

## More Like Jesus Part 6

Depending On The Great I Am

*John 8:12-59, 10:1-21, 15:1-17*

*Memory Verses: John 8:58*

### MANUSCRIPT

#### Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

Here at Stone Creek Church we talk about dependence a lot. One of the three tenets of our vision statement is depending. Now that may seem strange to those who haven't heard it before. Most churches use terms like "building," "loving," or "exciting." Depending sounds a little... I don't know... weak maybe? Depending? Depending on what?

Perhaps nature? Perhaps we are depending on the good graces of Mother Nature? I guess we could, nature provides animals and plants for food, trees for lumber to make shelter, cotton to make clothing. But nature also provides disasters of all kinds; hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, famines, floods, and lest we forget, world wide pandemics which may last years. And depending on nature, do we do rain dances as the natives of ole? Or pray to Mother Nature, or the god of the Nile?

Maybe we depend on the benevolence of our world wide society? The goodness of all mankind to bestow on humanity working governments which enrich all of our lives. Presidents and Kings to rule over our communities and cultures. Law makers to govern us. Judges to liberate us.

Or is it ourselves? We are smart aren't we? We can do things! If we tighten up our boots and clench white knuckles we can get anything done. We don't need anyone else as long as we are given a little space and maybe a local Home Depot.

Of course the answer is... none of the above. Now, don't get me wrong, in some sense we do need nature, government, and a strong work ethic, but according to the book which we all consider our standard for living, all of that is under the sovereign authority of another. Yes, we depend on Christ in all things! He is the author and creator, the beginning and the end, the Lord of Lords, and the ancient of days. As we saw last week at the end of the sermon... when Jesus asked the 12 if they were too going to abandon Him, Peter answered, where else do we have to go? You have the words of eternal life, you are the Holy one of God! In other words, "We can depend on no one else but you!"

We are in a series looking at the life of Christ and His teachings and we are seeing how we can apply them to our lives so that we can be More Like Jesus. We've seen how we are to pursue righteousness like Christ, how we are to become seemingly fools to the foolish by accepting Christ, how to handle rejection like Christ, how to share the Gospel like

Christ, and how to be satisfied and sustained by the bread of Christ. Today we continue with that theme of learning to fully depend on Christ because He is the great I Am.

In Exodus Moses comes across a sight so astounding that he literally can't believe his eyes; a bush on fire but is not consumed. He goes over to investigate and discovers that the bush also speaks. It tells him to take off his shoes because he is standing on Holy Ground. You know the story right? The bush, who Moses now recognizes as God, tells him to go and free the Israelites from the Egyptians and after reluctantly agreeing, Moses has one last question; who do I tell them sends me. Basically, God, what is your name? And God tells him, I Am that I Am. Tell them I Am sends you!

In **John 8:58** Jesus uses the exact same phrase speaking of himself. Jesus is the I Am because Jesus and God are the same. In fact Jesus uses the "I Am" phrase several times in the book of John to show that he is God, but also to let his followers know that they can depend on him. As we saw last week in John 6 Jesus says "I Am" the bread of life. In John 8 he says "I Am" the light of the world. In John 10 he says "I Am" the good shepherd, the door to the sheep. In John 11 he says "I Am" the resurrection and the life. In John 14 he says "I Am" the way, the truth, and the life. And in John 15 he says "I Am" the true vine. All of these sayings use symbolic language to help us recognize that our assurance, our credence, our hope, our faith, our reliance, and yes... our dependence can be placed in no other than Jesus Christ.

Today we are going to be looking at three of these and hopefully by spending some time hearing from the great I Am himself, we can learn to place our trust fully in him for all things. Today my prayer is that you would walk away from this service knowing that... **For all our needs, and for all we've been called to do, we must depend on Jesus, the great I Am.**

#### Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

In our first passage we will see that... **To Be More Like Jesus We Must Depend On Him As We Walk In The Light Of Life.** Let's read **John 8:12-59** together. There are few things to take note of here. First, the Light shows us what lies in the darkness. In **vs.13-19** our attention is placed on the sin of blasphemy or denying Christ. Of course this is the sin of all sins and the reason why anyone would truly do anything against Christ; they merely don't believe in him or his commands. That is why all men are blinded to the ways of Christ until they can see the light.

