

Encounter(ing) God

Jesus

Part 8

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June 23, 2019

Today

- **Unpacking the I Am statements of Jesus for the specific purpose of encountering Him in the ways He has described Himself**

The I AM Statements of Jesus

...what Jesus said about Himself

- **I AM** — Self-Existent, Self-Sufficient, All-Powerful, All-Knowing, Ever-Present, God in human flesh who has come to invite you into glorious relationship/friendship.
- **I am** the Bread of Life — satisfies spiritual hunger and thirst and gives eternal life
- **I am** the Light of the World — keeps us from walking in spiritual darkness
- **I am** the Door — gives access to God
- **I am** the Good Shepherd — lays life down for sheep, so they can have life
- **I am** the Resurrection and the Life — gives eternal life to Believers
- **I am the Way, the Truth, the Life**
- **I am** the Vine

Jesus is all these things so we can encounter/experience Him — and not just know.

What makes for an amazing climactic moment?

- build up, adversity, challenge, tension, mystery, subtle clues, among many others...
- **Braveheart** — “Freedom!” only because, love of Murron, fighting Long Shanks, betrayal Robert the Bruce, head on the chopping block
- **Shawshank** — Andy emerges from sewer line, raining, arms in air; only because of injustice, wickedness, death that surrounded him.
- **Pride and Prejudice** — Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, “You have bewitched me heart and soul, and I love you;” only because of the stolen glances, tension, arguments, hopelessness, foggy sunrise, across the field.

Listen — *what we have today is Jesus’ climactic declaration based on His previous mysterious word pictures and illustrations. If there was room for prior misunderstandings — today, He shatters that with climactic clarity!*

You know where I'm going and the Way

- **John 14:1-5**
“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.” Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”
- **Jesus** — “you know where I'm going and the way”
- **John 7: 28-29**
Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, “You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.”
- **John 7:33-34**
“I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come.”
- **Thomas** — “we don't know where You're going or the way” — UGH!!! *After everything I've said and done, you still don't get it — its lost on you.*

Time for clarity and climax

- **John 14:6**
Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”
- **John 6:68-69 — Peter said...**
“you have the words of eternal life... You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!”
- **I Am** the long-awaited Messiah of the prophets — the Personification of every illustration and analogy I've given you.
- **I AM** — the way, the truth, the life, no one comes to God but through Me!
- **BAM!** It's out! Clarity, Crescendo, Climax!

Listen — what we are talking about is “The All-Inclusive Narrowness of Jesus”

- all-inclusive — Jesus is for whosoever.
- narrowness — He is the only way, truth, and life to the Father, He's it!

**Jesus is saying —
No one comes to God except through Me —
but I'm welcoming everyone to come!**

IMPORTANT — this all-inclusive narrowness goes all the way back to Garden of Eden!

- **Genesis 3:15**
“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

- **Genesis 22:18**

"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

- **Galatians 3:16**

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "AND TO YOUR SEED," who is Christ.

The Seed is Christ, One — not many, narrow!

All-inclusive Narrowness

only way — for everyone

- all throughout the Old Testament, foretelling of coming Messiah, 2,000 years of buildup.
- Jesus starts His teaching ministry
- **Matthew 7:13-14**
"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (*All-inclusive Narrowness*)

Disciples finally understood All-inclusive Narrowness — only way for everyone...

- **Acts 4:12**
"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (*Only Name that saves*)
- **1 Timothy 2:5**
For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus... (*Only Mediator*)
- **Acts 17:30-31**
Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." (*Only standard of Judge*)

Yes — what Jesus said they knew, they finally really KNOW. They went from hearing and seeing — to personally experiencing and encountering!

- **Why Paul writes about Jesus**
- **Philippians 2:9-11**
Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Listen

- **the church**- needs to KNOW the All-inclusive Narrowness of Jesus!
- stop sidestepping, making excuses, watering it down — start declaring what Jesus said about Himself. If the world has a problem with it, take it up with Jesus.
- **the world** — **Proverbs 14:12** "way seems right to man/end is way of death" — need to realize Jesus is their only hope of salvation; **John 8:24** "unless you believe I AM, you will die in your sins."

Friends — this is serious stuff, of utmost importance...

“Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.”¹
~ C.S. Lewis

- the church must quit living like Jesus and the gospel are only moderately important- wake up, reach out, invite in. Jesus is the only way for everybody!

Question — What about everyone who has never heard of Jesus, are they lost to hell?

- God is loving and just — trust Him with them. Especially because...
- **Revelation 5:9-10**
And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth." (in heaven, redeemed, every tribe, tongue, people, nation).
- YOU have heard — what are YOU going to do?

**Jesus is the only way for everybody.
He said so.**

Discussion Questions

1. In John 14:1-5, why do you think that Thomas “didn’t get it”?
2. Define the “All-inclusive Narrowness of Jesus.”
3. How does this “All-inclusiveness Narrowness” go back to the Garden of Eden?
4. Discuss C.S. Lewis’ statement about the importance of Christianity.
5. When someone asks you about those who have never heard about Jesus, what will you say?

¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (Zondervan, Feb 6, 2001)

NOTES