



# A Word from the Lord

**A Wonderful Day in the Lord**

**A WONDERFUL DAY IN THE LORD  
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## **August 30, 2021**

In this series, we are going to talk about a *word* from the Lord. We all need a word from the Lord, don't we? As a matter of fact, a secondary purpose behind all that we are doing in these series is to encourage one another to be in the Word every day. So, if you get up every morning and read this series, that is not enough to really walk with Christ like you should. It's a starter, like a vitamin pill, or a glass of orange juice in the morning for breakfast. It will get you rolling and maybe encourage you to get further into the Word. It's a Word from the Lord as we look at scriptures together that will help you to walk with Him. We hope it has been doing that.

Another idea behind these series is that you might develop a habit of meeting with the Lord daily. We need that Word from the Lord. That Word is found in the scriptures alone. God does not speak to us independent of the scriptures. The Holy Spirit has inspired the Word of God and has given us this scripture and the Word that God wants us to have and to know. As we read the Bible, Old or New Testament, whatever genre we are looking at, we are finding God's Word to us. It is our great privilege to be able to do that. I was speaking to a class recently here at church and reminding one another how wonderful it is that we have a Bible in our hands. We are one of the few people in all of history that can go into our homes and churches and pick up our own personal Bible to read it, study it, and meditate over it. In times past, there was maybe a scroll here or there. Maybe a copy of the Word of God that was chained to the pulpit at churches, but people didn't have their own copies to go home to. If they had anything it was something they had written down themselves, or copied from church, or maybe a fragment here or there. The privilege of having the entire 66 books of scripture as the Word of God to speak to us is a privilege that should never be shunned and should always be enjoyed. It is not an obligation in the sense of that you must do this, and it just has to be done. It is something that is enjoyable. It feeds our souls. It draws us to the Lord Himself. It opens us up to the opportunities of prayer. It is our lifeline in a very real sense in the Christian life. A word from the Lord is important and we hope that as you contemplate this broadcast and as you study this series that it is developing in you a deeper habit of being in the Word, and hearing what God has to say.

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There are lots of ways to read the Bible. You can go through the scriptures quickly. Some people try to read it every year. Some people read a chronological Bible in the order of the timeline that it was written. Others will slow down and read short passages of scriptures and meditate upon them. Maybe one methodology that is popular right now is to read a book of the Bible over and over and over for a whole month and getting the principles and the understanding of that book down. There are lots of ways to go about it. I don't think scripture ever prescribes one way to do it. It does, however, prescribe that we read it. It tells us that we will be blessed when we do, and we are to meditate on the Word of God. That Word of God as meditated, sought through, and prayed over begins the process of changing us in our lives. Romans 12 tells us that we need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Our minds naturally are corrupt and thinking in ways they should not think. Our minds are in the process of being transformed by the understanding of the Word of God. Therefore, a word from Him is important.

We want to encourage you to do this every day and make this time just a starter for you each day.

I also want to encourage you to use these series as family devotions. The family can sit down and go through this information and ask questions and feed on the Word that way.

What we are going to do in this series is take a word, an important biblical concept or word each time, and talk about that one word. The word for the day will be an important, theological, and biblical word that we are going to try to understand better so we can walk better with the Lord.

I hope you can join us in each session, and I trust you will enjoy our time together.

## August 31, 2021 – Depravity

The first word we will look at is *depravity*. That is kind of a negative start, but it will lay the foundation for a very positive week to come.

We are looking at Romans 3:10-18 and we will find that depravity basically means corrupt. You might hear the term total depravity which is the idea that every aspect of our being is depraved or corrupt. Let's read Romans,

"as it is written,  
'There is none righteous, not even one;  
There is none who understands,  
There is none who seeks for God;  
All have turned aside, together they have become useless;  
There is none who does good,  
There is not even one.'  
'Their throat is an open grave,  
With their tongues they keep deceiving,'  
'The poison of asps is under their lips';  
'Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness';  
'Their feet are swift to shed blood,  
Destruction and misery are their paths,  
And the path of peace they have not known.'  
'There is no fear of God before their eyes.'"

That is a very vivid description of depravity. It's the corruption of every aspect of our being.

It means that we are fallen because of the sin of Adam and Eve that we participated in. We are fallen creatures and corrupt in our being. We are not in relationship with the Lord as we should be. Scripture also teaches that we could be worse.

Some want to point out the issue of common grace. The Lord gives common grace to humanity so that we do not all fulfill the full amount of our corruption. We could all be worse than we are. We do not live out the fullest detail of the depravity and the corruption of our natures. That is a good gift from God. Many people that do not know Christ and are totally depraved and

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do not have the Holy Spirit in their lives are nevertheless good people by the world's standards. They do good things; they are good neighbors and so forth. Nevertheless, their spiritual DNA is that of depravity or corruption.

We find in other places in Scriptures such as Ephesians 2:1-2 that we are also dead in our sins. That means that we are separated from God, and we are dead in our sins in such a way that we cannot do anything that truly is in alignment with God. We cannot do anything that truly pleases God. As a matter of fact, other Scriptures say that without faith it is impossible to please Him. So, we cannot please God in our natural state. Again, that does not mean we cannot do good things by the world's standards, but we cannot fulfill the righteousness of Christ. We cannot do those things that only Christ can give us in His own righteousness because we are dead in our sins.

That means we are incapable of pleasing God. We are incapable of earning our own salvation. That is an important facet of this. Because we are dead in sin and because we are totally, in every aspect of our being, corrupt, we are incapable of pleasing God and winning our own salvation.

That leads us to the very fact that we can never merit salvation. It goes back to our nature that is depraved or corrupt. We can never do enough good to balance the scale of good and evil because we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, according to Romans 3:23. We are a mess! But the good news is that God sent His Son to save people who could not rescue themselves or deliver themselves and could do nothing to make themselves right with God. Try as they may with all their religious activities and good deeds in this life, they can never reach God's standard. Only Christ can do that. And He did it on our behalf so that depraved people, people who are by nature corrupt, can be saved, not on the basis of our merit and goodness, but on the basis of Jesus Christ's goodness and righteousness for us. Even the word depravity leads to a very positive thing and that is: Jesus Christ has made the provisions to save us from our sins.

We are going to look at some other words going forward that will talk about exactly what Christ has done for us in our salvation process.

We will pick up there next time.

## September 1, 2021 – Redemption

Our word last time was *depravity* which is moral and complete corruption of our very nature. We were born sinners. We can do nothing to make ourselves right before God and all that leads to the things that Jesus Christ had to do for us so that we could be right before Him.

Redemption is not a common word in our secular language. We do use it occasionally, but we probably have a different understanding of it than the biblical terminology. Let's read 1 Peter 1:18-19, it says, "knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

Let us start with the word *redemption*. In the New Testament there are three different words translated redeemed or redemption. I have often taught over the years, that I think, these three words give us the full package and understanding of what it means to be redeemed.

The background of this word comes out of the slave market. The Jewish people knew something of slavery and there was a redemption process there among the Jewish people in the Old Testament. In the New Testament we have the Greeks and Romans that knew much about the slave market, and they understood what redemption meant there. So, I am going to go with those two contexts and look at these three words that help us understand the meaning.

### 1. Agorazo

Agorazo means *to buy*. If you picture a slave market in ancient times, someone goes down to a slave market and there are slaves being sold. In ancient times, it wasn't like the American system, many of these slaves were being sold into slavery and had been captured in war. Some have sold themselves into slavery because of financial situations. These individuals would be sold to a master. The master would go out and *buy*, that slave. Spiritually speaking then, we are *purchased*, by Christ.

2. Exagorazo

Exagorazo means *out of*. We are bought *out of* the slave market of sin. So, we have a slave, and someone goes down to the auction and buys the slave and brings him *out of* the slave market and takes him home to be his own. Spiritually speaking, we are not only purchased, but we are *purchased out of* the slave market of sin so that sin is no longer our domain or master. We have been purchased by another and taken home.

3. Latreuo

Latreuo means *to set free*. So, a slave could be bought by a master, and he could be taken out of the slave market and the master now has every right to do with that slave whatever he wants to do. That master could set the slave free. That slave who was once in the slave market belonging to a master has now been brought out and *set free*. Spiritually speaking we have been *set free* to be servants or followers of a new master, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord didn't save us to set us free for us to live our own life independent of Him, but now we are under His leadership and His mastery. We belong to Him.

That is what 1 Peter 1:19 is saying here. It is referencing the blood of Christ. The purchase price for our spiritual slavery is the precious blood of Jesus Christ that was shed for us, to take us out of the slave market of sin and set us free to follow Him.

Redemption is a beautiful picture of what the Lord had to do to set us free from the bondage and enslavement of sin that we all were born into. Now, because of Jesus Christ, we have been set free to follow Him and for Him to be our loving and glorious master.

*Redemption* is a wonderful word to contemplate today!

## September 2, 2021 – Justification

Our word for today is *justification*. We are looking at important words found in scripture.

We are going to look at Romans 3:23-24 which says, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”

We saw that word redeemed or redemption last time. The Lord purchases us out of the slave market of sin and sets us free to be followers of a new master, Jesus Christ. Today we are looking at justification. It is because we have sinned and fallen short of His glory that we need to be justified. The word justified was a battle cry in the time of the Reformation. The Roman Catholic church had looked at that word and were claiming that justification was a process. You could be justified before God, but it was a process. Faith was involved, but so were the sacraments and various requirements that had to be kept for the individual to be justified. So, it became a kind of works-based salvation – you could be saved by faith *plus* all these different things that you had to do to be justified. The Reformers came along and rightly understood the Scriptures taught that justification was not a process, rather it was a gift as this passage says. It is a gift that God gives those who are fallen, those who are sinners and need to be redeemed. We have been justified.

The word itself means to declare righteous. You might even find sometimes in Scripture the word righteous and justified are overlapping in translations in different places because that is the basic meaning. It is to be righteous. It is not **our** righteousness; however, it is not something we merit or grow in or develop. It is a declared righteousness. It is a legal term. We have been declared righteous. It is like we are going to court, and the judge declares us not guilty. It is even more than that though. It is actual righteousness of God that we are talking about here. ***We have been declared righteous by the Lord Jesus Himself.***

In 2 Corinthians 5:21 it says, “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”



I think there are two sides to the issue of justification.

