



HG194 *The I AM Sayings Of Jesus*  
**I AM The Way, The Truth And The Life**

John 14:1-14

Home Group Study Notes

23 February 2020 - James Van Cleef



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN  
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION  
**BEFORE THE MEETING!**

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group  
with you, along with any previous notes and other  
resources which might be helpful for your discussions.*



**Welcome** (10 mins)  
*Ice Breaker*

By some amazing chance, you discover you are a finalist in the 'Great British Bakeoff.' What is your 'signature' dish?



**Looking Upwards** (10 mins)  
*Worship*

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



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Home Group Sermon

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**As it was in the beginning...**

For a few moments, before we consider Jesus' incredible claim, let's reflect on an ancient story: Genesis 2.18-25. Eve was given to Adam out of his substance so she could stand with and alongside him, and together encounter life in God's presence. Furthermore, they lived in complete transparency and un-hiddenness between each other and God.

For another moment, let's reflect on Jesus' words: *'So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate'* (Matthew 19.6).

The context of Jesus' response is a challenge from the Pharisees—a question of divorce—which was a trap to see if he would contradict the Law of Moses. And he did, but only because he restated the truth from the beginning.

God's intention was, is, and always will be, intimacy. God's desire is that there is a unity of our whole being with the mutual, self-giving and receiving life of the Trinity, and unity of our whole being with others.

**...is now?**

Intimacy is the upward call of God for us to find our being in him. Our true selves are found in union with God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All—without exception—are invited into the intimacy of the Trinitarian life, and all are challenged to live out this Trinitarian life in a world marked by brokenness, hostility, isolation, and acute selfishness. Sadly, many find this invite hard to accept because, in the words of Eberhard Arnold,

*'Each of us suffers from separation and isolation. We are sick and dying, diseased to the core. But before we can attain health we must diagnose our illness—and recognise the extent to which ourselves are the cause of our pain. Our thoughts are repeatedly bound up within ourselves... 'The sickness of the world lies in this isolation of the accentuated ego.'*

From where does ‘the accentuated ego’ come? Let’s return to the Garden. The encounter between the serpent and Eve, and the subsequent interaction between Eve and Adam is the point of conception for separation and isolation. The serpent deceptively offers a way to be like God that is appealing to both the senses and desire: ‘Hey Adam,’ says Eve, ‘the fruit not only looks good, but it will give us wisdom. Surely, that is a good thing!’ But as soon as the fruit was eaten, pure intimacy—true knowing and being known—was corrupted between themselves and God. (See Genesis 3.1-10)

Instead of living the Trinitarian life of mutual love, self-giving, and receiving, humans now live out of the separated self, the part of us that would hide from reality and pretend, the part of us that winces at the thought of exposure, the part of us that drives us to be self-reliant. That part which leads us to hide from each other and from God...

To be our true selves requires the recovery of intimacy with God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. What has this to do with John 14.6? Everything...

### **We are standing on Holy ground!**

When we engage with the ‘I AM’ sayings of Jesus, we must first acknowledge that we cannot fathom the full reality of all that God is (see, for example, Ephesians 3.14-21). At best, we catch glimpses, and gain insight through our encounters with God. Of course, we see the reality most fully through Jesus. But still, when we set aside all we think we know and process the enormity of who Jesus is, we find we are in the place of divine mystery. Surely, we must find ourselves on holy ground, as Moses was before the burning bush.

### **‘I AM the Way and the Truth and the Life.’**

This saying of Jesus is supremely a call to recover intimacy. And the effect of his declaration is to point to the Father: *‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’*

Let’s break this down.

**The Way.** In Acts, ‘way’ is used to describe a belief system and mode of conduct. So Paul was sent to arrest those who belonged to ‘the Way’ (Acts 9.2), that is, those whose lives were marked by following the teaching and example of Jesus. But here, the emphasis is on going, a route or course. When Jesus engages with his disciples he does not offer himself as a belief system but as the means to the life-transforming relationship with the Father. The system does not lead to life (see John 5.39ff). It is Jesus himself who is the going, the route, the way...

