



**I AM**  
**CHRISTMAS**

# **A 7-WEEK ADVENT DEVOTIONAL**

By Chrys Jones

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## The “I AM” Statements of Jesus

|       |   |    |
|-------|---|----|
| [ 1 ] | <b>I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE</b> .....             | 3  |
|       | Kids' Version.....                              | 4  |
|       | Daily Readings.....                             | 5  |
| [ 2 ] | <b>I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD</b> .....        | 6  |
|       | Kids' Version.....                              | 7  |
|       | Daily Readings.....                             | 8  |
| [ 3 ] | <b>I AM THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP</b> .....         | 9  |
|       | Kids' Version.....                              | 10 |
|       | Daily Readings.....                             | 11 |
| [ 4 ] | <b>I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD</b> .....             | 12 |
|       | Kids' Version.....                              | 13 |
|       | Daily Readings.....                             | 14 |
| [ 5 ] | <b>I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE</b> ..... | 15 |
|       | Kids' Version.....                              | 16 |
|       | Daily Readings.....                             | 17 |
| [ 6 ] | <b>I AM THE WAY, TRUTH, AND LIFE</b> .....      | 18 |
|       | Kids' Version.....                              | 20 |
|       | Daily Readings.....                             | 22 |
| [ 7 ] | <b>I AM THE TRUE VINE</b> .....                 | 23 |
|       | Kids' Version.....                              | 24 |
|       | Daily Readings.....                             | 25 |

## [ 1 ] I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

### John 6:22-59

Advent encourages us to pause and contemplate the arrival of Jesus as a man, offering eternal life to sinners in need of a Savior. However, amidst the holiday rush, we often lose sight of this vital focus. The glory of Christ is often overshadowed by the hustle and bustle of shopping, event planning, travel arrangements, and meal preparations. While desiring newer and nicer things is not inherently wrong, these desires can offer only temporary satisfaction, causing us to misplace our hope and joy.

The core message of Advent, however, is that Jesus descended from heaven to provide eternal satisfaction. John 6:47-51 illustrates this:

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

Jesus proclaims Himself as the "Bread of Life." Before this declaration, He had performed miracles among the sick, drawing a large, eager crowd proving His Divine nature and power. Jesus' compassion led Him to feed thousands, and they rejoiced, but they sought Him for earthly gain and were disappointed when He didn't want to be their earthly king and slipped from their grasp to obscure Himself.

Later, the crowds returned for more food, missing the point of Jesus's miraculous works. Jesus redirected them, urging them to believe in Him for eternal sustenance. Many had anticipated a Messiah who would provide manna, much like Moses did in the desert, but Jesus corrected their understanding, emphasizing that God sent the true bread that grants life (v. 33). He declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst" (v. 34). Many of the people grumbled, just like their forefathers of old.

In the Bible, bread symbolizes life. Jesus used this metaphor to emphasize that He is the source of true life. Just as the ancient Israelites needed manna to survive, the people of Jesus' time needed spiritual nourishment from Him. He emphasized that their hope lay not in material possessions, an earthly Messiah, or good deeds. Rather true hope was in Him, the Bread of Life.

This Advent, consider where you seek life and hope. While the Sunday School answer may be "Jesus," self-examination is essential. In moments of distress, where do you turn for solace? During this holiday season, do you find more joy in Jesus or the gifts and festivities.

The good news is that Jesus sympathizes with our needs and desires. He extends the offer of eternal life, even amidst doubt and confusion. This year, keep giving gifts, singing hymns and carols, and celebrating with loved ones, but prioritize feasting on the Bread of Life. Dedicate time to read His words, meditate, and talk with Him. Create an Advent tradition centered on shared meals, discussions about Jesus, and communion with Him. He calls out, saying, "I am the bread of life. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever" (v. 58).

## [ 1 ] I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

### Kids' Version

Advent is a special time when we celebrate Jesus, who gave us the best gift ever—eternal life! But sometimes, we get busy with gifts and parties and forget what's important. We might even dream about cool stuff, but those things don't make us truly happy. They definitely don't keep us alive. Jesus is the one who gives us real joy and life.

Jesus came from heaven to give us eternal life and show us that real happiness is in Him. Let's learn from what Jesus said in John 6:47 and 51: "I am the bread of life... If anyone eats this bread, they will live forever". Before saying those amazing words, Jesus did mighty miracles and healed sick people. He showed them that He is God. Lots of people followed Him, hoping He'd be their king, but Jesus wanted them to understand that He was far more than that.

Later, the crowd came back, not to learn from Him but to get more food. Jesus said they should work for something even better than yummy food. They should work for eternal life by believing in Him. Just by believing they could live forever. Even after seeing miracles, some folks wanted more signs. They thought Jesus might give them manna like Moses did. But Jesus said, "I am the true bread from heaven, giving life to the whole world" (John 6:33).

When they asked for this special bread, Jesus said: "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never be hungry or thirsty. (John 6:35). Some people didn't like this message, just like their ancestors in the desert didn't like Moses' words. Jesus said only those God draws can come to Him. This was a hard truth, but they needed to hear it.

In the Bible, they needed bread to live. We also need food and water to live, just like we need Jesus for eternal life. If we don't believe in Him, we can't live forever with Him. Long ago, God gave manna to hungry Israelites, but they didn't live forever, and they didn't even trust God after He took care of them.

