

CHRIST, THE BREAD OF LIFE  
John 6:35

Intro: In John's Gospel alone we have the seven times when our Lord used this expression, "I am," and then followed it with a title which only He could claim. I want to give them to you in the order in which you will find them throughout this Gospel:

- 1) "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35; cf. also vv. 41, 48, 51).
- 2) "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12; cf. 9:5).
- 3) "I am the door" (John 10:7, 9).
- 4) "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11, 14).
- 5) "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).
- 6) "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).
- 7) "I am the true vine" (John 15:1; cf. v. 5).

There were other times in our Lord's ministry, also recorded by John, when He used the expression, "I am," such as John 8:24 and 58, and John 18:5, 6. Sometimes the Lord said, "I am not," as in John 17:14, but the seven references above are all followed by bread, or light, or door, or good shepherd, or resurrection and life, or the way, truth, and life, or the true vine. Thus they are a great help to us in enabling us to understand more about Christ and how truly great and glorious He is.

Our Lord's use of the words, "I am," should remind us that this was used by the Lord in the OT. In fact, it is the foundational meaning of the Name, Jehovah, since that, too, is formed from the verb, to be. Our Lord's use of this expression is one of the strongest claims that He made to His own Deity. I have spoken about this on previous occasions, but let me review this for you. Perhaps there are some who have never made this connection with the Jehovah of the OT.

"I am," or Jehovah, portrays God and Christ as being eternal. They are without beginning, and without ending. They were never born because they have always existed; they will never die. In addition to that, the expression means that they never change. "I am the bread of life" means that He always has been the Bread of Life, and He always will be the Bread of Life. He obviously was the Bread of Life when He spoke these words--and the same is true of all of the other expressions. No prophet of the OT could claim that title, neither could any apostle in the NT claim that title--or any of the other titles. They are uniquely titles that belong to our Lord Jesus Christ alone. "Jesus Christ" is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8).

For some time I have wanted to speak to you on John 15 where we see Christ as the True Vine. But the more I thought about

it, the more I felt that, if we are to see that expression in its true life, we need to approach it the way John did, beginning with Christ as the Bread of Life, and going on to the last statement: "I am the true vine."

There is truth in these titles for the unbeliever, and there is truth for the believer. We will have an opportunity to see that as we come to the first of these titles tonight, CHRIST, THE BREAD OF LIFE.

Notice, first of all:

## I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THE LORD SAID THIS.

Notice two things:

- 1) The feeding of the 5,000 men (which means that there may have been twice that number when we consider the women and children who could have been there.
- 2) The crowd that followed the Lord the next day was looking for more bread. That is when the Lord, in verses 26, 27 introduced the subject of their spiritual need. This, in turn, caused the people to bring up the subject of Moses and the manna which was given to the people in the desert. See vv. 30, 31. In vv. 32, 33 the Lord stated specifically what He was trying to get them to understand. But, as always was the case, the people failed to comprehend what the Lord was saying. This is a good illustration of 1 Cor. 2:14.

Obviously the Lord was indicating that what God did through Moses in the days of Israel's wanderings in the desert were intended to be a type of His coming into the world.

## II. THE LORD'S CLAIM.

Food is essential for life. If God had not fed the children of Israel in those desert years, they would have died.

It is interesting to study the subject of bread in the Scriptures. Bread often is used to represent all life-sustaining food. It is that which which is not only necessary for life, but that which gives pleasure to life. When the Lord spoke of Himself as "the bread of life," He meant that He was the One Who gives life, He is the One Who sustains life, He is the One Who gives real pleasure to life. The people were looking for Him to give them some special kind of bread, but He was speaking of Himself. He is the One Who gives life. He is the One Who sustains life. He is the One Who gives real pleasure

and meaning and satisfaction to life.

And the Lord made that claim for Himself alone. We can see that very clearly in the latter half of v. 35. He did not mean that you eat of that heavenly Bread once, and then can forget, but He did mean that if you come to Him and eat and drink, you will never need nor want to go to anyone else! He gives life. He sustains life. He gives real joy and satisfaction to life.

But notice what else the Lord was claiming.

He claimed that God was His Father. This further strengthened His claim to Deity.

More than that, He claim that He had been in heaven with His Father, and that He had been sent by His Father into the world to give "the true bread from heaven." This meant that all others who claimed to be the bread of life were making a false claim. So there was an exclusiveness about our Lord's claim. He did not come as one among many who could give them the bread of life. He alone was that Bread!

Now notice:

### III. THE CONDITIONS ANNOUNCED BY THE LORD.

They had to come to Him; they had to believe on Him. He had come from heaven to them, but they had to come to Him if they were to have life--and this, of course, meant eternal life!

You can see that coming and believing are here used synonymously. To come in faith is to believe what the Lord said about Himself and His mission into the world, and it is to come to Him believing that He, and He alone, will be to the person who comes, the Bread of Life.

The fact that the Lord spoke both of hungering and thirsting is an indication that the Lord was using "bread" in a far greater way than what we usually think of as "bread." But bread has been called, the staff of life, meaning that which is sufficient to support life. Bread is essential; all other things are over and above.

But there was another point that the Lord made which the people had trouble with. It had to do with coming to the Lord. Cf. vv. 44 and 37 (in that order).

And then notice the Lord's words in vv. 48-58. What does it mean that we eat His flesh, and drink His blood? It

means that we come to Him believing what He taught about His incarnation, and that we believe what He taught about the purpose of His coming: the shedding of His blood as the price of our redemption. No person really comes to Christ who doubts that He is the Son of God in human form. Nor can anyone come to Christ who has any doubt about the purpose of His death as a sacrifice for sins.

This is true life. See v. 55. And it ultimately leads to the full expression and experience of eternal life in the last day.

But let me make one more point before I close:

#### IV. THE MESSAGE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE COME TO CHRIST.

Perhaps some of you, if you were bold enough to say so, would say, "But I have not found that satisfaction in Christ." That is a terrible thing to say, but, if we are perfectly honest (which most of us are not), we would have to say that.

Why is that the case?

Because we have overlooked a very important truth which the Lord was conveying to those people in His day, a truth which I know He wants us to understand.

Let me explain it this way: We come to Christ only once for salvation. There is no such doctrine in Scripture which teaches that we can be saved more than once. If you are saved, you are saved forever. We come to Christ for life, eternal life.

BUT THIS LIFE NEEDS TO BE SUSTAINED BY OUR CONTINUALLY COMING TO HIM. WE CAME, BUT WE CONTINUE TO COME. WE ATE, BUT WE CONTINUE TO EAT. WE DRINK, BUT WE CONTINUE TO DRINK. THE TROUBLE WITH A LOT OF CHRISTIANS (and I am only talking about those who are really saved) IS THAT THEY NEED TO COME TO CHRIST TO FEED ON HIM--TO LEARN OF HIM, TO THINK ABOUT HIM, TO WORSHIP HIM, TO COMMIT THEIR CARES TO HIM, TO REST IN HIM. This truth is also taught in John 6:35. (Read it that way.)

Concl: Where so you stand with the Lord tonight? Do you need to come to Him for the first time? Then I invite you to come. I do more than that: I urge you to come. Come to Christ. Believe on Christ. You will never find eternal life except you come to Him and believe in Him. So come. Delay no longer,. Perhaps some of you have heard the Gospel over and over. You know it well. But you have never come to Christ. Come now.

