

I AM: WHO YOU ARE BECAUSE OF WHO JESUS IS

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LESSON 1- I AM...THE DOOR

Introduction

Activity: Introduce (or reintroduce) yourself to the group using only 3 words. Afterwards, share why you chose those 3 words.

Finding Identity

Who are you? That's a big question, especially one to try to narrow down into just a few words. But for far too many young people, the three words that they most honestly relate to when it comes to identity is: "I don't know." I don't know who I am, I'm still figuring it out, or I thought I knew, but then something happened and now I'm not so sure.

Below are some of the places where we tend to find our identity. What are some shortcomings or issues with finding who you are in each of these:

Sports/Activities

Relationships

Popularity

Grades/Achievements

So many young people go to college, to the workforce, or to various groups in order to *find* their identity, to figure out who they are. What ends up happening is that many of them end up getting lost or finding their identity in the wrong things, which has all sorts of disastrous results. The good news is that God isn't silent on this issue. He doesn't want your identity to ever be in doubt. Let's turn to the identity of Jesus, and in seeing who He is, find our own identity too.

A "Filtered" Life

Read John 10:1-9. What does Jesus say about His identity in this passage?

Jesus says that He is the door, or gate, for the sheep. In order to get to the sheep, you have to go through the door. If Jesus is the door, who are the sheep? What are the implications of that?

Jesus is the door. Entering through Him, you find life. How do we enter through this door?

Luke 19:10

Romans 5:8

Luke 15:1-7

You have a God who comes after you. Who comes after the lost sheep, who comes to save you in your sin. And after He's saved you, He continues to protect you and provide for you. No one can get to the sheep unless they get through the door. No one can get to you unless they go through Jesus.

What does this look like practically? It's like Jesus says in verse 8, the sheep don't listen to the wrong voice. Anything that comes your way has to get "checked" at the door. It gets filtered through the words of Christ. What does a filter do? What are some examples of filters that you can think of?

What does God say about you in these passages?

1 Peter 2:9-10

1 John 3:1

What happens when what others (or yourself) say about you is in conflict with what God says about you?

2 Corinthians 10:5

How can you filter your identity through Christ?

John 9 says that those who enter through Jesus will go "in and out and find pasture." Jesus doesn't just stay with you during Bible study, He also goes with you. Wherever you go, Christ goes with you, to lead you. Who does He lead us to?

[Application Activity](#)

"Who You Say I Am" Lyrics

What phrases stood out to me:

[Conclusion](#)

You are who God says that you are. That's your identity. May what other people say about you, what you say about yourself, your successes, your failures, where you go, how you interact with others, and everything else in your life be filtered through who God says that you are. You are loved, you are forgiven, you are His child. That's who you are!

[Finish the I Am Statement:](#) Because Jesus is my door, I am...

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LESSON 2- I AM...THE VINE

Introduction

List out the top 5 most important things in your life:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Look at your list and reflect on the following:

-Why did I select these five?

-What's God's role in my list?

-Is there a difference between what I think the "right answer" should be and what the "accurate/honest" answer is?

Central to All Things

When we, especially in the context of a Bible study, are asked what's first in our lives, we know that answer is supposed to be God. God is number 1! And yet there are two problems with even this answer:

First Problem: God oftentimes actually isn't first in our lives if we're honest. What are some examples that you can think of where this has been true in your life?

Second problem: Even if God is first, what about everything else on the list? Does He have a role in those too, or can I do whatever I want as long as God is first?

Our problem is that we don't want to be dependent on God. We'll give up Sundays for Him sometimes, and maybe a night for small groups or something like that, but then the rest of the week is ours to do whatever we want. When we think that we can operate independently from God, we've lost sight of who we are. Let's again return to the words of Jesus and in His identity, be reminded of who we are as well.

Read John 15:1-8. What does Jesus say in this passage about who He is?

What does He say in this passage about who we are? What are the implications of this identity statement for us?

