




"I AM" STATEMENTS OF
CHRIST

HOLY WEEK
DEVOTIONALS

2023
PRITCHARD AT SOUTH END



DAY 1: SUNDAY, APRIL 2ND

Abide in the True Vine

John 15:1, 4-5 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself, it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

Jesus is saying that our spiritual fruit can only come through Him. Our role is to “remain” or to “abide.” God’s role is to bring about fruit. Bearing fruit as mentioned above reminds us of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, forbearance (KJV calls this long-suffering) kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

The story is told of a situation that happened many, many years ago. A young pianist heard a sermon by her pastor on these scriptures in John 15. He taught that when facing difficulties, remember the phrase: “For this I have Jesus; and Jesus says, for this you have Me.” After the church service that night, she received a telegram that her widowed mother who lived in another state was dying, and she needed to go home. As she hurriedly made travel arrangements, she kept remembering the phrase “For this I have Jesus; and Jesus says, for this you have Me.” It brought her much peace. Disappointed that she arrived home after her mother had died, and during the next days as she (for the first time) had to make funeral arrangements, this phrase kept coming to her, “For this I have Jesus; and Jesus says, for this you have Me.” It brought her incredible peace during this difficult time. Are you facing difficult situations today? How can you apply this promise to your life? So how do we remain or abide in Jesus, the vine?

- By spending time in God’s Word and praying regularly
- Living a life of worship and obedience
- Loving God and our neighbor

During this Easter season, let us all commit to these three disciplines, and we will see much fruit! When we abide in Christ and trust Him, God promises to bring about great fruit in our lives.



DAY 2: MONDAY, APRIL 3RD

Called Out Of Darkness Into His Marvelous Light

John 8:12 “I AM the Light of the World. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”

During the Feast of Tabernacles, the City of Jerusalem was flooded with the light from four massive lamps to remind the people of the pillar of fire which had guided the Israelites in the desert.

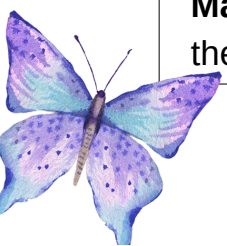
It was against this background that Jesus made the **I AM** declaration recorded in John 8:12. He was the Light of the World and connected that light with life. Light is necessary for life. In this passage, the Lord explained that spiritual light comes to those who choose to accept and follow THE LIGHT of the world.

In the original language of the Bible the word “light” used here speaks of radiance, a fiery brightness--a divine illumination designed to impart life. This is who Jesus is! He is the brilliant, inextinguishable, divine radiance of God shining through human form.

Through Jesus, God’s One and Only Son, God’s light came into the world’s darkness to bring life eternal to all who believe in and accept Him. Jesus came to call His people “out of darkness and into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). The Apostle Peter writes to remind us that we are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and God’s special possession. Because Jesus is the Light of the World, we are to declare His praises to a world around us who needs Him, the Light of Life, more than ever!

If we have experienced first-hand how the light of the world changes lives—giving us purpose, hope and redemption—be reminded this Holy Week Season. The world is full of people who are lost, hurting, fallen and searching. God wants to use us. He wants us to shine His Light into the lives of the people around us. Today, and every day--walk in Jesus, the Light of the World, as you invite others to join you in the Light!

Matthew 5:16 - In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.





DAY 3: TUESDAY, APRIL 4TH

Who Do You Say I AM?

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM!”

The **I AM** statement of Jesus we read in John 8:58 is not only the most critical statement to our understanding of WHO Jesus claims to be but the name, **I AM**, then serves as the foundation for each of His other claims...the Light, the Bread, the Vine, the Good Shepherd, the Gate, the Way, the Truth and the Life, and ultimately the Resurrection and the Life.

I AM in the Hebrew language and tradition referred to one and only one person – GOD! In the Old Testament account of Moses and the burning bush in Midian we read:

Exodus 3:13-14 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.’”

Abraham was brought into being while Jesus claimed to exist. He never came into being. By stating to the Jewish leaders that He was I AM, Jesus was deliberately taking upon Himself the language of deity. Jesus is claiming to be GOD, not just sent by God. Here is his claim to be timeless—He who was before time, He who will be after time, He who always is. Jesus is either a liar, crazy and delusional; or He is WHO He claims to be.