Are you a dissatisfied, unhappy Christian? All of us have our times like that, but there is always one reason for our dissatisfaction. We have not been coming to Christ. We have not been feeding on Him. Oh, we may be very faithful in reading our Bibles. We may pray every day. But the blessing is not there. Why? We have not been coming to Christ to draw our strength and our joy from Him, from His work, and from His gracious promises.

That dissatisfaction and unhappiness can vanish before you go to bed tonight if you will only come to Christ as you should, and let your soul delight itself in Him--who He is, what He has done, and all that He continues to do for you and me.

Margaret Clarkson, who, as far as I know, is still alive, wrote the words of a wonderful hymn which expresses what I have been trying to say tonight to those of you who believe in the Lord. Let me read the words she has written as I close tonight, and I hope that her words will become, if they are not already, our words. Cf. Inter Varsity Hymns II, #1.

## CHRIST, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

John 8:12

Intro: "Light" is a prominent subject in John's Gospel. We have it in two passages prior to John 8, and we have it in two passages after John 8. Let us take the time to read them as it will help us in considering our Lord's words in John 8:12.

The first is in John 1:4-9.

The second is in John 3:19-21.

After John 8:12 we have the statement in John 9:5, and then the words in John 12:35, 36.

The Apostle John has also given us those words in 1 John 1:5-7.

There are also some related words in Ephesians. See Eph. 5:8-13.

When related to our Lord, to John the Baptist, or to the people of God, it, of course, is used symbolically. The Lord was not claiming that He went around with a halo on His head, nor that there was a great radiance about His being which set Him apart from other men while He was here on earth. But He was claiming that what light does in the natural realm, He does in the spiritual realm.

We see in several of these passages, including our text, a contrast between light and darkness. "Light" stands for that which is good and righteous and holy; "darkness" stands for that which is evil and wicked and sinful. Always the light in Scripture is to be preferred to darkness, but this is speaking of things from God's point-of-view. Man by himself, as we have read, loves the darkness, and walks in darkness, and will not come to the light because he does not want his deeds to be exposed for what they are--sinful and displeasing to God.

We can affirm about Jesus as the Light of the world what we affirmed about Jesus and the Bread of life. The Lord has always been the only, true Light, He is today the only true Light, and He is the only One Who will ever be able to make that claim. So we are dealing with a title which uniquely belongs to our Lord, although the Father and the Spirit are also light. But the Lord Jesus is the One Who became incarnate, and thus he claimed to be "the light of the world."

But beyond fact that this title belongs only to the Lord,

what did the Lord intend to teach by saying, "I am the light of the world"? There are several answers to that question, and I do not claim that I have all of them.

- I. As the Light of the world, our Lord was saying that He was DIFFERENT FROM THE WORLD.

It seems like Christians have always had trouble saying that. At least that is true of our generation. The professing church, the local church, spends a lot of time and money trying to figure out ways in which she can be like the world. She tries not to offend the world, and in this she is altogether different from the Lord. He did not try to be an offense, but He could not help it because there was such a great difference between what He was and what the world was.

Note again what the Lord said in John 3:19, 20.

Therefore, if we are going to live and walk in this world as "children of light," we must not expect that the world will receive us any differently from the way it received our Lord.

But there is another truth that stands out in this statement.

- II. The Lord Jesus was claiming to be THE ONLY LIGHT FOR THE WHOLE WORLD.

The term, "the world," definitely had the meaning of being a Gentile world. So when the Lord said that He was "the light of the world," He was claiming that He was not only "the light" for the Jews, but for the Gentiles as well. That is, He is the Light for people in all nations and in every generation. Thus, His message and His mission were not to be confined to Israel alone. He is "the light" universally. God has an elect people in Israel, but He also has His elect scattered among the nations of the earth. If He were not "the light of the world," all of us here tonight would be excluded.

This undoubtedly was one thing that made His presence and His message particularly distasteful to the Jews. The OT prophets spoke of the Messiah's reign over all the earth, but by the time the Lord came that had come to mean the complete overthrow and judgment of the Gentiles, not that they should be fellow-heirs of the same Gospel and the same hope that had been proclaimed to the Jews.

Let us look at a third thing which the Lord had in mind.

I have already pointed out that the expression "I am" meant

(and still means) that the Lord always has been, and always will be the Light of the world. But the expression also means that . . .

III. The Lord was claiming that He had had NO PREDECESSOR in that position, and NO SUCCESSOR.

It is true that He said in John 9:5 that He was the Light of the world as long as He was in the world, and He also called John the Baptist "a burning and a shining light" in John 5:35, and He spoke of all of His people in Matt. 5:14 as "the light of the world," but our position is different from His. He is the source of all light. He is "the Light." We shine by reflection from Him as the moon shines by reflecting the light of the sun. There have been many religious leaders who have claimed to hold the position which only the Lord has, but they are false lights, and those who follow them always continue to walk in the darkness. As long as the world last (and even to all eternity) there is only one Light of the world: our Lord Jesus Christ.

But there is a fourth thing that I want you to recognize in this claim that our Lord made. It is this:

IV. This has to be listed as OUR LORD'S CLAIM TO DEITY--one of many which He made.

John, the Apostle, wrote in words which I have referred to already, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). In claiming to be "the light of the world," the Lord was claiming to be Deity. He was claiming to be God!

He is pure Light. There is no darkness at all in Him. Read the Gospels, and you will never find any evidence of anything that He ever thought or said or did that was sinful. He alone could say to His enemies, as He did, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" The only witnesses that the Jews could produce to accuse the Lord of wrongdoing were false witnesses! He was without sin. He knew no sin. He did no sin. He was without sin. He was neither a sinner by nature nor by choice.

You and I who know the Lord are lesser lights, but people do not have to look very long before they find sin in us. Not so with the Lord. The beloved Apostle John who outlived all of the other apostles, and who knew the Lord in a most intimate way, was still convinced in his old age as he wrote toward the end of the first century that the Lord Jesus Christ was "the Lamb," as John the Baptist had so faithfully and fruitfully proclaimed.



I say to you tonight that, if Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, then neither is He the Light of the world. But, thank God, we know that He is both.

But we are not through yet.

- V. In claiming to be the Light of the world, the Lord was calling attention to the fact that HIS LIFE WAS HIS LIGHT.

Let me read again John 1:4. It tells us this:  
In him (Christ, the Word) was life;  
and the life was the light of men.

What does "the life" of Jesus Christ include?

- 1) It includes what He was as a person.
- 2) It includes all that He taught.
- 3) It includes the way He lives.
- 4) It includes the miracles which He performed.
- 5) It includes His death.
- 6) It includes His resurrection.
- 7) It includes His ascension back to the Father.

In short, it included and still includes everything about Him. When you look at Jesus Christ you are looking at pure light. Those who think that they are going to heaven on the basis of what they are or on the basis of what they are able to do, need to look at Jesus Christ. How good do you have to be to go to heaven? Just as good as He is. But no one is that good, we would all say if we have any sense at all. That is why we need to be "in Christ" before we can be "like Christ," and the only way we can be "in Christ" is by a sovereign act of the grace of Almighty God.

You see, as Paul told the Ephesian church, it is one of the functions of light to make manifest. That is the reason we have lights in our homes. That is the reason you carry a flashlight when you are out in the darkness at night.

But the significant thing about Christ as the Light of the world is that people of the world will never understand sin until they see Christ. The abortionist who argues for abortion has obviously never seen Christ. The homosexual who demands his right to live the way he (or she) wants to live, has never seen Christ. The man who cheats on his wife, or the wife who cheats on her husband, has never seen Christ. The person who lies, whatever age he might be, and lies as a habit of life, has never seen Christ. Sin needs no interpretation or defense when once a person begins to understand that Jesus Christ is the Light of the world. Sin is exposed

in the presence of Christ.