For each of these verses, reflect on what does this passage say about God's role in my "list" of what's most important in life (or everything else that doesn't even make that list)?

John 15:5

Romans 11:36

Colossians 1:17

Application Activity

Go back to your list from the introduction. Does anything need to be rearranged? How can God be the center of all of those, so He can hold everything together?

Abide in Me

The key to having God at the center of everything is being consistently reminded that we need Him. Apart from Him, we can do nothing. We are the branches and He is the vine. This is good news for us, because a branch really doesn't do much apart from remaining connected to the vine and then bearing fruit because of what is provided by the vine. What does it look like for you to remain connected to the true Vine, Jesus?

The beautiful truth of the Gospel is God holds onto us even when we're not holding onto Him. Isaiah 46:4, "Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you."

Application Activity

"He Will Hold Me Fast" Lyrics

What phrases stood out to me:

Conclusion

Jesus is the Vine; we are the branches. When we remain in Him, the One who holds fast to us, we have everything that we need. It's okay to need God. In fact, it's essential. For Him to not just be first on our list, but the center of everything, so He can hold it all together. What a great God we have!

Finish the I Am statement: Because Jesus is my vine, I am...

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LESSON 3- I AM...THE LIGHT

Introduction

What do you need when you're in physical darkness? Emotional darkness? Spiritual darkness?

We are people who need light. We cannot thrive in the darkness, and yet so much of our lives tend to revolve around darkness- hiding our sin. It's what Adam and Eve do in response to the fall into sin in Genesis 3. Why do we respond to the darkness of sin by hiding it, by keeping it in the darkness?

What effects does hiding our sin have on us?

- Fractured relationships in Gen 3- with God and with one another

The fall into sin fractured relationships- with God and with one another. And sin has been doing that ever since. It's what sin does in your life- even sin that you think is hidden. Perhaps especially when you think it's hidden. Sin that's left in the darkness only gets worse, like poison running through your veins. The secrets we think we are keeping oftentimes end up keeping us. What are some examples of this?

Brought into the Light

Thankfully, you don't have to live in darkness anymore. As Jesus began His public ministry on earth, He fulfilled this prophecy: "The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned" (Matthew 4:16). Instead of living in darkness, you are called to live in the light.

Read John 8:12. What does Jesus say about His identity in this passage?

Darkness can never overcome light. Even in the darkest of rooms, if you turn on the smallest light, it will illuminate the whole room. Darkness never overpowers light. The Good News of the Gospel is that light has come into the world. And the light of the world has come for you. To shine in your life, to forgive your sins. Read 1 John 1:5-6. What does this passage say about living in the darkness of your sin?

Read 1 John 1:7-9. What does God invite you to do in this passage? What are the blessings received by living in the light?

Light of the World: Confession and Absolution Activity

My reaction to God's forgiveness:

Live in the Light

You don't have to walk in the darkness of hidden sin, but rather can walk in the light of forgiveness. To confess is to "say the same thing as". So when we confess our sins to God, we are saying about our sins the same thing that God says about them- that what we are doing is a sin, is not in God's plan, and is harming us and others. When we confess our sins, what does God promise? How can you be sure of this promise?

John 3:19 says that "the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil." Why do we gravitate towards the darkness? What does this say about how often we need to be forgiven, to have the light of Christ's forgiveness shined on our sins?

Our lives are meant to be built around confession (saying the same thing to God about our sins that He does), absolution (receiving God's forgiveness proclaimed to us), and repentance (turning away from sin and living in obedience to God's design). Whenever the darkness of sin comes into your life, instead of hiding it, excusing it, or denying it, you are invited to bring it into the light. James 5:16 says, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." How can you live a life of repentance?

Identity in Action

Scenario 1- You bring a friend to church and they ask how you know that you're actually forgiven when the pastor speaks the Absolution during the worship service. How do you answer?