People in Jesus's time need to feast on Him with their hearts to really live. We need to do the same thing. They needed to know that toys and stuff can't make them happy. Jesus, the Bread of Life, gives us true joy and life forever if we love Him.

During Advent, think about where you look for happiness. It's easy to say "Jesus," but do you really believe it? Do you really mean it? When you're upset or confused, where do you go? Does Jesus bring you more joy than the toys and fun stuff at Christmas?

Jesus knows what you need. He's the gift of eternal life, even when you're grumpy. He's saying, "I am the bread of life. Anyone who loves Me will live forever" (John 6:58).

This Advent, have fun giving gifts, singing songs, and being with family. But don't forget to enjoy the Bread of Life—Jesus. Spend time reading about Him, thinking good about Him as much as you can, and talking to Him. Ask your parents to start special traditions with your family, and make them all about Jesus. He's calling you right now and offering you eternal life!

## [ 1 ] I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

### Daily Readings

#### Day 1: Read John 6:22-59.

- How does the surrounding context help you better understand Jesus as the Bread of Life?
- How does Jesus being the Bread of Life impact your life today?

#### Day 2: Read Exodus 16:1-36.

- How does this passage make us anticipate the coming of the Savior who is the true Bread of Life?
- How does the gospel provide a greater hope than the physical manna from heaven?

#### Day 3: Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.

- How and why is the Lord's supper greater than the manna in the wilderness?
- What is the importance of the Lord's Supper in the life of the church today? How does it point us to the gospel?

#### Song (scan the QR code to listen):

"On and On" – Trip Lee

[Trip Lee, Jonathan Traylor - On & On \(Official Audio\) - YouTube](#)



## [ 2 ] I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

## John 8:12-9:5

As we celebrate Advent, the darkness of late autumn and winter begins to set in. When we rise from our slumber each morning, we are greeted by dark, starlit skies. Shortly after we pull into the driveway from a hard day's work, the darkness creeps back in and quickly ushers us back into our nightly slumber. Some days, the clouds are so dense and the gray so heavy that a shadow of darkness is cast over the entire day. We begin to long for brighter days, earlier dawns, and later dusks. Spring sunlight brings relief after a winter season of darkness.

After Adam and Eve ate the fruit in the Garden of Eden, darkness set in. It's a darkness we can all feel. To our dismay, as dark as those early days were, there would be darker days coming. The days of Noah were dark. Despite God's pillar of fire, Moses and the Israelites couldn't help but feel the darkness. In the days of the judges, the darkness seemed to reach its peak. Yet, in the days of Israel's corrupt kings, we see some of the darkest days in human history. Sin, idolatry, and darkened hearts gave way to the exile, famine, death, and desolation of God's chosen people.

Yet, into the darkness came a great light! "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone" (Isa. 9:2). What did they see? Who was this great light? It was the promised Savior and Messiah. It was the Son of God who caused the light to shine when His Father said, "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3). He is the Light who came into the world (John 1:9; 3:19). The darkness of sin and death could neither comprehend nor overcome the light of Christ (John 1:5).

Jesus wasn't shy about this reality, either. He stared Pharisaical darkness directly in the face and said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12). As further evidence of His true nature and power, just prior to making a blind man see, Jesus declared, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (John 9:5). In pitch darkness, the light of a candle can illuminate a room. Yet, Jesus wasn't a flickering candle, He came like a blazing, glorious sun, bursting onto the scene with immeasurable glory.

The Light of the World reveals the darkness that resides in all of our hearts. He also exposes the deepest needs of those He interacts with, some for their salvation and others for their judgment. His teachings pierce the most learned scholar as well as the ignorant and unlearned (Acts 4:13). Greatest of all, Jesus shined the light of salvation, illuminating the gospel for all who would receive and believe in Him (2 Cor. 4:6).

This is what Advent is all about. This is why we string up lights and enjoy the glowing flame of the Advent candles each Lord's Day throughout this wonderful season. The true Light has come into the world. As you meditate on the blazing glory of our Savior, remember this:

*"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16)*

When Jesus ascended into heaven, the Light didn't leave the world. He shines through us. As the full moon lights up the night sky, we "shine as lights" in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation (Phil. 2:15). Shine bright, dear brothers and sisters! The world needs to see His glory.

## [ 2 ] I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

### Kids' Devotion

Advent is upon us! As we celebrate, the days become shorter and the nights longer. When we wake up in the morning, we see a dark, starlit sky. It seems like right after school the darkness comes back, and we go to sleep. Sometimes, the clouds are thick and the gray sky makes the day feel gloomy. We start to wish for brighter days with earlier mornings and later evenings. Spring sunlight brings relief after a long winter.

Long ago, after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, darkness filled the world. We all feel this darkness. Sadly, even darker days were yet to come. The days of Noah were dark. Despite God's pillar of fire, Moses and the Israelites also felt the darkness. In the days of the judges, things seemed to be at their darkest, but they got worse in the days of Israel's corrupt kings. Those were some of the darkest times in Israel's history. Sin, idol worship, and hard hearts led to exile, hunger, death, great sadness, and emptiness.

However, into this darkness came a great light! "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness, light has shone on them" (Isa. 9:2). Who was this great Light? It was the promised Savior and Messiah. He's the Son of God who brought light to the world when God said, "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3). The darkness of sin and death couldn't understand or overcome the light of Christ (John 1:5).

