



## STUDY ONE

# I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

*Leaders note - you might want to finish this study by sharing in a simple communion of bread and juice to remind us of Jesus the Bread of Life. You could read John 6:35, 54-57 out loud as you eat and drink together.*

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

**What are your top 2 favourite meals?**

**Share a time with your group when you were really really hungry - how did that hunger come to an end?**

**What is one thing you would like to be remembered for?**

## BACKGROUND TO OUR PASSAGE

**Read Exodus 16:1-18.** (You can keep reading to verse 36 if you are keen!)

**Why were the Israelites grumbling?**

*They have short memories of the LORD's kindness to them in the Exodus! (See Exodus 12:31-14:31!) They have substituted thankfulness for God's provision with pride and coveting something else*

**What could the LORD have done in response to this grumbling - but what did He do?**

**How does this point to the character of our God?**

*God could have wiped them out for being so ungrateful! But instead, He graciously provides quail and bread from heaven to sustain them, to give them life in the desert. Our God is a God who graciously provides what we need, even in the face of our unworthiness and sinful pride. Praise be to our God!*

## **What are the various ways that the Israelites responded to God's gracious provision?**

*Some were grateful and obeyed all of God's instructions to receive what he had provided, others were dissatisfied and wanted more, trying to store it away (v19-20), or gather some on the Sabbath (27-29)*

## **THE PHYSICAL MIRACLE**

### **Read John 6:1-15**

### **What stands out to you in this account?**

*Get members to share their view of the miracle account*

### **What is it that the crowds want from Jesus?**

*They want Jesus to satisfy their physical needs but performing more miracles like the ones he has already performed. They are focusing on the 'signs', not what the signs were pointing to (ie. Jesus and how he comes to satisfy all their deepest needs)*

### **What is the significance of this miracle happening at the time of the Jewish Passover Festival? (Verse 4).**

*Jesus is about to fulfil the Passover by becoming the greater sacrifice of the first born son, and being the ultimate bread broken.*

### **What is the significance of everyone having eaten their fill, and then there were leftovers?**

**(Note: 5000 men were there - these were likely heads of families, and so the crowd is probably more like 15-20 thousand).**

*The sign here is that Jesus can fulfil our needs beyond our hunger. The 12 baskets represent his provision for the 12 tribes of Israel, ie the full number of the people of God, whom the 12 disciples represent and whom will include Gentiles going forward.*

## JESUS' EXPLANATION OF THE MIRACLE – PART ONE

**Read John 6:22-40**

**Why were the crowds looking for Jesus? (14-15, 26, 28)**

*They wanted to make him their military leader, their king, who could help overthrow the Romans and provide all they needed. They thought he could give them the definitive list of the things God wanted them to do to make sure they could earn their way to be right with Him.*

**How does Jesus challenge their perspective once they find him?**

*The bread they need is not an 'it' but a 'He', and the works that they ask for are not on a list, but in fact are just 1 - believing in the One whom God sent to bring salvation that was not earned but graciously given. As one author puts it: "Jesus hasn't come to bring manna that delays hunger and delays death, he himself is the bread that satisfies hunger and destroys death"*

**What is the comparison Jesus makes with Moses in these verses?**

*Moses provided bread from heaven, but Jesus is the true bread from heaven that brings eternal life*

**What is the comfort provided in verses 35-40?**

*All that the Father gives to Jesus will come to him, and he will never drive them away. He will not lose any one of them, but will raise them up on the last day. If Jesus has you, he will never let you go.*

**How can knowing these incredible promises make a difference to our lives right now?**

*Ask the group to share their perspective.*

## JESUS' EXPLANATION OF THE MIRACLE – PART TWO

**Read John 6:41-59**

**Why do the Jews who had heard Jesus' explanation start grumbling? (And what does this remind you of?!)**

*They grumble because they can't believe that Jesus is who he says he is, that he is greater than Moses, and that he came down from heaven. 'Grumbling' is present in the account above in Exodus 16 - it is to be dissatisfied with the provision that God has given.*

**How are we prone to this sort of behaviour?**

*Ask the group to share how we can so easily complain in the face of our salvation in Jesus, and what that can look like in our lives.*

