



I AM

Red Door

SEVEN STATEMENTS OF JESUS
EASTER 2023



BEFORI ABRA- HAM WAS, — I AM

Jesus is the most controversial human being in history. That might sound like a classic preacher's exaggeration, but I think you'll come around by the end of this series.

When I was 15, I stood in front of my English class and told everyone I was going to be a racing car driver. Nobody asked me for this information, I just decided that everyone should know that it was absolutely, definitely going to happen.

Jump ahead 27 years and I drive my car once per week and couldn't name you more than two racing car drivers.

People say stuff about themselves, even crazy stuff, it happens.

Jesus said some stuff about himself too. Not just about what he was going to do, but about *who he was*. And what he said... it was the kind of thing that gets you killed.

In this series we'll focus on seven of these explosive statements of self-identification. I can't wait to dive in with you.

Jonathan

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BIBLE TEXT IS FROM THE CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE (CSB) AND IS PRINTED FOR YOU TO HIGHLIGHT, ANNOTATE & GENERALLY SCRIBBLE ON.

JOHN 8:47-59

The one who is from God listens to God's words. This is why you don't listen, because you are not from God."

The Jews responded to him, "Aren't we right in saying that you're a Samaritan and have a demon?"

"I do not have a demon," Jesus answered. "On the contrary, I honor my Father and you dishonor me. I do not seek my own glory; there is one who seeks it and judges. Truly I tell you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

Then the Jews said, "Now we know you have a demon. Abraham died and so did the prophets. You say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.' Are you greater than our father Abraham who died? And the prophets died. Who do you claim to be?"

"If I glorify myself," Jesus answered, "my glory is nothing. My Father—about whom you say, 'He is our God'—he is the one who glorifies me. You do not know him, but I know him. If I were to say I don't know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him, and I keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad."

The Jews replied, "You aren't fifty years old yet, and you've seen Abraham?"

Jesus said to them, "**Truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.**"

So they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus was hidden and went out of the temple.

I AM THE I AM

CONTEXT

Jesus' most controversial self-identification comes in the context of a disagreement between himself and some Jews who had initially believed in him. The dispute centres on their sense that they don't need to be set free from sin, because they are 'Abraham's offspring'.

BIG IDEA

The sovereign God who exists before all time has come into the world as Jesus of Nazareth.

KEY IMAGE

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14).

DISCUSSION

The Bible portrays Jesus as fully God and fully man: 100% of both. Most of us, though, tend to relate to him either as more God or more human.

Who is Jesus to you? If you are a Christian, in what way do you need to adjust your view of Jesus to better reflect his deity or humanity?

JOHN 6:27-40

Don't work for the food that perishes but for the food that lasts for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set his seal of approval on him."

"What can we do to perform the works of God?" they asked.

Jesus replied, "This is the work of God—that you believe in the one he has sent."

"What sign, then, are you going to do so that we may see and believe you?" they asked. "What are you going to perform? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, just as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat."

Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, Moses didn't give you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

Then they said, "Sir, give us this bread always."

"I am the bread of life," Jesus told them. "No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again. But as I told you, you've seen me, and yet you do not believe. Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. This is the will of him who sent me: that I should lose none of those he has given me but should raise them up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him will have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

CONTEXT

Jesus' miracle of feeding five thousand people with five loaves and two fish leads some to follow him because he can give them food. Knowing their shallow motivation, he encourages them to seek 'the true bread of God that gives life.'

BIG IDEA

Jesus is the only one who can satisfy the deepest longings of our souls.

DISCUSSION

We have a long history in our country of 'nominal Christianity', that is, someone identifies as a Christian without actively worshipping him and following him.

What would it look like today for someone to be following Jesus 'for the food that perishes'?

JOHN 8:12-19

Jesus spoke to them again: **"I am the light of the world.** Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life."

So the Pharisees said to him, "You are testifying about yourself. Your testimony is not valid."

"Even if I testify about myself," Jesus replied, "My testimony is true, because I know where I came from and where I'm going. But you don't know where I come from or where I'm going. You judge by human standards. I judge no one. And if I do judge, my judgment is true, because it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. Even in your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. I am the one who testifies about myself, and the Father who sent me testifies about me."

Then they asked him, "Where is your Father?"

"You know neither me nor my Father," Jesus answered. "If you knew me, you would also know my Father."

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

CONTEXT

It's the final day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Four large lamps are lit in the temple courts, and men dance through the night holding flaming torches. Jesus uses the evocative scene to identify himself as 'the light of the world' - a powerful Old Testament metaphor for God's plan of salvation.