Concl: Now let me read the last part of John 8:12. The Lord  
said,  
He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness,  
but shall have the light of life.

How do we get out of the darkness, out of living in darkness?  
We get out by following the Lord. What does that mean? It  
means that we listen to what He had to say in His Word, and  
then do it!

What does He tell us to do?

Well, to answer that fully, you would have to read the whole  
Bible. It is all there. But tonight I am concerned about  
how you begin this life of walking in the light. Where do we  
start?

The Lord told the people to whom He was speaking in John 8  
that they would "die in their sins" (John 8:21). And then He  
explained in v. 24 why they would die in their sins:

I said therefore unto you,  
that ye shall die in your sins:  
for if ye believe not that I am (he),  
ye shall die in your sins.

If you would get out of the darkness of sin and into the  
light of God's favor, you must believe that Jesus Christ is  
the Light of the world. You must believe that what you see  
in His life and teaching is true. You must trust in Him as  
the One Who shows you that He is both the Light and the Way.  
You will never get to God and heaven unless you come through  
Christ. May God in His grace grant you the faith to believe  
in Him if you have never trust Him as your Saviour and Lord.

## CHRIST, THE DOOR

John 10:9

Intro: (Read John 10:1-10.)

The Lord used two expressions in this chapter which are very closely related to each other:

- 1) "I am the door" (vv. 7, 9).
- 2) "I am the good shepherd" (vv. 11, 14).

These are related because, when the Lord spoke of Himself as "the door," He, according to v. 1, was speaking of "the door into the sheepfold."

The first five verses in this chapter are a parable. (See v. 6.) In the seventh verse the Lord began to explain what He was seeking to teach the Pharisees. How simple His words were, and yet how profound--so simple that a child can understand them, and yet so profound that the greatest mind unassisted by the Holy Spirit cannot make out what He was saying.

We see the lowliness of our Lord in the way in which He spoke of Himself--first as Bread, then as Light, and now as a Door. Actually, even as a Shepherd the Lord would not attract many of the people of the world because, as was the case with the Egyptians, a shepherd was a despised occupation. However, all of these are consistent with the Person of our Lord, and with His mission to the earth. Nothing could be more common, and yet, at the same time, more essential, than a door.

Notice, in the first place, that we see in v. 7 . . .

## I. THE LORD'S AUTHORITY.

I am referring to His words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you"--all of you (pl.). This claim stands upon the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. He has said it, and it stands. It is not a matter to be disputed; it is to be believed and accepted. It was a word in which the Pharisees (or anyone else) could safely trust, and they would not be led astray. Others had made similar claims, but they were thieves and robbers who had nothing in their minds but "to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." The Lord had been sent to give life, and to preserve the life which He gave. He said in v. 10,

I am come that they might have life,

and that they might have it more abundantly.

And that the Lord said that anyone who did not enter by the door, but sought to enter the sheepfold some other way, "the same is a thief and a robber" (v. 1)

Therefore, anyone who claims to be "the door," or claims that someone else except Christ is "the door," is a liar and one who will only steal and kill and destroy. To follow them would mean eternal death.

If there were not a strong tendency in the hearts of men to follow the false, rather than the true, the Lord Jesus would not have said what He did.

But notice also:

## II. THE LORD'S CLAIM.

As the great I AM, He claimed that He was "the door," and, as we have seen, this means, the only Door, that there never has been any other door, and there never will be. HE ALONE IS "THE DOOR."

The sheepfold here represents the fold of salvation, but we must see, as we shall in a moment, that going out and coming in does not mean going out and coming in of salvation.

But for now we can say that the Lord was claiming that no one could get into salvation unless they would come through Him. Before He had said that about Himself as the Bread of Life, and then of Himself as the Light of the World. Now He was saying this about Himself as the Door. The only way to be saved is through the Door Who is Christ!

You might say that that does not need to be repeated so often, but remember that the vast multitudes of the world do not know this. There are thousands of people in this Portland area who do not know this. You may have members of your own family who do not know this. If they think at all about eternity and heaven, about life after death, it is very likely that they are not thinking about the Lord Jesus Christ. But they need to be thinking about Him because He is the Door, and there is no other door that will get them into salvation and heaven!

One thing that people hate about the Christian faith is that it is so narrow--and it is! The Bible does not generously open the door for all to come any way that they want to come, but it says very positively, and over and over, that people must come through Christ, or they will never get to God and to salvation and, ultimately, to heaven.

Notice the Lord's words in John 10:16.

But let us look a little closer at the Lord's words.

### III. THE DOOR AS THE ENTRANCE.

I am referring to the Lord's words, "By me if any man enter in . . ." He actually said, "By me (emphatic) if anyone enter in"--whether that person be a man or woman or child, or his skin of whatever color, or what language he may speak, or whenever and wherever in the history of the world he may live, "By me . . ."

Mohammed is not the way--so the Moslems need to hear of Christ. Buddha is not the way--so the Buddhists need to hear of Christ. The Law cannot save us--so the legalists need to hear of Christ. Cult members who are trusting in anything or anyone but Christ cannot be saved--and so they need to hear about Christ. There are not many ways to be saved. There are not even two! Every person who expects to spend eternity in the presence of God must come through the one and only Door: our Lord Jesus Christ. There are no exceptions, and this is why our mission in the world is so extremely important. A man can be as "good as gold," but his goodness will not get him into heaven. Only Christ can do that for him.

In saying, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in he shall be saved," the Lord was eliminating every other way of salvation. Cf. Acts 4:12.

But what does it mean to enter the sheepfold, as the Lord said, "By me."

He meant that our faith must be in Him, and in Him alone. It means that we believe His teachings (such as this which we are considering tonight, but it also means that we are trusting in His death as sufficient for our salvation. We do not try to add to what He did. We do not believe that we can, nor is it necessary.

Jesus paid it all,  
All to Him I owe;  
Sin had left a crimson stain,  
He washed it white as snow.

I trust that you have done that. If not, may you do it tonight.

But there is one other thing I want to mention---actually three, but they all come under one heading:

### IV. THE LORD'S PROMISES.

Do you see them? They are right there at the end of v.

9:

- 1) "He shall be saved."
- 2) "And shall go in and out."
- 3) "And find pasture."

A. "He shall be saved."

This may be a reference to the fact that, in those ancient eastern sheepfolds, when the shepherd took the sheep into the sheepfold, he would lie down in the entrance so that he actually became the door, and the security of the sheep.

That is what we ought to be interested in--being saved--saved from our sins, and saved for heaven. Saved not just as long as we behave ourselves, but saved for all eternity. That is the only kind of salvation that the Bible speaks of. If the Lord is our Saviour, then we are absolutely secure in Him. Read John 10:27-30.

There are many who have made meaningless and false professions of faith. I am not talking about them. But I am speaking of all who have entered through Christ, the Door.

B. "And shall go in and out."

This is what is called an Hebraism--an expression that has come down to us through the Hebrew people.

This is the way they described daily living: It is going in and out. We go back and forth in the course of each day's activity.

Remember that I pointed out earlier that it is not going in and out of salvation. We cannot do that. We go in with our Shepherd, and we go out with our Shepherd. We are always with Him. This speaks of "a constant intimacy with the Shepherd and Master" (Bengel, I, p. 647).