**What is the misunderstanding that is articulated in verse 52?**

*Misunderstanding is that Jesus was talking about cannibalism (this is what the Romans in the first century thought that Christians were doing when they gathered together, and one of the reasons they banned Christianity)*

**If Jesus is not being literal in verses 53-57, what does he mean?**

*To 'eat and drink Jesus' flesh and blood' is to so trust in him and his work done for us and his promises that we will let him be 'in us', like physical food and drink go 'in us' when we eat and drink them. Jesus dwells within us now by His Spirit given to us, as we also dwell ('abide') in him.*

## TAKING JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE WITH YOU

**If someone asked you, 'What does Jesus mean when he says, "I am the Bread of Life", what would you say?**

## CLOSE IN PRAYER



## STUDY TWO

# I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

**What is the darkest place you have ever been?**

**Have you ever been ‘kept in the dark’ about some really important news or truth? How did you finally find out what was going on?**

**What struck you from last Sunday’s sermon?**

## BACKGROUND TO OUR PASSAGE

**Read Exodus 13:21-22.**

**How was God the light of his people in the Exodus?**

*God went ahead of his people as a pillar of fire during the night.*

**Read Isaiah 42:1-9**

**How was God going to provide ‘a light for the Gentiles’?**

*He would send his Spirit-filled servant to be a light, to release captives from darkness. This servant would be God acting through a person. (See Luke 4:14-21 for this prophecy’s fulfillment)*

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**Read Zechariah 14:5b-7**

**What will happen when the LORD Himself comes on the final day?**

*When the LORD himself comes on the final day there will be no more darkness, only light (see Revelation 21:22-27 for this prophecy's complete fulfilment)*

## **JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

**Read John 1:1-13**

**List all the things said about Jesus being the light of the world.**

*Note: John 8 takes place during the Feast of Tabernacles, where there were four huge lamps lit in the temple's court of women, and where people celebrated through the night singing songs and carrying burning torches. In this context, Jesus speaks John 8:12.*

**Read John 8:12**

**Given all of the background above, what does Jesus mean when he declares, "I am the light of the world"? How does this metaphorical language convey a deeper spiritual truth?**

*Jesus is God with us to guide us through the darkness of uncertainty; He is the servant of the LORD to deliver us from the darkness of sin and depravity*

**In what ways does darkness symbolise sin, ignorance, or separation from God in the Bible? How does Jesus being the light counteract these aspects?**

*Hear the thoughts of the group.*

**What does it mean to follow Jesus according to John 8:12? How does following Jesus lead to a life free from spiritual darkness? (See also 1 John 5:5-7)**

*Jesus delivers us from the hold of darkness through our forgiveness of sin, and empowers us by His Spirit to say no to the darkness in our ongoing walk with God. The darkness is now no longer our natural domain, it is the land where we once lived and are urged not to revisit.*

**Reflect on the concept of light as a source of guidance and illumination. How does Jesus being the light of the world provide direction and clarity in our lives? (See Psalm 119:105)**

*Jesus leads us through this life by his Word and by His Spirit. We have clear direction - its towards Jesus - even though we may only see one step at a time, and can't necessarily see the pathway into the future.*

**Read John 9:1-41**

**How does Jesus demonstrate that He is the light of the world in his interaction with the blind man?**

*He opens blind eyes to see the world around him, and to see Him as his Saviour. The healing is an enacted parable of the spiritual truth that Jesus is the light of the world.*

**As this scene plays out, how do the Pharisees (who should have been the teachers of the light of God in the Scriptures) demonstrate that they are in the darkness?**