1. We have been forgiven.

As justified sinners, we have been forgiven. Our sins, which are many, that we are incapable of purging or declaring our innocence from, have been forgiven and they are off the table. The Lord has purged those because of Jesus Christ.

2. Righteousness is the other side.

We need more than forgiveness we need to have the righteousness of God, and that is what He says in 2 Corinthians 5:21 "So, through what Christ has done for us we have been forgiven for our sins, but we have also been given the righteousness of God."

That is staggering to consider if we think about it for a moment. I can see being forgiven to a certain degree, at least momentarily. If I sin against you and you forgive me, then I am at least momentarily forgiven. If I sin today against God and go to the Lord and confess my sins, as Scripture says in 1 John 1:9, He is faithful and just to forgive me of my sins. So, I can have that momentary forgiveness and release from my sins. That is a wonderful thing. It is valuable, important, and necessary. However, to have the righteousness of God also given to me is just staggering. How can I receive the righteousness of God? How can I be righteous before Him? It is impossible. I cannot ever do enough good. I can't go to church enough, read my Bible enough, pray enough or be good enough to say that I am righteous before God. It simply is not a possibility. No human, no matter how good and gracious could ever reach that standard.

So, we go to a passage like this, and it says Christ died for our sins, on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God. He transforms us from the sinners we were in our depravity to the righteousness of God and that is a gift from God that only He can do.

So, *justification* is a marvelous biblical word that tells us that we have not only been forgiven of our sins, but we have been made the righteousness of God.

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Glory in that today and consider that! It will give you a wonderful day in the Lord.

## **September 3, 2021 – Reconciliation**

We are looking at Romans 5 for our word *reconciliation* which is not a word that is commonly used in everyday language although it is occasionally used. In the biblical terminology, we are looking at reconciliation with God.

Our great need ultimately is to be reconciled with God. If you think of the whole picture of salvation, our problem is that because we are sinners we are alienated from a righteous God. That is our major problem and all the teaching in scripture is dealing with how a sinner can be righteous before God. How can we be reconciled to Him? We are alienated and separated from Him, and we need reconciliation.

Romans 5:10 talks about reconciliation, "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation." This is a great passage in Scripture. I encourage you to read Romans 5. As Paul is teaching, he is closing his teaching of how to be saved and all about justification and so forth. He is pulling a lot of that together before he springs into Romans 6-8 talking about sanctification – or spiritual maturity and growth. As he does so, he is looking at the factors that have kept us from being right with God. Our spiritual alienation – or separation. Here in this passage, he calls us sinners, ungodly, and even the enemy of God. Most of us don't like to think of ourselves as the enemy of God. We like to think that at our very worst we were noncommittal. To think that we are enemies of God is a horrible thing to consider. If there is a true God and you want to be an enemy of that God, you are certainly on the wrong side of things, right? We do not want to be that way, but that is what the Lord says. He says, we were actually the enemies of God, and it was while we were the enemies of God that Jesus Christ came to save us. He didn't wait until we cleaned up our act, or stopped being enemies, or stopped being sinners, or stopped being ungodly. He came while we were in that very condition. He came in order that we might receive reconciliation. We were alienated from Him, and we were His enemies and now we are His friends. We were once separated and now we are on His side. That is the idea of reconciliation.

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Turn to 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 it says, "Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Paul says here that the Lord has come to bring us reconciliation with Himself. Then he says that we, speaking here of himself and the apostles, but this is reflective of all of us, we have a ministry of reconciliation. We have the privilege of telling people how they can be right with God. How they who are enemies can be His friends. How those who are alienated from Him can be reconciled. We have that precious and beautiful ministry. In 2 Corinthians 5:20, he pleads with his audience begging them on behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God. Even though his audience is mostly Christians, there were some reading his material or hearing his words that needed to be reconciled with God. They were outside of the friendship with the Lord. They were alienated from Him, and he pleads with them to be reconciled with Him. They can only be reconciled as 2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us because of the righteousness of God given to us through Jesus Christ who died for our sins on our behalf.

Reconciliation. What a beautiful word to contemplate today.

## Week One Review

- Depravity – corruption of every aspect of our being  
Because we are dead in sin and because we are totally, in every aspect of our being, corrupt, we are incapable of pleasing God and winning our own salvation.

Romans 3:10-18

- Redemption – purchase out of, set free

The purchase price for our spiritual slavery is the precious blood of Jesus Christ that was shed for us, to take us out of the slave market of sin and set us free to follow Him. Redemption is a beautiful picture of what the Lord had to do to set us free from the bondage and enslavement of sin that we all were born into.

1 Peter 1:18-19

- Justification – to declare righteous

*Justification* is a marvelous biblical word that tells us that we have not only been forgiven of our sins, but we have been made the righteousness of God.

Romans 3:23-24; 2 Corinthians 5:21

- Reconciliation – change in the relationship between God and man

He says, we were actually the enemies of God, and it was while we were the enemies of God that Jesus Christ came to save us. He didn't wait until we cleaned up our act, or stopped being enemies, or stopped being sinners, or stopped being ungodly. He came while we were in that very condition. He came in order that we might receive reconciliation. We were alienated from Him, and we were His enemies and now we are His friends. We were once separated and now we are on His side.

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Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

## September 6, 2021 – Propitiation

We are looking at important theological, or biblical words that are important to our faith and understanding the Christian life in each lesson. We have already looked at five other words. We are going to look at the fancy word of *propitiation* this time.

This word is so out of sync with our vocabulary that many of the newer translations don't even translate it as propitiation. They say something like, atoning, sacrifice, or something along that line which really doesn't cover the real meaning of the word propitiation. It's only found a few times in Scripture, but it is a very important word.

Let's read Romans 3:25, "Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God, He passed over the sins previously committed." Here is one of our Scriptures where propitiation shows up speaking of Christ as the "whom" that was displayed. The word itself means to satisfy. It is the flip side of the issue of redemption. When we ask the question: Why did Jesus come to earth and die on the cross? We give the answer that He came to redeem us from sin and set us free of the bondage of sin and to save us. Those are good and correct answers, but there is a flip side to that in which most people don't think about which is wrapped up in this word propitiation. It is the idea that God's righteous justice and wrath against sin had to be satisfied in some manner. It helps us to understand what takes place here by looking at two central attributes of God. One is holiness and the other is justice. God is a holy God. He is righteous, He is holy, He is pure, and He is without sin. Because He is a righteous and holy God, He cannot simply look the other way at sin. He cannot simply airbrush it out of the universe and accept us into His presence complete with our sins. His wrath is poured out against sin because He is holy. That brings us to the word justice.

Everyone wants to talk about justice today. Social justice is a big deal. There is only one being in all the universe who is totally just. Only God is just, so the attribute of justice, God's justice, demands something to be done about sin because He is holy. So, we put together holiness and justice and we see there is a real problem with the issue of sin from God's perspective, not just ours. We have a real problem because we are sinners in need of redemption,

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but the issue with God is that His righteous and holy wrath and justice must be poured out against sin. What deals with that? For us, it is settled on salvation. Christ's blood covered our sins and paid for our sins so that we could be saved and redeemed. For God, the blood of Jesus Christ satisfied this righteous and holy wrath that God has against sin and against sinners. That is the meaning of the word propitiation. This is to satisfy God's holy and righteous anger.

There is another scripture in 1 John 2:2 that also uses this word, it says, "and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." Here is a second use of the word propitiation. It is very clear in 1 John that Christ Himself is that propitiation. He is the one who satisfied the righteous, just, and holy anger of God against sin by going to the cross for us. In His work on the cross, He paid for the sins of the sinner so that our sins could be forgiven, but He also covered the wrath of God and paid the wrath of God and satisfied righteous justice and judgment against sin that God must pour out. Therefore, we become redeemable because God's wrath has been satisfied through the blood of Jesus Christ.

That is our word propitiation. It is a big one and a good one. Meditate on that today!



## September 7, 2021 – Regeneration

Our word today is *regeneration*. This word is more common to us than propitiation, at least in our Christian world. This word is found primarily in Titus 3:5 which says, "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit." As we look at this verse, we see Christ saved us, not according to anything that we have done to deserve salvation, but according to God's mercy and grace. Then it says, "through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit;" so, this is a ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the unredeemed and unsaved person that brings him to the state of redemption and in this case, regeneration.

Regeneration basically means to make alive. Something that was once dead is now alive. Something that did not exist in its present form is now existing. Jesus talked about it with Nicodemus in John 3:7 and used basically this same word, but it is translated as born again or born from above, depending on your translation. He told Nicodemus that in order to have eternal life, you must be born from above, or born again. So that is the word regeneration. A new birth.

We find the same thing in 1 Peter 1:3, it says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." So, it is a second birth, just as Jesus told Nicodemus and that is the idea of regeneration. That which was dead has now been made alive. That which was born physically has now been born spiritually.

What is the result of regeneration? The result is a new nature and a new life that is ours. One of the best verses on that is 2 Corinthians 5:17 when it says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." We are new creations, or creatures. We are born in the flesh with an old sinful nature. Our nature as we are born unregenerate is a nature that always moves toward sin. It chooses sin and it desires sin. The darkness does not like the light. Jesus told Nicodemus that men love darkness rather than light. That is our nature. It is sinfulness. In our old nature we not only desire sin, but we don't desire the things of God. We truly don't desire to please Him and in fact, we cannot.

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At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit comes into our lives, and He does a number of wonderful ministries. One of those is regeneration. He makes us new creatures. He makes us new creations and we are now no longer, in essence, sinners. We are saints. Now, unfortunately, saints sin. There is this dual issue that Luther even talked about back in the Reformation era in which we are kind of doing both. We sin, so in that sense we are sinners, but our nature has been changed and we are saints. So, we no longer sin as we once did, we have a new nature, we are a new creation, and we are new in Jesus Christ. So that passage of Scripture is very important to us in that regard.

As we think about these things, we realize that had the Lord not saved us, none of us would desire Him. None of us would want to live for Him, or choose Him, or have the fruit of the spirit that is produced by the Holy Spirit. Regeneration is absolutely essential in our life of living for the Lord. We are dependent upon being new creatures in Christ, and in having this new nature that we have been made saints in Him. Born again as Jesus told Nicodemus.