One of the promises that Moses gave to the people of Israel just before he died, was this:

Blessed shalt thou be in thou comest in,  
and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out  
(Deut. 28:6).

And we all ought to be familiar with those words in Psa. 121:8,

The Lord shall preserve thy going out  
and thy coming in

from this time forth, and even for evermore. You see, when the shepherd led the sheep out, he not only went before them, but he stayed with them. This is why we can be so sure that once we come into the sheepfold, we will be kept forever.

C. "And find pasture."

Here is what we might call, as Dods did in the EGT, I, p. 789, our "sustenance."

That is what the shepherd is concerned about when he leads the sheep out. And that is what our Lord is concerned about: that we be fed! And the promise is that we will find pasture. The Lord is going to nurture us by His Word. Think of your Bible-reading time as a time when the Lord is leading you out to pasture, to feed upon His Word, and to feed upon Himself. This is His promise, and His promise cannot fail.

Illus: the young man in the navy who was saved, then transferred to a ship where he could not find another Christian, and how God fed him.

Concl: Are you not thankful that the Lord has taught you the truth of John 10:9? We all love to hear the Gospel over and over again. But every time we hear it, it ought to make us stop and thank the Lord for what He has taught us, and for what He has done for us. We are going to be doing that in heaven, so we ought to get ready for it now.

But we also should remember that many have never heard this simple truth that I have been talking about tonight. So let us be faithful in spreading the Word. If the Lord tarries, every person you and I know is going to die some day. Then everything will depend upon whether or not they have entered into salvation through Christ, the only Door.

If you have known about the Door, but have not entered in, let me urge you to enter tonight. Enter now. Trust in Christ now. He is the only One Who can save you, keep you, and sustain you through all of life here on earth, and then welcome us into heaven afterwards.

CHRIST, THE GOOD SHEPHERD  
John 10:11

Intro: Psalm 23 has made this title of our Lord a well-known, and well-loved title. In Psa. 78:52, 53 the record of the wanderings of the children of Israel under Moses is introduced with these words:

But he made his own people to go forth like sheep,  
and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.  
And he led them on safely, so that they feared not:  
but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.

In Psa. 80:1 the Lord is addressed as the "Shepherd of Israel." Isaiah predicted concerning the Messiah that

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd:  
he shall gather the lambs in his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom,  
and shall gently lead those that are with young  
(Isa. 40:11).

Both Matthew (9:36) and Mark (6:34) tell us that the Lord,  
... when he saw the multitudes,  
was moved with compassion on them,  
because they fainted, and were scattered abroad,  
as sheep having no shepherd (Matthew's account).

And both Matthew (26:31) and Mark (14:27) give those words of our Lord in which He, quoting from Zech. 13:7, announced the way in which the disciples would be scattered when the Lord was taken under arrest. This is what He said:

All ye shall be offended because of me this night:  
for it is written, I will smite the shepherd,  
and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.

Therefore, it is not only clear that this was a title that our Lord claimed for Himself, but we can also see that the Father considered Him as a shepherd.

In the Epistles we have three other references to our Lord as a Shepherd:

- 1) In Heb. 13:20 the Lord is called "that great shepherd of the sheep."
- 2) In 1 Pet. 2:25 the Lord is called "the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."
- 3) In 1 Pet. 5:4, "the Chief Shepherd."

Obviously this was a title that was loved as much by Peter in the NT as it was by David in the OT.

One time this word "shepherd" in the NT is translated, "pastors." A pastor is a shepherd, and a shepherd is a pastor. The word pastor is actually from the Latin, and means to lead out to pasture, to feed. The Lord is the Chief Shepherd; all others are under Him. That is why we speak of pastors today as under-shepherds. In the same way, the Lord is a "Bishop," which is the word for an overseer, an elder; and all others are under-elders, serving under our Lord.



So, when David said, "The Lord is my shepherd," it was like saying, The Lord is my pastor."

What is the work of a shepherd?

A shepherd is one who feeds, guides, guards, and cares for the sheep, whatever their requirements may be. This is one way, a most important way, in which the Lord wants us to think of Him. He is our shepherd.

Tonight we are considering the verse which tells us that the Lord said,

I am the good shepherd:

the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

A similar statement is in John 10:14 where our Lord said,

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep,  
and am known of mine.

(Some feel that verse 14 belongs with verse 15.)

So the Lord is not simply the shepherd, but He is "the good shepherd"! He is the Shepherd, the good One. What does that word "good" tell us?

This was the Greek word for beautiful, but their conception of beauty was quite different from ours. It carried a moral emphasis in it. It meant that which was good in nature and characteristics, and therefore adapted to meet its own purpose and ends. Thus, a "good shepherd" was one who was eminently qualified to be a shepherd. And for our Lord to call Himself the shepherd, the good one, meant, as in the past titles which we have considered, that no one is as good, no one is as qualified, as He is to act as a shepherd. He is the Pattern, the Example for all other shepherds. No sheep are as fortunate as those who have the Lord Jesus Christ as their Shepherd. He excels all other shepherds. In one sense of the word, He is the only true Shepherd.

Now let us see from our text where we can see the goodness of our Shepherd, that which makes him greater than all other shepherds, whether we are thinking of the shepherds of sheep, or the pastors of the Lord's people.

Our text gives us our first answer. The Lord is "the good shepherd" because:

I. HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP. Cf. John 10:9.

Probably, throughout history, there have been many shepherds who have died for their sheep--died perhaps protecting them from some wild animal, or died out in the cold in search of some lost sheep. But in the case of our Lord this means something entirely different, doesn't

it? Our Lord died as no other shepherd has died. He died for the sins of the sheep. He died to save them from the penalty that was due them because of their sins. He died because they deserved to die, even though He did not! He died to please the Father. He died to do the will of the Father. The Lord Jesus Christ is "the good shepherd" because He is also the Saviour of the sheep. He died voluntarily. Cf. John 10:17, 18.

And when we consider the whole benefit of His death, we can say that the Lord died not only to save the sheep from eternal death, but also to save them from sin's power now, in this life. And He died that some day it would be utterly impossible for them ever to sin again! Where will you find a shepherd who can do all of this for you?

And will you notice also from our text that our Lord died specifically for "the sheep." He died to "save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). He died particularly for those whom the Father had chosen, and given to Him. He died for the elect of God.

Look at John 10:16, and also at verse 25, 26. This is limited atonement, not because the power or value of the death of Christ was limited, but because His purpose, His design, in His death was limited. He died to guarantee the salvation of everyone who the Father has chosen—a mighty host which no man can number. The Lord was providing salvation. But He did more than that. It was when He gave His life for us that He accomplished and guaranteed that in the course of time we would be saved. Are you not thankful that you are one of His sheep for whom He died, for whom He gave His life.

But let me point out a second way in which we see that the Lord is "the good shepherd." It is because:

## II. HE GAVE HIS SHEEP HIS LIFE. Cf. John 10:27-30.

He not only gave his life for us, but He gave His life to us. Eternal life is divine life. It is God's life. It is a life that will never end. Oh, some day our physical life here on earth will come to an end, but we will live on eternally with the Lord in heaven.

No other shepherd can do that for you. This is why we can live different lives after we are saved, different from what we were doing before we were saved. See verse 10. There is power in us that is greater than the power of sin within us, and that power is there because our "good shepherd" has given us His very life.

Can you think of another shepherd who can do that for you?