Jesus wasn't shy about this truth. He looked right into the darkness of the Pharisees and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). Then, just before making a blind man see, Jesus said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:5). In complete darkness, a candle's light can brighten a room. Jesus was even bigger and even better! Jesus was like the blazing sun bursting into your room on a bright, summer morning!

The Light of the World shows us the darkness in our hearts. He also shows us what we need most. His teachings reached all kinds of people, whether they were super smart teachers or regular little kids like us. Most importantly, Jesus showed the light of salvation, explaining His good news to all who would receive and believe in Him.

This is what Advent is all about. It's why we decorate with Christmas lights and light Advent candles on Sunday mornings. Light has come into the world. If you've placed your faith in Jesus, He has some amazing words for you:

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16).

Did you hear that?! If you're a Christian, you get to carry the light of Jesus with you everywhere you go! When Jesus went to heaven, the Light didn't leave the world. He shines through us. Just like a full moon brightens the night sky, we "shine like lights" in a sinful world (Phil. 2:15). Shine brightly, kiddos! The world needs to see His glory!

## [ 2 ] I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

### Daily Readings

#### Day 1: Read John 8:12-30

- How does the darkness of the Pharisees' and Jews' responses prove that they did not have the Light of Christ?
- Why do you think Jesus chose to use darkness and light imagery? How does the metaphor light connect with the idea of knowing Him?

#### Day 2: Read Isaiah 9:1-7

- How were the days leading up to Christ's coming described by Isaiah in this passage?
- What are some of the ways Jesus is described in this passage? How do these words give hope about the One who was to come?

#### Day 3: Read Revelation 21:22-27

- How will the New Temple and New City be lit up after the return of Christ? How does this give us hope and anticipation of Christ's second Advent?
- Who will walk in the light of Christ in the days after Christ's coming? How does this help us understand that Jesus was the light of the *world*?

#### Song(s) (scan the QR code to listen):

Light of the World - We The Kingdom

[We The Kingdom - Light of the World \(Sing Hallelujah\) \(Acoustic Performance\) - YouTube](#)





# [ 3 ] I AM THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP

## John 10:1-9

Advent is about an entrance. We celebrate the Son of God entering the world in human flesh to bring salvation and joy to a world that is full of darkness and devastation. We also celebrate the entrance of God's King and ruler who came not with pomp and an iron will—though His fierce wrath will indeed come later. Rather, this Savior came in humility and rules with a “scepter of uprightness” (Hebrews 1:8). When the Jewish people tried to force His hand, He'd slip from their grasp or remind them that His time had not yet come.

In the Advent season, we open our doors to welcome friends, family, and even strangers into our homes to celebrate this joyous season. If someone forcefully enters through a window, they are not a welcomed guest. Rather, they're a threat, and they deserve to be treated as a thief or a robber. The difference between a guest and a thief is *how* they enter the house.

When Jesus said, “I am the door of the sheep” (John 10:7), He used a similar metaphor to illustrate that He was the true Son of God. He said, “All who came *before* me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. Perhaps there were already false Messiahs and false prophets” (Matt. 24:24). More likely, Jesus is referring to the wicked kings and false prophets whose rule is defined by utter wickedness:

*“...Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them.” (Ezek. 34:2-4)*

That's a picture of thieves and robbers! These sinister rulers weren't just the kings and false prophets of old. They were the Pharisees, scribes, and lawyers in Jesus' own day. They were leading people through the door of legalism, self-righteousness, and salvation by works. These self-appointed shepherds were leading people straight to hell (Matt. 23:15)!

Praise be to God that Jesus, the Door of the sheep, arrived to do what doors do. He is the entryway to salvation—“anyone who enters by me, he will be saved” (John 10:9). He is the Door that protects His sheep from thieves and robbers for all eternity (John 10:28). He provides security for the sheep to “go in and out and find pasture” (John 10:9). We don't need a king, priest, pastor, or father on this earth to be saved. We don't need a set of regulations, culturally-mandated activism, or any other “door” to get to the Father. We need to enter by Jesus, the Door of the sheep. He is the true God.

Have you entered by the door? Are you living as though the door of salvation is a set of rules? Does your daily hope and joy ebb and flow based on the length of your quiet times? Have you been caught up following thieves and robbers who offer joy, hope, and life through someone or something other than Jesus? Reorient your heart this Advent season. Jesus is calling, and His message is clear, “I am the Door of the sheep.”

Enter by the Door.

## [ 3 ] I AM THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP

### Kids' Version

Advent is a special time of year when we get ready for Christmas. It's a time to think about the birth of Jesus, who is the Son of God. Advent helps us remember why Christmas is so important.

You see, Advent is all about an entrance. It's like welcoming someone important into your home. We celebrate the fact that the Son of God came into our world as a baby. He was born in human flesh to bring us salvation and joy. Before Jesus came, the world was a dark and sad place. But when He arrived, everything changed.

We also celebrate that Jesus is the King and Ruler sent by God. He didn't come with a big parade or act like a strict and harsh leader, even though He will be the King forever. Instead, He came in a humble way, and He rules with fairness and kindness.

In the Advent season, we open our hearts and homes to welcome friends, family, and even strangers. We want to share the joy of this special time with others. But if someone tries to come into our house without permission, like through a window, they are not welcome. They are like a threat or a robber. The difference between a guest and a thief is how they enter the house.