You and I have that privilege if we know Jesus Christ as our Savior, to be born again, saved, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit and therefore able to live in a way that pleases Him by faith.

This should give us a wonderful day in the Lord as we consider all these things.

## September 8, 2021 – Adoption

Today's word is the beautiful word of *adoption*. Ephesians 1:4-5 says, "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will." We find that word adoption in Ephesians as one of the benefits that we have in coming to Christ. He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Him.

To understand this word, adoption, we must back up a bit. We have a different understanding of adoption in our culture today. In the Greek and Roman culture, this was a different understanding. The Jews didn't really have an idea for adoption in the same way, but the Romans did, and it was a rather complicated system. As a matter of fact, if you had a son, as he was growing up, he would be considered a child. Then there was a point of time, kind of like a bar mitzvah, in which this child would be accepted as a son. He would be adopted into the family and now be considered a son, not a child, and in essence have the rights of an adult in the family. The word was also used for those that were not relatives as well. Adults could even be adopted by someone outside the family to be in your family and have all the rights of your family. The best-known case historically, is Julius Caesar, who adopted Octavian in his will. Octavian was 18 years old when Julius Caesar died. He was a relative, he was Julius' great-nephew, but he was not the son of Julius Caesar. So, when he adopted him, he made Octavian part of the dynasty, and his name was changed to Augustus by the leadership, and he became known as Caesar Augustus. He would end up being the emperor over Rome for a long time. However, he was not a direct descendent of Julius Caesar, but he was adopted into the family of Julius Caesar and as a result he had all the rights of Julius Caesar. So, that was part of the adoption program. That was something that happened on occasion, usually by more of the wealthy people, who would adopt someone into the family who would obtain the rights of the family.

What does that mean spiritually if we have been adopted into the family of God? That means there is a new status. We are a new person. Our position has changed as a result of being adopted into His family. Look at Romans 8:15, it says, "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear

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again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" There is a very sweet aspect to this. When the Lord brings us into His family, we don't come as slaves. We are not simply slaves or servants, and we don't have that fear factor that a slave might suffer serving his master. Instead, we come into His family as adopted sons of Him. Therefore, we cry out, "Abba! Father!" which is an endearing way of speaking of a close relationship with our Father. So, adoption brings us into the family, so that we are literally a part of the family of God.

In the Roman system, when someone was adopted into the family, the past was erased and a new position in this person was realized. This was true legally. Their name was changed, and their status was changed. This was true criminally. If you had a criminal background, it was all erased. If you owed debts, all of them were removed and you no longer owed those debts. You now had all the rights of the family that you are adopted into. The past is gone and now you have this new position and the new rights in the family.

Applying that to the Christian life we recognize that in the past, we were a different person. We were steeped and enslaved to our sins and enslaved to Satan. We were bound toward hell. Then God bought us into His family. He adopted us into His family as sons and all the past has now been erased in that sense, and now, we are a new person in Christ. We now have a new position. We are in the family of God with all the rights of that family. On top of that, it is the rights of an adult person in that family, so we are not required to grow into those rights. We receive those rights at the moment of salvation and adoption. Someone who is newly adopted into the family by salvation has all the same rights as someone who has been adopted in the family for fifty years. We have all the rights that belong to the family of God. We have been adopted into that family.

What a blessed word, right!? It is one to meditate on and thank the Lord for!

## September 9, 2021 – Forgiveness

Our word today is *forgiveness*. What a sweet and important word. This word is incredibly valuable to us. We love it when we think about forgiveness. It is an issue that permeates every aspect of life. Without forgiveness there is a hardness, bitterness, and conflict. With forgiveness, so many things can be resolved. We are so grateful that forgiveness is one of the aspects of what the Lord gives us at the moment of redemption.

A general idea of the word forgiveness means that something is off the table. If we have been forgiven that issue no longer bears any pressure on us. It is no longer counted against us. It is completely removed from the table, and it is gone. It does not come back again to haunt us or challenge us or condemn us. It should be that way between people. If someone sins against us and harms us and we forgive them then that issue should be resolved and off the table. It shouldn't be brought back up again. It shouldn't be reoccurring; it is gone and off the table. That is very important in relationships, but it is far more important in our relationship with God.

In Matthew 26:26, at the first Lord's supper we find, "While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.'" Forgiveness is at the heart of the Lord's supper as He pointed to these elements that would be symbolic of what He would do for us.

What takes place when we are forgiven of our sins by God?

There are three things we are released from at that moment:

1. We are released from the guilt and punishment for sin.

Released is a legal term. It is the idea that legally, we are set free and released from these things. We are no longer held responsible and no longer held guilty. It would be like going before a judge and he declares us not guilty, and we are now set free. We no longer

have to be concerned about being punished. We are considered not guilty. That is forgiveness. It is off the table and gone and we are no longer held accountable for that.

2. We are released from the effects of sin.

The effect of sin is ultimately death. According to Romans 6:23, it says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." The ultimate effect of sin is physical and spiritual death. If death means separation – as we have talked about before – to die physically means our soul is separated from the body, so that our soul is no longer in our bodies. That is physical death. Spiritual death is a separation from God. We are not united with God we are separated from Him. Eternal death is eternal separation from the Lord. The effect of sin is death. Physically, of course, we will die because of sin. However, our death spiritually is far more important. Forgiveness by God removes sin's threat of spiritual death. Sin can no longer have its way over us. We must still experience physical death, but we are released from the spiritual death of sin in our lives.

3. We are released from the wrath of God.

We talked about that a few lessons ago when we looked at the word propitiation. The holy and just wrath of God is poured out on sin and sinners, and something must happen to release us from that consequence of the wrath of God. That is forgiveness. When the Lord forgives us; He totally forgives us. His justice has been satisfied and His wrath is no longer poured out on those who have been saved by the blood of Jesus Christ because He has redeemed us by His own blood. In Hebrews 9:22, it says this, "And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." It would take the blood of Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God, to die in our place and shed His blood so we could have forgiveness from sin and be released from all the power that sin has had over us and from the wrath of God.

Forgiveness is indispensable in the Christian life, isn't it? What would we do without the forgiveness that is found only through the blood of Jesus Christ? What a glorious and wonderful truth that we have meditated upon today. I

## A Word from the Lord

hope you have appreciated that, and I hope you give more attention to it today.

September 10, 2021 – Trespass & Sin

For our final word this week we are looking at two words that overlap. The words *trespass* and *sin*. In Ephesians 2:1, it puts these two words in the same sentence and says, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins." I think we often just couple those two words together and think of them as being synonymous terms. They are not quite synonymous. They give us a full picture of our sinfulness.

Let's start with the fact that we are dead in our trespasses and sins. There is a spiritual death that we are born into. We are born sinners. We are born guilty. We are born in a situation in which we have no spiritual life or relationship with God and that is our original state. That is what we are born into. That is what he is speaking about in Ephesians 2 as he is talking about how we can get out of that situation through what Jesus Christ has done for us as we receive His grace by faith alone. He said we are dead in trespasses and sins.

What is the difference between trespasses and sins? When you understand the meaning of the words you will see how they complement each other. Trespass is the idea of a deliberate act of deviating from the law or will of God. Again, we are born that way automatically deviating from the will of God. That is our stated personhood. We are those that deviate from the will of God and the Word of God and the law of God. We do not want to be what God wants us to be by nature. That is who we are by nature. It helps us to understand the word trespass when we walk around somewhere, and we see a sign that says no trespassing. Recently, I was in a location in the countryside, and there were a number of places that I wanted to go trekking back into the woods and check out and see what it was like, and I kept running into these signs that said no trespassing. That property belonged to someone else and if I decided to walk onto that property, I was trespassing and I was deviating from the will of the owner, and I could be prosecuted for that according to the sign. So, I was not to walk on those properties. To trespass is to step onto a territory where you are forbidden. A territory where God does not want you to go. You were dead in those trespasses.

Sin has a slightly different meaning. The word sin itself means to miss the mark. Romans 3:23 is one of the best verses on sin, "for all have sinned and



fall short of the glory of God." So, it is almost defined or described here what sin is. Sin is to miss the mark. It says here that we fall short of the glory of God. For example, if we are out with a bow and arrow and we have a target up ahead and we are trying to hit that target, sin would mean that we miss the target every time. If we read Romans 3:23, we come up short, so in this case no matter how far back we pull the string on the bow, the arrow never reaches the mark. If we want to be a bit more literal in our thinking, that arrow always goes to the top or the side or somewhere but never actually hits the target. That is the word sin, meaning to miss the mark. You and I are people, that by nature, we always miss the mark and fall short of the glory of God. We are never on target with the glory of God. As we think about that, we are dead in our trespasses and sins and there is really nothing that we can do about it.

The only thing we can do according to Ephesians 2:4 is to ultimately recognize that we are dead in our trespasses and recognize that God has given us His mercy and He loves us and then He offers us, on the basis of the work of Christ, salvation on faith alone. He says in Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." We cannot hit the target ourselves because we are sinners. We cannot do God's will because we are trespassers. We are dead in those things. There is nothing we can do about it, but Jesus Christ, on the basis of mercy and the grace of God, died in our place and offers us the gift of salvation. He hit the mark for us. When we trust Him and believe in Him and place our faith in Him, we are given salvation in Jesus Christ.

This is a wonderful concept that we are given. We are dead in trespasses of sin, but we are saved by the grace of God Himself. This should give us a wonderful weekend in the Lord as you think on the words we have covered this week.

## Week Two Review

- Propitiation – to satisfy

Christ's blood covered our sins and paid for our sins so that we could be saved and redeemed. For God, the blood of Jesus Christ satisfied this righteous and holy wrath that God has against sin and against sinners. That is the meaning of the word propitiation. This is to satisfy God's holy and righteous anger.

Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2

- Regeneration – make alive

That which was dead has now been made alive. That which was born physically has now been born spiritually. Regeneration is absolutely essential in our life of living for the Lord. We are dependent upon being new creatures in Christ, and in having this new nature that we have been made saints in Him.