But let me add a point to that. Sometimes it was possible for wild animals to isolate a sheep from the flock, or the sheep would go astray and be killed, or die of hunger. But here we have another reason for saying that our Lord is "the good shepherd." It is because:

III. NO ONE CAN GET US AWAY FROM HIM, NOT EVEN WE OURSELVES.  
Cf. John 10:28b-30.

Our Enemy, the Devil, may try, but he can't do it. There may be times when friends or family will try to get us away from the Lord, but they can't do it. There will be times when we will sin, and should be cast away. But sin will not do it. There may be times when we would like to give up because of the difficulties, but the Lord will not let us go.

And do you see why? It is because we are in our Lord's hand, and our Lord's hand is in the Father's hand who is "greater than all." So before we can get away, we or somebody else has to break the grip of the Father, and then break the grip of the Son. But there is no power in heaven or on earth that can break the grip of omnipotence! If Jesus Christ is your Shepherd, He will never let you go.

"But," you say, "I know some who have gotten away." Do you?

Let me say first that the story of their lives is not ended IF they are still living. If they truly belong to the Lord, He will bring them back.

But we must also recognize what the Apostle John said in 1 John 2:19. (Quote.)

Let me give you two more reasons why the Lord is "the good shepherd." The first of these is this: because

IV. HE IS ALWAYS WITH US. Cf. John 10:4.

Two of a shepherd's responsibilities are:

- 1) He must guide the sheep.
- 2) He must lead them to "green pastures."

This is related in a way to my last point. If the Lord is keeping us, then it means that He will never leave us. And so when He leads us out, He goes before us. He stays with us. He makes sure of the way, and we avoid dangers

when we follow the Shepherd.

But where does He lead us? He leads us to pasture land. Notice our verse for last week, verse 9. As the Lord leads us in and out, we "find pasture." This means that we will be fed until we are fully satisfied. And only the Lord can do this. There is no shepherd like He is.

Finally, the Lord is our "good shepherd" because:

#### V. OUR SHEPHERD KNOWS US.

Verse 3b says that "he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out . . . and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice (v. 4b).

But add to this John 10:14, 15.

The Lord knows us like the Father knows Him, and like He knows the Father. What would you say about how intimately the Father and the Son know each other? It is a perfect knowledge, isn't it?

How well does Jesus Christ know you? Perfectly. He knows your every thought. He knows every burden you carry. He never gets your needs mixed up. You and I may not be very well known on earth, but our names are familiar names in heaven. The Son has been speaking to the Father about you today.

Now it is not unusual for shepherds to know the names of their sheep, but no shepherd ever knew his sheep as well as the Lord knows us. He knows things about us and needs that we have which we have never discovered ourselves, and which no one else knows about us.

#### WAS THERE EVER A SHEPHERD LIKE OUR SHEPHERD?

Concl: Let me conclude with this. I have been concentrating tonight on the Lord as the Shepherd of His people-- your Shepherd, and mine. And although I have had to allude to what we are many times during this message, let me remind you that we are sheep. A sheep is a good picture of the people of God. In fact, all people are sheep-like. The Lord had compassion on the multitudes because they reminded Him of sheep without a shepherd. Why?

- 1) They had no one to guide them.
- 2) They had no one to feed them.
- 3) They had no one to protect them.
- 4) They had no one to care for them and love them like only He can.

Sheep easily go astray. They are defenseless against their

enemies. They need someone to care for them. We have the only true Shepherd Who is sufficient for us now and forever.

Is it any wonder that the Lord said, "I am the good shepherd." What assurance is for us in this truth! What comfort in our trials! What hope in our conflicts!

Let me close with Peter's words at the end of 1 Peter 2. I want you to see his reference to our Lord in its context. He wrote this:

For even hereunto were ye called:  
because Christ also suffered for us,  
leaving us an example,  
that ye should follow his steps:  
Who did no sin,  
neither was guile found in his mouth:  
Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again;  
when he suffered, he threatened not;  
but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:  
Who his own self bare our sins in his own body  
on the tree,  
that we, being dead to sins,  
should live unto righteous:  
by whose stripes ye were healed.  
For ye were as sheep going astray;  
but are now returned  
unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls  
(1 Pet. 2:21-25).

CHRIST, THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE  
John 11:25, 26

Intro: These words were spoken by the Lord to Martha, the sister of Lazarus, four days after Lazarus had died. The Lord had deliberately waited until after Lazarus had died. That is why Martha rebuked the Lord in John 11:21 for not coming sooner, but she hastened to add in verse 22 that He could still help if He were to ask God because, as she said, "Whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."

The Lord spoke to her of His intention to raise Lazarus, but she interpreted it doctrinally, a doctrine which she believed. But she had a lesson to learn, as her answer in verse 24 indicated. She needed to relate Christ to her doctrine. And so He said, "I am the resurrection, and the life . . ."

I. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRIST AND DOCTRINE.

The Lord, when He made this statement, was not simply saying that He could raise Lazarus from the dead, but that He Himself was "the resurrection, and the life." Resurrection is a demonstration, a manifestation, of Christ Himself. Others, like the Apostles, could say that they could raise people from the dead, but they never dared to say, "I am the resurrection, and the life." It is true that they could raise the dead, but their power to do so came from Christ. "The resurrection" is a title which belongs to Him alone. "The life" is also a title which belongs exclusively to Him. There is no resurrection without Christ; there is no life without Him.

When we go back to the "I am" in John 6:35, we can say that Christ not only provides bread (He surely does that), but He Himself is the Bread of life! He not only gives light (in John 8:12), but He Himself is the Light of the world! The disciples distributed the bread, but they were not the Bread. Likewise, they could spread the Light, but they were not the Light. They were "the light of the world" only as they were able to shine by light reflected from Him.

This was a lesson that Martha needed to learn. It is a lesson that all of us seem slow to comprehend. We could say with her,

But I know, that even now,  
whatsoever thou wilt ask of God,  
God will give it thee.

But God often does that even for us. But it is different

to see that Christ Himself is "the resurrection, and the life." There would be no doctrine of resurrection if Christ were not Christ, if He in Himself were not "the resurrection, and the life." It is Christ Who gives life to the great doctrines of Scripture. It keeps us from simply postponing in our thinking that Christ will do something in the future instead of seeing that, since He is "the resurrection, and the life," He can do NOW what He will do then. If He could raise Lazarus at the last day, as He will, then He could do it at that time.

All of Scripture comes alive when we see that Christ is the Key to the Word of God. Every doctrine which is related to Christ takes on new meaning when we see that He was, and is, the embodiment of the truth which He proclaimed.

This is a most important truth for us to learn. One thing which sets Elisha and Christ apart is that Elisha could raise the dead, but Christ is "the Resurrection, and the Life." Christ not only saves; He is the Saviour, He is salvation. Christ not only provided propitiation for our sins with God; "He is the propitiation for our sins." We not only have righteousness through Him; He is our righteousness. He not only sanctifies us; He is our sanctification. He not only give us wisdom; He is our wisdom. And on and on I could go. Take the great doctrines of Scripture, and identify them with Christ, and you will have the truth. The truth does not mean anything to a lot of people because they have never seen them and Christ together.

That lesson was so important that the Lord waited four days before coming to Martha and Mary, even though He knew that they would not understand His delay, because He wanted to teach them this truth.

But there are . . .

## II. OTHER LESSONS TO BE LEARNED.

I am speaking now of other lessons to be learned from this glorious statement which our Lord made: "I am the resurrection, and the life." What else can we see in this claim that the Lord made?

