



The  
Claims of  
Jesus  
Christ

Lionel Hawker

# **The Claims of Jesus Christ**

**by**

**Lionel Hawker**

Talks given on  
“Discovery”

A programme of GBS Radio

(The Gospel Broadcasting System Ltd.)

# Contents

No. 01 "The Living Water"	4
No. 02 "The Bread of Life"	8
No. 03 "The Light of the World"	11
No. 04 "The Light and The Door"	14
No. 05 "The Door"	17
No. 06 "The Life"	21
No. 07 "The Resurrection"	24
No. 08 "The Good Shepherd"	28
No. 09 "The Way"	31
No. 10 "The Truth and The Vine"	35

Published by  
The Gospel Broadcasting System Ltd ©  
2015

Scripture quotations from the HOLY BIBLE  
NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION  
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society  
Used by permission  
and  
The Authorised Version of the Bible

## Claim 01 “The Living Water”

So who exactly was Jesus? What do Christians believe about Him? What does the Bible say concerning Him? We need to be clear that Jesus made some very great claims for Himself. There are some people who say that He was not God, but only a man whom God especially anointed and used. His claims, though, go far beyond mere manhood. He claimed that He and God, his Father, were one (John 10:30). Again, in John 8:58, He says, *“Before Abraham was, I am.”*

To his listeners at that time this could mean nothing other than that He existed before time began. It was because the Jewish religious leaders understood His claims in this way and realised that He was making Himself equal to God, that they were so angry and opposed Him so fiercely. It was unthinkable that someone in human flesh should claim to be God. But if He did not really mean what he said, then He was not even honest. As someone has said, *“If He was not God, He was either mad or bad.”* In other words, He was either deranged or a deceiver. But the whole pattern of his life and teaching is against that. He must therefore be God in human flesh. This is how Christians think of Him and worship Him, and it is with this in mind that we are going to think of some of His claims over the next several studies. Most of them are found in John’s Gospel.

The first incident we are going to look at is in chapter four of John’s Gospel. It is a claim that Jesus made to give a special gift to a very needy woman. We are told that Jesus was making His way through Samaria and came to a well to drink water. A Samaritan woman also came to the well to draw. Jesus started a conversation by asking her to give Him some water to quench His thirst. This was a strange thing for Him to do because normally a good Jew did not speak to women outside of their own household. Besides this, Jews and Samaritans had no dealings with each other - they despised each other. So she was very surprised at Jesus’ request and asked Him why He, a Jew, was asking her, a Samaritan, for a drink. To her surprise, Jesus turned the whole conversation round to speak of something quite different from the natural water found in the well.

He began to speak about something He called *“living water”*. He said, had she asked He would have given her this *“living water”*. *“If you had this*

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

*water*”, He said, *“you would never thirst again.”* She probably didn’t really understand what Jesus was getting at, but she was interested and puzzled and so she asked for the water of which He had spoken.

Jesus, who knew her real need, went further and began to probe more deeply into her life. He asked her to fetch her husband. At that point she became defensive and tried to avoid further questioning by saying, “I don’t have one”. But Jesus knew the truth and spoke straight to her. He said, *“You have had five husbands and the man your are living with now is not your real husband.”* This made the woman realise that she was dealing with no ordinary man. Jesus’ challenge brought her a deep sense of her sinfulness and all that was wrong in her life. She recognised that here was a man of God, and a prophet.

Jesus picked this up and reminded her that because God was spirit those who worshipped Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. In other words, true worship must be from the heart and sincere, and not just an outward display. The woman already knew from the Samaritan Scriptures that Messiah who was to come would be a prophet and would reveal all things. Then Jesus told her clearly that He was that promised Messiah.

The end of this story is amazing. She went back to her own city, told her fellow citizens that she had met a man who told her everything she had ever done. *“Surely this is the Messiah,”* she said. They went back with her and invited Jesus to come to their city. He went and stayed there for two days. While He was there, many of the people believed in Him.

May we, who are Christians, be as enthusiastic as this Samaritan woman was in telling others about the Saviour of the world. That is what the people of that place called Him, and that is what He is.

But now let us look back again over this story. Jesus had not offered the woman ordinary, natural water, but what He called “living” water. It was “water” that would satisfy the deep longings within her. If she had this water, her life would be made whole and she would be fully satisfied by spiritual springs of refreshment within her.

