



THIS QUESTION IS FOR YOU

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

2023-02-26

Leader Notes

OVERVIEW:

Welcome to our series, 'This Question is FOR YOU'! In this series we will explore 4 questions Jesus asks us. These questions Jesus asks are designed to get us thinking about who Jesus is and how we can follow him well. Deciding who you will say Jesus is, is an unavoidable question. Today's question is - Who do you say I am? What about you? Have you asked yourself the question? Have you decided? Whether you are considering becoming a follower of Jesus or you have been following Jesus for many years, allow today's question to prompt a response in you of taking a step closer to him.

ICEBREAKER: My Baptism Story

This Sunday we watched people at Creekside declare their faith in Jesus by being baptized. This is a powerful moment in their lives as they share their testimony of what Jesus has done for them and pledge their lives to follow him. What about you? Have you declared your faith in Jesus by being baptized? Are there questions you would have before making this decision? Share your story with the group!

STUDY:

Jesus asked a lot of questions. He used questions as a powerful teaching tool to draw people to him and to grow his disciples in their faith. Jesus' questions invite us to engage with him, to consider his question and to formulate a reasoned response. For today's study, we'll look at a key question Jesus asks and we'll dig into 7 statements Jesus makes about who he is. As we look at Jesus' question and statements, we'll ask - "how does this invite me closer to Jesus?"

1. Think about today's question from Jesus - "Who Do You Say That I Am?"
 - How would you personally answer? Who has Jesus been to you in your own life?
2. How has your answer to this question changed over the years?
 - What events or people have influenced your answer?
3. Sometimes Jesus is described using these 4 terms: Saviour, Teacher, Lord and Friend.
 - Do find each of these equally easy to embrace or do you find some of them to be more difficult?

Jesus uses the phrase "I AM" in seven declarations about himself. Each of these statements point to his unique divine identity and purpose as the Son of God. Explore what each of these mean about who Jesus is and how we can respond as his followers.

4. "I AM the Bread of Life"

READ John 6:35, 41, 48, 51

- What does this statement tell you about who Jesus is?

LEADER NOTE: The I AM statements in John are meant to tell us about Jesus' identity and ministry. In using the term, "I AM" Jesus purposefully picked a phrase that would make his listeners think of the OT name for God. (see Exodus 3:14). In his statement, "I am the bread of life" Jesus tells his followers that he is the true manna that has come from God. (see 6:38)

- How does Jesus' statement invite you to take a step closer to him?

LEADER NOTE: Jesus' statement reminds us that he alone can truly satisfy our spiritual hunger. Just as we are designed by God to satiate our physical hunger, God creates a spiritual hunger in us that can only be met as we spend time with him and his people.

5. "I AM the Light of the World"

READ John 8:12

- What can we learn from this statement about who Jesus is?

LEADER NOTE: Jesus made this declaration about himself during the Festival of Shelters. In the temple during this festival, sixteen gold bowls were filled with oil and lighted. Jesus stood beneath these lights in the Temple (8:20) and declared that he is the source of true light. Jesus is the only true spiritual light given to us by God to guide us to him.

- How does Jesus' statement invite you to grow your walk with him?

LEADER NOTE: As we follow Jesus, we have his promise that we will no longer live in spiritual darkness – the darkness of sin and death. As his followers, Jesus calls us to reflect his light in a dark world that needs to see him. (see Matthew 5:14-16).

6. "I AM the Gate"

READ John 10:9

"Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pasture." NLT

- What does this statement tell you about who Jesus is?

LEADER NOTE: In Jesus' world, sheep were kept over-night in an area that was often enclosed by a low wall of rocks. A shepherd would stay at the entrance to guard the sheep from harm. When Jesus said, "I am the gate" he meant that he is the way for the sheep (us) to find salvation and our home with God. Jesus, and Jesus alone, is the gate (the way) of salvation. (see John 14:6).

- How does Jesus' statement invite you to take a step closer to him?