Titus 3:5; John 3:7; 1 Peter 1:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17

- Adoption – to bring someone not related into the family and give them all the privileges that come with being family

We were steeped and enslaved to our sins and enslaved to Satan. We were bound toward hell. Then God bought us into His family. He adopted us into His family as sons and all the past has now been erased in that sense and now, we are a new person in Christ. We now have a new position. We are in the family of God with all the rights of that family.

Ephesians 1:4-5; Romans 8:15

- Forgiveness – something is permanently off the table.

In the moment that we are forgiven by God we are released from the guilt and punishment of sin, the effects of sin and the wrath of God.

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It would take the blood of Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God, to die in our place and shed His blood so we could have forgiveness from sin and be released from all the power that sin has had over us and from the wrath of God.

Matthew 26:26; Hebrews 9:22

- Trespass – the idea of a deliberate act of deviating from the law or will of God.

Sin – means to miss the mark.

Trespass is the idea of a deliberate act of deviating from the law or will of God. Again, we are born that way automatically deviating from the will of God. That is our stated personhood. We are those that deviate from the will of God and the Word of God and the law of God. We do not want to be what God wants us to be by nature.

With sin we must recognize that you and I are people, that by nature, we always miss the mark and fall short of the glory of God. We are never on target with the glory of God.

Ephesians 2:1, 4, 8; Romans 3:23

## September 13, 2021 – World

It is important and helpful to understand the meaning of words found in the Bible and their meaning in the context of the Scriptures. This is important for understanding the meaning in the Christian life.

Today's word is *world*, which is the Greek word *cosmos*. It is found 188 times in the New Testament. The problem with the word *cosmos* is that it can be used more than one way which can cause confusion and misunderstanding.

There are at least three different ways in which the word *cosmos* is used:

### 1. People

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." So, we know that the Lord loves whom? He doesn't love the world system as we will look at in a moment. He doesn't necessarily love the planet, but He does love people. He loves people so much that He sent His Son to die for us that we might be saved. The word, *world*, or *cosmos* is used in this way.

### 2. Planets

We find that the Lord talks about the planet itself, the sphere of which we live upon, in Matthew 4:8, "Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory."

### 3. System or philosophy

The primary way that it is found in the New Testament that really impacts us, is that it is used as a world system. A philosophy of life. A system that permeates everything around us and often within us. It colors the way we think. The things that we value, and the life that we live. Probably the most important passage on that subject is in 1 John 2:15, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Unless we understand that the word *cosmos* can be used in more than one way, we will have a contradiction between John 3:16 and 1 John 2:15 because John 3:16 says, "God loves the world," but it says in 1 John 2:15, "Do not love the world." You can see the importance of understanding the difference. In 1 John 2:15, it is speaking of the *world* as a system of values, the way we think, the way we process all the things that are in this world system. A system that is controlled by Satan himself. So, He says, "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." That is pretty important, isn't it? If we are loving this world system, and if we love the values of this world and the system itself that is corrupt and polluted, then the love of the Father is not in us. He goes on to describe what He is talking about in 1 John 2:16, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world." The word lust means desire of our flesh and sinful nature, and we will look at that word tomorrow. The lust of the eyes appears to have the outward appearance of something important and right and good, but does not, it is superficial. The boastful pride of life is living for personal ambition or self. Living in pride. Those are the things of the world. When we find ourselves gravitating toward ourselves, embraced in the flesh-filled desires (we will look at that tomorrow), and proud and arrogant, these things do not come from God. He does not author these things. These things come from a world system that is controlled by Satan and is polluted by sin. He finishes in 1 John 2:17, "The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever." He is giving us another reason not to embrace the world system – it is passing away, it is temporary. The sinful desires that the world draws us to are also passing away. We, as God's children, are very different than the people of the world system. Those in the world system love all these things that are found in the world that are not of God. We, who are the people of God, the followers of God, love the things that are of God. We understand that the things of this world are temporary, but we who belong to Jesus Christ, abide forever in Him because our life is founded in Christ and not in the world system.

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The term *world* is an important word to understand in the understanding of our Christian life. We will look at the word flesh next time which goes right along with the world system.

## September 14, 2021 – Flesh

I'm sure you have heard it said that there are three great enemies of the Christian: the world, the flesh, and the devil. The devil is a personal being who controls the world system, and he desires for us to be sinners. Therefore, he draws us toward the things of the world and the things of the flesh. Last time we looked at the word *world*, or the Greek word *cosmos*, which often means the world system in opposition to the system of God and the life He has for us.

This time, we are going to look at the word *flesh*. *Flesh* really overlaps with the others. We really do have three great enemies. The devil is our enemy. He seeks to destroy us. The world draws us to its ways, thinking and values. The primary enemy found in the New Testament, the one that is repeated as our enemy far more than the other two, is the word *flesh*. So, what does the word mean to us? Like the word world, it is used in more than one way in the New Testament.

Here are a couple ways *flesh* is used in Scripture:

1. The body

In Romans 2:28, it speaks of the physical body, "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh." Our fleshly bodies. That is how it is sometimes used.

2. Natural inward nature of humans

This is the primary form of how we will look at the word *flesh* today. It speaks of our inward nature. Not our fleshly body, but our inward nature that is often referred to as *flesh*. It is the idea that we have a corrupt nature by birth, at the moment of our birth, we have a nature that: is in opposition to God, drawn toward sin, in defiance against God, and we have the propensity for sin found in our *flesh*.

As Christians, one of the great pieces of good news that we get is that we are new creations in Christ according to 2 Corinthians 5:17 which says, "Therefore, from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even

though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer." When we are saved, we are no longer by nature of the *flesh*. We are by nature, born again. We are new creations in Christ. We are no longer of the *flesh* in the same way.

Unfortunately for us, the *flesh* doesn't disappear. The *flesh* continues to be a great enemy for us until the Lord takes us home. The primary passage on that, I believe, is Galatians 5:16-21 which says, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Galatians 5:19 gives us a description of the *flesh*, it says, "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these." So, these are all these sinful desires that are built into our fleshly nature, and this is what the *flesh* produces. If we are following the *flesh*, he is saying these things are what will be evident in your life. These are evidence of the *flesh* in us. As a Christian, however, we are in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives in us. He enables us to live as God would want us to live. It talks in Galatians 5:22, for example, of the fruit of the Spirit. When the *flesh* is in control, we see the fruit of the *flesh*. When the Spirit is in control, we see the fruits of the Spirit, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." All of these things are that which is produced by the Holy Spirit when He is in charge of our lives.

We have these two opposites that we are battling. The *flesh* is trying to produce things in our life that are corrupt and polluted and in opposition to God. The Spirit is producing things that are the characteristics of Christ. Wouldn't it be wonderful if at the moment of salvation if the *flesh* was eradicated and we would all live by the power of the Holy Spirit in almost perfection? That would be wonderful, but that is not the case.



So, we return to our passage of Scripture in Galatians 5:16 where Paul says, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." Our victory over the *flesh* is by walking in the Spirit. It continues, "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law." He says here that we are in a great battle. As long as we are in these bodies, as Christians, we have a battle between the *flesh* that is the hangover from our past, and the new nature that is now infused and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. So, the Spirit and the *flesh* are at war. We are in that battle for as long as we are in this life. By the power of the Spirit, we can have victory in the things of this life, but we are going to be battling that *flesh* until the Lord comes to take us home.

So, it is important to understand this word *flesh*, and how it works in our lives, so that we can live not by the flesh, but by the Spirit.

## September 15, 2021 – Baptism

We are continuing to work through biblical words and terms, and we are looking at some of the great teachings of Scripture found in the words of Scripture. It is important that we do these kinds of word studies and see them in context and see how they are used so we understand how God wants us to live.

Today we are going to look at the word *baptism* or *baptize*. You will find the word *baptize* many times in the New Testament. That is really not a translation. The translations from the Greek and the Hebrew is different. This is a transliteration. Simply taking the Greek words letter by letter into the English text. I think the reason why that happened is because by the time the English Bibles were being translated, there had been several confusing ideas about baptism floating around the Christian church. As a result of that, or in order to have their translations accepted by the various groups, it was just wiser not to translate the word and simply transliterate it over and let everybody else fight for the rest of time over what it meant.

The word itself means to immerse or dip. That is where the problem came in because early in church history, not long after the apostles passed away, we find one of the very earliest of heresies had to do with baptism. Very quickly, people began to baptize children with the idea that by baptizing those children, they would be saved, and an unbaptized child would not be saved. Of course, that teaching is not found in Scripture anywhere. Then that bled over later to baptizing adults for salvation. So, there was the heresy of baptismal regeneration that began to pop up very early in church history. Then there were others that would come along, especially at the time of the Reformation, and they would continue to baptize infants, but not for salvation. They said they are bringing the children into the covenant, but not for salvation itself. So, we have had these various ideas floating around. Therefore, in the twenty-first century we can see why many people are confused by the subject of baptism.

When we baptize people at our church, it is often after a period of instruction, so they fully understand what it means. In the New Testament, people were baptized immediately after salvation. We find that Jesus was baptized, and His disciples baptized the Jewish people upon repentance. In the New

Testament book of Acts, we find that the Jews, at the days of Pentecost in Acts 2, the very first Christians, were baptized. We find later that the Gentiles, such as the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 and Cornelius in Acts 10, were baptized immediately after salvation. They were not baptized before they were saved, and not in order to be saved, but after salvation. We find the Philippian jailer in Acts 16 being baptized after professing Christ along with his household as they came to Christ. We find all these people being baptized after salvation. In what we call the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 we see Jesus send out His disciples to teach people His Word and to baptize them as well. So, baptism was part of the Great Commission also.

Baptism has always been linked with the Christian church. It is part of the New Testament, but it comes after salvation. It is a water baptism. It is by immersion because that is what the word means, and that word came out of the clothing industry of that time in which people would dip clothing into dye and so that clothing would take on the characteristics or the coloring of the dye. Therefore, it would be dipped, and it would take on the identification of the dye that they dipped the clothing in. So, the secondary meaning of baptism is identification. When we are baptized, we are immersed physically, and we are identifying with Christ. We are making a public testimony that we are identified with Christ, and we are followers of Him.