A. That He is the Victor over death and the grave.

Regardless of how long we have known the Lord, or how well, there is always more that we need to learn. When the Lord was with the disciples on the way to Gethsemane, He said this:

I have yet many things to say unto you,  
 but ye cannot bear them now (John 16:12).  
 That will always be true. We will never know all  
 that we can know, nor all that we should know--and  
 know the way we ought to know!

Just this morning I began reading the last Book of  
 the NT, the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.  
 In the opening chapter of that Book John gives his  
 account of a special revelation he had had of the  
 Lord.

After telling what he saw, John said this:  
 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.  
 And he laid his right hand upon me,  
 saying unto me;

Fear not, I am the first and the last:  
 I am he that liveth, as was dead;  
 and, behold, I am alive for evermore,  
 Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death  
 (Rev. 1:17, 18).

This means that the Lord is the Victor over death,  
 over the grave. And this is because He is the One  
 Who was dead, and is alive, and is alive forever! He  
 has the keys of both death and the grave. Death  
 cannot touch us until His time has come! And when it  
 does, the victory of death and the grave is only for  
 a short time because He is "the resurrection, and the  
 life.

Now what I am saying about our Lord's victory over  
 death can be illustrated in at least three ways.

#### 1. His own resurrection.

Look back into chapter 10, verses 17 and 18.  
There never has been another person who could say  
what the Lord said here. (Read.)

Imagine that men sought to keep in the grave the  
 One Whose Name is "the resurrection and the  
 life." The only reason they were able to put Him  
 to death was because God delivered Him into their  
 hands. If He had not done that, they could not  
 have touched the Lord.

But the point that I am making is that the  
 resurrection of Jesus Christ is the greatest  
 example we have of what the Lord told Martha: "I  
 am the resurrection, and the life." It was  
 impossible for Him to remain in the grave because



of Who He was and is! All of the power of Rome, and all of the authority of the Jews, were shown to be nothing before Him Who is "the resurrection, and the life."

But there is a second point I want you to see in this:

2. The resurrection of the people of God from spiritual death.

I know that Martha and our Lord were speaking here about physical resurrection, but it would take a very superficial look at John 11 not to be able to see the Gospel in this chapter.

What does the Bible teach about all of us apart from Christ? We are dead, spiritually dead, completely devoid of spiritual life. What does it take to bring us to life, spiritual life? It takes a spiritual resurrection. Obviously no one but our Lord has ever had the power to raise himself from the dead, so this must mean that, unless someone else raises us, we will remain spiritually dead in our sins.

But every person who is saved, and who now has life, has been raised from the dead--raised out of spiritual death into spiritual life. Have we not learned that from Ephesians, or do you remember that? Listen to Ephesians 2, part of verses 4 and 5, and all of verse 6:  
But God, . . .

Even when we were dead in sins,  
hath quickened us together with Christ, . . .  
And hath raised us up together,  
and made us sit together  
in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

We experienced the transformation from spiritual death to spiritual life when we were saved, but it was accomplished for us and guaranteed for us in the resurrection of Him Who is "the resurrection, and the life."

And notice the promise connected with this:

He that believeth in me, though he were dead  
(which means, although he dies physically),  
yet shall he live:  
And whosoever believeth in me  
shall never die.

The Greek text literally says this:

And everyone who lives and believes in me

shall no, never die unto the ages!

You see, the believer who is worried about his salvation needs to see Christ in his salvation, that his Saviour is none other than "the resurrection, and the life." We were raised in Him, and we live in Him. If He dies, we die. But since death can never touch Him again, so we can be sure that we shall live eternally.

Is that not wonderful?

And, although I will not try to deal with this truth tonight, remember that our resurrection in the One Who is "the resurrection, and the life," is a resurrection to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4b).

That makes a wonderful salvation even more wonderful, does it not? We are not only saved from the penalty of our sin, but we are saved from the authority that sin was held on our lives.

But let me mention one more thing with reference to the meaning of this claim that our Lord made. It has to do with:

### 3. Our physical resurrection as believers.

We have this promised to us in John 6:39, 40 where we have these words spoken by our Lord:

And this is the Father's will  
which hath sent me,  
that of all which he hath given me  
I should lose nothing,  
BUT SHOULD RAISE IT UP AT THE LAST DAY.  
And this is the will of him that sent me,  
that every one which seeth the Son,  
and believeth on him,  
may have everlasting life:  
AND I WILL RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY.

That promise was made by Him Who is "the resurrection, and the life."

What comfort this holds for us when we stand by the grave of some dear believer who has died! Death is not the end. The grave is not the end. Resurrection is coming when Christ comes. He will change these bodies, and all of those dead bodies. And He will glorify them! They will be like His body. How can He do this? It is as

Paul said in Phil. 3:20, 21, "According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things **UNTO HIMSELF**." He is "the resurrection, and the life."

Cf. 1 Cor. 15:51-57.

Paul was actually scorning death and the grave. What victory will we have in that day? The victory of resurrection! How will it come? By our resurrection through our Lord Jesus Christ Who is Himself "the resurrection, and the life."

Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

Concl: Let me close, however, on a more sober note.

It is thought by some that the verse from which Martha first learned about the resurrection was Daniel 12:2. This is what it says:

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life,  
AND SOME TO SHAME AND EVERLASTING CONTEMPT.

You see, this truth which brings such blessing to those of us who know the Lord, that He is "the resurrection, and the life," holds nothing but terror and eternal doom for those who do not know the Lord.

Are you one who says, or do you know anyone who says, "When you're dead, you're dead"? If you believe that, you are believing a lie. Every person who has ever lived is going to be raised some day. For some, those who believe in Christ, it will be eternal, unmixed happiness and joy. But for those who do not know the Saviour, it will be "shame and everlasting contempt," abhorrence, separation from God to suffer with the damned in hell for all eternity.

That is what makes our Lord's question to Martha so very, very important: "Believest thou this?" He was saying, "Do you believe that 'I am the resurrection, and the life,' and are you trusting in Me for the forgiveness of your sins and for the gift of eternal life?"

What is your answer to our Lord's question? I leave it with you. May God turn your heart to Christ if you are not a believer that your hope may be in Christ, and Christ alone.

## CHRIST, THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

John 14:6

Intro: The context of this verse probably begins back in 13:31. Judas had just gone out, and the Lord was left with the eleven apostles. At this point He began speaking to them about His departure. This brought questions from Peter (13:36, 37), from Thomas (14:5), and from Philip (14:8--not stated as a question, but requiring an answer from the Lord). The concern of the apostles was how they were going to be able to find the Lord, and so the discussion really centered around (1) where the Lord was going, and (2) how they could get where He was. And so that accounts for the prominence of the expression, "the way." See 14:4-6.

As you look closer at these verses you can see that the Lord was going to His "Father's house," and so we can say that they wanted to know the way to the Father, because that is where they would find the Lord.

From Philip's request in 14:8 we see that he was asking about the Father.

As, as the Lord frequently did, He went beyond their discussion, raising the question about the necessity of life, eternal life.

And so He said,

I am the way, the truth, and the life;  
no man cometh to the Father but by me.

We might even be able to say that the subject of this verse is, Christ, the Way, and that the Lord brought in the other two titles for Himself so that the disciples would clearly understand all that was involved in getting to the Father (getting to the Father meaning salvation). It is important to know how to get there, Who the Father is, and what is required to be in "the way."

So let me state it this way:

- 1) Christ is the way to the Father.
- 2) Christ is the truth about the Father.
- 3) Christ is the life of the Father, or from the Father.

