

I AM the Good Shepherd

Message 3 of 5 in the series: "I Am"

A. God told Moses that His name is "I AM."

"Moses said to God, 'Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you," and they ask me, "What is his name?" Then what shall I tell them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: "I AM has sent me to you."' Exodus 3:13-14 (NIV)

1. "I AM" is the perfect name for God because:

- God is self-existent. "I am the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end," says the Lord God. 'I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come—the Almighty One.'" Revelation 1:8 (NLT)
- God is always present everywhere. "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there." Psalm 139:7-8 (NIV)
- God is unchangeable. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Hebrews 13:8 (NLT)

2. Jesus claimed to be "I AM" in the flesh.

"Your father Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming. He saw it and was glad.' The people said, 'You aren't even fifty years old. How can you say you have seen Abraham?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I AM!' At that point they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus was hidden from them and left the Temple." John 8:56-59 (NLT)

Life Application: We don't just admire Jesus; we worship Jesus!

"...I heard the voices of thousands and millions of angels around the throne and of the living beings and the elders. And they sang in a mighty chorus: 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered—to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.'" Revelation 5:11-12 (NLT)

B. Jesus said, "I AM the good shepherd." (John 10:11)

1. The good shepherd is the legitimate shepherd of the sheep.

"I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him..." John 10:1-3a (NLT)

Life Application: We can follow Jesus with confidence because He fulfilled all of the OT prophecies about the Messiah and satisfied all of the requirements of the OT law.

"But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children." Galatians 4:4-5 (NLT)

"Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose." Matthew 5:17 (NLT) (see *Ezekiel 34:23-24*)

2. The good shepherd knows his sheep, and they know him.

"...the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice...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." John 10:3b-5 & 14-15a (NLT)

Life Application: Following Jesus means entering into a trusting personal relationship with the God of the universe who made us and knows what's best for us.

"The Lord *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my

enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.” Psalm 23:1-6 (NKJV)

3. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don’t belong to him and he isn’t their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. The hired hand runs away because he’s working only for the money and doesn’t really care about the sheep.” John 10:11-13 (NLT)

Life Application: Following Jesus means believing that Jesus sacrificed His life for me (insert name).

“But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God’s paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all.” Isaiah 53:5-6 (NLT)

C. Jesus also said, “I AM the gate/door.” (John 10:7)

“I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.” John 10:7-10 (NLT)

- Gates/doors **separate** the inside from the outside.
- Gates/doors require us to **make a decision**.

Life Application: We must each decide whether or not we will trust Jesus as our savior and follow Him as our shepherd.

“When he said these things, the people were again divided in their opinions about him. Some said, ‘He’s demon possessed and out of his mind. Why listen to a man like that?’ Others said, ‘This doesn’t sound like a man possessed by a demon! Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?’” John 10:19-21 (NLT)

“Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if only you would hear his voice, do not harden your hearts...” Psalm 95:6-8a (NIV)

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Connect Group Questions:

Read John 10:1-21 and then discuss the following questions:

1. Describe a time in your life when you felt completely lost/confused/helpless. Where did you turn for help?
2. Discuss what the following passages teach us about God, ourselves, and our relationship with Him:
 - Psalm 23
 - Psalm 100:1-5
 - Isaiah 53:3-7
 - Luke 15:3-7
 - John 1:29, Revelation 5:11-12

Why do you think the Bible uses the imagery of sheep and shepherds a lot?

3. What does a shepherd do? What’s the difference between a shepherd and a cowboy?
4. Discuss the following statements Jesus made about being the good shepherd:
 - The good shepherd is the legitimate shepherd of the sheep. (John 10:1-3a)
 - The good shepherd knows his sheep, and they know him. (John 10:3b-5 & 14-15a)
 - The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. (John 10:11-13)

Which of these statements means the most to you?

5. Why do you think Jesus said, “I am the gate/door”? (John 10:7-10) What do gates/doors allow us to do?

6. Why are some people offended by Jesus' statement, "Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved"? (John 10:9 & 19-21)
7. Discuss the following reasons why "I AM" is the perfect name for God:
 - God is self-existent. (Revelation 1:8)
 - God is always present everywhere. (Psalm 139:7-8)
 - God is unchangeable. (Hebrews 13:8)

Why do you think Jesus repeatedly made statements about Himself using the phrase, "I Am"? (John 8:57-59)