There is one other aspect of baptism that we should mention. That is what we might call *spirit baptism*. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 it says, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." This is what we call spirit baptism. That is when the Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ. This is something that is independent of water baptism. Water baptism then becomes a symbol, or a picture, of what happens to us spiritually. When the Lord saves us, He baptizes us into Christ and into the body of Christ. We are now identified with Him. Water baptism signifies and pictures what takes place spiritually in our lives. Both are important. Spirit baptism brings us into salvation. Water baptism identifies us with Christ as one who has already been saved.

## September 16, 2021 – Repent

Our word for today is the word *repent*. This is a word that is often misunderstood, and it is a vital piece of the Christian life. The word itself simply means to change your mind about something, but it is used in a biblical and spiritual sense as: changing our minds about something that results in a change in the way we live. So, it's kind of like walking in one direction and then turning around and walking in another direction. It is a turnabout. It starts with the mind. It starts with our thinking. We have changed our mind about Christ and how we used to live and the lifestyle we used to have. We have changed our mind about sin, and we no longer want to be under the dominion of sin. We want to be under the mastery of Christ. We are turning from our idols and turning to Christ to worship Him. All of these things are involved in this word. So, the biblical terminology then is the change of your mind that results in a change of behavior.

John the Baptist came preaching repentance in the opening words of the gospels. He called for the pharisees and others to change their behavior and bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance. Later, when Jesus stepped up, He preached the exact same message in Matthew 3:2, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Repentance was an important word in the opening words of the gospel concerning Jesus' public ministry.

When we come later to the church age, the book of Acts is full of repentance. At the very first sermon ever preached in the Christian realm by Peter in Acts 2:38, he called for the people to repent for salvation. It says, "Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" He also preached repentance in Acts 3:19, "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."

Paul had the same message throughout his ministry. In Acts 26:18, later in Paul's ministry while he is under arrest, and he is standing before King Agrippa, he says that the Lord had sent him. This is a commission the Lord had given Paul and he is relating that to Agrippa. He says the Lord has sent him, "'to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

“So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.” Notice that phrase, “turn from,” that is the same concept. Turning from the darkness – spiritual darkness – and to the light of Christ and His truth, and from the authority of Satan to God. So, we are turning from the mastery of the devil to the mastery of God. Note also, “receive forgiveness of sins,” repentance is part of the forgiving of sin process. We are saved by faith alone. We say that often and we sincerely believe that. Faith has, in a sense, a two-sided coin. One side is repentance, and the other side is faith. We turn from our sin, and we turn to Christ by faith alone. Repentance and faith cannot, in that sense, be separated. Once again, repentance is a turning from sin and turning to God and that results in deeds that are appropriate to repentance. The deeds do not save us, rather the true repentance of turning to the Lord by faith should result in a life that represents the fact that we have turned from sin and turned to Christ.

This is not found only in the book of Acts. We find it in 1 Thessalonians 1:9 where we read a clear statement along these same lines, it says, “For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God.” That word “turned,” is the same concept as repentance. He says there has been this report that you turned from idols. You turned from the things that you used to worship that are not truly God. You’ve turned from the idols, and you’ve turned to God. So, there is a turning around. You were going one direction and now you have turned around and you are going another direction. You used to worship idols. Now you worship God. You used to serve that which were false deities and now you serve the true and living God. Then he goes on to say that He is the living God and that is who you are serving. He is saying your repentance then is the turning from all that we trusted before. All the things we live for and all the things that were our point of worship, including self, and it is a turning to the Lord for forgiveness and saving grace. Now, we have done that in Christ. That is part of our salvation – repentance. So, He calls us to a life of repentance and a life of faith.

## September 17, 2021 – Glorify

We have been looking at the meaning of specific words found in the Scriptures to help us understand the Christian life and God. The word we are looking at today is especially related to God Himself. It is the word *glorify*. It is a wonderful word that speaks of radiance, majesty, and honor. Originally it had the idea of weight. Describing something weighty or heavy, and therefore of great importance. Although that definition is seldom used in the Old or New Testaments. It is the idea of manifesting or demonstrating the glory of God. Whether God demonstrates His own glory or whether He speaks of His own glory. At the incarnation in Acts 2, there was glory all around the angels and that was the reflection of the glory of God. We have in various occasions the glory and majesty of God being demonstrated.

In Hebrews 1, I want to look at a few verses that speak on this idea. One of my favorite Scripture passages is Hebrews 1:1 it says, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." We are looking at the communication of God. God has communicated in two central times and ways in the Old Testament and in many portions and in many ways through the prophets and in the final days in this final dispensation, He has spoken to us through His Son. He has appointed Him heir of all things.

Now we go on to talk about that Son and what He is going to do. Hebrews 1:3 says, "And He is the radiance of His glory," Jesus Christ is the radiance or reflection of the glory of God Himself. He is the exact representation of His nature. When we see Jesus and look intently into the life of Jesus, we are looking intently into the glory and majesty and radiance of God Himself. "And the exact representation of His nature and upholds all things by the word of His power." Here we have the creative power of Christ Himself. "When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Majesty is related to this idea of glory. When Christ had finished His work on earth and had done all that He needed to do to save us from our sins, when He was done, He returned to the right hand of the Father, which it calls here "the majesty on high." We see then, a reflection of the glory of God in the life of Jesus, in the ministry of Jesus, and the communication of Jesus and now in the very fact that He is at the

right hand of the glory of God, or the majesty of God as He sits in His rightful place in His throne by the throne of God.

We think about this in our own lives. The central passage about the glorification of the Lord is found in 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Paul has been talking to the Corinthians about all sorts of ways in which they were dishonoring God. This was a church that was a pretty filthy church, spiritually speaking. They were immature, involved in a lot of self-centeredness, selfishness, sinful and prideful activities, immorality, and a lot of things that made this book, in many ways, a difficult book. Paul talks about these things, and he outlines to them the way they should be living their lives and gives them instructions and rebukes. He kind of sums up the overall nature of how we ought to be living in this passage and it says, "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." They were all wrapped up in eating or not eating certain foods and certain places. That is not our discussion today, but He says, whatever you do or whatever you are eating and wherever you are eating, do it all to the glory of God. We are magnifying God with our lives. That is our function! That is our mission!

Someone has said, "When we praise God, we spread His fame." In praise to God both in word and in life we are spreading the fame of God Himself in order to let the world know of His greatness, radiance, majesty, and splendor. That is our goal in life. That is our calling. I trust that you and I want to live that way.

## Week Three Review

- World or cosmos – people, planets, system or philosophy

He doesn't necessarily love the planet, but He does love people. He loves people so much that He sent His Son to die for us that we might be saved.

We find that the Lord talks about the planet itself, the sphere of which we live upon, in Matthew 4:8, "Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory."

In 1 John 2:15, it is speaking of the *world* as a system of values, the way we think, the way we process all the things that are in this world system. A system that is controlled by Satan himself.

John 3:16; Matthew 4:8; 1 John 2:15-17

- Flesh – the physical body, or the natural inward nature of humans

It is the idea that we have a corrupt nature by birth, at the moment of our birth, we have a nature that: is in opposition to God, drawn toward sin, in defiance against God, and we have the propensity for sin found in our *flesh*.

Romans 2:28; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 5:16-21

- Baptism – immerse or dip

*Spirit baptism* brings us into salvation. That is when the Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ. This is something that is independent of water baptism.

*Water baptism* identifies us with Christ as one who has already been saved. We are making a public testimony that we are identified with Christ, and we are followers of Him.



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Acts 2, 8, 10, 16; Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 12:13

- Repent – to change your mind about something, but it is used in a biblical and spiritual sense as changing our minds about something that results in a change in the way we live.

It starts with our thinking. We have changed our mind about Christ and how we used to live and the lifestyle we used to have. We have changed our mind about sin, and we no longer want to be under the dominion of sin. We want to be under the mastery of Christ. We are turning from our idols and turning to Christ to worship Him. All of these things are involved in this word. So, the biblical terminology then is the change of your mind that results in a change of behavior.

Matthew 3:2; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 26:18; 1 Thessalonians 1:9

- Glorify – speaks of radiance, majesty, and honor; the idea of manifesting or demonstrating the glory of God

It is the idea of manifesting or demonstrating the glory of God. Whether God demonstrates His own glory or whether He speaks of His own glory. In praise to God, both in word and in life, we are spreading the glory of God Himself in order to let the world know of His greatness, radiance, majesty, and splendor. That is our goal in life. That is our calling.

Acts 2; Hebrews 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 10:31

## September 20, 2021 – Word

We continue to study important words, concepts, and phrases found in the New Testament especially, that help us understand how to live, understand God Himself, and who we are in Christ. We are looking at a lot of different words and it's appropriate that we would look at the word, *Word*!

John 1 uses the Greek word *logos* here. It is used only by the apostle John in the gospel of John, and it is not found anywhere else. John had an agenda and idea in mind here that he was trying to communicate to us concerning the *logos*, or as translated in our Bibles, the *Word*. It says in John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." What does the word, *Word* mean? Part of our problem is that it is not found in other parts of the New Testament, nor does John take the time to explain what he means. It seems very poetic and metaphorical, and it is a beautiful picture of who Christ is, but why did he use the word *logos* or *Word* to describe Jesus Christ?

We look at this from two different perspectives: The Jewish and the Greek. As we do, we see that the word *logos* had different meanings in the different cultures:

### 1. Greeks

To the Greeks it carried the ideal of a powerful force that permeated the whole universe. It was not personal. It was not a personal deity, but it was a force that controlled even the mythological gods. It was the most powerful force in all the universe. Most of us have seen Star Wars the movie and recall the storyline that encompasses the idea of the fictional power called "the force," which is a pretty close identification of the Greek understanding of the *logos*. They held the idea that there was this power and this force that controls everything.

### 2. Jews

For the Jews however, it carried the idea of communication. The *Word* speaks of communication. So, for the Jews, it was the

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understanding that the Lord had communicated to us most powerfully and most clearly in Jesus Christ. We saw that the other day in our time together in Hebrews 1 where it says that in these last times, He has spoken to us through His Son. That is the communication about God given through His Son and that is what the word, *Word* means.