God has so made us that we cannot be truly satisfied with merely material things. We are more than just bodies, more even than bodies and minds.

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

There is a deep inner part within us, which was made for fellowship with God Himself. We can only be truly satisfied when we know God in this inner, spiritual part of us and have fellowship with Him there. It is this truth that Jesus was trying to make this woman see. He wanted her to know that He could satisfy the deepest part of her nature.

Jesus knew, though, that she could not possibly drink of this spiritual, living water unless she was honest with herself and confessed the sinfulness of her life. Sin blocked the way. It is the same with each one of us if we do not know Christ as our Saviour. We need this living water. We need to be made spiritually alive again, but if sin is there, held on to and unconfessed, we cannot experience this. You see, until sin is confessed, repented of, forgiven and cleansed away, you can never know the living water that Jesus gives, and that brings spiritual life, cleansing, refreshment and satisfaction.

You may not have sinned in the same way as this woman. That is not the point. It makes no difference what the sin is, it must be confessed and put away if you are going to receive the living water that Jesus freely gives.

The closing part of the story makes it clear that the living water not only comes from Jesus, but that He is that living water. He told the woman that He was the Messiah, the Christ, the anointed One of God who had been promised from centuries earlier by the prophets. He was a prophet, yes, but more than that. He is the Son of God who loves us and gave Himself for us on the cross of Calvary so that our sins can be forgiven. The neighbours from her city recognised that He was the Saviour of the world.

When we receive Jesus as our Saviour, we receive His Spirit, who is the living water. He is a “spring of water within us”, to satisfy and refresh us, to give us joy and peace through life. He is Christ in us giving us spiritual new life and the power to live godly lives. This is the claim that the Lord Jesus Christ made concerning Himself.

So we have seen that this was all so real to this woman that she could not help telling her neighbours and talking about it. “Surely this man is the Christ, the promised redeemer”, and they responded, “Yes, and the Saviour of the world!” Does Jesus mean all this to you? Christian believer, are you telling others about Him?

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

### For Further Study

1. What did Jesus mean when He spoke about “Living Water”?  
Read: John 7: 37-39
2. Now read the following passages and see how this “Living Water” is given to every believer in Christ:  
Ephesians 1: 13-14; Ephesians 2: 22; 1 Corinthians 3: 16.
3. How does this “Living Water” work in our lives?  
Look up: Acts 1: 8; Luke 12: 11-12; Romans 8: 5-11; Galatians 5: 16-26

## Claim 2. The Bread of Life

At the beginning of John chapter 6 we read the story of how Jesus miraculously fed more than five thousand people. Andrew, one of Jesus' disciples, found a boy with five loaves and two fishes, but he didn't think these would be much use for such a great crowd. They were though, as he and the others were soon to find out! Jesus made the people sit, and then in a miraculous way made that boy's small lunch enough to feed them all. And not only that, there were twelve baskets full of pieces left over as well.

It was all so wonderful that the people recognised that here was someone who was more than a mere man. Was He the Messiah - the promised redeemer? Jesus realised that they were going to try to make Him a king to deliver their nation from the Romans. That was not His plan, though. He had not become man for that. So He slipped away into the hills to pray to his heavenly Father. When He had gone and didn't seem to be coming back, the disciples got into their boat and started for the other side, but there was a terrible storm. Sudden storms often blew up on the Sea of Galilee and things looked bad for them. Then, amazingly, Jesus appeared walking on the water and saying to them, *"It is I, do not be afraid"* (v. 20). John then records, *"Then they were willing to take Him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading"* (v. 21).

John's account continues: *"The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realised that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. Once the crowd realised that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus. When they found Him on the other side of the lake they asked Him, 'Rabbi, when did you get here?'"*

Now notice what happened. Jesus did what He nearly always did. He went straight to the point. He didn't answer their question, which was merely an inquisitive one, but He went to the heart of their thinking. He told them they were only looking for Him because He had miraculously given them something to eat. They were looking for material things, material gain and satisfaction. He told them that it was not the food that perishes they should

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

work for, but the food that endures to eternal life which the Son of Man would give them. The *"Son of Man"* was Jesus Himself.

"But what should we do to do the work that God requires?", they asked. Jesus said they must believe in Him whom God had sent, and that was, of course, Jesus Himself. Then they started arguing again. *"What miraculous sign will you give that we may see it and believe you? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness. As it is written (in the Old Testament Scriptures) 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat'."* The swift reply of Jesus was that that manna perished. It was not the true, living bread. He was the true bread from heaven.