**The Truth.** Truth is much more than stating a verifiable fact ( $a^2+b^2=c^2$ ). Truth is fundamental reality, the veritable essence, the unveiled reality. Used adjectively, it means ‘the same thing.’

So, Jesus is more than a verifiable fact; he is the fundamental reality, he is the veritable essence, the unveiled reality of...God! Who God is, Jesus is. Jesus is the climactic expression of God: *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'* (John 1.1).

**The Life.** 'Life' here is *zōē*, which describes life in its normal physical sense (as in lifetime), and also an experience that transcends normal physical life (see John 3.15f). We could say that this is about life in the spirit and soul, or life as our true selves in union with God. Jesus, as the life, does not merely teach us about what an experience beyond our normal physical life is like; he is that very life and draws us into it. *'In him was life, and that life was the light of men'* (John 1.4).

So, through Jesus, who is the fundamental reality of God, we make the journey into the life that is, in essence, the eternal existence of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are standing on holy ground!

### **'No one comes to the Father except through me.'**

The world sees this central claim of the true Christian faith as arrogance. But in truth it is so much more arrogant to think that we can make a better way. The evidence of human stupidity and our inability to save is chronicled every day.

Let's be clear: there is one path to the Father—Jesus. 'On the mountaintop all paths meet' is bunk, and really is the fruit of the Edenic lie: surely you will not die, but have your eyes opened and so be like God (see Genesis 3.4-5). There is no one else—not then, not now, not ever—who can lead us to the Father. There is no one else who has embraced the fullness of our humanity to redeem it from sin and death through self-giving and self-sacrificing love. The Cross and Resurrection of Jesus stand as the epitome of the glory of God, who draws all to himself.

So, yes, the way to the Father is exclusive—through Jesus the Christ alone—but its invite is universal. God provides the way for all: *'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life'* (John 3.16).

***You are invited into the Way, the Truth, the Life by I AM the Way, the Truth, the Life***

Have you ever felt that your life was out of sync, like you know there is more but not sure why or how to get it in sync?

Do you feel you are troubled or limited by a wound, some scar inflicted by a past hurt?

Have you been broken by sin, all too aware that choices made have disrupted your flow with God?

Have you spent so much time trying to be *correct* about Jesus that you haven't made time to *connect* with Jesus?

If you have answered 'yes' to any of these questions, then listen to these words:

*'Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.'*

Matthew 11.29-30, The Message

In the shadow of the Cross, as we are bowed low because we cannot bring ourselves to look upon the King of Glory, we find the grace that comes from Jesus: in our humility and unworthiness, knowing our deceitfulness and pride, owning our lostness, he offers himself as the Way and the Truth and the Life so that here and now, and in the day when all things are at last complete, we can live in union with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

## **Emmanuel Church Text for 2020**

*“The Lord Your God is with you. He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you. He will quiet you with His love. He will rejoice over you with singing.”*

Zephaniah 3:17



## **Looking Upwards** (40 mins)

### *Bible Study*

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

**1.** How do you feel/react when the word ‘intimacy’ is used to describe your relationship with God?

**2.** ‘Masks’ are worn so we can keep things to ourselves. If we are not honest with ourselves, how can we be honest with one another, or honest with God?

**3.** There is common moral teaching in many of the world’s religions, so how can it be asserted that Jesus is the only way to God?

4. We can be *correct* about Jesus without *connecting* with Jesus. Discuss how far you think this is true, and how this might affect our witness.

5. How might living in union with God change us as a community of disciples?

6. (This is for silent prayer, and then for sharing as the Spirit directs.) Jesus was wounded to heal our wounds (Isaiah 53.5). What wound do you carry that Jesus wants to heal now?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



## Looking Inwards (15 mins) Caring For Each Other

*Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!')* for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



## Looking Outwards (15 mins) Concern For Others

*Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:*

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?

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*Part of The Billericay & Little Burstead Team Ministry*