So, we put it together and we have both, I think, that are true. We have this word that speaks of the most powerful force in the universe that controls all things, and John could be saying to his Gentile audience that yes, there is a Logos, there is a power that is in charge of all things and that power is none other than Jesus Christ. To the Jews, he is saying, this is the final communication of God to man found in Jesus Christ. He has come to communicate to us about God.

What do we learn about the Lord here? We see in John 1:1 that this *Word*, this *logos*, was with God and He was God. So, He is part of the divine trinity, and He is God. He was in the beginning with God. He is eternal. In John 1:3, it says, "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." So, He is the great Creator of all things. In John 1:4, "In Him was life and the life was the Light of men." He is the life that we can have in God. He is the light that shines, it says in John 1:5, "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." So, we have the idea here that the Lord has come to give us light in a dark world and the world could not understand that.

Drop down to John 1:14 where we talk about the incarnation without any question of whom John is speaking, it says, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." We see the glory, the majesty, and the splendor of God in the face of the person of Jesus Christ as He became incarnate.

In John 1:18, it says, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." No one has ever seen God. He lives in splendor and light unseen so that no one can see Him, but in Christ we have seen God. He has exegeted, or explained, Him. That goes along with our word, *Word* again. If the word *logos* means

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communication, then Jesus has come to communicate to us what God is like and who God is. The most perfect, clear communication possible about the divine nature of God Himself is found in the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

Aren't you glad He came? Aren't you glad that He is the *logos*, the *Word*, that has come to us from the Father, and He explains the Father?

## September 21, 2021 – I Am

Today we are going to look at two words that go together, *I AM*. In John 8:58, Jesus made a startling announcement about Himself in these verses. It was an announcement that really rocked some of the Jewish leadership.

John 8:58 says, "Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." It is very instructive to note here that He didn't say that before Abraham was born, I was born, or I was around or whatever. He says, *I am*. That was a very important terminology for the Jewish people because they understood that was a reference to God Himself. As a matter of fact, the Jews were upset and we see their reaction in John 8:59, "Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple." They knew exactly what Jesus was referring to and it very much upset them. So much so, that they tried to kill Jesus.

I want to go to Exodus 3 and look at the passage of Scripture that the Jews knew very well, and they knew exactly what Jesus was trying to say. Jesus was not claiming to be only pre-existent saying He existed before Abraham. That was true, but there is more to it than that. Jesus is claiming to be God and the Jews knew what He was talking about. In Exodus 3, Moses is at the burning bush and God is commissioning him to go into the land of Egypt and virtually pull off the Exodus. Moses would be God's representative. He would be going from where he was living in the wilderness into Egypt and confront Pharaoh and the Egyptian army and nation. As Moses would go into Egypt, he had to have a message. He was deeply concerned that as he went into Egypt and presented the message God wanted him to present to the Jews that they would reject it. So, he wants to know who he should say is sending him. So here is the dialogue of that in Exodus 3:13, "Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" As Moses is given this message, the message is, "*I AM* has sent you." The word *I AM* here is the terminology for the self-existent one. It is a synonym for Yahweh or what we usually call Jehovah in our bibles. When we think about that, we realize that God is saying: *I AM* the self-existent one, and *I AM* the only God. *I AM!* The word itself means I am the One who

is. There is no one like Him. There is no one beside Him. He is the Jehovah, the Yahweh. He is eternal God.

We return to John 8 and Jesus said, "before Abraham was born, I AM," He was identifying Himself with Jehovah God. He was saying to them: Do you remember the message that God sent with Moses to the Jews in Egypt? The message was this: I AM has sent you. Jehovah, Yahweh, God has sent you to bring you out of bondage and into the Promised Land. Because of that message sent by God through Moses the people would ultimately follow Moses out of Egypt. So, Jesus is picking up on that and the Jews know exactly what He is saying. He is not just saying I am a great prophet, or I am a great teacher, or I am sent by God, or I am pre-existent. All of that was true, but what He was saying is: I AM Jehovah God. Not simply a god, or a part of God, but I am God. I am identified with Jehovah Himself. So, the people want to kill Him, and that is what we find over and over in the gospels as Jesus presents who He is by a message such as this or by signs and miracles. Whatever Jesus said, for the most part, the people rejected it and turned against Him.

As we are going to start looking at the *I AM* statements of the book of John, it is important to note that we start with this one. The *I AM* is reflective of Jehovah God, of Yahweh. He is saying, I am God and here is what I am.

We are going to have an enjoyable time as we look at the next seven *I AMs* of the gospel of John. I hope you will be enriched by this teaching.

## **September 22, 2021 – I am the Light**

Last time, we looked at Jesus' proclamation that He is the great I AM. He is God. He is Jehovah. Then we find, in the gospel of John, seven different times that Jesus came out very clearly and said, *I am...* These are pictures or metaphors that describe the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. They are very enriching and valuable for us to think about and meditate on. As I go through them briefly these next seven times, I hope you will take some time and go back and look at the context of these statements and spend some time meditating on them and praying about them and thanking the Lord for who He is and that He has come for us. These are wonderful statements that Jesus Himself made.

The first one is in John 8:12 which says, "Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, 'I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.'" As Jesus spoke this way, again He is talking to a Jewish audience, and the Jews have a background in the understanding of the ways and things of God. They know the Old Testament and they know what God did for the people of Israel in the Old Testament. One of the things that the Lord did in the Old Testament was to guide His people in a very physical way through the use of His own presence of what we call the Shekinah Glory. When He wanted the people to move, His cloud, by day, would guide them. At night, if He wanted them to travel, He would do so in a pillar of fire. At night, He would be the illumination for them to see the way of where they are going and know the direction that God wanted them. This is a picture linking back to that time in the wilderness as God led them. So, Jesus is saying here that He is the Light of the world. I am the illumination of the world. You can't see where to go without illumination. You can't see what is right without illumination, and I AM that illumination and Light of the world. Therefore, Jesus is proclaiming that He is the only hope and truth and way. We will look at that later in John 14.

We can go back in John and see that He talked about this earlier in John 1:4 in the prologue where we find the Scripture speaking of Jesus, "In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men." Right here we see that He is the Light of humanity. John 1:5 says, "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." The only way to overcome darkness is light. Light illuminates and dispels darkness. It is the only means of dispelling

darkness. So, Jesus came as the Light, and He shines in that darkness to show the way to God. It tells us that the darkness did not comprehend it. That means that it did not understand for the most part. Those in darkness did not understand who Jesus was. This word for comprehend also means to overpower. Darkness does not overpower light. It does not have that ability. The light will shine. Whether the people accept it or reject it is another story. Jesus came to give that light.

In John 3 when Jesus is still in the process of speaking to Nicodemus and after giving him that statement in John 3:16, which is the most well-known verse in all of Scripture that says, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life," He goes on to talk about the fact that most people will reject the truths spoken in John 3:16. John 3:18 says this, "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. This is the judgement, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil." Jesus claims to be the Light that has come into the world, and we see that term "Light" here again. It continues in John 3:20, "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God." The Light of Christ, the Light that is Christ, is so very, very important here. The problem is that the majority of people who walk in darkness love their darkness. They love their deeds. They do not want their sinfulness exposed for what it is. They want to live that way. Yet, Christ does not back off. He comes to give us light and to show us the truth and illuminate the way to God and to bring to us the truth of eternal life.

That is only possible because Christ has dispelled the darkness and exposed our deeds of sinfulness so that we know that we need to come to Jesus Christ for salvation by believing in Him. Jesus says, "I am the Light."

Next time we will look at the statement where Jesus says, "I am the bread of life."



## **September 23, 2021 – I am the Bread of Life**

We looked last time at the fact the Jesus is the Light of the world. Today we are looking at His statement in John 6:35 that He is the bread of life.

John 6:35 says, "Jesus said to them, '*I am* the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.'" Let's get some context here. So far, Jesus has been well received, by the masses at least, and He has been doing some great signs and wonders that shows who He is. One of those has been to feed a multitude of people. Just prior to this, He had fed five thousand men. That apparently didn't include the women and children, so it could have been much more than five thousand. So, we have five thousand people or more fed and they are excited about that. They want to actually make Him King, and you can see why. Most of us have never actually experienced true hunger. We get hungry sometimes, but to have the idea of true hunger with the possibility of not finding food is something pretty foreign to most of us. In the first century times when Jesus lived, hunger was a real deal at times. Someone who could come along and actually feed the people and meet their most basic need for food without cost was something very special. So, when they found a person in Jesus, who now they are recognizing is a great prophet if nothing else, and He feeds them in this way, on top of the other signs that He has performed, some of them are now saying and thinking, "Let's make Him King, maybe He is the Messiah! Let's force Him to be our King and to take care of us and to feed us and satisfy our hunger." Jesus, of course, rejects that because their motivation is to be fed, not to follow Him in righteousness. Jesus does, based on this account, say that He is the bread of life and if you come to Him you will never hunger. He wasn't talking about physical food here. He is talking about spiritual food. He also says that they will never thirst if they believe in Him. So, Jesus is promising to satisfy something far more important than our physical hunger and thirst. He is promising to satisfy our spiritual longings and our great spiritual needs.

We go to John 6:48, and we need to remember the people understood this better than us, it says, "I am the bread of life." He repeats His statement here and then He continues, "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of

heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh." The people were well-versed in the miracle of the manna that took place in the wilderness. You probably recall that story when the Jews were in the wilderness for about forty years. They had no means of feeding themselves. They would have died very quickly in the wilderness, but God fed them by giving them manna every morning – except on the Sabbath – which was a cake-like substance that tasted a bit like honey. It sustained them for decades as they were there in the wilderness. God fed them and took care of them physically. He met the needs of their physical life. Jesus is saying here that He is identifying with that and drawing a direct line to that and saying basically: you remember what God did for the Jews in the wilderness? Well I have come to give you the true bread of life. Not just the physical bread that will satisfy your hunger for a day or two, but a spiritual bread. The spiritual manna of life that will satisfy you forever and will give you spiritual life. So, Jesus has come to do that.