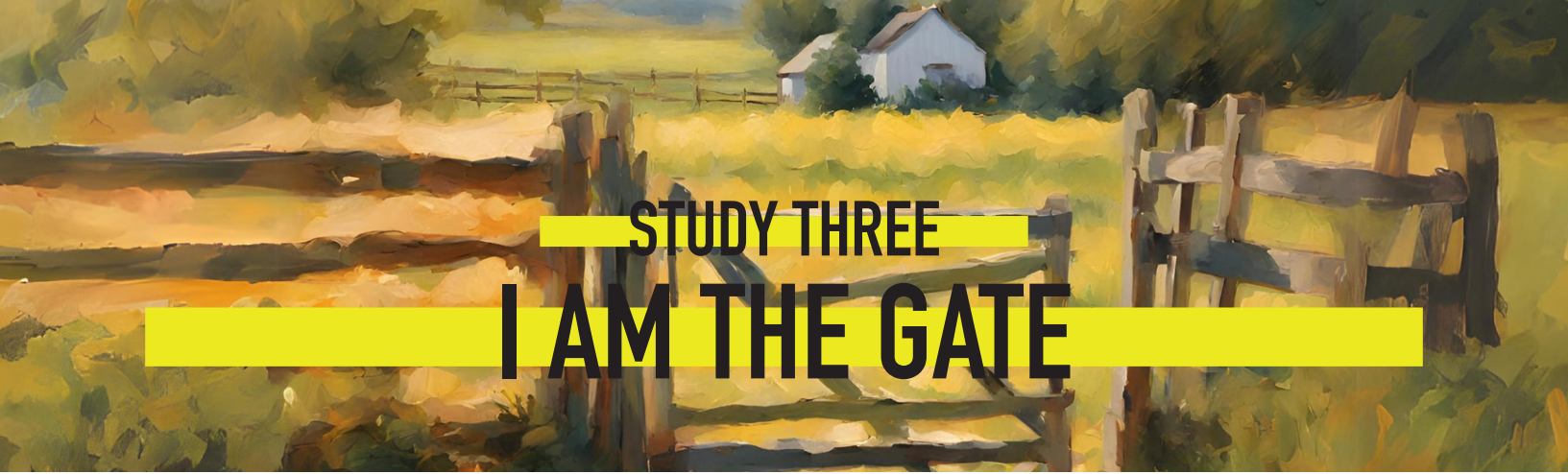
*They cannot see Jesus for who he truly is, even though they should know better with all of their learning from the Scriptures, and even though*

## **TAKING JESUS THE LIGHT WITH YOU**

**Discuss in you group ways in which you can, individually and together,**

- **walk in the light of Jesus, and**
- **shine His light into a dark world**

## **CLOSE IN PRAYER**



## STUDY THREE

# I AM THE GATE

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

**What struck you from last Sunday's sermon?**

## READING OUR PASSAGE

**Read John 10:7-10**

**In John 10:7, Jesus declares, "I am the gate for the sheep." What does this metaphor suggest about the exclusivity of salvation through Jesus, and how does it relate to other passages in the Bible?**

**Reflect on the significance of Jesus stating, "If anyone enters by me, he will be saved" (John 10:9). How does this statement emphasize the centrality of Christ in the process of salvation? What does 'entering by Jesus' look like?**

**Explore the idea of salvation as entering into a safe and secure place. How does Jesus being the gate provide a sense of refuge and protection for believers?**



**In John 10:8, Jesus contrasts himself with those who came before Him, referring to them as thieves and robbers. Who might these “thieves and robbers” represent, and how does Jesus distinguish Himself from false leaders or ideologies?**

**According to John 10:10, Jesus came so that we may have life and have it abundantly. What does abundant life mean in a spiritual context, and how does it differ from worldly definitions of abundance?**

**Reflect on the contrast between the thief’s intentions (to steal, kill, and destroy) and Jesus’ purpose (to give life abundantly) in John 10:10. How does this distinction shape our understanding of God’s character and Satan’s influence?**

## **TAKING JESUS THE GATE WITH YOU**

**How does Jesus being the ‘gate’ through which you enter and through which you are protected make a difference to how you approach life this week?**

## **CLOSE IN PRAYER**



## STUDY FOUR

# I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

**What sort of qualities were present in the worst leader AND/OR the best leader you've ever had?**

**What struck you from last Sunday's sermon?**

## BACKGROUND

**Read Ezekiel 34:1-16**

**For what does the Lord condemn the leaders of Israel?**

*They look after themselves and not the flock; they haven't looked after the weak in the flock as they were supposed to; they have let the flock be scattered from outside forces; they have treated the flock harshly*