It is important to see how the Lord placed Himself between His Father and His apostles. He not only pointed out the way to the Father, but He was the way. He not only preached the truth about the Father, but He was the truth. He not only gave from the Father, but He was the life. Therefore, He was the only way. The truth about God cannot be attained with Him. And there can be no life from the Father unless a person receives that life from Him.

## I. CHRIST, THE WAY.

Christ is the way to the Father, the only way, and the way that excludes all other ways. If people do not come through Christ, they cannot come.

This is one part (not the only one, but one) that people naturally hate about the Gospel. In our day there is a great tolerance for religions of all kinds, or no religion at all. But to say that the only way to God is through Christ is especially distasteful to most people. They like to think that we can pick our own way to heaven and to God and to eternal life--IF they believe in a future life at all!

But remember that Solomon said long ago, and recorded it twice in Book of Proverbs (14:12; 16:25),

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man,  
but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Every generation has had millions of people that have thought that they were right, but they were wrong because they did not choose Christ. And to be wrong here is the worst mistake you can make. It means eternity in hell, separation from God, not going to God and to heaven! And we have a natural inclination, especially in things pertaining to God, to choose the wrong way in preference to the right way.

Do you remember from you reading of the Book of Acts how the Christian faith was spoken of as "this way"? Cf. Acts 9:2. When Paul went to the authorities to get letters to bring Christians from Damascus back to Jerusalem "bound," Luke said that he "desired letters . . . that if he found any of **this way**," lit., the way, he might bring them back in chains.

In Acts 19 we read about Paul's time in Ephesus, and we are told this:

And the same time there arose no small stir  
about **that way**.

When Paul was giving his defense before Felix in Acts 24, he said, after denying many of the charges that were brought against him,

But this I confess unto thee,  
that after **the way** which they call heresy,  
so worship I the God of my fathers,  
believing all thing which are written in the law  
and in the prophets (v. 14).

The demon possessed girl in Philippi kept saying day after day,

These men are the servants of the most high God,  
which shew unto us **the way** of salvation (Acts 16:17).

The writer of the Book of Hebrews spoke of "the way into the holiest of all" (Heb. 9:8) which had not been opened up until Christ died and rose again. And later he spoke of the way as "a new and living way" (Heb. 10:20) which our Lord consecrated by His blood. Thus, the Book of Hebrews is really a commentary on this title of our Lord: Christ, the way.

In the parable of the shepherd in John 10 (v. 1) the Lord spoke of those who do not enter by the door, but climb up "some other way," as "thieves and robbers."

In Peter's second Epistle he spoke of those who had "forsaken the right way" (2:15), and then he added later on in that chapter:

For it had been better for them not to have known  
the way of righteousness,  
that, after they have known it,  
to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them  
(v. 21).

Jude lamented about those false teachers who had gone "the way of Cain" which was not through Christ.

If you are not already in the way, let me solemnly warn you that you will never get to heaven unless you come through Christ.

What does it mean that Christ is "the way"? It means that we must come to God, repenting of our sins, and trusting in Christ to cleanse us by His blood shed on the Cross at Calvary. There is no other way to God!

## II. CHRIST, THE TRUTH.

Cf. John 14:9.

We see something of the meaning of the expression, "the truth," by turning to Deut. 32:4:

He is the Rock, his work is perfect:  
for all his ways are judgment:  
a God of truth and without iniquity,  
just and right is he.

The Apostle John was describing the reliability of the revelation of God that we have in Jesus Christ, and he said in John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth."

The reason that people do not see the necessity of coming to God through Christ is because they have never realized that Christ is the full and final revelation of God. Others spoke about God, and manifested in part the life

of God in themselves. But only Christ was indwelt by the fulness of the Godhead! He has faithfully revealed the Father. To see Christ is to see the Father. God has no more to say about Himself than He has said in His Son. No other person can say, "I am . . . the truth."

Our Lord told Pilate that he had come into the world to bear witness to the truth. Pilate scornfully replied, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). But he did not wait for an answer. Unless the Lord did something in the heart of Pilate that we do not know about, this is one question that will undoubtedly be ringing in his ears for all eternity.

"What is truth?" is the greatest question a person can ask. What is the answer? Christ is the truth because He is the faithful, the true, the complete and final revelation of God.

### III. CHRIST, THE LIFE.

In Eph. 4:18 Paul declared that man, all men, are "alienated from the life of God."

The Lord had already said, "I am the resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25). The Apostle John began his Gospel by saying, speaking of Christ,

In him was life;

and the life was the light of men.

Our Lord said, speaking of Himself in His incarnate state as a man,

For as the Father hath life in himself;

so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself  
(John 5:26).

Again quoting from the Apostle John, we have these words in 1 John 5:11, 12:

And this is the record,,

that God hath given unto us eternal life,

and this life is in his Son.

He that hath the Son hath life;

and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

Any person who expects to go to the Father in heaven must have life, eternal life. And to have eternal life means that you have Christ, that He has forgiven you, that He has made you a child of God, that you are no longer alienated and separated from God, but united to God through Christ forever.

Concl: Could anything be clearer than these words of our Lord Jesus Christ in John 14:6? No one else can claim these titles. He, and He alone, is "the way, the

truth, and the life. He is the way to God. He is the truth about God. And He is the life of God. Christ came to open that "new and living way" for us. No one else can bring you to God. Do you remember Peter's words in 1 Peter 3:18? Let me read them to you. Here they are:

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins,

the just for the unjust,

**that he might bring us to God** (He is "the way"),

being put to death in the flesh,

but quickened by the Spirit.

No one can lead you to God except the One Who died for sinners. It is sin which has separated us from God, and only a Saviour can lead us to God and to heaven. Christ is the only Saviour there has ever been for sinners.

Is He your Saviour? If He is, you will not mind my asking. If He is not, then listen to His words tonight. Believe what He said. Come to God, but come through the Saviour. Then you can be sure that you are on the right way, "the way of salvation."



CHRIST, THE TRUE VINE  
John 15:1, 5

Intro: All of John 14, 15, and 16 is usually referred to as The Upper Room Discourse. However, you will note that at the end of chapter 14 the Lord said, "Arise, let us go hence" (John 14:31b). This must mean that, at this point, the Lord led His disciples out of the Upper Room, into the streets of Jerusalem, and out toward the Garden of Gethsemane. And so the words which we are about to consider were spoken en route to the Garden.

It seems useless to speculate on what prompted the Lord to speak in this way other than the fact that He was speaking His last hours with them before His death, and He was preparing them for the time at hand when He would go back to the Father, and they would have to continue their work without having Him physically present with them. He had been comforting them in chapter 14, and His words of comfort were centered in what He had to say about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would not depart from them. Neither would the Holy Spirit let them forget what the Lord had taught them. In fact, He would make the Lord's teaching more understandable to them.

But then He introduced the illustration of a vine, the husbandman, and the branches, to show the disciples that He was not leaving them as orphans (14:18), but that full provision had been made for their blessing, even greater blessing than they had yet seen, by their continued relationship with Him, and with the Father.

Let me read the first five verses of John 15. (Read.)

The first thing that we must note is this:

I. THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS INVOLVED.

We have them in verses 1 and 5:

- 1) The Father is the husbandman.
- 2) The Lord Jesus is the vine, the true vine.
- 3) The disciples, and all believers then, since then, and now, are the branches.

And we can add to that the fact that the obvious reason for the vine and the branches was that there would be fruit.