When Jesus said, "I am the Door of the sheep," He used a similar idea to show that He is the real deal. He wanted us to know that He is the true way to joy and salvation. He said that anyone who came before Him was like a thief or a robber. There were people who pretended to be special messengers from God, but they weren't real.

There were also some leaders who were not good rulers. They were like thieves and robbers because they didn't take care of the people they were supposed to lead. They were only interested in themselves. This is what Jesus was talking about when He said, "Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves!" (Ezek. 34:2-4). He meant that these leaders were not doing their job. They were not helping the weak, the sick, or the lost.

In Jesus' time, there were some religious leaders called the Pharisees, scribes, and lawyers who were also not doing the right thing. They were leading people in the wrong direction by focusing on rules and self-righteousness. They were like thieves leading people away from God.

We should be thankful that Jesus, the Door of the sheep, came to do what doors do. He is the way to salvation. He said, "Anyone who enters by me will be saved" (John 10:9). He protects us from thieves and robbers and gives us security. We can come to Him and find what we need.

We don't need special leaders, rules, or rituals to be saved. We just need to believe in Jesus and follow Him. He is the true door to happiness and salvation. We don't have to look for salvation in other people or things; we can find it in Jesus. He is God.

So, as we celebrate Advent, let's remember that Jesus is the door to hope, joy, and eternal life. Don't try to follow rules or people who promise joy for only a little while. Follow Jesus because He is the real Door to life and every good thing.

## [ 3 ] I AM THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP

### Daily Readings

#### Day 1: Read John 10:1-21

- How does the context help us better understand how Jesus is a Door to the sheep? How does this metaphor convey the idea that Jesus is the way to salvation?
- Why is it vital that we enter the Kingdom of Heaven through Jesus and not try other ways instead?

#### Day 2: Read Ezekiel 34:1-10

- How does God describe the shepherds of Israel? How does this illustrate that these shepherds were the thieves and robbers Jesus spoke about?
- How does God's response give us hope in the face of wicked shepherds attacking His church today (v. 10)?

#### Day 3: Read Luke 13:22-30

- What does this passage teach about entering by faith in the gospel rather than by some broad, alternative entrance?
- Why is it significant to live by faith in Christ rather than merely be around Him and His people (v. 26-28)?

#### Song (scan the QR code to listen):

"I am the Door" – Seeds Family Worship

[John 10:9 - I Am The Door - YouTube](#)



# [ 4 ] I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

## John 10:10-21

We live in the age of the influencer. Influencers range from kids who merely play with toys on camera to self-appointed philosophers giving their perspectives on a host of topics. The season of Advent is a time to reflect upon the idea of influence. We are all being led and guided by principles and people in our lives. Pastors and elders lead us in the local church. Our bosses and supervisors lead us at work. Our coaches and trainers lead us in sports. Some so-called free-spirited people follow no leader except their own hearts. Yet, when we meditate on the baby who laid in the manger on that glorious Christmas morning, we are setting our minds on the greatest Shepherd to ever walk this earth.

In the days before Jesus' arrival, Israel's leaders failed them in significant ways. The people begged for a king like the nations around them, and in doing so, they rejected God and set themselves up for a devastating downfall (1 Sam. 8:4-9). God gave them exactly what they demanded, and most of their kings did evil in the sight of God. Even their greatest kings were mere men whose track records included murder, adultery, pride, presumption, self-reliance, and more. At best, they were mere men trying to do the work of God.

As we've already seen Ezekiel cried out against wicked shepherds for feeding themselves and not caring for God's sheep (Ezek. 34:1-10). God struck these false shepherds with a crucial blow, but made a sweet promise of rescue and deliverance for those who were truly His people.

“I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.” (Ezek. 34:15-16)

Jesus came on this mission, again unveiling His Divine nature and power to save. He regathered His scattered sheep from all of the lands they had been scattered to (Ezek. 34:11-24). When a shepherd calls for his sheep, they come running because they know him. So it is with Jesus. His sheep listen to Him and follow Him because they know His voice (John 10:3, 8, 14, and 6). The Good Shepherd in the manger would one day rise up and rescue the sheep.

What is the work of this good Shepherd? He leads the sheep to safe, green pastures that are rich with food and shelter (Psa. 23:2, John 10:3). He gives eternal life to all who trust and follow Him (John 10:10). To do this, He had to die for the sheep—He gave His life to give us life (John 10:11-15). He knows us deeply and shares Himself with us in a way that had only previously been expressed in His three-in-one fellowship with the Father and Spirit (John 10:15).

Let this truth reverberate in your heart as you meditate on Christ, the Good Shepherd:

“And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.” (John 10:16)

Who do you need to reconcile or reconnect with? Who have you cast aside because their political views don't align with yours? Who has anything against you? The Good Shepherd leads one flock, not many. The unity of His sheep testifies to the world that He has the power to transform the worst of sinners.

# [ 4 ] I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

## Kids' Version

We are in a time of Youtube stars. You know, like kids who play with toys and teach you lessons about life. Advent is a time to think about how people influence us. We are all led by rules and people in our lives. In church, pastors and elders lead us. At school, our teachers lead us. In sports, coaches show us the way. Some people follow no leader except their own hearts. That's not a good idea at all!