Then Jesus went on to explain more fully that He was the Bread of Life. If they were not to be hungry and thirsty spiritually, they must believe in Him. Later he was even more pointed. He said that they must "eat His flesh and drink His blood." You may well think, "What strange, almost revolting language to use." Jesus knew it was, and He did it deliberately, speaking as He often did of spiritual things in a way that made people take notice. Now Jesus obviously did not mean His words to be taken literally. He was standing there before them and such an interpretation was impossible.

So what was He saying and what is He saying to us today? First, Jesus was saying that there was something more important than physical food or even earthly life. In many countries bread is the basic food. If it is not actually bread, it is something like it made from wheat or some other cereal. In some countries rice is the basic food. This doesn't really matter as far as what Jesus was saying is concerned. The word used for "bread" was commonly used to mean food generally. Jesus was saying that the life men really need is eternal life, the life of God: to be partakers of God's nature. The food that feeds that kind of life is Jesus Himself. Believing in Him is the only way to receive this life. Jesus was saying that He alone is the way to God. If we do not believe in Him and take Him into our lives, we shall never know what it means to have eternal life and we shall finally perish. We are hopelessly lost without Him.

What does it mean, though, when Jesus said that they were to "eat of His flesh and drink of His blood?" (V. 54). As we said just now, it was obviously not meant literally. It is not just a question of believing with your mind. Jesus

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

has to be received right into your life. He becomes your *“Bread of Life.”* It is believing with all your heart that the body of the Lord Jesus (his flesh) was given for you on the cross, and that his blood was shed there to redeem you from your sin. Then, this new, spiritual life that is given when you accept Christ as your Saviour needs feeding. Think of it like this: when you eat food it has to be chewed, digested and turned into the various types of nourishment that give strength and activity to your body. It is just the same when you believe in the Lord Jesus and take Him into your life. He becomes your continuing *“Bread of Life”* who through the Scriptures and by his indwelling Spirit sustains you and helps you to grow as a Christian.

When you read the Bible, you have to act on what it says. That is as good as saying you have to digest and obey the commands, which the Bible gives. It means, too, believing his promises, making them your own and living by them. Likewise you must deliberately and willingly love Jesus, trust in Him, rejoice in Him and always obey the inner voice of his Spirit in you. So this is what it means to *“eat His flesh and drink His blood”*; it is continually trusting in the power of the death He died for you and the blood He shed for you.

I do pray that, if you have not already done so, you will really take Jesus into your own life, truly believe in Him, and then love, trust and obey Him day by day.

## For Further Study

Read: John 6: 16-51

1. What can we learn from verse 21 concerning our relationship with Jesus?
2. What did Jesus say should be the priority of the people? (v. 27)
3. In whom did Jesus say they should believe and why is this important? (v.29)
4. What do these verses teach us about who Jesus is and where He came from?
5. In what ways have you experienced Jesus as your *“Bread of Life”*?

### Claim 3. The Light of the World

The claim we are thinking about this time is found in John 9:5 where He says, *“While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.”* Jesus Christ, who is God Himself made known in the form of a man, is the *“Light of the World.”*

Our minds go back to the first chapter of this Gospel where John tells us that all things were made by the Word of God and that that Word is none other than Jesus. He was the creator of all things including the physical light that enables us to see and that illuminates our world. But it is not physical light that we are thinking about as we look at Jesus’ claim to be *“The Light of the World.”* We can think of light in other ways. We can think of it as the light of understanding, or the light of truth, or the light that reveals things. This is a light that dispels spiritual darkness.

Have you ever thought how dreadful it would be if there were nothing but darkness? I often think it must be very miserable to live through an Arctic winter where there is hardly any daylight for three months or more. It is still worse, though, to realise that moral, spiritual and often mental darkness envelopes humanity. There is no darkness worse than the darkness that comes from not knowing God, and the darkness of sin that blights the human race.

What, then, was the reason for Jesus making this claim about Himself that He is *“The Light of the World?”* Jesus and his disciples had come face to face with a man who had been born blind. The disciples wanted to know who was to blame for the man’s blindness. They said, *“Teacher, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”* (v. 2). Jesus’ reply must have startled them. He said, *“Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of Him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world”* (v. 3-5).