Scenario 2- Your friend has messed up and doesn't feel welcome at church. "Church isn't for people like me" is what they say. What do you tell them that will remind them of God's truth?

Scenario 3- You have a sin that is really bothering you- what do you do?

Conclusion

Jesus is the light of the world! "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9, emphasis added). All unrighteous- that includes your sins, no matter what they are. You don't have to walk in darkness anymore. Your sin is paid for, covered in the light of Christ. You don't have to suffer anymore from hidden sin. Bring it into the light and find forgiveness and freedom in Christ!

Finish the I Am statement: Because Jesus is my light, I am....

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LESSON 4- I AM...WAY, TRUTH, LIFE

Introduction

Share a time in your life where you've been lost, either when you didn't know where you were or when you didn't know where to go or what to do next.

Read John 14:1-5. The disciples are lost and in need of guidance. They don't know what's going to happen next Jesus' answer to His disciples and provides us a lot of guidance when we're lost in our lives too. Read John 14:6-7. What does Jesus say about His identity in this passage?

What difference would it make if we changed the word "the" to "a" way in v6? How do we try to do that in our lives?

What are the implications that Jesus is "the" way, truth, and life?

Jesus is...THE Way

What is a time in your life where you really felt close to God? Far from God, or that God was far from you?

Oftentimes it's easy to base our relationship with God on our feelings, whether we feel close to God or not, or whether we feel that He is close to us. What are some potential problems with this?

Read John 1:14, Luke 19:10, and Matthew 28:20. Even when you don't feel it, where is God whenever you feel lost or far away? How can this bring comfort to you?

Jesus is the way to the Father- there's no other way to come to God. And Jesus comes to you, even when you feel far off. He draws near to you through His Word and His Sacraments. He seeks and saves the lost, rather than waiting for them to come to Him. You have a seeking, pursuing God who has made not just *a* way, but *the* way to know Him: His Son Jesus Christ, crucified and risen for you!

What does it mean in your life for Jesus to be not just "the" way, but "my" (or insert your own name here) way?

Jesus is...THE Truth

Is there such a thing as absolute truth? Or can everyone believe whatever works for them?

Read John 8:31-32 and John 17:17. How does the Bible talk about truth? Why is this important, even in a world where truth is relative?

Since Jesus is the truth and His word is true, we can turn to Him to know what is good versus evil, what is lasting versus temporary, and what is worth pursuing versus what is vanity. And you can turn to Him to know who you are. What does God say about you in John 3:16-17 and Romans 5:8? Why is it important that what God says about you is THE truth in your life?

What does it mean in your life for Jesus to be not just "the" truth, but "my" (or insert your own name here) truth?

Jesus is...THE Life

FOMO, or "fear of missing out" is certainly a concern for many. How have you experienced this in your life?

Oftentimes we're so convinced that our lives will be somehow lesser if we miss out on something, so we end up filling our days and schedules with too much. The question we have to ask ourselves is, "What if I don't have that _____ (relationship, sport, concert, game, whatever else I want to fill the blank with)?" What will my life be without it?

Read 1 John 5:12. What does this passage say about your life? How does this help you deal with loss, failure, or missing out on things?

In Jesus you have life- life now and life eternal. He is your life- not sports, not grades, not relationships, not anything else...Jesus is your life. If you get injured and can't play your sport, that is certainly disappointing, but it doesn't end your life- because your life is found in Christ. If your relationship ends, your life doesn't because your life is in Christ. Even if a disease or illness takes your last breath, it doesn't take your life- because your life is in Christ and one day He will raise you and all believers from the dead!

What does it mean in your life for Jesus to be not just "the" life, but "my" (or insert your own name here) life?

Conclusion

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life! You don't have to be lost anymore, because God comes to find you. You don't have to work your way to God, because He comes to you. You're saved not by your works, but by Christ's. You can be confident in His promises!

Finish the I Am statement:

- Because Jesus is my way, I am...
- Because Jesus is my truth, I am...
- Because Jesus is my life, I am...