BIG IDEA

In the darkness, many of us are attracted to weak and flickering lights, but Jesus comes as the light of the world, to show once for all the way of salvation.

KEY IMAGE

Johnny Cash at Nickajack Cave.

DISCUSSION

The response to Jesus' words in chapter 8 is hostile. People hear his claims and attempt to kill him. To this day, Jesus' words often elicit a hostile response. He is accused of being arrogant or delusional, or both. How do you respond to Jesus' claim in this passage?

What do you make of Jesus' words in John 3?

"...the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil"

JOHN 10:7-18

Jesus said again, "Truly I tell you, **I am the gate for the sheep**. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn't listen to them. I am the gate. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, since he is not the shepherd and doesn't own the sheep, leaves them and runs away when he sees a wolf coming. The wolf then snatches and scatters them. This happens because he is a hired hand and doesn't care about the sheep.

"I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. I lay down my life for the sheep. But I have other sheep that are not from this sheep pen; I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. Then there will be one flock, one shepherd. This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life so that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."

I AM THE GATE, & THE SHEPHERD

CONTEXT

*In yet another confrontation with the Pharisees, Jesus uses Old Testament imagery to describe the Kingdom of God as a sheepfold - a walled area to keep sheep in - and his own role as both the **gate** for the sheep, and the **good shepherd** who calls them, and lays his life down for them.*

BIG IDEA

In a world of unfaithfulness and uncertainty, Jesus is a self-sacrificing protector who promises abundant life and eternal security.

KEY IMAGE

The shepherds who eat their sheep vs. the Good Shepherd who loves them - Ezekiel 34:2-6; 11-16.

DISCUSSION

Self-serving shepherds (pastors, priests, leaders) have done great damage to the People of God from the Old Covenant to the present day.

What can we do to ensure our church communities are led by Good Shepherds? What will stop Red Door being led by a bad shepherd now, or in the future?

JOHN 15:1-11

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. Every branch in me that does not produce fruit he removes, and he prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me.

If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples.

"As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commands you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love.

"I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

I AM THE TRUE VINE

CONTEXT

It's the night before his crucifixion and Jesus meets with his disciples in the upper room to share with them some important teaching before the seismic events of the following day.

BIG IDEA

In the Old Covenant, Israel was meant to be a fruitful vine, tended to by God, but Jesus himself is the true vine who gives life to those who remain in him.

DISCUSSION

Jesus says his followers will remain (or abide) in him.

He goes on to say that those who keep his commands will remain in his love.

What's the connection between keeping Jesus' commands and remaining in his love?

How do we avoid the errors of 'antinomianism' (Christians are not bound to keep commandments) and 'legalism' (Christians earn salvation by keeping commandments)?

JOHN 13:34-14:7

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."

Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

"Don't let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. You know the way to where I am going."

"Lord," Thomas said, "we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way?"

Jesus told him, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life.** No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, & THE LIFE

CONTEXT

During the last supper, Jesus made some worrying predictions about his disciples. He told them that one of them would become a traitor, and said Peter would deny Him three times that very evening. They are also wrestling with the idea that Jesus will leave them soon. In response, Jesus offers comfort in the form of some of his most famous words.

BIG IDEA

Human beings across time have sought to connect to something transcendent, something eternal. Here Jesus reveals himself as the object of their search: he is the way, the truth, and the life.

DISCUSSION

If there's one thing our culture doesn't like it's claims to exclusivity. But here, Jesus makes many such claims: he is the way, the truth, and the life! He is the only path to the Father, to enlightenment, and to eternity.

How does this statement make you feel? Remember, Jesus intended his words to comfort his disciples. Does it comfort you? Embarrass you? Anger you?

If you believe his claim to be true, what needs to change about how you live?

JOHN 11:17-27

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem (less than two miles away). Many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother.

As soon as Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. Yet even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you."

"Your brother will rise again," Jesus told her.

Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life.** The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who comes into the world."

I AM THE RESURRECTION & THE LIFE

CONTEXT

Jesus deliberately arrives too late to heal Lazarus before he dies. This was to set the scene for his greatest miracle - the raising of his dear friend from the dead. But before he does so, he reveals something astonishing about himself to Lazarus' sisters.

BIG IDEA

The biggest problem humanity has ever had to deal with is the reality of death. Jesus solves the problem by being the solution: he is the resurrection and the life.

KEY IMAGE

You. In a box. Buried underground.

DISCUSSION

How often do you think about your own death?

Is there anything so inevitable that you think about less than death? Why do we avoid the thought?

Is death the end of your existence? If not, what's your resurrection plan? How will you survive the grave?

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