The disciples, like many in their day, assumed that circumstances like that of the blind man were due to some serious sin, that it was a sign of God’s judgement on them. In his reply Jesus rebuked that way of thinking and gave his disciples, and us, a lesson about God’s sovereignty. God had allowed this situation so that his grace and love and power could be displayed through

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

Christ for all to see. It is also a lesson about taking every opportunity to do God's work in our world, for a time is coming when this will not be possible.

Notice that Jesus said, "*We must do the work of him who sent me.*" An important part of Jesus' work while He was in the world was to be "*The Light of the World.*" And that is the duty of every Christian believer. But what does all this mean in actual fact? What does it mean to us that Jesus is "*The Light of the World*"?

The first thing about light is that it reveals. Shine a torch into a dark room and you begin to see things; let more light in and you see more. Let the sunshine in and the dust and dirt become evident. Something very similar happens when the "*Light of the world*" shines into our lives. We realise how dark we are, and how little we really understand and know about God, his character and all that He wants to do for us. It was to show us the truth concerning God that Jesus came into this world; to reveal God to us.

By nature we are spiritually in the dark; we have no real purpose in life; we don't know where we are going. But it goes further than this. When we look at the perfect life of the Lord Jesus, that light begins to show us how unclean, sinful, evil and selfish are our lives. Our desires are impure; our attitudes wrong. We can be full of hatred, bitterness, jealousy and resentment. What a contrast to his sinless, selfless life of love for all.

Do you remember what Peter said to Jesus on one occasion? "*Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord*" (Luke 5:8). We begin to feel like that when Christ's light shines on us. We realise that we are too unclean to come into the presence of God who is utterly holy. We want to hide ourselves with shame. Yes, light reveals, and when Jesus, by His spirit, begins to shine into our lives, we begin to see just how sinful and unclean we are.

John in his first letter says that, if we walk in the light as He is in the light, and we confess our sins to God, the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin. This is the glorious light of the Gospel, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners by his death on the cross of Calvary. By that death and by faith in Him we are brought into the true light of life.

Light, as well as showing where we are wrong, brings something positive. It is light that brings life and growth. Beautiful flowers, delightful fruits, leafy

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

trees and healthy human beings all need light. The life of the soul needs light too. We cannot grow in our Christian life without the light that Jesus brings. Only as we walk in the light of Jesus can we be kept clean in this sinful world. There are many diseases that attack flowers, plants, animals and men. In the same way there are things that attack our spiritual life, and we can only keep clean and healthy by walking in the light of Jesus. Light also brings warmth and cheer, and as we walk in the light of Christ the love of God is poured into our lives.

We see and feel the warmth of God's love as we read his promises in the Bible. Think of this one from Jeremiah 31:3, *"I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you."* Or again, the words of Jesus in John 14:16, *"I will pray the Father and He will give you another comforter to be with you for ever."* And this one from Hebrews 13:5, *"I will never fail you, nor forsake you."* Promises like these, and there are many of them, bring warmth and comfort to us.

## For Further Study

Read: John 8: 12-20

1. What promise did Jesus give to those who follow Him?
2. What does it mean to "walk in the light"? (See 1 John 1: 5-7)
3. How can Christians be "the light of the world"? (Matthew 5: 14-16)

## Claim 4. The Light and the Door

We are thinking of Jesus' claim to be the "*Light of the World.*" Light is needed for guidance, to find the way. In the dark we get lost; we cannot find the way or even know which way to go. We need the Light of the World to show us the way to heaven, the way to God. We so often need to know what is right and what is wrong. We need this light to show us the kind of life we ought to live, and the kind of friends we ought to have. How can we know all this? Jesus said, "*I am the Light of the World*" (John 8:12), and later on said, "*Walk in the Light while you have it*" (John 12:35).

God has given us His word, the Bible, and if we read and study it regularly, we will find in it all we need to know: the right way to go and the right thing to do. God will let His light shine upon the words of the Bible so that we can understand it.

There is another important point, though. Jesus also said that we, his followers who believe in Him and love Him, are also to be the Light of the World (Matthew 5:14). The verse reads like this, "*You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.*" You see, if His light has shone on us, revealing our uncleanness and bringing life, cleansing, warmth and comfort, then that light must shine through us to others. We are to be lights in the world as well. In Matthew 5:16 Jesus continued, "*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*" The light that has shined into us must shine out again. We have to let others see how much they need the light and that Jesus is ready to give it to them. We have a responsibility to others. I wonder whether the light is shining through you. Do the people with whom you live and work know you that belong to Jesus and do they know about His love in dying for them?