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LESSON 5- I AM...THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Introduction

"The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy." (John 10:10a). That verse brings to mind this story by Kierkegaard: One evening, two thieves break into a jewelry store. But they don't steal anything. Instead, they just rearrange the price tags. So the next day, people are buying masterpieces for next to nothing while others are buying what they think is expensive, fine jewelry, but in reality is overpriced junk.

How does this story relate to our lives and the value we put on things?

What types of things do Satan and our sinful world want us to think that life is all about?

Meanwhile, how does Satan tempt us to forget or question our own value and worth?

One of the greatest ways that Satan attacks us is by tempting us to fall into sin and then accusing us afterwards, attacking our value and worth. When we don't think we're valuable or worthwhile, how do we tend to live and act?

The Good Shepherd Steps In

God never wants you to doubt your value or who you are: "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10b). The abundant life that Jesus offers is life not found in the things, achievements, and fame of this world, but in hearing, trusting, and following the voice of God.

Returning to our opening story, how would the jewelry store get their price tags back in order? Where do we turn when determining the true value in our lives?

Read John 10:11. What has Jesus done for you? How does His sacrifice impact your sin? (See 1 Peter 3:18) How does this give you a place to stand against Satan's accusations?

What does your Good Shepherd laying His life down for you say about your value? What is going to impact or change that? (see Romans 8:38-39)

Activity

"How Deep the Father's Love for Us" Lyrics

What phrases stood out to me:

Remember Who You Are

God's love for you is unfathomable. He sees you in all of your sin and brokenness and instead of abandoning you, running away, or rejecting you, He send His only Son to suffer and die for you. That's why you're valuable: because God has given you value through your Good Shepherd. Read John 10:14-16. What are we called to do as God's sheep?

Oftentimes "listening to God's voice" can sound easy to do, but is hard to practice. What makes it hard to hear and obey God's voice?

Read 1 Peter 2:9-10. What does this passage say about who you are? What does it say about what you are to do?

This passage is one example of what we see consistently in Scripture. God talks very specifically about who you are, and more generally about what you are to do. So you're not going to find a verse that tells you specifically which college to go to, or whether to go to college at all. What are you going to find? Verses about who you are, and reminding you to live your identity out wherever you go. God leaves the choice of your career path up to you, but He doesn't leave you empty-handed. He tells you, "Pick one and while you're being my witness there, always remember who you are."

Lion King clip example

What are some ways that you can "remember who you are" in your daily life?

Conclusion

Instead of listening to the voice of the world or the rearranged price tags of the enemy, we are to listen to the voice of our Good Shepherd. A Good Shepherd who says, "I have called you by name, you are mine" (Isaiah 43:1). A Good Shepherd who lays His life down for you, forgiving your sins and saying, "It is finished!" (John 19:30). A Good Shepherd who loves you, who saves you, who calls you His own, and who invites you, every day to remember who you are and to remind others who they are in Christ!

Finish the I Am statement: Because Jesus is my Good Shepherd, I am...

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LESSON 6- I AM...THE LIFE

Introduction

Here are a few questions that we don't have great answers to:

"Why do we drive on parkways and park on driveways?"

"If a kid refuses to sleep during nap time, are they guilty of resisting a rest?"

"Why do hot dogs come in packages of 10 and hot dog buns come in packages of 8?"

Can you think of any others?

There are a lot of things that we don't or simply can't understand, especially when it comes to God. "Why God?" seems to be a very common question in life, that is very hard to answer oftentimes. What are some examples of "why" questions that we direct at God?

The issue isn't that God can't handle our why questions- He's certainly big enough. The issue is that we can't. What are the ways that we can respond when we don't get answers to our "why" questions?

Bread of Life

When it comes down to it, our real problem is that God chooses to work in ways that we don't understand. John chapter 6 is a great example of this. Jesus has just taught the crowds about how He is the bread of life (v48) and that whoever eats of this bread will live forever (v51). His hearers don't understand what He is saying. Read John 6:60, 66. How do many of those who had been following Jesus respond to this teaching that they don't understand? How are we tempted to do the same?