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In John 7:1 we are told that the Jewish leaders were seeking to kill Jesus at that time as a result of His signs, miracles and the disregard for their man-made rules and religious authority He evidenced throughout His ministry. How much more, with the statement in today's devotion “...before Abraham was, I AM,” does this serve to inflame their hatred of the Nazarene! No doubt the Jews present in His audience at this time very clearly understood what Jesus meant by these words and regarded His claim as blasphemous. John records in John 8:59 that the Jews picked up stones to throw at Him – they had had enough and it was time to be rid of Him! However, since it was not yet “His time” to suffer, die and arise again for our sins, we are told He miraculously disappeared!

Colossians 1:15-20 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and firstborn from among the dead, so that in all things He may have preeminence. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him, to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through the blood of His cross.

Do you know Jesus the Great I AM? He is not just a great teacher. He is not just a miracle worker. He is fully the Son of God and fully the Son of Man. The One who humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross...for you, for me, for the whole world! The I AM who gave His sinless life in exchange for my sin, for your sin...for the sin of the world!

Matthew 16:15 Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do you say I AM?” We at Pritchard pray that as you reflect on Jesus and His great sacrifice on the cross for you and me throughout this week, that you choose to believe in the **I AM**, and respond as Simon Peter then answered to His question in **Matthew 16:16**, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”



DAY 4: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5TH

Greener Pastures

John 10:9 “I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.”

You’ve probably often heard the saying “the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.” Often this turn of phrase is used negatively to indicate a person thinks there’s something better on the other side when there’s really not.

In today’s verse, Jesus describes himself as the gate. In Biblical Israel, sheep pens were made of stone and would generally have had only one gate. Each gate was guarded at night by a watchman who would only open the gate for the shepherds who had sheep in that enclosure. Notice here that Jesus doesn’t describe Himself as our shepherd as He does in other places in Scripture; rather, He’s the gate, the only way through to the other side of the fence – to the pasture where the sheep could rest and be secure. In their pasture each evening, the sheep could savor the green grass, drink from the still streams, and rest easy, knowing they were guarded from the lions and wolves who would otherwise prey on them outside the safety of the walls.

David celebrates this special place of rest in the 23rd Psalm: “He makes me lie down in green pastures.” **Psalms 23:2a**

The pasture David describes is a place of such ease and rest that he feels safe enough to lie down. He’s cared for so well that there is no need to be watchful.

How wonderful to know we have a Savior who is our way to truly greener pastures – to an eternal life where we can rest and be secure with Him! He’s the only way to Heaven, the only gate.

As we come to the middle of Holy Week, consider the great privilege we have in Jesus as our gate. We can find safety and security in Him and rest easy knowing He’ll protect His pasture from the Enemy lurking outside.



DAY 5: THURSDAY, APRIL 6TH

The Voice

John 10:11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

Have you ever thought about why Jesus so often referred to Himself as a shepherd? If you think about it, shepherds weren't the most revered people in society. They were dirty, smelled of sheep, and were generally poor. They wouldn't have been the first people invited to a social event, for certain.

However, these men had to be brave and strong to defend their flocks against predators, while also being endlessly mindful of where each and every little lamb wandered. Sheep are notoriously dumb animals and need constant attention and care.

Yet, Jesus described Himself as the “good shepherd,” willing to “lay down his life for the sheep.” When the predator Satan clawed at us to drag us down into the pit of our own sin, Jesus stood in the gap and gave up His own life in our stead, stupid sheep though we are.

And, though we are so mindless and sinful and tend to stray, Jesus invites us into a personal relationship with Him. Think of someone close to you. Perhaps it's your spouse, your best friend, your child, your neighbor... if they walked into a pitch dark room where you were sitting and said “hello,” would you not instantly recognize that voice?

Jesus said His sheep also know His voice: “The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.” **John 10:3**

Notice He calls each sheep by name. He's intimately knowledgeable about each and every one of His flock. He cares enough for them that each one has a name – not just Sheep #1, Sheep #2, etc. We, the sheep, have significance to Him. **Jesus loves us!**

As we enter the last days of Holy Week, reflect on how Jesus might be speaking to you today. Are you open to hear His voice and let Him lead you?

DAY 6: FRIDAY, APRIL 7TH

No More Hunger! No More Thirst!

John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

During his earthly ministry, Christ taught the multitudes that He was the promised Messiah. He authenticated His claims through many signs and wonders, such as the feeding of the 5000. The supply of bread and fish satisfied the crowd's physical hunger and excited their carnal cravings, but they neglected to understand the deeper meaning of this miracle of Jesus.