How can you do this and be light in this way? You can do it in two ways. First, by talking to others about Jesus and his dying for them whenever you have a chance to do so. You can tell what He has done for you in forgiving your sins and changing your life. Tell how He has saved you from the sins that once held you captive you and gave you eternal life. But there is something else. It is no use just talking about Jesus unless you live like Jesus. If the Light of the World is to shine through you, the love of Jesus must be

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

seen in you, and His joy and peace too. Jesus must be so real in your life that others will want to know Him and have Him in their lives too.

Now let us move on to the next claim that Jesus made about Himself. You will find it John's Gospel chapter 10. If you can, read this chapter through for yourself, up to verse 30. He says, *"I am the door of the sheep"* (v. 7). He goes on to say in verse 9, *"I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and go in and out and find pasture."*

Doors are useful things, though sometimes they can be a nuisance. I don't know what doors are like where you are. In the towns and cities they are probably much the same everywhere. In villages they may be different in different parts of the world. Even so they are just as necessary and useful. Jesus is talking in these verses in John 10 of a shepherd and his sheep. Often in Israel the shepherds would use themselves as doors by lying across the opening of the sheepfold at night. They would guard the sheep themselves; their own bodies would be the protection. Jesus is just like that. He himself is our protection.

He says something more here. He says that the sheep go in and out to find pasture and that reminds us what a door is for. It is the way out and the way in. We can think of a door as a way of escape and a way of entry. We shall think this time of the door as a way of escape. How glad we would be if we were in real danger, say in a fire, to find a way of escape through a door.

The Bible shows us that we are in real danger if we do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour. Apart from Him, we all stand condemned before God as guilty sinners. We are under the judgement of God and are on the way to a lost eternity, which means to be cut off from God in the awfulness of hell for ever. But Jesus is our door of escape because He bore our sins in His own body on the cross. He died the perfect one for we who are so imperfect; the just one for we who are unjust. Because of his great love for us God in Christ took our punishment for us. Because Jesus died and carried our sin, we can be acquitted and counted as if we had not sinned. In other words we are justified in the sight of God who is utterly holy.

So there is a way of escape from God's righteous judgement for our sins. Jesus is that doorway of escape. To escape from a danger we have to take the way of escape. There may be a door to safety, but if we do not go through

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

it we will be lost. To know about an escape route and not to take it is the height of folly, for such knowledge without action is useless. I am sure you will see that is true. Have you seen the danger you are in if you have not acknowledged your sin to God and accepted his Son as your Saviour? Christ is the door by whom we can enter in to forgiveness and eternal life. *"I am the door,"* Jesus said, *"If any man enters in he shall be saved."* He is the only way into the blessings that God has for all who will believe.

The doors into some houses are plain and simple; others are ornate and grand. As the door into God's kingdom the Lord Jesus Christ is unique. In Acts 4:12 we read these words; *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."* So we have discovered that as the Light of the World the Lord Jesus is the only one who can show us the way to heaven, and as the *"Door"* he is the only way back into fellowship with God. We will continue to think about Jesus as the *"Door"* in the next study because there is much more valuable truth to be discovered in this passage in John's Gospel chapter 10.

## Claim 5. The Door

We have been thinking of the words of Jesus in John's Gospel chapter 10 where He says *"I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved and go in and out and find pasture."* We were thinking of the "being saved" last time and how wonderful it was to have a way of escape from the condemnation and guilt of our sin. But it is also true that humanity is held captive by sin. People are slaves to sin and need a way of escape here as well. What do I mean by this? Let me explain.

We are not really free men and women. We are enslaved by our passions and our sinful habits. We so often wish we were different, don't we? If only we didn't fly into violent tempers; if only we didn't steal and lie and cheat. If only we were not unclean in our thoughts and often in our actions too, but we are. These things are true and much more also. As Paul says, *"When I would do good, evil is present with me"* (Romans 7:21). We so often do not seem able to do the things we ought to do, and don't seem to be able to stop doing the things we ought not to do.

