

I AM HE

JOHN 18:1-11

1. When you introduce yourself to someone how do you help them identify who you are? (It generally depends on the setting. For instance, I am Gene, Paul's neighbor. Or I am Gene, Bill's SS teacher. Etc.)
2. What would you say is your primary identity? (Linda's husband. Retired FBC Minister of Education. Etc.)

In our Scripture text today, Jesus is identified as Jesus of Nazareth. We could say that Jesus made an eighth "I Am" statement in John's gospel when He responded to the authorities who came to arrest Him. Jesus, by identifying Himself as "I Am," was saying to them He was God, and that is where the rub was with the Jewish authorities.

3. Have you ever mistaken someone for another person? How did you react once you realized your mistake?

In the encounter in the Garden of Gethsemane, there was no way to mistake Jesus for someone else. Not only did Judas identify Him with a kiss, but Jesus also boldly stated, "I am He." He was not afraid of Judas or the mob. His hour had come, and He was ready.

Up to this point Jesus had completed all He came to do. He had taught the disciples and prepared for what lay ahead during the next 12 hours or so. He was in complete control.

4. Where do you go when you need to prepare yourself for a stressful time?

There is evidence that Jesus went with His disciples to the place known as Gethsemane on several occasions. Although John doesn't record Jesus' time in prayer here, we know from the other gospels that Jesus prayed for approximately two hours before His arrest. Now His time had come!

SHOW OF FORCE! Read John 18:1-3

The size of this company of soldiers may have been as many as 200.

1. What would the number of soldiers indicate? (They expected trouble.)
2. What motivated Judas to betray Jesus? (Most likely it was the money. He is identified as a thief, even though he was the designated treasurer for this band of disciples. The lure of 30 pieces of silver was too much to turn down. Some scholars believe Judas was trying to force Jesus' hand into taking control and setting up His earthly kingdom. But the truth is Satan had entered him to destroy Jesus and gain control himself.)

It was one thing to find Jesus. It was another thing to take Him into custody. While Jesus would never oppose the Father's will, His enemies would come to experience His power and authority before all was said and done. There had been other times when they tried to take Him but He simply walked away and they couldn't find Him.

POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION! Read John 18:4-9

1. How do you picture Jesus as He confronts the mob? (He stepped out in front of the disciples, knowing what was about to happen and boldly confronted this mob.)

Read Exodus 3:14. I Am is revealed here as the personal name of God for His people. Not "I Was," not "I will be," but "I Am!"

2. After Jesus identified Himself, what happened to the crowd? (The collapse of the soldiers came in reaction to a small taste of the divine power of Jesus! But Jesus withheld this power and thereby demonstrated that He was going to the cross willingly.)
3. What command did Jesus give them in verse 8 and what did it indicate? (Let the disciples go and Jesus was in complete control!)

Jesus put Himself between His followers and the enemy. This display of physical protection is a snapshot of the spiritual and eternal security that only Jesus gives those who follow Him.

REBELLION SNUFFED! Read John 18:10-11

1. When have you done something, you later regretted?
2. How did you respond to the regret?
3. How would you describe Peter's reaction here? (Rash. Impulsive! What was he thinking? If we're going to die, I'm going down fighting!)

Caught up in the moment, Peter cut off the right ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest. Peter likely was aiming for the man's head. Jesus rebuked Peter and healed Malchus's ear.

This highlights two truths. **First**, Jesus did not need defending. He had already shown that His opponents were powerless against Him. **Second**, the disciples were still thinking of Jesus as a political leader, rather than a divine Savior.

4. We are not told here, but who can tell us the rest of the story? (Luke 22:51 tells us that Jesus told Peter to put his sword away then healed Malchus's ear.)
5. Why was it important for John to document Jesus' response to Peter? (See 1 John 5:4. It is by our faith that we conquer the world.)

There is nothing outside the realm of possibility when God's power is at work in our lives.

JUDAS! Read Matthew 27:3-5

1. Do you think Judas will be in Heaven? (In death, Judas failed to make the necessary connection between remorse and repentance, just as he had in life. Being with Jesus had taught him nothing. Charles Swindoll says: "In the end, Judas died as he had lived, entangled in a secret love affair with sin.")
2. What can we learn from the negative example of Judas's life? "Judas will forever be remembered as the most heinous traitor of all time. Four timely principles worth our consideration emerge from the tragic example of Judas.
 - First, association with godliness is no guarantee that we will become godly.
 - Second, moral corruption in secret is deadlier than visible moral corruption. There is no cancer deadlier than one that goes undetected.
 - Three, Satan and his demons are looking for any opportunity to work against the Lord.
 - Fourth, no sorrow can compare to the remorse of one who discovers too late that he's misunderstood Jesus and spurned His love. The flood of shame, humiliation, regret, self-condemnation, and hopelessness can be overwhelming.

—Charles Swindoll 2009. *Jesus: The Greatest Life of All*.

SUMMARY AND CHALLENGE!

1. What "weapons" do the enemies of the Church use to attempt to silence or destroy Jesus and His gospel in the world today? (Threats; persecution; laws to silence the truth; etc.)
2. What can we do to encourage each other and others to stand boldly for Jesus? (Stand together. We can do much more together than we can alone. Stay in the Word, attend worship and Bible study, have an active prayer life.)
3. How does knowing Jesus oversees every situation help strengthen your faith and confidence?
4. What opportunity can you take this week to tell a friend or family member about the Lord demonstrating His control in your life?

Think about difficult situations in your life. Ask God for guidance and strength to remain faithful. Ask the Father to remind each of us that He is in control.