**What 2 things does the Lord promise to do in response to their behaviour?** *1. He will judge them harshly, hold them accountable for what they have done, remove them from their oversight of the flock. 2. He himself will search for the sheep and care for them and feed them, he will gather them from all the places that they have been scattered*

## READING OUR PASSAGE

**Read John 10:1-18**

**What are the features by which the ‘Good’ Shepherd is identified?**

*He calls his sheep by name and they listen to his voice, and follow him as he goes ahead of them. He enters by the gate, and not by some other back means.*

**How is the Good Shepherd contrasted to the hired hand/ false leaders?**

*They come to be self serving, rather than to look after the sheep; they come to the sheep to kill, he comes to be killed for the sheep by laying down his life to secure them. The hired hand runs away at the sign of danger because he doesn't care; the Good Shepherd care for his sheep because he knows them like he is known and loved by his Father*

**What does the Good Shepherd promise to provide for his flock? (See also Psalm 23:2, John 6:10)**

*V9 the sheep will be fed, they will find ‘pasture’ (green grass). Ps 23:2 talks of the provision of grass for the sheep, and the note in John 6:10 about the grass that was in the place where the crowds gathered to be fed by Jesus is likely an allusion to Ps 23:2, and points forward to John 10:9*

**Who are the ‘other sheep not of this sheep pen’, and how is that good news for most of us at St Paul’s?**

*They are Gentiles, non-Jewish people. The gospel came to Australia and Castle Hill because Jesus is still gathering these ‘other sheep’ to be a part of the one flock with the one shepherd*

**What is the Good Shepherd’s relationship with the Father? How will this be fulfilled in the rest of the book of John? How does this point to his utter trustworthiness?**

*He is ‘known’ (=intimate connection) by the Father, as he knows the Father; he demonstrates his love for the Father through his free obedience to the Father’s command to lay down his life for the sheep, only to take it up again. Jesus will die on the cross and rise again by the end of John, showing that his love is true and full, and his word will be fulfilled.*

## **TAKING JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD WITH YOU**

**What stops us from letting the Good Shepherd guide us through this life?**

**How (and when) will you let the Good Shepherd lead you with His voice in this coming week? What will that look like for you? Do you need to make a plan now for that to be able to happen?**

**How can you make listening to the Good Shepherd's voice a habit than a reaction? How can we help each other in this?**

## **CLOSE IN PRAYER**



## STUDY FIVE

# I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

How is death portrayed in the media?

What struck you from last Sunday's sermon?

## BACKGROUND

Read Daniel 12:1-3.

What is the promise that is made about the end of time through the prophet Daniel here?

*There will be a great resurrection at the end of time.*

Read Ezekiel 37:1-14.

What is the promise that is made about the end of time through the prophet Ezekiel here?

What role does the Spirit of God play?

*God will breath his Spirit into his dead people and it will bring them to life in a great resurrection.*

## READING OUR PASSAGE

### Read John 11:1-16

#### What is Jesus' relationship with Lazarus?

*He is someone Jesus loved dearly. He loved his sisters, Mary and Martha as well*

#### What do you think Jesus meant by his statement in v4? How does it relate to v14?

*Jesus will be glorified in his raising of Lazarus, but ultimately, he will be glorified in his own death on the cross on behalf of humanity and resurrection from the dead, which which be set in motion by his raising of Lazarus.*

#### What is the disciples reaction to Jesus throughout these verses (see John 10:31 for the climate in Judea)?

*They don't want Jesus to go back to Judea, as the leadership were now looking to stone Jesus. They didn't understand Jesus' comments about raising Lazarus from the dead as if it were just sleep. Thomas speaks more than he knows when he says that the disciples will go and end up dying - this is what will happen eventually for them following the crucified and resurrected Messiah.*

### Read John 11:17-37

#### How does Martha's comment in verse 24 relate to our background verses?

*Martha reflect the common understanding from the OT that there would be a resurrection of everyone at the end of time, at the Judgement of God*

#### How does Jesus' reaction to Lazarus' death and Mary and Martha's tears teach us about grief in the Christian life?

*It is proper to grieve in the face of death - death is a thief and a scandal. Jesus is fully human, and shows us that humans should grieve when we are robbed by death.*

#### Do you think verse 37 is a fair enough reaction to Jesus?

## **Read John 11:38-43**

### **What is the concern in verses 38-39? How do these verses reinforce Lazarus' state?**

*They are worried about the stench. The fact that he was in the tomb for four days reinforces that he is dead beyond rescue in common understanding.*

### **How does Jesus' raising of Lazarus demonstrate the glory of God (v40)?**

*It demonstrates Jesus' power over death, and therefore his compassion on humanity - but, because he knew this event would lead to his own death (and resurrection), it demonstrated his willingness to be obedient to his Father who sent Him to go to the cross as our substitute and defeat sin and death in his resurrection and offer eternal life to all who come to him in faith.*

### **How is Lazarus' being brought back to life similar and different to Jesus' resurrection?**

*Lazarus would die again, because he was given an extension to life within the same body - Jesus would never die again, he came through death and was raised in a glorified body that had continuity and discontinuity with the body he had before Golgotha.*

## **TAKING JESUS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE WITH YOU**

**Having read through John 11, how would you state in your own words what it means for Jesus to say 'I am the Resurrection and the Life - whoever believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me, will never die?'**

**How does this affect your outlook on life, and on the lives of others around you?**



## STUDY SIX

# I AM THE WAY THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

What is something you hold to be true and certain in your life? What makes you think that?

What struck you from last Sunday's sermon?

## BACKGROUND

Read Daniel 12:1-3.

What is the promise that is made about the end of time through the prophet Daniel here?

*There will be a great resurrection at the end of time.*

## READING OUR PASSAGE

Read John 14:1-14

What does Jesus mean when he says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me" (John 14:1)?

How does Jesus describe the place he is going to prepare for his disciples in verse 2?



**Why does Thomas ask, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” (John 14:5)?**

**What does Jesus mean when he says: ”I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”?**

**What does Jesus mean by saying, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9)?**

**How do the works that Jesus does relate to the statement, “Whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these” (John 14:12)?**

**What is the significance of Jesus promising to do whatever his disciples ask in his name, in verse 13-14?**

## **TAKING JESUS THE WAY THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE WITH YOU**

**How does this ‘I am’ statement speak to the claim that ‘all religions are the same, they are just different cultural expressions of the same thing’?**

**How does this ‘I am’ statement speak to the urgency of evangelism?**



## STUDY SEVEN

# I AM THE VINE

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

What struck you from last Sunday's sermon?

## BACKGROUND

**READ:** John 15:1

**NOTE:** As Jesus calls himself “the true vine” he is not introducing a new metaphor, he is drawing on His audiences knowledge of the scriptures, Psalm 80 in particular. Psalm 80, as it was first sung by Israel, covers 3 points in salvation history; past, present and future.

Considering God's work through the history of Israel, what is being communicated about each point in history through the image of a vine?

**The Past: Read Psalm 80:8-11**

*God rescued His' people from 400 years of slavery in Egypt and planted them in the fruitful promise land. V10-11 showed the breadth of joy and growth in God's provision.*

**The Present: Read Psalm 80:12-13 / Isaiah 5:4**

*Despite God's rescue and abundant provision, Israel did not yield the fruits of faithfulness to God. Instead they turned to the God's and powers of other nations. God moved in Judgement against them accordingly.*

## **The future: Read Psalm 80:14-19**

*Here we see Israel's prophetic prayers for salvation and redemption, that God would return to them, tend to them as a vine, rebuke and cut off what is needed. The language that stand out is this vine is "the son you have raised up for yourself", the vine that would see restoration once again and salvation (v19)*

**How does what we have read in Psalm 80 change how we understand Jesus' intended meaning as he spoke John 15:1?**

## **JESUS THE VINE**

**With Psalm 80 in mind, how does John 15:2 make you feel?**

**There are two types of branches and corresponding actions from the Father. Who do you think the types of branches represent and what do the actions of the Father mean?**

*The the branch that bears no fruit represents those not genuinely in Jesus (v5) and they are judged by the father. The branches that do bear fruit represent those who are in Jesus and who by the provision of Jesus are bearing fruit, the Father prunes, producing growth through experience, hardship and challenges.*

**Passages like this can often produce a fear in us, we may ask "am I a branch that bears no fruit?" In fear of coming judgment from the father.**

**What do you think is meant by "fruit" in this passage?**

*A developing Christian character is fruit: (Galatians 5:22-23 / 2 Peter 1:5-8)*

*Good deeds in response to God are fruit: (Colossians 1:10)*

*People coming to Christ through the witness of another are fruit: (Romans 1:13 / Colossians 1:5-7)*

*Praise is the fruit of our lips: Hebrews 13:15*

## **How can v3, v9-12 and v16 help us if we worry about being a branch that is to be cut off?**

*V3, shows us that it is the cleaning work of Christ that allows us to be joined to the vine, not any work of our own.*

*V9-12, Show that it is an act of love not merit that we are in the vine and that remaining in Christ is to remain in His love, **this should be a point of joy not fear.***

*V16 once again reminds us that the capacity for us to remain in Christ is not about our performance but dependence on him.*

## **In v4 Jesus says “Remain in me”, what do you think it means practically for us to remain in Jesus?**

*We are given some clues in the following verses, v7 “my words remain in you”, v8 “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Now remain in my love. If Jesus is the vine, he is the source of life and growth, there is no life outside of him and his love. To remain in Jesus is in one sense an ongoing act of choosing Jesus as the source of and purpose for our life. However, there is more on offer here than the call to obedience, other translations use the term “abide in me”, picking up on the intention of Jesus to invite people to find themselves at home with Him.*

## **TAKING JESUS THE VINE WITH YOU**

### **In what parts of your life do you feel you are consistent in remaining in Christ and in what parts do you feel you find what you need elsewhere?**

*This is a point for people to think personally and consider how consistently they abide or remain in Jesus.*

### **What can be learnt about growing as Christian’s from this passage?**

*Christian growth is not linear, if we are pruned there is growth followed by being drawn back for more growth. It is important to note that pruning causes the growth of the branch to bear more fruit while remaining closer to the vine. To grow in fruitfulness is to remain in Christ.*

**In verses 9-17 Jesus speaks to many aspects of how we might experience or live out remaining in him, are each of these reflected in your life? Why / Why not?**

- *Joy in Christ*
- *The love of Christ for you*
- *Reflecting that sacrificial love to others*
- *Being called "friend" by Christ*

**Pick one of these areas and consider it in your prayers**

**CLOSE IN PRAYER**



## STUDY EIGHT

# I AM

### DISCUSSION STARTERS

When you have had conversations with those who don't go to church, what do they think of Jesus?

What struck you from Sunday's sermon?

### BACKGROUND

Read Exodus 3:1-14

What do we learn about God's character and power from this interaction with Moses?

What is the name that God gives to Moses to understand who He is?

## **READING OUR PASSAGE**

**Read John 8:12-20**

**What is Jesus saying about his identity in these verses?**

**Read John 8: 21-30**

**What does Jesus say will happen to those who do not have a remedy for sin? What does this imply about the audience he is speaking to?**

**What is Jesus speaking about in verses 28-29 (see John 3:10-15)?  
How will this please the Father?**

**Read John 8: 31-47**

**What is the truth that Jesus is speaking about, and how will it set some hearers free? Why won't it see everyone free (see verse 47)?**

**Who are the 3 fathers being mentioned in the argument, and what is being said about them? Where does the argument end up?**

**Read John 8:48-59**

**How do Jesus' final remarks echo Exodus 3:13-14? What is he saying about himself? What are the implications of this (make a long list!)?**

**How does the fact that the Jews pick up stones to stone Jesus confirm what he has said in verse 58?**

## **TAKING JESUS THE "I AM" WITH YOU**

**How does Jesus being the 'I am' make a difference to how you approach life this week?**

**How this passage make a difference to how you view and interact with the Word of God this week and beyond?**

## **CLOSE IN PRAYER**