This is exactly what Paul says in the passage from which we quoted just now. He found a way of escape, though, from the impossible situation in which he was caught. The Lord Jesus was the door of escape. He says at the end of the passage: *"Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God - through Jesus Christ our Lord!"* (Romans 7:24-25). So you see, Jesus died, not only to free us from condemnation, but also to make us free from our sinful habits and attitudes. Jesus said, in John 8:36, *"If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."* He is the door of escape. He is the way into freedom.

But remember, the words of Jesus in John chapter 10 were not only that we should be saved, but also that the one who enters will go in and out and find pasture. Here is the picture of sheep being fed and cared for. Christ is not only a way of escape, but also the door into fields of spiritual riches that will make life whole and satisfying. Jesus is the door that opens up something wonderful to us. Now there are some doors we do not particularly want to go through. We may imagine that we don't really like what is on the other side. That is so true, isn't it? But it is not true with this door.

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

What does Jesus mean by *"finding pasture"*? This very same chapter in John's Gospel tells us what it is that Jesus is offering. He goes on to say, *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I am come that they might have life and have it to the full."* This life Jesus is talking about is eternal life, the very life of God himself. If we have this, it makes all the difference to ordinary natural life. It means that we can enjoy living because we have that extra, spiritual dimension that comes with the life of God. The strange thing is that true enjoyment of life does not in the end depend on the possessions we have, or the amount of money, learning or education we have; it does not even depend on being healthy. With all these natural, material things many people are thoroughly miserable. On the other hand, without very much of them, many people are truly enjoying life because they have the Lord Jesus and His life within. He brings with Him a sense that all is well, because He has reconciled us to God and has us in His care. Life is full of challenge and interest because all that we do is done for Him.

There is something else beyond this door, and that is peace, the peace that Jesus gives. In John 14:27, Jesus says, *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you."* And in Matthew 11:28, He says, *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."* Peace does not mean we have no troubles and that there are never any storms. It means Jesus is with us in the midst of them and assuring us that all is well. It means that He is in control and will not fail us.

Once there were two pictures painted both entitled *"peace"*, but they were so different from each other. Both were of lakes surrounded by mountains. But in one there was what we would normally call a peaceful scene - no clouds in the sky, calm waters on the lake, not a breath of air, all so still and peaceful. But the other was of a storm tossed lake; bleak thunder clouds in the sky and the trees swaying in the wind. Out on the branch of one of the trees, tossed by the wind, was a bird, singing, happy and carefree. That bird was at peace. He knew all was well; whatever happened, he could fly away. That is the kind of peace Jesus gives. It is calm in the times of storm. We belong to Him and are in His hands. This is one of the treasures we may have if we go through the door - Peace with God and God's peace within.

There is joy, too, on the other side of this door. Joy is different from happiness. Happiness is when everything is going right, when everything is

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

pleasing us. You do not need me to tell you that this can easily be upset. Everything does not usually go just as we want it for very long. Illness, accidents, bereavement, natural disasters, loss of money, failure to do something we had always wanted to do, all sorts of things spoil our natural happiness. But joy is different. It is that deep sense of satisfaction and pleasure in the presence of someone, or sometimes something, you love or are fond of. The joy that Jesus gives comes through the love of God in our hearts and through the realisation of all that Jesus has done for us. It is the fruit of the Spirit; it is that inward satisfaction in Jesus. It is in adoring Him and delighting in Him. This is the kind of joy that is ours when we go through the door and put our trust in Jesus as our Saviour and Lord.

There is one more treasure to discover as we continue to think about the claim that Jesus made that He is the *“Door”* to eternal life and peace with God. This treasure is heaven itself. Life here on earth is not all there is. When we die it is not the end of everything. The body may decay away, but that part of us which is called the soul lives on. But it is important to know that all do not live on in the same way or in the same place. The Christian good news speaks of those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as receiving eternal life and passing from death to life. These go into the presence of God and are with Him in a state of blessing and joy. This the Bible calls heaven.

However difficult life may have been down here, however hard the battle, it is worth it all if we know we shall enter God’s presence at last. Finally we shall enjoy and be part of all the wonderful reality of the new heavens and the new earth described for us in the book of Revelation chapters 21 and 22. We shall enjoy all that will be found in the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He shall be King indeed in a world that is perfect and peaceful, where there is no death, sorrow, crying, pain, hunger or thirst. This is the certainty you can know by placing your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who is the door.

