

Before Abraham Was, I Am

John 8:48-59 || Bill Ingram || 09 August 2020

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: Have you ever had a blessing in disguise? What was it?

Worship: Colossians 1:15-20 (*Read aloud 3 times, reflect and listen for God's invitation to you.*)

Sermon Summary for John 8:48-59

Those who came into contact with Jesus thought He was many things: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. Many do the same today, saying Jesus was a great teacher or moral leader. Those who knew Him best – His disciples – had more clarity. When asked, Peter responded, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:13-16). But more important than any of these answers is who Jesus declared that He was.

Who did Jesus claim to be? This is the core of what the “I Am” statements get at. And perhaps the greatest of these was “Before Abraham was, I AM”. In these few words, Jesus is declaring His character, His authority, His love and grace. And it answers without a doubt, who He is. The significance of Christ’s words cannot be overemphasized. They leave no room for debate. And we are forced to respond and decide what we believe. We cannot hear His words and take the middle ground – that Jesus was a great moral teacher (but nothing more). We must either accept Him as the Son of God... or dismiss Him as a lunatic or something truly evil. There is no other option.

“I AM WHO I AM.” Jesus uses the very words as the LORD speaking to Moses from the burning bush (Ex 3:14). The same God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The same God who was at the beginning (John 1:1-4,14). The very God of the universe is standing before the Pharisees in John 8. Not only does Christ make these claims, He lives them out. Perfectly. He healed the sick, raised the dead, walked on water and did all sorts of other miracles to show to the world that His words were true. And with this truth, we see the character and goodness and overwhelming love of God the Father. Just as God is all-knowing and all-powerful, so too is Jesus (Col 1:15-20).

The weight of Christ’s words go even deeper. God Himself has chosen to be a living sacrifice so our sins could be forgiven, thereby reconciling us to our loving Father (Gal 4:4-5). What comfort there is in these words! Being confronted by Christ’s divinity can feel overwhelming... but through Him we definitively see that our God is with us and for us. *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”* (Heb 4:15-16).

Discussion Questions (We realize you will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like.)

- What was Jesus saying about Himself by declaring, “Before Abraham was, I AM”? (See also Exodus 3:13-15)
 - What was the Jew’s response to His claim and why? What is your response and why?
 - How did Abraham see Jesus’ day? (v56) What does this imply about Old Testament salvation?
 - Why was this so bothersome to the Jews? What were they trusting in? What are you trusting in?
 - Jesus is both fully man who understands us and fully God who has the power to help us.
What hope does this truth offer us during this difficult time of the coronavirus pandemic?
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Prayer: Bring your prayer requests to Jesus.

Engage & Experience: Reflect on all the I AM statements of this series: Bread of Life, Light of the World, Good Shepherd, Resurrection and Life, Way, Truth and Life, True Vine, before Abraham was I AM. What is the most important thing you have learned from these statements? How has it and will it affect you? Write it down and pray about it this week. Share it with someone else – for accountability for you and encouragement for them.