One of the ways we can respond to God not working in ways that we understand is to do just what these disciples did- to abandon their Lord, to allow their "why" questions to consume them, to demand that God work in ways that we can understand. The underlying problem with our view of what is right and wrong, good and evil, what God should do and shouldn't do, is that we're convinced that when we disagree with God, we're the ones who are right. We're right, and the God of the universe is wrong. Somehow, we reasoned it all out and if we explained it to God, He would go, "Oh Myself! I never thought about it that way...I'm really glad I have you around to keep me in line!" Thinking that we know better than God is really the root of all sin, so this can quickly get us into trouble, as seen in John 6. Why is our assumption that we're right and God's wrong at the heart of our issues here?

But as we continue in our text, we find another way to deal with our why questions- to cling to what God has given to us, rather than what He hasn't. God, in His wisdom, has chosen oftentimes to keep the "why" answers to Himself. What if we let Him have it? God is the provider of all things that we need and He has chosen not to give us all the answers that we want. That must mean that we don't actually need those "why" answers. What if instead of demanding more, we looked at what He *has* given us and trust that it is enough? Read John 6:67-69. What do the twelve cling to in the midst of their questions? How do they respond differently than the other disciples?

God does provide us an answer to our questions, but it's not a why answer, it's a Who: Jesus, who gives us life. We hold onto Jesus, the Who, in the midst of the "why's" of life.

Resurrection and the Life

Knowing our Who, Jesus, gives us an anchor in the midst of even the toughest of "why's", even death. Read John 11:21. How is Martha's statement similar to our questions when faced with death and loss?

Read John 11:23-27. What does Jesus say about His identity in this passage? Why can we cling to this in the midst of our why questions?

Jesus didn't just *talk* about being the resurrection and the life, God actually raised Him from the dead after He died on the cross for our sins! Read Romans 6:4 and 1 Peter 1:3-4. What does Jesus' resurrection mean for your life?

More than answers, God gives us Himself and the more we know Him, the more we realize that He actually is the answer that we've been looking for all along.

For every cry in our lives, God answers with Himself- "I AM."

Who's going to help me...and He answers, "I AM."

Is anyone going to figure this out? I AM.

Is anything going to last? I AM.

What's real anymore? I AM.

Is anybody listening to me? I AM.

I can't hold on anymore. I AM.

I'm running on empty, who's pouring into me? I AM.

I'm doing all I can and it's not enough. I AM.

What's my hope for the future? I AM.

Who's going to save me? I AM.

God says to you: I am your hope, I am your peace, I am your Savior, I am your life! More than answers, this I AM God wants to give you Himself. And He wants to send you out into a world that is full of why's, not for you to try to make up answers as to why God would allow one thing or another, but to share what you confidently do know: that God has sent Jesus, and He is for you. We don't always have a why, but we always have a Who, and You can trust in Him and His promises, no matter what.

What's one take-away I have from today's lesson?

I Am Statements

Because Jesus is my door, I am...who He says I am!

Because Jesus is my vine, I am...dependent on Him!

Because Jesus is my light, I am...forgiven!

Because Jesus is my way, I am...never far away from God!

Because Jesus is my truth, I am... confident in His promises!

Because Jesus is my life, I am...secure no matter what happens!

Because Jesus is my Good Shepherd, I am...saved!

God's blessings to you as you live out your identity in Christ, as you are sent as His witness to share Christ's promises with those around you!

Conclusion

Think back to the opening question of this study series- describing yourself in 3 words. Now in light of everything we've talked about, knowing who you are because of who Jesus is, come up with three new words to summarize who you are. It could be a 3 word phrase (like "Child of God") or 3 individual words (like "Loved, Forgiven, Sent").

My 3 words: