

For the PEARL series, our weekly “Sermon Based Discussion Guide” comes out of our PEARL Devotional Guidebook. These will not be directly based off of Jeff’s messages for these five weeks.

Attached is this week’s devotional followed by the Group Discussion Guide.

PEARL

Guidebook

THE COMPASS CHURCH EVANGELISM DEVOTIONAL

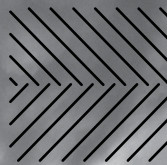
DEVOTIONAL
WEEK 3



THE **COMPASS** CHURCH
thecompass.net

*"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered,
"before Abraham was born, I am!"*

JOHN 8:58



Who is Jesus?

As we examine today's question, let us begin by reviewing the nine "I am" statements Jesus makes in the Gospels.

- "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God." (*Luke 9:20*)
- I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. (*John 6:35*)
- I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. (*John 8:12*)
- I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. (*John 10:9*)
- I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (*John 10:11*)
- I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. (*John 11:25-26*)
- I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (*John 14:6*)
- I am the true vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (*John 15:5*)
- I tell you the truth, Jesus answered, before Abraham was born, I am! (*John 8:58*)

Jesus of Nazareth is the most controversial figure in human history. Throughout the Gospel accounts, Jesus is found doing outrageous things...things that only God can do. He commands the winds and sea to obey Him...and they do (*Mark 4:39*). He forgives sin... something only God can do (*Matthew 9:1-8*). He miraculously feeds thousands of people (*Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 8:1-9*). He raises the dead back to life (*Mark 5:21-43; John 11:38-44*).

But He not only did outrageous things, He made outrageous claims... about Himself...about who He is. What mere human could claim things such as, being the way, the truth, and the life? That the only way to salvation is through Him? The difference with Jesus of course, is that He backed it up.

The Bible passages above are known as the "I am" statements. In English, these two little words are not overly worrisome to most. But in the language of biblical times, they pack quite a punch! That is made very clear by the reaction of the Jews:

“I tell you the truth,’ Jesus answered, ‘before Abraham was born, I am!’ At this they picked up stones to stone him.”

JOHN 8:58-59

Jesus said the Divine Name of God, declared to be so holy, that it was never to be said out loud. And not only did Jesus say it out loud, He went even further. He claimed it as His own name! He claimed the covenant name of God, revealed to Moses, as His own.

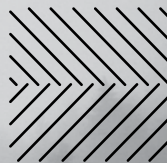
“Moses said to God, ‘Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them’, ‘the God of your fathers has sent me to you’, and they ask me, ‘what is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them? God said to Moses, ‘I AM who I AM’. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

EXODUS 3:13-14

The holy name of God (YHWH) is most often written in our Bibles as LORD (all upper case). Since this name is not to be verbalized, the Jews came up with a rather ingenious method of being able to read the Hebrew text without saying the name out loud (which holds true today). Originally, Hebrew was not written with vowels, only consonants. So as the consonants YHWH are written in Hebrew, they supplied vowels to YHWH from the word, Lord (Adonai). Only the vowels would then be pronounced (you would hear the word, Adonai) when reading the divine name, YHWH (the name Jehovah comes from the combination of the consonants YHWH and vowels for Adonai).

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

ROMANS 5:8



WEEK 3 | DAY 2

Why Did Jesus Die on the Cross?

Mother Goose, Tom Thumb, lullabies, nursery rhymes are perhaps memories many of us have from our childhood or as a parent reciting or singing them to our children at bedtime. Perhaps you may remember some of them: Hey Diddle Diddle, Jack Sprat, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, Baa, Baa Black Sheep, Hickory Dickory Dock, Jack and Jill, Mary Had a Little Lamb...and then there is of course, Humpty Dumpty:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

Humpty is typically depicted as an egg, although that may come from the more modern version of what most of us know. Falling off a wall (some claim he was pushed!) most often does not bring a good result for an egg. And as you think of it, this nursery rhyme would not be the most comforting story you could tell your little ones before they go to sleep! Humpty ends up splattered all over the ground and more than likely is made into omelets (sweet dreams!). This rhyme ends in despair.

And while this tale was written in Britain sometime around 1797, it seems fitting as a commentary on our day. Some of us may feel like Humpty Dumpty. Perhaps at times we feel like we've fallen off the wall and lay splattered on the ground. We get upended physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Think especially about those outside of Christ who are lost and are without real hope. They are left with the fact that the king's horses and the king's men could do nothing. They are left abandoned and alone. Ellis Potter in his book, *3 Theories of Everything*, suggests an additional line:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

...but the KING could!

But the KING could. Just a few pages into the Bible in the Book of Genesis, Adam and Eve had a great fall. They believed a lie, listened to someone other than their Creator, and ended up running and hiding in the bushes in their sin. God asks them a simple question,

“Who told you that you were naked?”

GENESIS 3:11

From this point on, the rest of the Bible is all about how the KING acts to bring salvation, forgiveness, and righteousness into every human heart that seeks it. The KING not only saw us sitting on the wall, He not only saw our great fall, but He came in the Person of Jesus Christ to put us back together again. He pulled us out of despair and brought hope, meaning and purpose into our lives.

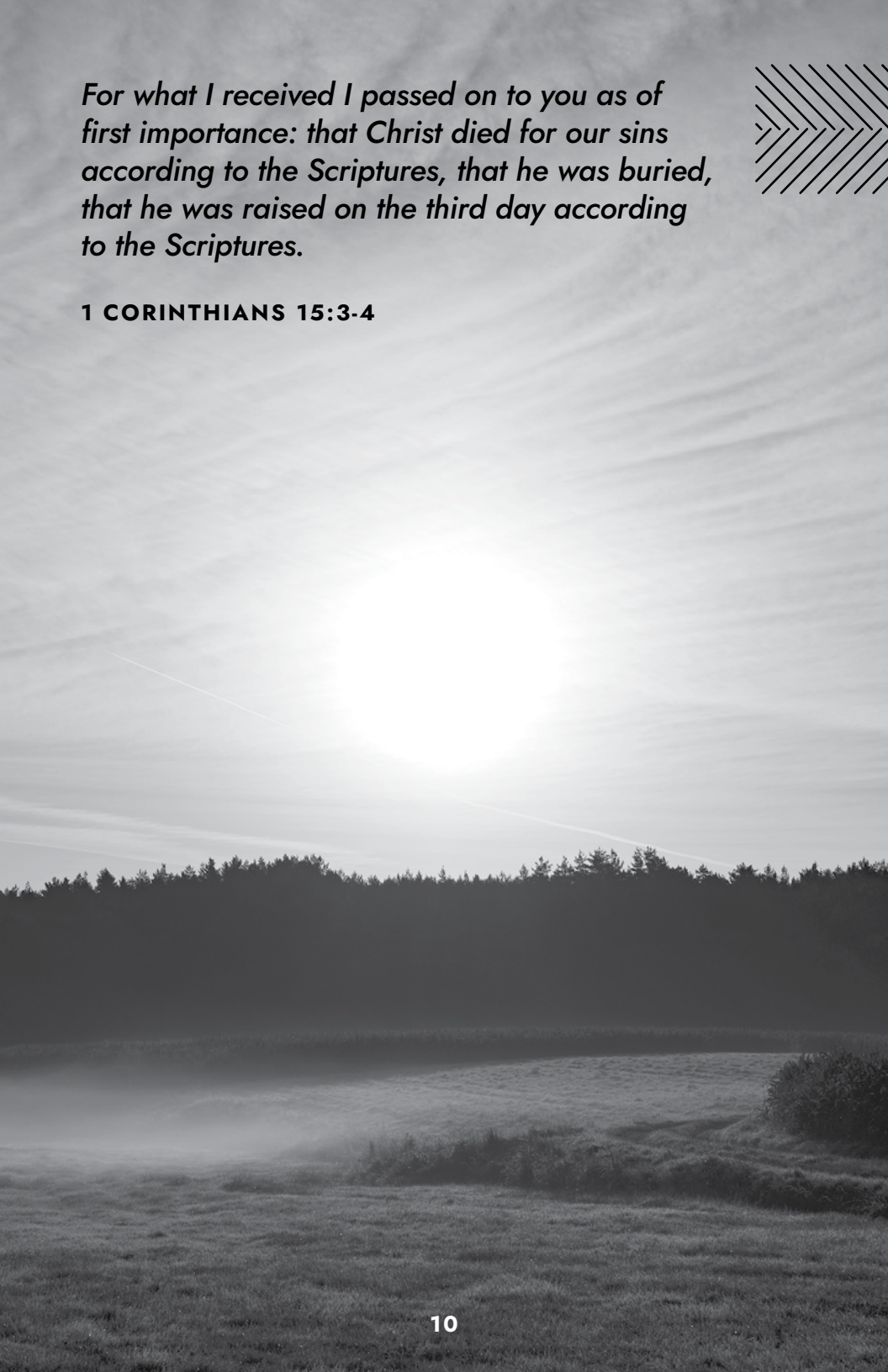
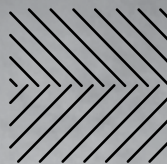
Without the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, none of this would be possible. Jesus went to the cross for the express purpose of taking our sin upon himself, bearing the full wrath and judgment of God that we deserved, making it possible to be reconciled in our broken relationship with the KING.

REFLECT

1. Describe a time when you felt like Humpty Dumpty, broken and splattered on the ground.
2. Describe when you placed your trust in Jesus as your Savior. What are some ways in which He put your life back together again?

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-4



WEEK 3 | DAY 3

Why Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?

There is little doubt that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single most significant act in all human history. The Apostle Paul boldly declares that if Christ has not risen, then our faith is useless (*1 Corinthians 15:14*). That's quite a statement. It's understandable why Mary was clinging to Jesus after His resurrection! He was her hope... her life.

The writer to the Hebrews certainly understood this. He captures it in the form of a blessing.

“Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

HEBREWS 13:20-21

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not “just something” that took place over 2000 years ago. We are living now in light of His resurrection. His resurrected life is to show up in ours. This resurrected Great Shepherd equips us with everything we need to follow Him and walk with Him in obedience! Consider a few:

Absolute assurance. Think of Peter's response to Jesus when asked if they would walk away from Him: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (*John 6:68*). We do not have to live our lives looking over our shoulder for someone else. The resurrected Jesus holds the keys to life and death and life after death.

Empowered obedience. Once we have received Christ as Savior, we are co-resurrected with Him and empowered to live unto Him through the Holy Spirit. Paul fills in some details: “Since then you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God....Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature...as God’s chosen people... clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility gentleness and patience...bear with each other...forgive as the Lord forgave you” (*Colossians 3:1,5,12-13*).

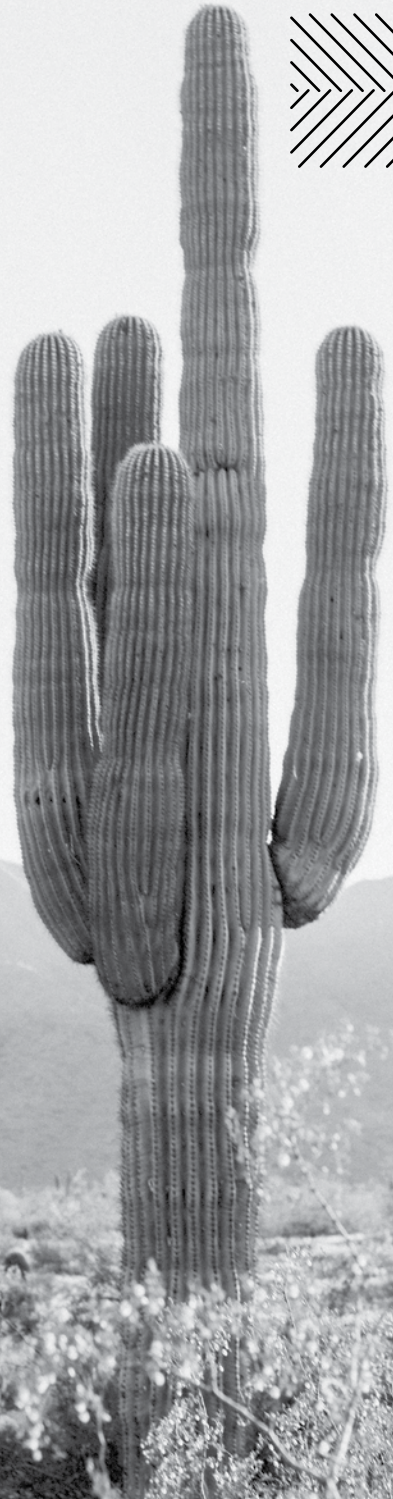
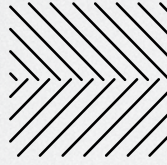
Endurance in suffering. Paul reminds us, “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings...” (*Philippians 3:10*). Paul says this without any hesitation or second thoughts. He knows that living a co-resurrected life with Jesus comes at a cost...but one that has an amazing return on investment!

REFLECT

1. What is your reaction in realizing that you have been co-resurrected with Christ?
2. What are some areas in your life where you feel equipped to accomplish His will?
3. List some areas that you resolve to surrender over to Him?
4. How does living in light of His resurrection help you endure suffering and challenges in your life?

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering... But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

ISAIAH 53:3,5



WEEK 3 | DAY 4

Why is There So Much Suffering in the World?

People have always found it convenient to blame the Christian God for pain and suffering in the world. Whether it be personal afflictions, premature death, violence, natural disasters, famine and yes, even pandemics, God must be behind it all. If God is sovereign, if He is loving, then human suffering doesn't seem consistent with who He is. Yet the Bible provides the most thorough explanation possible.

The Bible tells us that the world is broken and how it came to be that way. In our impatience, we demand swift resolution. We require that God right the wrong immediately. But the Bible tells us that God spread His purposes across thousands of years through all the mess of human history...and in the center of it all, as one writer expresses beautifully, he stakes the cross of his beloved Son.

Theologian John Stott has written,

"I could never myself believe in God, if it were not for the cross. The only God I believe in is the one Nietzsche ridiculed as 'God on the cross'. In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it? I have entered many Buddhist temples in different Asian countries and stood respectfully before the statue of the Buddha, his legs crossed, arms folded, eyes closed, the ghost of a smile playing round his mouth, a remote look on his face, detached from the agonies of the world. But each time after a while I have had to turn away. And in imagination I have turned instead to that lonely, twisted, tortured figure on the cross, nails through hands and feet, back lacerated, limbs wrenched, brow bleeding from thorn pricks, mouth dry and intolerably thirsty, plunged in God-forsaken

darkness. That is the God for me! He laid aside his immunity to pain. He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death. He suffered for us. Our sufferings become more manageable in the light of his.”

Through the cross, God has provided the ultimate solution to suffering. He provided Jesus. In the shortest verse in the Bible, are found some of the most powerful words, “Jesus wept” (*John 11:35*). Jesus wept over the death of His friend Lazarus...even though He would momentarily raise him from the dead. The God of the Bible does not watch our suffering from a distance...He takes it upon Himself...He feels it as we do. He walks with us through it.

Christian author Rebecca McLaughlin writes,

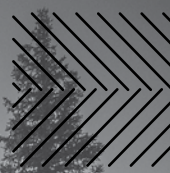
“From a Christian perspective, there is not only hope for a better end; there is intimacy now with the One whose resurrected hands still bear the scars of the nails that pinned him to his cross. Suffering is not an embarrassment to the Christian faith. It is the thread with which Christ’s name is stitched into our lives.”

REFLECT

1. All of us have gone through varying degrees of pain and suffering. What were your feelings about your situation and about God?
2. Jesus will still bear His scars from the crucifixion throughout all of eternity (*John 20:24-29*). We will see them. How do His scars help you live in light of yours?
3. How does the emotion that Jesus displayed over the death of Lazarus, help you grow in your compassion for others?

*God is spirit, and his worshipers
must worship in spirit and in truth.*

JOHN 4:24



Who is the God of the Bible?

God, as described in the Bible, is unique from all other gods. He has spoken and has revealed Himself to us as *One*, yet in three distinct Persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is personal, He has made Himself known to us so that we might know Him...He desires to walk with us and for us to walk with Him. He desires for us to be in community with Him.

The Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit beautifully reveals this about Him. Because God is three in one, there is a holy submission, a holy deference that exists. There is a concentrated centering of attention on each of the others...all at the same time! As the Apostle Paul challenges us to, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves" (*Philippians 2:3*), he is telling us to imitate Jesus, because He models this in the Godhead. Each member of the Godhead submits (defers) to the other. One theologian observes that each member of the Godhead points faithfully and selfishly to the other, in a gracious circle. They shine a spotlight on each other!

In *Matthew 17:5*, God speaks from heaven and says, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" God the Father shines a spotlight of attention on God the Son. He declares that everything that you need to know is found in the Son...listen to everything He says! But then God the Son turns around and shines a spotlight of attention on God the Father. In *John 5:19* Jesus says, "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does." God the Son then shines a spotlight of attention upon God the Holy Spirit. In *John 14:26* Jesus says, "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will

teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” Jesus goes on to say that the role of the Holy Spirit is to glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you (*John 16:13-14*).

The Father says...listen to my Son. The Son says...I look to the Father. The Holy Spirit says...I want the Son to be glorified in everything that I do. This is the God who is revealed in the Bible. There are no equals.

Our relationships with each other will be different because of Him... our marriages, our parenting, our friendships, our compassion for others must reveal His character. We are to live in holy deference of one another...as we live in holy deference to Christ. There are over 50 one another commands in the New Testament...commands such as love one another (*John 15:12*), honor one another (*Romans 12:10*), serve one another (*Galatians 5:13*), and forgive one another (*Ephesians 4:32*). We are called to show a watching world who our God is by placing Him on display through our lives.

REFLECT

1. What misconceptions or false images of God do you have?
2. How does your understanding of holy deference in the Godhead help you in your relationship to God? To Jesus? To the Holy Spirit?
3. How does it impact your relationship to others?

Group Discussion Guide

CONVERSATION KICK-STARTER

- What are some of this past year's biggest events and news? Why would they be considered a big deal?
- How does hearing or sharing big news, personal news or headline news, feel?

DEVOTIONAL DISCUSSION

- What challenged or impacted you from your reading and journaling this week?
- What from your processing this week are you feeling prompted by God to act on?

Group Facilitator | Consider picking one question from each Daily Reflection and discussing as a group.

The Gospel of Jesus Changes Everything

In the Bible, the Gospel isn't merely pragmatic or just information: How to get saved, how to go to heaven after we die, how to have a personal relationship with God, how to experience forgiveness, how to be a better person.

The Gospel is a story! It is the very true story of Jesus: the story of how the Kingdom of God came from heaven to earth through Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension.

The climax of the story told through the Bible is the Gospel, the Jesus story, the big news. Jesus is the something that has happened! Everything will be made right in the future and now, in the present, there exists the real potential for everything to become different and new. Jesus has died for our sins. God has raised Jesus from the dead for our salvation.

The word salvation is overladen with so many religious clichés that many of us have lost sight that at its core, salvation implies rescue. When God saves us, God rescues us from death, destruction, sin, and hell in order to bring us safely to the good life – eternal life. You are invited to believe this Good News, trust in this royal announcement, and experience salvation at the intersection of the Jesus story and your story.

We all need a story big enough to help us make sense of the world. It's common for our minds to make up a story whenever we lack information. The Gospel gives us the very true story of Jesus, a story bigger than us, a story of God's never-ending love. Once we lose ourselves in this story, we discover who we are supposed to be.

As we enter into the Gospel story, we become people of the cross and resurrection: people of the Spirit. This Gospel shapes the contours of our mission. We are gathered by the Gospel that we may be scattered into the world.

GROUP REFLECTION

1. What is one of the “big news” events of your life? How did you feel when you were sharing that news to others?
2. How does the Good News, the Gospel, about Jesus change everything?
3. Bring to mind your PEARL person (who you are seeking to relationally evangelize to). How could you help them see the value in Jesus' story weaving with their story?