Let us examine what the Lord said about the Father, about Himself, and about His disciples.

A. "My Father is the husbandman."

All through chapters 14, 15, 16, and even in the prayer in chapter 17, our Lord referred to God as "the Father," or "my Father." He is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:14). But He is also "our Father" (Matt. 6:9; cf. also John 20:17). This title for God which was very rare in the OT, then became what certainly has to be the outstanding way in which we are to think about God, and even speak to Him, in the NT.

When we enter into such a relationship, a relationship which not even the angels enjoy, but which belongs pre-eminently to our Lord, we begin to realize the very great privilege that is ours, a privilege that we owe to the grace of God alone.

Since God is a Father, He has to be the ideal father. All other fathers are to find their pattern in Him. It is a term of endearment, speaking of His love for us, and our love for Him. Paul taught in two of his epistles (Romans and Galatians) that it is the Holy Spirit Who teaches us to say, "Abba, Father."

It is a term which describes a relationship. God, in our text this the Father; the Lord Jesus Christ is His Son. Christ was begotten of the Father in His humanity. He recognized the greater greatness of His Father. Christ came to do the will of His Father. His whole purpose on earth was to glorify the Father.

The Father, on the other hand, provided for His Son while the Lord was here on earth. He protected His Son, and no man could touch the Lord Jesus until it was the time appointed by the Father. John 17 is especially precious, not only because it is peculiarly the Lord's prayer, but because in it He was speaking to His Father. It was impossible and inconceivable that the Father would let the work of the Son fail. Jesus Christ, the Son, was even raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.

Much, much more could be said, much more than I have the knowledge to say. But perhaps what I have said will help us to appreciate more these words of the Lord, "And my Father is the husbandman." That is just as important a statement was the one that preceded it, "I am the true vine."

But what is a "husbandman"?

God has two roles here: He is the Father of our Lord; He is also the husbandman of the Lord as the

Vine, and of us as the branches. But what is a "husbandman"?

He is the farmer whose job it is to care for the vine and the branches. The word in the original also means a tiller of the soil (Thayer, p. 114). He cultivates the soil in order that the vine will produce more fruit. James wrote in 5:7 that "the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the vineyard." And the Apostle Paul said in 2 Tim. 2:6 that "the husbandman that laboreth must first partaker of the vineyard." So, just as God is the ideal Father, so He is the ideal Husbandman. He knows the right thing to do at the right time to bring the vine and the branches to their greatest productivity.

Cf. 1 Cor. 3:9,  
"Ye are God's  
husbandry."

Therefore, our Lord, in describing the work which He left His disciples to do, was saying that it was all under the careful observation and constant attendance of none other than His Father and their Father. This ought to encourage us when it seems that things are particularly difficult and not much is happening.

But let us go on to:

B. "I am the true vine."

This figure of speech was used in the OT to describe the people of God in Israel. Cf. Psa. 80:8 where the exodus is described as God bringing a vine out of Egypt. In Jer. 2:21 the Lord said, "I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed." But then He lamented the degeneration of the vine that He had planted. In Hosea 10:1 we have the prophet lamenting that "Israel is an empty vine."

The vine was a proper representation of what God wanted to accomplish through Israel. But Israel failed again and again, even though the Lord will yet bring her to fruitfulness for His own glory.

It must have been a little startling to the disciples to hear the Lord use this of Himself, especially when He said, "I am the true vine." This means that He is the real as opposed to the false. He is perfect where others are imperfect. He is strong where they are weak. He is pure where they are impure. He is genuine; others are false.

Now, when we add to that statement the words that we have seen over and over as we have gone through these claims of our Lord, the words, "I am," we can see

that there never has been but one genuine vine, there is none other now, and there never will be one who will replace our Lord. He is the only One Who can truly lay claim to that title. People may try to make themselves a vine, or others may try to make them a vine, but only the Lord is the true, the genuine, the real vine.

But what was the Lord driving at here? What does the vine mean to the branches, and even to the husbandman?

Well, the vine holds the life of the branches. And, as the vine is, so will the fruit be.

In Deut. 32:32 Moses was teaching the children of Israel the song that they were to learn and to sing to keep them from going astray, or, when they had gone astray, to bring them back. And among the things that were said in the song about idolatry was this:

For their vine is of the vine of Sodom,  
and of the fields of Gomorrah:  
their grapes are grapes of gall,  
their clusters are bitter.

There is always the danger that the people of God, as well as the people of the world, will draw their life, their vitality, from someone or something other than the Lord Jesus Christ. We see people doing it every day. The result is always disaster--both in time, and surely in eternity.

(Cf. the Lord's question to the disciples in John 6:67.)

The true source of life and power and blessing is the Lord Jesus Christ. All other vines--people, pleasure, money, power, possessions, and any other--are FALSE. Jesus Christ is not only "the vine," but He is "the true vine."

Now for the third of the principal characters:

C. "Ye are the branches."

A branch by itself is nothing, and can do nothing. Cut the branch away from the vine, and there will be no fruit. Fruitfulness depends upon a good, healthy relationship between the vine and the branches.

The picture that the Lord was giving to His disciples was that, although He was going away, they would

never be able to get along without Him. Fruitfulness was dependent upon abiding in the vine.

So the Lord's purpose in using this figure of speech was to show three things:

- 1) Their dependence upon the Father.
- 2) The sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3) Their utter worthlessness apart from both the Father and the Lord, the True Vine.

See vv. 4, 5.

Now we come to the one thing that stands out as being of chief importance in this relationship between the husbandman, the vine, and the branches, IF THERE IS TO BE FRUIT! What is it?

## II. THE NEED TO ABIDE.

Abiding means remain, not departing, continuing on.

The work of the husbandman will not fail. The vine has life that is sufficient for every branch. There is no possibility that the life, the strength, the power, that is in Christ can ever be used up. You can worry about our natural resources if you want to, but do not spend a moment worrying about Christ. His mercies are "new every morning" (Lam. 3:23).

Abiding means that we will not look anyplace else but to Christ for our life, our strength. By the grace of God we are going to do what needs to be done to maintain a healthy relationship with our Lord. How is this done?

Let me suggest three things:

### A. It means continuing to trust in the Lord.

We cannot do what we need to do apart from Him, and so we continue to trust Him. And we do this because we love Him and would not trust in anything or anyone that would take His place in our hearts.

### B. It means having His Word abiding in us.

### C. It means obeying His Word, keeping His commandments.

This is how we continue in His love. See John 15:10. And this is the way the Lord measures our love. See John 14:21, 23.

And the commandment which transcends every other commandment, except the command to love the Lord, is

the one the Lord mentioned in John 13:34, 35, and He came back to it again in John 15:12--the command for us to love one another. When there are divisions among us, the fruit will be lacking.

Concl: I haven't tried to describe the fruit tonight. Hopefully I will be able to do that in the near future. But I do hope that you have really seen and appropriated what I have had to say tonight about the Father as the Husbandman, and about Christ as the True Vine, and about ourselves as the Branches.

The fruit is not produced by us, but we have responsibilities in this. Cf. the importance of fruit to the Lord in John 15:16. But this requires a close relationship with the Lord. And yet we cannot have a close relationship with Him unless we have a close relationship with His Word. And a close relationship with the Lord and with His Word will inevitably lead to a close relationship with each other in the Lord. We all have our own unique place in the Vine, but we live in the same Vine, and we all have the same Husbandman.

May the Lord enable us to bring much glory to the Father by bringing forth much fruit. Cf. John 15:8.