The light shows us their unbelief, but the light also shows us in **vs. 23-24** the cure to that unbelief; a recognition of sin and the need for a savior. We cannot be saved until these two things become a reality. Until we recognize that we are sinners who have severed our relationship with God we will not understand how lost we are and how dire our situation is. Only

when we know that we need to be saved will we yearn for a savior.

Therefore, the light shows us in **vs. 28** how to be saved; by seeing the death and resurrection of Jesus as sufficient for our salvation. We look upon his death on the cross and we see that it was accepted as payment for our sins. We look up on his resurrection and see that it validated that he was who he said he was and did what he said he would do.

So the light shows us the darkness of our sin, our need for a savior, and our salvation. Secondly, the Light shows us the truth. In **vs. 31-32** we see how to find the truth. We must abide in his Word and then we will know the truth and the truth will set us free. This very important. You can't just say you believe in Jesus and then be magically bestowed with the knowledge of truth. No, you must read it in his Word! The truth of Jesus Christ, the great I Am, can only be found within his Word! You can claim Christ all day long, but if you are not reading His Word you are not being filled with truth. As **vs. 34-36** adds; the truth of God which is found in His Word tells us How to worship Him by fleeing sin. **The more truth we understand and obey the more sin we will flee and the more we will be set free from it's slavery. You can't walk in the light unless you are set free from the dark slavery of sin. You can't be set free from sin unless you know the truth. You can't know the truth without reading the Word.** And according to **vs. 43-47**, you can't understand the Word without depending on Jesus as the light. Without the truth we are sons of the devil unable to hear the truth of God. We are blinded in our disbelief, we need our eyes to be opened up to the truth.

The light shows us our need for salvation. The light shows us what the truth is. And thirdly, the Light shows us who our father is. In **vs. 53-57** we see that the Jews loved to celebrate Abraham as their father. Here Jesus reminds them that they have a greater father than Abraham; God. He then tells them that they don't know God because of their disbelief. He tells them that their real father is the devil. And then in **vs. 58** he drops this bomb. "Before your father Abraham was... I AM!" In terms they could not ignore, Jesus is saying, I Am God! I am the light of life, I am the truth that sets you free, I am the father that was before Abraham, I am God. **The light leads to the truth, the truth leads to Christ, trusting in Christ leads to freedom.**

If we are to be more like Jesus then we must see beyond the darkness of our traditional views and natural desires. We must be enlightened to see our sin, to see our twisted understandings of truth, and to see who we've been allowing to pull our strings this whole time. Then in the light we will finally know the truth and the truth will set us free. What is that truth? That Jesus is the I Am and only in Him can we place our trust. **Only on Him can we depend. For all our needs, and for all we've been called to do, we must depend on Jesus, the great I Am.**

In our second passage we will see that... **To Be More Like Jesus We Must Depend On Him As We Walk Through The Door of The Good Shepherd.** Let's read **John 10:1-21**. Again, there are several things to note here. First, there is only one way to enter the Sheepfold of God. In **vs. 1-2** we see that if someone tries to enter in by anyway other than the door they are counterfeit and do not belong; they are a robber or a thief. But, if someone enters through the door then they must be a sheep led by the shepherd. In **vs. 3-5** we know that those who enter by the doorway are true sheep because they have to be led their by the shepherds voice. They know his voice and obey it. Note, we enter the doorway by being obedient to the shepherds voice. This theme of obedience cannot be separated from the theme of salvation. We will see this again in a minute.

So easy peasy right? We can enter into salvation by entering the door. Great. Just walk through the door. But how? What is the door? Look at **vs. 7-10** again. Jesus is the door to the sheepfold. All other ways are counterfeit ways that lead to dead ends. We must enter through Christ. By placing our trust in Christ. Then it says we will be led to the pastures of peace and rest.

But not only is Jesus the doorway to the sheepfold; he is also the Shepherd. He is a shepherd who loves us as his own. He makes it clear in **vs. 11** that he will always lays his life down for his sheep. He reiterates this again in **vs. 15, 17-18**. He is not only willing to lay down his life for the sheep, but in **vs. 12-13** he actively fight for them against the wolves. But perhaps the most comforting thing about the Shepherd is that he has such a relationship with the sheep that in **vs. 16** the sheep know his voice and he knows them. Jesus isn't just doing a job. He is doing what he loves. In caring for us, saving us, protecting us, and befriending us, Jesus is doing what he loves most.