At Advent, when we think about the baby in the manger on Christmas, we get to think about the greatest leader ever. Jesus uses the example of a shepherd to show us His leadership. Before Jesus came, the leaders in Israel didn't do so well. The people asked for a king like other nations. They rejected God and set themselves up for serious trouble (1 Sam. 8:4-9). God gave them what they wanted, but most kings did bad things. *Really bad things*. Even the best kings did wrong because they were people trying to do work that only God can do.

As we saw last week, Ezekiel spoke against bad shepherds who cared only for themselves and not for God's sheep (Ezek. 34:1-10). God punished these false shepherds but promised to rescue and help His true people:

“I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.” (Ezek. 34:15-16)

Jesus came on this mission, showing that He is God and has the power to save. He brought back His scattered sheep from where they were (Ezek. 34:11-24). When a shepherd calls, the sheep come because they know him. It's the same with Jesus. His sheep listen and follow because they know His voice (John 10:3, 8, 14, and 6). The Good Shepherd in the manger would one day rise up and rescue the sheep.

What does this good Shepherd do? He leads the sheep to safe, green places with food and shelter (Psa. 23:2, John 10:3). He gives eternal life to all who trust and follow Him (John 10:10). To do this, He had to die for the sheep—He gave His life to give us life (John 10:11-15). He knows us deeply and shares Himself with us like He does with the Father and Spirit (John 10:15).

Remember this as you think about Christ, the Good Shepherd:

“And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.” (John 10:16)

Which of your friends do you need to make up with? Who do you ignore on the playground because they're not cool enough? Who has a problem with you? If they believe in Jesus, you should try to work it out! The Good Shepherd leads one flock, not many. His sheep being together shows the world that He is truly powerful enough to change us from the inside out.

## [ 4 ] I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

### Daily Readings

#### Day 1: Read John 10:1-21

- How does Jesus describe His work as a shepherd? How do His sheep respond to Him?
- What is significant about the sheep *knowing* Christ and Christ knowing them?

#### Day 2: Read Ezekiel 34:11-24

- What actions did God promise to take to save His sheep? How do we see Christ take these actions to save us?
- How does God's judgment of Shepherds reveal the seriousness of leading God's people?

#### Day 3: Read 1 Peter 5:1-5

- Why is the character and work of a shepherd or elder important?
- How should church members respond to the leadership of elders? What is the reason Peter gives for this?

**Bonus Reading:** Psalm 23

**Song (scan the QR code to listen):**

"Psalm 23" - Shane and Shane

[Psalm 23 \(Surely Goodness, Surely Mercy\) - YouTube](#)



# [ 5 ] I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

## John 11:17-27

The Advent season comes with festivities of joy and peace as we celebrate the coming of the Savior. Yet, for many, these days are tinted with a gloomy layer of grief. As a young boy, I lost my grandmother to cancer on December 12th, and the sting of her death lasted long into the new year as I counted the days, weeks, and months since I heard the awful words that I'd never see her again. Many of you have been there, too. Some of you are spending your first Christmas without a cherished mother, father, wife, husband, brother, or friend. Others are on year 10 or 20, but the pain still lingers on each year.

Even if you're not grieving a lost loved one, perhaps you're walking through a divorce. Or maybe this is your first year away from an estranged child who is in the prodigal pig slop as you longingly wait to welcome them back home with a feast and the best robes (Luke 15:11-32). It all feels like death. The effects of the fall of Adam and Eve are bearing down on you full force as you fight to crack a smile and not shed a tear while singing "Joy to the World". Joy feels so foreign at times, and the world seems far from it.

On the morning of Christ's birth, Israel was in agony. Ripped from their land and then brought back, they were now under the deadly rule of Herod, and there was a darkness in the land that could be felt. One day life showed up. Jesus arrived unknown to most of the world and was hated by Herod and the religious elites. He healed the sick and lifted the lame. He opened blind eyes and touched the untouchable. Yet, people all around him still died—even his friend Lazarus (John 11:14-15). Yet, even death was no match for him.

When Jesus came to raise Lazarus from the dead, he told Martha that her brother would rise again. Martha said, "I know that he will rise in the resurrection on the last day" (John 11:24). There was a sense of hope in her voice, but Jesus had an earth-shattering truth for her: "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Whether Jesus had been there when Lazarus died or not, the resurrection and the life stood right there talking with her. Lazarus wouldn't be dead for very long, for Jesus would utter the powerful, life-giving words: "Lazarus, come out", and life would reenter this corpse that had been lying there for four days.

Do you hear Jesus speaking to you today? Though life may feel like death for you today, you will live again. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we too will live again if we only believe in Him. Though our bodies decay and we face the grave, Jesus gives us eternal life. Everyone who lives and believes in Him shall never face the second death (Rev. 21:8). Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, came into the world, and He came as the Resurrection and the Life. If you're in a season of suffering, grieve dear brothers and sisters, but not as those without hope. For we know the resurrection and the life! Do you believe this?

## [ 5 ] I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

### Kids' Version

The Christmas season is a time when we celebrate the coming of Jesus, the Savior, with lots of joy and peace. But for some people, these days can be a little sad. When I was a young boy, my grandma passed away from cancer on December 12th—about 2 weeks before Christmas. The sadness from losing her stuck around for a long time, even into the new year. I kept counting the days, weeks, and months since I heard the sad news that I would never see her again.