The picture in our passage is this: the physical hunger that they had experienced would be a direct link to the spiritual hunger that they also experience. Everybody knows when they get hungry. All of us have eaten a big meal and thought that we would not eat for days after that, but even a few hours later we get hungry again and we want to eat again and have our hunger satisfied. That is a natural biological function that God has built within us. There is a spiritual hunger in us as well, and that is not always so easily recognized. We know it is there. We know there is an emptiness in our lives. We know there is something more beyond us. We know deep within us, according to Romans 1, that God exists. We know those things and yet we try to satisfy all that hunger with a lot of spiritual junk food. It never satisfies, but we keep trying over and over with these various things. The Jews have been doing it, and people have been doing it ever since. Jesus is saying that those things will never satisfy, but when you come to me, I will give you the bread of life, and it is a bread that will satisfy the deepest, heart longings within you and the deepest thirst within you and it will satisfy you continuously and forever.

Jesus has come to offer us what nothing else can. He is the bread of life!

## September 24, 2021 – I am the Door

We have been looking at the seven *I am* statements made by Jesus found in the book of John. We have seen so far that Jesus says *I am*: The Light of the world and bread of life.

Today we are looking at Jesus saying *I am* the door. Looking at John 10:7 it says, "So Jesus said to them again, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.'" The Jews were very familiar with the life of the shepherd. Most of us might see a sheep in the pasture somewhere, but most of us know very little about them. That was a way of life for the Jewish people, although they were not all shepherds. Sheep were very common. It was part of the economy and part of their lifestyle. Many of them worked as shepherds at one point or perhaps continuously, so they understood these things.

The sheep were often out looking for grazing. They had to find pasture and so they were often taken wherever that grass might be. It was the job of the shepherds to guide them and to protect them and to take them to places where they could get sustenance, water, food and so forth. Out in the wilderness there were a lot of predators. As a result of that, one of the ways to protect the sheep was known as the sheepfold. If you left the sheep to wander around at night, almost certainly a predator would get one or more of them or they would get lost and not find their way back. So, the only way to keep from losing your flock at night was to keep them together. In the wilderness, there were these small containers, they were short walls that the sheep could be driven into at night for protection, but they did not have a gate in the front of them. So, the shepherd would lay out in front of that opening so that the sheep could not get out. If a sheep would try to get out, they would have to go through the shepherd and they were not successful in doing so, and so they were able to protect the sheep. The people understood this and that the shepherd laying across that entryway would be in essence the door for those sheep to keep them in.

Jesus turns the picture around a little bit in John 10:7 by saying, "*I am* the door of the sheep." If we follow the normal protocol by being the door, He

keeps them safe and secure in the sheepfold and they can't get out and He protects them. On the other hand, Jesus is turning this around and He is saying that He is the door to life! So, the sheep would come through that doorway into the pen because that is where they would find safety and security and prevent them from losing their life. Then Jesus said that He would be the doorway to keep them in. We have this picture of them going through this doorway where He says He is the door.

Jesus goes a little further than the sheepfold. He doesn't say I am the one that will lay across this entryway, He is saying "I am the door!" When we look at that picture, we see that only coming through the door of Jesus Christ is it possible to find life. As a matter of fact, He goes on talking about these thieves and robbers, and that would probably be a reference to false teachers among them such as some of the pharisees and Sadducees that had no real interest in the sheep. They used the sheep, the sheep being the people of Israel, for their own purposes. Jesus is not like that. He says in John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy." There were predators that were trying to destroy the flock of Israel. Some of those would be the religious leaders and others as well, I am sure. Their motives are not pure. They have come to steal and destroy these people. Jesus contrasts Himself with those particular people. He says I have come that they might have life and that they might have it abundantly. We look at that terminology and we can get confused. Life in scripture speaks of the unity that we can have with the Lord. Death means separation. Life means unity or union. So, our great spiritual need is reconciliation with God. We are separated from a holy God because of our sin. The Lord further says in John 10:10, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." Abundantly means more than you need. An over surplus. So, the Lord didn't come to simply give us the basics. He has come to give us true life that is found only in the Lord Himself. That is why He is the door of the sheepfold. He is the door of the sheep.

We come to the Father through Him and we find life abundant. We find union with God. We are reconciled to the Father because we have come through Jesus Christ. There is no other way to be reconciled to God except through Jesus Christ.

## **September 27, 2021 – I am the Good Shepherd**

We continue looking at the *I am* statements in the book of John. The *I am*, as you will recall, is a reference, at least partially, back to the idea that Jesus Himself is God. He is deity, that is drawn from the Old Testament. The I am. The Jehovah God. Then He makes seven definitive statements concerning Himself as the I am. The last one we looked at in John 10 is that He was the door of the sheep. Then He immediately moves right into not only being the door of the sheep, but the good Shepherd. That's where we pick up today!

John 10:11 says, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." Jesus is saying that He is that good shepherd. I want to come back to shepherds in a moment, but I want you to note the contrast He makes here between Himself and others who have pretended to be the shepherds of the people. Probably referencing the spiritual leaders of Israel, the pharisees and Sadducees and so forth.

John 10:12 continues, "He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me." Jesus contrasts Himself with those who pretend to be the shepherd and have actually led the people astray. He is the good shepherd. It is a normal, very common metaphor back in the Old Testament. The people of Israel, many of the people, were shepherds and they all knew about sheep and understood the life of the sheep.

There is no more important or beloved passage in the Old Testament, and certainly in the Psalms, than Psalm 23. It talks about the shepherd, and Jesus is probably connecting with that as it talks about the shepherd. Psalm 23:1-3 says, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." We see the shepherd here guiding, protecting, leading and feeding for His own sake. Then the psalmist goes through the difficult times of his life. This is where this passage, I suppose, really speaks to the heart of so many. Psalm 23:4-

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5 says, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," we are in the most difficult and darkest time of life here, "I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows." He speaks of Him here. It is interesting to note how the pronouns change from the first three verses to the latter verses of this little Psalm. In the first three verses he speaks in a more objective sense of who God is, but in verse four, when he is in the valley of the shadow of death, he takes on a second person pronoun and says: You are with me, Your rod and Your staff. You prepare. You have anointed my head.

Into the future the shepherd leads. Psalm 23:6 says, "Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." That beautiful Psalm surely is in the mind of Christ even as He speaks of Himself as the good shepherd.

As we go back to the passage, we have one more thing we want to pick up on. Not only is He the good shepherd who leads, protects, feeds and cares for the flock, He also does one thing that no other shepherd can do. He dies for His sheep. This was already mentioned in John 10:11, but look at John 10:15, "Even as the Father knows Me, I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep." Only Christ as the good shepherd can die for His sheep. By dying for the sheep, He not only takes care of them in a physical, or even a material spiritual sense, He takes care of them eternally in the great spiritual need of their life, salvation, and redemption before God.

Only the good shepherd could do that, and Jesus Christ claims very clearly in this passage that He and He alone is the good shepherd.

## **September 28, 2021 – I Am the Resurrection and the Life**

We have been looking at the great seven *I am* statements made by Jesus concerning Himself. We are in John 11 today where Jesus makes a startling statement to Martha of the Mary and Martha sister duo.

In John 11:25 it says, "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies.'" Jesus claims here to be the resurrection and the life. Death is one of our great enemies. It is the last enemy that will be conquered according to 1 Corinthians 15. Death will ultimately be defeated, because Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life. In the meanwhile, we sorrow over death. There are very few things, if anything, in life that is more sorrowful than the loss of a loved one, and we grieve over that loss.

The story of Lazarus has always intrigued people. Jesus knew that Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, was sick and that his sickness was going to be fatal. Jesus knew that, yet He delayed coming. He could have healed him and been there on the spot, and healed him as He did many others, but He didn't. So, finally, after Lazarus has already died and been buried and is in the grave for four days, Jesus and His men show up. At that point, a dialogue takes place between Martha and Jesus. Mary stays in her house at this point. Maybe she is mad at Jesus. Maybe she is just so grief stricken she doesn't want to come out. We see Martha show up and she believes in the resurrection as it says in John 11:24, "Martha said to Him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.'" The Old Testament doesn't talk a lot about the resurrection at the end of time, but it does in a few places. Job mentions it, Psalm 16, and especially Daniel 12 which gives a more detailed account of the resurrection at the end times. Mary and Martha believed that. They knew a resurrection was coming and they fully believed that their brother, Lazarus, would resurrect at that time. He was a man who trusted God and Martha had no doubt about his eternal destiny.

Jesus had more to say than that. He said to her in John 11:25 that He is the resurrection and the life. Why did He allow Lazarus to die? Not to show the doctrine of the resurrection at the end times, that has already been revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures, but Jesus needed to show that He is the power behind the resurrection. He is the giver of life. He is the source of

these things. Martha didn't know that, and she needed to know that. Jesus is teaching that to her. He goes on saying, "he who believes in Me will live even if he dies." So, the antidote to death is life and then life can be found only in Jesus Christ who is the giver of life and the resurrection of life.

So, Mary and Martha did not understand that part, and they are just now getting it, but I am impressed as we go further in John 11:26, "and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" This is a startling statement, isn't it? After all, Lazarus had just died. All the people who have ever lived on the earth in the past have died, and all of us currently alive on earth and those who will live in the future will die if the Lord doesn't come back first. So, Jesus is not talking about the physical death. He is not saying that if you believe in Him, you will live forever. Not in that sense. He is saying that you have eternal life, and you will have resurrected life because of me if you believe in me. When He says to Martha, "Do you believe this," I'm sure she was taken aback to a large degree. She makes a startling statement in John 11:27 showing that she has a true depth of understanding, "She said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world.'" This is a statement that very few others have made in Scripture. A heavenly, doctrinal infused statement about who Jesus Christ is. She believed that He was the Messiah. She believed further that He was the Son of God. She believed that He had come into the world, incarnated, apparently to give eternal life. She believed all those things. As a result of that, she would have eternal life.

So, Jesus is saying here in some of these earlier pictures:

1. He has said He is the bread of life who has come to give us full satisfaction in spiritual things. He is going to quench our hunger and our thirst spiritually speaking.
2. Scripture in these *I am* statements say He is the Light of the world. He has come to illuminate. He has come to remove the blinders and show those of us who are spiritually blind the truth about Himself. Of course, that is all of us before Christ.
3. He is saying He is the resurrection and the life. He is the giver of life. He is the sustainer of life. Not only eternally, but even right now for those who have trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin.