Jesus warned them not to work for the bodily food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which He alone could give them. He was the One on Whom the Father set His seal. It was not being fed on bread and fish that these lost souls needed, but feeding on the Bread of Life from heaven - feeding on Christ, the Son of Man, in Whom is life eternal.

Jesus announced the most earth-shattering truth to these people and they misunderstood, through unbelief. He did not say he HAD the bread of life but He WAS the Bread of Life. In Him was eternal life and the one who comes to Him will never hunger nor thirst. Christ could satisfy their spiritual hunger and spiritual thirst because He is the Living Water and the Bread of Life from heaven.

All are invited to feast at the banqueting table to feed on Christ our Living Bread, Who came down from heaven from the Father of mercies. And all who feast upon the Lord are promised the eternal benefits of this life-sustaining heavenly Manna - that true Bread Who satisfies the hungry heart with all good things.

Every word uttered by our dear Lord Jesus is spirit and life to all who come to Him as Savior. All those who feed on Christ will live forever, for Jesus said to those who followed Him, "truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." (John 6:53)

May we daily feed on the Bread of Life, by faith with thanksgiving, as we journey through life; for He alone is our life-sustainer; for in Him are the words of eternal life.



DAY 7: SATURDAY, APRIL 8TH

The Way Back

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

I experienced a turn in life when I recently had hip replacement, my second. I thought everything would go as the first surgery when I was up and back to normal within four weeks. Nothing was going as the first. At a follow up appointment, I was getting an infection and needed additional surgery that same day. Two weeks later I had yet another surgery when it was discovered that I had MRSA. That diagnosis was a life changing event that I will be dealing with for the rest of my life.

I was not healing and could hardly move. Nothing was working. The infection was not spreading, nor was it healing. I had never experienced pain like this before. Every movement hurt. I hardly noticed time as it passed. My attitude and my spirit were at all-time lows. Life was passing me by and I didn't care. I kept this inside--pretending things were okay, for my wife's benefit. My lowest point happened when I didn't care about the garden. Produce was piling up, and I do mean we had lots. We had buckets everywhere and could not see the kitchen table most days. Physically, I could not help. The guilt was horrible, my spirits were suffering trying to control everything at this time. I was on my knees with all these burdens. I had failed!

With soul searching prayer, this event reaffirmed my need to lean on and be carried by our Savior. This moment, a calming peace came over me knowing that Jesus was my way to our Father.

I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6.

Father in heaven, help others find you as I have. It is only because you sent your Son to die on the cross for our sins. Heal them spiritually as well as physically so they can find peace. Amen



DAY 8: SUNDAY, APRIL 9TH

At Just the Right Time

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;"

Have you ever been somewhere at just the right time? Maybe you were there at the moment a crisis struck or perhaps you have shown up for a friend, or even a stranger, exactly when they needed you. Life can be so heavy - grief, loss, hurt, pain, stress, depression...the list could go on and on. Sometimes life's trials can just become too much to handle and you might begin to wonder, "Is anyone going to show up for me this time?"

Our scripture passage today comes from John 11 - the story about the death of Lazarus. Lazarus, Mary's brother, had been sick and died. Mary and Martha had sent news to Jesus of Lazarus' sickness prior to his death; but rather than Jesus rushing to the scene to display a miraculous healing, we see Jesus purposely delay. He later says to Mary, "I'm glad for your sake I wasn't there. You're about to be given new grounds for believing." **John 11:14**

Lazarus was dead four days by the time that Jesus arrived at the scene. Most would say this was not the 'right time' for Jesus to show up; he was too late. Four days is significant, because by this point, there should have been a bad odor.

Mary says to Jesus, "I know that he will be raised up in the resurrection at the end of time" (John 11:24,) but Jesus comforts her saying,

John 11:25-26 (MSG) "You don't have to wait for the end. I AM, right now, Resurrection and Life."

John 11:25-26 (NIV) "The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Mary believed. Jesus displayed the Glory of God by raising Lazarus from the dead, even after four days.

Jesus asked this question of Mary, and this same question could be asked of all of us. Do you believe that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life?

Just like Mary, we don't have to wait either. Jesus has already 'shown up' for us, lives in us and walks with us daily through all of life's joys and trials! Although this life will not be free of heavy moments, we can live and walk in the life that Jesus offers us right now and forevermore. Through Jesus, we can live knowing that this life on earth is not the end; Jesus overcame the world, and we can too through belief in Him.



Each devotional coincides with a 8-day video series released by Pritchard at South End, viewable on Facebook, Instagram, and Pritchard E-Connect.