Maybe some of you have lost someone you love. Some of you might be having your first Christmas without someone special like a parent, grandparent, or friend because they moved away. Others might have been feeling sad for many years because life has been tough for you.

Even if you're not missing someone, maybe your family is going through a tough time. Maybe you're struggling to obey and follow the rules at home or at school. It can feel a bit like things are not so great everywhere you look. The effects of Adam and Eve's mistakes from a long time ago can make you wonder how you can even sing "Joy to the World". Joy can feel impossible sometimes, and the world might not seem so joyful for you.

On the day Jesus was born, things were tough for the people in Israel. They were taken away from their land for a long time. Then they were brought back, but now they had a horrible ruler named Herod, and things were bad for them. But then, something amazing happened! Jesus was born, and even though a lot of important people didn't like Him, He did incredible things. He healed sick people, helped those who couldn't walk, and even made blind people see! Even though He was God, people still got sick and died—like His friend Lazarus.

After Jesus found out that Lazarus was dead, He told Lazarus's sister Martha that her brother would live again. Martha thought he meant in the last days, but Jesus had something very special in mind. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Wow!

When Jesus got to Lazarus's tomb, He called out, "Lazarus, come out!" Even though Lazarus had been dead for four days, he came back to life! Imagine that! We know Jesus is God because He can defeat even death!

So, here's the best part: Jesus is still here for us today. Even if we feel sad or this Christmas feels terrible, Jesus promises us life forever if we believe in Him. Even on bad days, Jesus is the one who brings joy and promises us joy and life forever if we believe in Him!

Do you believe in the amazing Savior who brings life back and makes everything good again? If so, maybe you could help someone in need. Do you know any friends who are left out on the playground? Show them the love of Jesus by playing with them and telling them why you celebrate Christmas. Do you have a friend or family member who is sad about Christmas? Write them a Christmas card and write about the gospel in it. Show them that Jesus can give them eternal life, even if life seems joyless and sad today.



# [ 5 ] I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

## Daily Readings

### Day 1: Read John 11:1-44

- What is the emotion of this scene? How did Jesus enter the scene?
- How did Jesus display His divine power in raising Lazarus from the dead? How does that resurrection power give us hope today?

### Day 2: Read Psalm 30

- How does David describe the weight of sin and death in this Psalm?
- How does his language point to the life-giving, resurrecting power of God (v. 3, 8-10)? How does this Psalm teach us to rejoice in God's saving and rescuing work?

### Day 3: Read 1 Peter 1:13-25

- How does Peter use the gospel as the reason for our obedience to the commands of God?
- Look at v.20-21. How does Jesus's life—before and after His first coming—affect our lives both present and future?

### Song (scan the QR code to listen):

"He Has Risen" - Sovereign Grace

[He Has Risen \[Official Lyric Video\] - YouTube](#)



## [ 6 ] I AM THE WAY, TRUTH, AND LIFE

## John 14:1-6

The Christmas season brings people together from all walks of life. One of my favorite popular Christmas songs is "Give Love on Christmas Day." It was originally a Jackson 5 tune, but hearing the Temptations croon the chorus of that song takes me back to Nanny's house as the vinyl crackled in the background and we opened gifts together with all of my cousins. There's a powerful line near the end of the song that says:

"Give love on Christmas day...Tom, Dick, and Harry, and Susie too, need love every day as much as you... no greater gift is there than love."

The line beckons my attention every time because there's so much truth packed into those words, especially in the times in which we live. The desire for all people to love one another is a common grace reflection of Jesus's teaching on the second greatest commandment (Mark 12:30-31). It's also His "new" commandment for His disciples, and it sets His people apart from the world around them (John 13:34-35). There's something powerful about the love of Christ and the love His people have for one another.

In a world of inclusivity, Jesus's love is countercultural because it is an *exclusive* love. That single word, exclusive, grates against our political correctness and postmodern sensibilities. Yet, it is Christ Himself who reminds us that true love for our neighbor requires us to proclaim such an exclusive truth. When Thomas asked about Christ's departure and where He was going, Thomas said:

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him" (John 14:6-7).

In other words, Jesus was saying, "If you want to know God the Father, you must know Me. If you know Me, then you know Him and you have seen Him." Jesus can utter these words because He is the Author of truth and the instrument through whom God spoke in these last days (Heb. 1:1).

Advent is a season of joy, unity, and celebration, so why would we dampen the mood with this exclusivity stuff? Wouldn't it be better to celebrate Jesus as just one way to God? Certainly not! If Jesus were merely *a* way, then He'd be no way at all.

**Jesus is the Way.** Without Christ, our GPS always tells us to turn left and drive straight into a pond, despite the warnings of well-meaning people around us. Without Jesus, we think we can get to God by being generally good, philanthropic people who coach youth sports or donate to the local PTO. Without Jesus, we are wandering without a compass or a map - completely and utterly lost.

**Jesus is the Truth.** We don't know the truth apart from Jesus. At all. Ever. When Pilate mockingly asked Jesus if He was king, Jesus retorted: "For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice"

# I AM CHRISTMAS

(John 18:37). You may wonder, “What about all the people before Jesus?” We see glimpses of Jesus as the truth in Genesis 1 as the all-wise God says, “Let us make man in our image” (Gen. 1:26, John 1:3). Jesus was right there.