LEADER NOTE: Seeing Jesus as the gate reminds us that he is our source of a rich and satisfying life (see John 10:10). God designed you to experience more and better life than you ever imagined possible in him. We experience this life as we centre our life around following him.

7. "I AM the Good Shepherd

READ John 10:14-15

"I am the good shepherd. I know my own sheep, and they know me, just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep." NLT

- What can we learn from this statement about who Jesus is?

LEADER NOTE: Jesus is our "good" shepherd. The Greek word for "good" here is "kalos" meaning that which is wholesome, noble and beautiful. This is innate goodness. When Jesus says he is the "good" shepherd he is referencing his inherent goodness, righteousness and beauty. As the shepherd, he is one who protects, guides and nurtures his flock.

- How does this statement draw you to Jesus?

LEADER NOTE: As our shepherd, Jesus promises to protect us from our spiritual enemy, Satan. He guides us to live a life that honours him. He nurtures us by his word and through his Spirit. Our Good Shepherd, Jesus, has paid the ultimate price by giving his life for us. These truths show us Jesus' love for us and draw us to respond by loving and following him.

8. I AM the Resurrection and the Life

READ John 11:25-26

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" NIV

- What can we learn from this statement about who Jesus is?

LEADER NOTE: In this statement Jesus tells us that he not only gives us life - he is life! Jesus is our source of life (see John 1:4; 14:6). This means he grants life, even to those who have died. Jesus has power over life and death because he is the Author of life.

- How does this statement invite you to take a step closer to him?

LEADER NOTE: In this statement Jesus invites us to take a step closer when he asks - "Do you believe this?" When we believe in Jesus' power and how wonderful his offer to us is, our natural response is to commit to follow him, to serve him with our lives. Those of us who believe have Jesus' wonderful assurance - "I will live again, and you will too." (John 14:19) NLT.

9. I AM the Way, The Truth and The Life

READ John 14:6

6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." NIV

- What can we learn from this statement about who Jesus is?

LEADER NOTE: This is one of the most basic and important passages in the Bible about who Jesus is. As the way, Jesus is our way, the only way, to the Father. Jesus is the way because he is both God and man. He has bridged the divide between fallen humans and a holy God. Jesus is the truth. His words are truth. (see John 17:17). Jesus is the life, our source of life and our promise of forever life with him (see John 1:4).

- How does this statement invite you to take a step closer to him?

LEADER NOTE: In this statement, Jesus invites us to come to the Father. How do we do that? Through following the Son! As we choose to follow Jesus, we become one with the Father, just as Jesus is one with the Father. (see John 17:21). As we follow Jesus through reading his words and obeying his teachings we grow in the knowledge of his truth and we live in the assurance of his promise of forever life with him.

10. I AM the Vine

READ John 15:5

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." NIV

- What can we learn from this statement about who Jesus is?

LEADER NOTE: This final "I Am" statement that John records for us was given by Jesus to remind his disciples then, and us today, of who he is to us. As the Vine, Jesus is our life source. He nourishes and sustains those who remain in him.

- How does this statement invite you to take a step closer to him?

LEADER NOTE: The image of Jesus being the Vine invites us to stay close. Even though we cannot see him, we are intimately connected to him, just as a branch is connected to a vine. We draw our spiritual nourishment and life from remaining to him. Jesus produces fruit through our lives - the fruit of obedience and the fruit of pointing others to him. Our desire to know him, love him and serve him will continue to grow as we abide in him.

11. Which of Jesus' I AM statements is speaking to you most powerfully today?

PRAY:

Father, thank you for drawing me closer to you through your Son, Jesus. Thank you that Jesus is Way, the Truth and the Life. Help me to walk in the way of Jesus. Give me your power to live in your truth. Thank you for the assurance that my life is in You. Jesus, thank you for being the Vine. Help me to stay closely connected to you as I read your word and meet with your people. Thank you for your amazing love for me! In Jesus' Name, AMEN.