Jesus is both the door to the sheepfold, the church, the kingdom of God, and eternal life, and the Shepherd of the sheepfold as well. We cannot enter into his kingdom unless we enter through him. We can not enter into his kingdom unless we know his voice and obey it. **We can depend on none other than Christ alone to give us abundant life here and eternal life in heaven.** So, do you know his voice? Do you obey his voice? Have you walked through his door? **For all our needs, and for all we've been called to do, we must depend on Jesus, the great I Am.**

And finally, in our last passage we will see that... **To Be More Like Jesus We Must Depend On Him As We Bear Fruit From The True Vine.** Let's read our final passage in **John 15:1-17**. Again we see several things of note here. First, every branch connected to the vine needs to bear fruit or it will be pruned, Look at **vs. 1, 3-5, 7-8**. These verses make It clear that if we abide (depend) in the vine we will bear much fruit. It is very important

that we as believers bear fruit. That is our purpose. Our purpose isn't to merely hold to a set of beliefs. Our purpose is to act on those beliefs to the point that people are saved and God is glorified. That is why in **vs. 2, 6** we see that if we do not abide in the vine then we will not bear much fruit and we will be thrown away into the fire. Abiding in the vine produces fruit. Not abiding in the vine does not. Therefore.... **the evidence of not being attached to the vine is a lack of fruit.** People all the time say, "you can't judge me." Well, according to the Bible, we aren't to judge non-believers, but if you call yourself a believer, the church is called, to hold you to your standards. If you aren't bearing fruit, we are to call you out on that. It's simple. If you aren't bearing fruit, then we must help you bear fruit. If we can't help you bear fruit, you probably aren't attached to the vine. Notice, you will not be pruned because of a lack of fruit, you will be pruned because you are not really attached to the vine but the fact that you don't bear fruit only proves that you are not attached.

So how do we abide in him? Look at **vs. 9-10, 14, 17.** We abide in him and in his love by keeping his commandments. Once again, obedience cannot be separated from salvation. Yes we are saved by faith alone by grace alone, but if our faith doesn't produce obedience, then we really don't have faith. The way you show that you are walking in the light, or being a sheep, or abiding in the vine... is that you are being obedient to Christ's commands. You can't say you depend on Christ and never do anything that remotely looks Christian!

We abide in him by obeying his commands. But he desires one command to be obeyed beyond all the others. In **vs. 12-13** he commands us to love one another as he has loved us. Christ desires nothing more than to see the church love on one another. This is the greatest display of fruit. Unfortunately in many of our churches we don't see this type of love. We see bickering, gossip, slander, and back-biting. I dare say, many churches have unity in the Spirit. Praise God we do. But there is more to it than just being in agreement. We must love one another the way Christ loves us. Look around. Who in here do you love like that? Probably the person right next to you... maybe one or two more. We've obviously got a long way to go here don't we. **For all our needs, and for all we've been called to do, we must depend on Jesus, the great I Am.**

### Application

The bottom line this morning is that In order to walk in the light of Christ we must depend on Him with all we are and all we have. In order to be a part of His sheepfold we must depend on Him with all we are and all we have. In order to be apart of the vine we must depend on Him with all we are and all we have. Why? Because He is the light. Because He is the door. Because He is the vine. Because He is the source of all that

is good and righteous. Because He is the only way to have and abundant life here and an eternal life there. Because He is the great I Am. **When it comes to anything that you may need there is nothing that He is not.** For those who are weary He says, I Am peace and rest. For those who are hungry He says, I Am the bread of life. For those who are thirsty He says, I Am living water. For those who are overwhelmed and burnt out He says, I Am your strength and stamina. For those who are entangled by sin He says, I Am the way of escape. For those who are struggling with finances He says, I Am your benefactor. For those who are struggling with sickness He says, I Am the great physician.

### Conclusion

Perhaps you don't have what you need today because you have not depended upon the I Am? Walk in his light, abide in the vine, read his word, flee sinful darkness, seek him in prayer, hear his voice, walk through his door! **For all our needs, and for all we've been called to do, we must depend on Jesus, the great I Am**