**Jesus is the Life.** Jesus is the Author of Life (Acts 3:15). With His Father and the Holy Spirit, Jesus authored all of life and breathed life into Adam’s nostrils to make the first man a living and breathing image-bearer. In an even more profound and gracious way, Jesus came into this world with a human body to bring eternal life to those who would trust in Him. Whether it’s Muhammad, Buddha, Mindfulness, Spirituality, or productivity, the promise of life can only be kept and fulfilled in Christ.

This Christmas, don’t hesitate to preach the exclusive truth of Christ. God took on flesh and became a man so the world could know the Father through Him. Be as willing to *show* the love of Christ, too! Everyone you encounter needs Christ’s love just as much as you do.

# [ 6 ] I AM THE WAY, TRUTH, AND LIFE

## Kids' Version

The Christmas season is a time when people come together from all walks of life. One of my favorite Christmas songs is "Give Love on Christmas Day." It was originally sung by the Jackson 5, but when I hear the Temptations sing it, it takes me back to Nanny's house as we opened gifts with my cousins.

There's a special part in the song that says:

"Give love on Christmas day, Tom, Dick, and Harry, and Susie too, need love every day as much as you... no greater gift is there than love."

This part catches my attention because it holds a lot of truth. It's like what Jesus teaches us about loving others (Mark 12:30-31). He gave His followers a new rule to love one another, and it makes them different from the world around them (John 13:34-35). The love of Christ and the love His followers have for each other are powerful things.

In a world where everyone wants to say that anything is truth, Jesus's love is special because it's only through him. This might sound like a big word, but it means Jesus's love is different from what the world thinks is right. Jesus says something very important about Himself. When someone asked Him where He was going, He said:

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him" (John 14:6-7).

It's like Jesus is saying, "If you want to know God the Father, you must know Me. If you know Me, then you know Him and you have seen Him."

Advent is a joyful time for celebrating, so why doesn't God just let other religions get to Him in their own ways? Wouldn't it be better to say Jesus is just *one* way to God? No way! If Jesus were just *a* way, then He wouldn't be able to fit with other gods because He says, "I am the only way you can get to God". That would make Him a liar, and Jesus can't lie!

**Jesus is the Way.** Without Him, it's like you're riding your bike and your parents gave you directions but you went your own and got lost. Without Jesus, we might think we can get to God by being good or doing nice things, but that's like being lost without a map on a dark road in the middle of nowhere!

**Jesus is the Truth.** We don't know what's true without Jesus. When someone asked Jesus if He was a king, He said: "For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice" (John 18:37). Even before Jesus came as human, we can see Him as the truth in Genesis 1 when God said, "Let us make man in our image" (Gen. 1:26, John 1:3). Jesus was right there.

# I AM CHRISTMAS

**Jesus is the Life.** Jesus is the one who made life (Acts 3:15). He, along with His Father and the Holy Spirit, made everything alive. In an even more special way, Jesus came into this world to give eternal life to those who trust in Him. No matter what other people say about life, only Jesus can truly keep that promise.

Have you believed in Jesus? Do you tell your friends and family about Him? Christmas is the perfect time to tell them the truth about Jesus. He is the only way, the only truth, and the only life. Without Him, you can try as hard as you want, but you won't find eternal life.

## [ 6 ] I AM THE WAY, TRUTH, AND LIFE

### Daily Readings

#### Day 1: Read John 14:1-14

- What did Thomas and Philip fail to realize about Jesus as he spent time with Him? Why do you think people often fail to see that the Father and Son are one?
- Why is the unity of Christ and His Father so important? How does unity with God set Jesus apart from other prophets before and after He came to the earth?

#### Day 2: Read Psalm 86:8-13

- How does truthfulness set God apart from other gods? How do you see this in the world today?
- How does truth impact our lives? Who is the source and teacher of the truth?

#### Day 3: Read James 5:19-20

- What is the consequence of wandering away from the truth? How does this line up with Jesus's teaching in John 14:6?
- Who does God use to bring people back to the truth? Who are there people in your life who need to be brought back to the truth? How can you use Advent to start some conversations with them?

#### Song(s) (scan the QR code to listen):

"I Am The Way" - Jasper Williams

[JASPER WILLIAMS JR - "I AM THE WAY" - YouTube](#)



## [ 7 ] I AM THE TRUE VINE

## John 15:1-17

There are few people worse than imposters. Impersonators are cool; imposters fall short. It's an art form to master another person's or character's vocal inflections and mannerisms. It's annoying when imposters pretend to be something they're not or fail to be what people expect them to be.

We live in a culture of spiritual imposters—people who claim to be experts on a host of spiritual matters but lack the authority and absolute truths that lead to true spiritual flourishing. From the modern stoics and mindfulness gurus to the shamans and prosperity preachers, we see imposters promising us tranquility and peace despite having no grasp of the truths of God and the gospel.

Advent is the great spectacle that puts all spiritual imposters to shame, whether past, present, or future. A street magician's optical illusions and sleight of hand are unveiled when the camera angle changes. So it is when Jesus reveals every facet and angle of false religious leaders and systems. At Advent, He proves He's the real deal and gives us the full 360° image of the glory of God (John 14:7). We see Jesus, "the true vine" (John 15:1).