## A Word from the Lord

This is a blessed teaching in Christ's word. We are so grateful the Lord put this in His scriptures.

## September 29, 2021 – I Am the Way, Truth and Life

We are coming to the end of the *I am* statements in the book of John. We are in John 14 where Jesus is going to make a wonderful statement.

A little context here: Jesus is in the upper room with His disciples on the night that He was betrayed just before the crucifixion. He is now revealing to them that He is going away. They are troubled by that. So much so, that in John 14:1 He says, "Do not let your heart be troubled, believe in God, believe also in Me." Jesus wants to comfort them at this time. Wonderful things are going to happen, but before those things happen there is going to be the awfulness of the crucifixion, and the disciples don't know what to do about that, and they are just now learning certain things even in this last night with Jesus. He does say to them in John 14:2-4, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 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. And you know the way where I am going." Part of the comfort that Jesus is giving them is that He is going to go away, but He is going to prepare a place for them so that they would have a place in the "Father's house," together with the Father, with Christ, and Jesus says I am going to prepare such a place for you. Then I am going to come back for you and take you to be with myself. What a wonderful comfort that should be. He says, "you know the way that I am going." Thomas, I think, probably spoke for all of them when he said in John 14:5, "Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?'" I think that is a good statement. Jesus is kind of hitting them blind here. He is going to go away, prepare a place for them, come again, and take them to Himself and all of that is great, but Thomas is kind of out there in left field here saying what are we to do with this? We don't even know where you are going how could we possibly know the way? I don't think any of the other disciples had a better handle on this than Thomas did. Thomas just happened to be the one to blurt it out. Thomas did that on several occasions in the gospels. He spoke his mind. It was on his heart, and he spoke it out and we are glad he did because as he brings up that issue, that is when Jesus moves into John 14:6 with this incredible statement concerning who He is. This is the *I am* statement. There are three of them all encompassed into one in this verse.

Jesus says, "I am the way." I want you to note here that He is the way. He takes us the right direction. In the earlier part of this chapter, He is talking about taking us to be with the Father, so He is the way. He is taking us the right way. He is more than the one who leads the way, He **is** the way. Note that personalization here: He **is** the way. Not simply the one who reveals the way. He is not simply the map, He is that, but He is much more. He is the way.

Then He goes on and says, "I am the truth." He has talked about that before in the gospels. He is not simply the one who gives truth, although He does give truth. When He would send the disciples out later at the Great Commission, He says, I want you to go out and teach everybody what I have taught you. I want you to take that truth, and I want you to give that truth to the people wherever you go and make disciples in My name. So, He does give truth. He embodies that as well. He not only gives the truth; He *is* the truth.

Finally, He says, "I am the life." He is not simply the way to life, although He is that as well. He is the one who shows us the way to eternal life, and He **is** the life so that no life can be found except through Him.

He says finally at the end of John 14:6, "No one comes to the Father but through Me." One of the ancient church leaders many centuries ago said it this way, "He is the way, without Him there is no going. He is the truth without Him there is no knowing. He is the life both now and forevermore." It's a good way to say that. The latter part of John 14:6 finalizes Jesus' statement because He is the way, the truth and the life, He then becomes the bridge to God. Our great need is for us to be reconciled with God. For sinners to be right with a holy God is possible only through the bridge that is Jesus Christ.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but through Me."

## **September 30, 2021 – I Am the Way, Truth and Life**

This is the seventh *I am* statement found in John 15.

Jesus says in John 15:1, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit, You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

There is a lot here. This is a very intense section and goes all the way through John 15:11. There is so much, so we will just have to hit some highlights of this passage. We find that Jesus is the source of life here. He gives the analogy of a vine, and most of us don't know a lot about growing grapes today, but we know the concept. There is a vine, and you cannot grow fruit unless you are connected to the vine. So, He is saying that He is the vine. The Father is the dresser, so to speak, He takes care of the vineyard, but we are the branches within that vine and unless we are connected to the vine, we cannot have life and we cannot draw life from Christ, and we cannot bear fruit.

There are two things here:

1. There is life.

He gives us eternal life, spiritual life, found only in Christ if we are connected to Him.

2. There is also fruit.

He says here that if you are a branch in the vine that you will bear fruit, and that fruit is part of the evidence of being in the vine.

In the New Testament, *fruit* is used in several ways that all have connected in some way. Which one is Jesus talking about? Let me mention four different kinds of *fruit* that are mentioned by name in the New Testament:

1. Fruit of discipleship.

Helping others become followers of Jesus Christ. When we serve Him and share the gospel and train people in the Word, we are developing disciples, and that is a fruit that could be implied here.

2. Fruit of righteousness.

This is mentioned a couple of times in the epistles. As we walk in Christ we grow in righteousness. Coming out of the life of Christ is the life that brings righteousness, or a holy life, that matches our position in Christ as being in the vine.

3. Fruit of praise.

This is mentioned in the book of Hebrews. When we praise God with our lips by speaking, singing or praying that is a fruit of praise. So, the act of worship comes to mind.

4. Fruit of the Spirit.

I think this one shows up most predominantly in the New Testament from Galatians 5. In that same basic metaphor, we have a fruit that is developing because we are in Christ and because the Holy Spirit is in us and that is why they call it the fruit of the Spirit. There is only **one** fruit of the Spirit in that passage, but *nine* facets: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.

I think that is what Christ is talking about here. That your life will take on the characteristics of Christlikeness if you are abiding in Him if you are on the vine. So, fruit is what should be produced.

## A Word from the Lord

John 15:5 makes a startling statement. Probably one we don't really like. It says, "without me you can do nothing." That is a harsh statement, and we don't like it. We like to think we can do something, but Christ makes it very clear that without Him you can do nothing.

The question is how do we abide in the vine? We must be saved first. We must know Christ as our Savior. John 15:10 also says, "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." Obedience seems to be a central piece of this "abiding in Him." Our first act of obedience is salvation, placing our faith in the Lord Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins. Then, we live a life of obedience because we are vitally connected with the vine that produces life in us.

So, Jesus Christ says, I am the vine. We are the branches, and we can do nothing without Him!

## October 1, 2021 – I Am, Recap

Several weeks ago, we began a short series of looking at the words of Scripture and looking at different ones and how they impact our Christian life and the meaning behind them. That morphed into looking at some statements in the New Testament. Principally, the seven *I am* statements found in the gospel of John spoken by our Lord. He says, "I am," seven different times. We looked at that already. I'm going to overview that and review that today as we conclude this short series.

The *I am* as you recall is a link, at least, to the fact that Christ is deity. It was spoken in the Old Testament. Remember when Moses wanted to know who he should say sent him to the people in Egypt, God responded to tell them, "I am sent you." That is a statement concerning the deity of Christ, the title of Christ. It is a reference to the self-existent one or Yahweh or Jehovah. When Jesus made these *I am* statements, the ears perked up on all His listeners. They knew He was speaking beyond simply saying that this is *I am* as a person. He was making claims that He was deity.

Then He gives us seven different *I am* claims in the gospel of John. I'm simply going to review those with you today:

1. I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE – JOHN 6:35, 41, 48, 51

Bread, just like a physical bread, is sustenance. It gives us food to sustain us, but it also satisfies us. As we eat bread, we have the satisfaction of life that is found in that bread, and Jesus is saying exactly that. He is the one that satisfies the great hunger in our souls for God and for life. He is the one that quenches our thirst in that same basic idea. He is the bread of life.

2. THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD – JOHN 8:12, 9:5

One of the great needs of the world is illumination. We are born into darkness. We are born spiritually blind. Satan, as well, blinds the eyes of unbelievers to reject Christ, so we have a great need for sight. Jesus says I have come to the world to bring light: to illuminate, to

show the way, to point to God, and to tell you the truth. "I am the Light of the world."

3. I AM THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP – JOHN 10:7, 9

The only way for the sheep to come into the fold of God is through the door. The door is Jesus Christ. He is the One. As the One who is the door of the sheepfold, He protects, and He sustains, and takes care of the needs of the sheep. You cannot get into God's sheepfold without going through the door of Christ.

4. I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD – JOHN 10:11, 14

The good shepherd takes that same idea of sheep, which is very common to the people of Israel, and He is saying that He is the good shepherd. The one who lays down My life for the sheep. I not only protect them, guide them, and feed them, but I died for them so that they could have life. No other shepherd could do that. There could be some very good shepherds. David was a good shepherd in the Old Testament, but he could not die for the people of Israel. Only Christ could do that. He is the good shepherd.

5. I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE – JOHN 11:25

Without this, when we die, we would just simply cease to exist, but Christ says, "I am the resurrection and the life." The time comes, at the end of time, when I will resurrect all from the grave. My people will be resurrected into eternal life with me. "I am the resurrection and the life."

6. I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE – JOHN 14:6

He **is** the way. He **is** the truth. He **is** the life, and no one can come to the Father except through Him. That statement is very powerful because it shows who He personally **is**. Not simply what He does by giving us the way, the truth, and the life, but who He **is** in Himself. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."



7. I AM THE TRUE VINE – JOHN 15:1, 5

“I am the vine; you are the branches.” He is the one who is the source of life. Unless we are connected to the vine, we have no life. Unless we are connected to the vine, we have no fruit. Christ says without me you can do nothing. “I am the vine; you are the branches.”

These are the seven different *I am* statements in the gospel of John. They have been relished and loved and studied and prayed over for centuries. I would encourage you to do the same. Take some time to think about it, pray about it, talk about it and you will have a wonderful day in the Lord.

## Week Four & Five Review

- Word – “*logos*” God’s ultimate communication to humanity

Logos is translated in our Bible as the *Word*. If the word *logos* means communication, then Jesus has come to communicate to us what God is like and who God is. The most perfect, clear communication possible about the divine nature of God Himself is found in the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

John 1:1-5, 14, 18

- I AM – I am the One who is

The *I AM* is reflective of Jehovah God, of Yahweh. He is saying, I am God and here is what I am.

Exodus 3:13-14; John 1:4-5; 3:16-20; 8:12, 58-59; 6:35, 48-51; 10:11-15; 11:25; 14:1-6; 15:1-11; Psalm 23