:5-17](#)

Although John 15:1-8 gives the metaphor and John 15: 8-17 gives a commentary on the metaphor, it is useful to overlap the two passages to get the full force of the illustration.

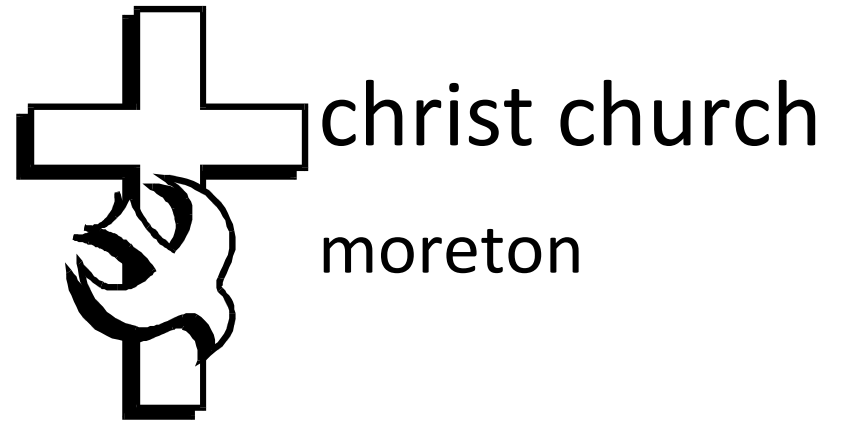
6. Make a list of the privileges Christians can have if they remain in the vine (Christ).
7. List the conditions that apply for remaining in the Christ.
8. In John 15:7 Jesus says that is we that if we ask for whatever we wish, it will be given us. Try to explain this in relation to the illustration of the remaining in the vine.

Important

It is important that we don't press this parable or metaphor too far. It is all about fruit bearing. We must stay close to (remain in) Jesus if we if we are to be fruitful. The parable has nothing to do with whether or not we can be "cut off" from the vine, that is, to lose our salvation It is the clear teaching of scripture that this will never happen.

Homework:

Is there anything, personally or in our church, that we need to do in order for us to be more fruitful?



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making disciples

growing disciples

being disciples