Jesus came as God in the flesh to be everything Israel, with their laws and sacrifices, couldn't be (Isa. 5:2; Jer. 2:21, Heb. 10:11-18). In Jesus's day, the Pharisees, scribes, chief priests, and rulers of Israel promised life in the knowledge of and obedience to the Scriptures, but they had missed the True Vine, too. We also miss the True Vine if we settle for a "try harder, let your good deeds outweigh the bad" pseudo-Christianity. Advent refocuses our attention on the true vine because we need Him.

Grapevines are planted for the fruit they bear, and if the branches aren't attached to the vine, they are useless. Though vitally important, biblical salvation is not solely focused on a salvation moment, especially if that moment doesn't impact the way we live: "Every branch that does not bear fruit [the Father] takes away" (John 15: 2). An equally important reality is that apart from abiding in Jesus we can't bear spiritual fruit. To put it plainly, Jesus said, "apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). How much of your life is spent doing nothing because what you do is in your own strength? I'm guilty as charged.

Advent is a reminder to abide. No, really. Abide. Slow down. The holidays have a way of driving us from place to place in an anxious, hurried pace that steals our communion with God and our joy. Abiding has transformative power if we will do it. We will bear spiritual fruit (Gal. 5:22-23). Our prayer lives will grow, and we will see our prayers answered. We will glorify God and find assurance for our faith. The world will see genuine faith and know what Christ's disciples truly look like. The love of God will burn like a fire in our hearts and spill over into our relationships with everyone we encounter. We will obey God and long to continue in obedience—especially in love for one another.

There's at least one more thing Jesus promises those who abide. We will have His joy in us, and our joy will be full! I suspect that few of us can say our joy is full to the brim. We may have full bank accounts or full bellies. We may have full schedules or full homes. But do we have the fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore (Psa. 16:11)? There's no greater gift we could receive this Advent season than the full joy that comes from Christ. Abide in the true vine.

## [ 7 ] I AM THE TRUE VINE

### Kids' Version

There are some people who are fake—they pretend to be someone they're not. It's like when someone learns how to talk and act like a cartoon character or person from a movie, and that can be fun. But others pretend to be someone they're not, and that's not cool. We also have some adults and kids who act like they know a lot about spiritual things, but they don't really understand what they're talking about. They might say things to make us feel calm and peaceful, but they do not know the real truths about Jesus and the good news.

During Advent, we celebrate the arrival of Jesus, and His whole life proves who the real God is. It's like when a magician does tricks, and we find out how they did it when we see things from a different angle. In Advent, Jesus shows us every side of what's true and good about God—His glory (John 14:7). He says, "I am the true vine" (John 15:1). He's not like the fakes. He's the real deal.

Jesus came to Earth as God in a human body to be everything that the people of Israel, with their rules and sacrifices, couldn't be (Isa. 5:2; Jer. 2:21, Heb. 10:11-18). In Jesus's time, some leaders promised to show the way to a good life by following the Scriptures in their own strength, which they couldn't do! They missed the True Vine. We also miss the True Vine if we just try to be good on our own without really following Jesus. Advent helps us focus on the True Vine because we need Him.

Think of grapevines - they're planted to grow grapes and give us grape juice. But if the branches aren't connected to the vine, they can't grow grapes. Like a branch on the grapevine, it's important to believe in Jesus and stay attached to Him. It's not just about saying we believe. We need to live like we believe in Him: "Every branch that does not bear fruit [the Father] takes away" (John 15:2). Jesus also said, "...apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). We can't do anything truly good without Jesus. I sometimes forget that. I bet you do, too.

Advent reminds us to abide in Jesus. Abide means to stick close to Him in your thoughts and actions. Think about Jesus and His words. Even when the holidays make us rush around and your parents forget to lead family worship, ask them to read, pray, and sing with you. Abiding in Jesus can change your heart. It can change your whole family. We'll bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Our prayers will get stronger, and we will see God answer them. We'll glorify God and feel sure about our faith. Our friends will see that we really believe in Jesus. God's love will grow in our hearts and spread to everyone we meet. We'll obey God, our parents, and those in authority.

There's one more thing Jesus promises if we stick close to Him. We'll have His joy in us, and our joy will be full! Not many of us can say we have joy all the time, right? Your parents might have a lot of money or you may have lots of toys, but that doesn't give you true joy. Your schedules might be full, and you may have the best grades. But do you have the true joy that lasts forever (Psa. 16:11)? There's no better gift for Christmas than the full joy that comes from Jesus.

Abide in Him forever.



## [ 7 ] I AM THE TRUE VINE

### Daily Readings

#### Day 1: Read John 15:1-17

- What is the evidence that you are abiding in Christ? How have you seen this evidence in your life?
- What are some practical ways to abide in Christ more this Advent season? How can you bring friends and family into it with you?

#### Day 2: Read Psalm 16

- How does this Psalm paint a tangible picture of abiding in Christ? What choices does David say he made to abide in the Lord?
- What is the result of abiding in Christ? How is this Psalm similar to John 15:1-17?

#### Day 3: Read 1 John 3:16-18

- What is the evidence that Jesus has abiding love for those who believe in Him? How does that encourage you today?
- What is the evidence that God's love abides in us (v. 17)? What does this teach us about the nature of genuine, abiding love?

#### Song(s) (scan the QR code to listen):

"The Answer" (Interlude) - Chrys Jones

[The Answer \(Interlude\) - YouTube](#)