## For Further Study

Read: John 10: 1-9

1. There was only one way into the sheepfold - one door or gate. Why is this a picture that Jesus uses of Himself?
2. The shepherd would lie at the entrance at night and so be “the door” to keep out false shepherds and other dangers. What does this tell us about Jesus and the believers as his sheep?
3. Is there any other way into “God’s flock” than through the Lord Jesus? Explain your answer.

## Claim 6. The Life

Now let's discover another claim of the Lord Jesus. It is found in his words, *"I am the Life."* Jesus has hinted at this in John 10:10, where He says, speaking of those who follow Him, *"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* In John chapter 11, where we have the account of the raising of Lazarus from the dead, Jesus says to Martha, *"I am the Resurrection and the Life"* (v. 25).

We are not going to think of the events in that chapter in this study, or of Jesus' claim, *"I am the Resurrection."* This will be the theme of the next study. We are concentrating now on the claim, *"I am the life."* There is one other place in the Gospel where this claim is made. It is in John chapter 14:6, where Jesus says, *"I am the way, the truth and the life."* So you see it is an important teaching in John's Gospel that Jesus is the life. It is more obvious, too, when we think of the many times in the Gospel where Jesus says that the ones who have everlasting life are those who believe in Him, and He implies quite clearly that it is only those.

If Jesus is the life and true life only comes through Him, it is important for us to know what this means. As we have said before, the life He is speaking about is not just physical life, the kind of life that we all have. The word life is often further described by adding the word *"eternal"* or *"everlasting"* to it. This word does not merely apply to the length of life. It tells us of the kind of life it is, the quality of the life. In other words it is the life of God Himself.

The first thing that is clear is that without this life we are dead spiritually. We are not dead physically, but we are dead in our relationship with God. Because we are without his life, where God is concerned we are dead, cut off from Him because of our disobedience. This means we can never enter the place called heaven, nor shall we ever enjoy the glories of the kingdom of our Lord. This again shows us how important it is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and receive everlasting life. Without this life we cannot possibly avoid the awfulness of eternal separation from God and all that is good.

Another result of our being dead spiritually is that we can have no communion or fellowship with God. The apostle Paul, in Ephesians 2:1,

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

speaks about those without Christ as being *“dead in trespasses and sins.”* Isaiah also says in chapter 59:2, *“Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you.”* Because of this separation, God is not real to us and we cannot love Him and have fellowship with Him. He seems to be far away from us. God does at times get through to our consciences with a realisation of our sin and darkness, but this still makes Him someone to be feared rather than loved. Without this life of God that comes to us in Jesus Christ, we are dead and cannot truly love, worship and have fellowship with Him.

What does it mean to have this life? What positive reality is ours when we possess it? We must remind ourselves that if we have Jesus, we have the life of God. John says, *“He that has the Son has life”* (1 John 5:12). Now if we have Jesus and have the life of God in us, we shall start becoming like Him. Our whole attitude to life will change because we have a new kind of life. Its source is from above and from God and not from the earth. We shall start producing the fruit of the Spirit. Where there is life in a tree, there is fruit. If there is no fruit being produced, it would seem there is no life. It is the same in the life of a Christian believer.

When you can, look up the list of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which Paul gives in Galatians chapter 5. They are: love, joy and peace, long suffering, kindness and goodness, faith, or faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. What a delightful cluster of fruit! This is the sort of fruit, which starts growing in our lives, when we have the life of Jesus in us. God begins to make us patient and kindly in our dealings with others; his love within us overflows with desires to do good. We are faithful to Him, and gentle when people oppose us and persecute us. Finally we begin to learn how to control ourselves and our lives, so that all our strength can go into the right channels. Life grows and so we begin to grow in all these areas of our living.

Physical growth, though, depends largely on food and drink. If we are healthy we get hungry and thirsty and if we do not want food and drink, there is usually something wrong. It is much the same spiritually. When we have eternal life we begin to feel hunger and thirst for fellowship with the Lord and for food from his Word, the Bible. We find we want to pray and talk to the Lord. We find, too, that we want to talk to others who love the Lord and we want to worship the Lord with them.

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

As we read the Bible and have fellowship with the Lord and each other, strength comes to us and we grow in grace and in our knowledge of the Lord. We do not have an aim and purpose in life. We can say with Paul *“To me to live is Christ”* (Philippians 1:21). Life has taken on a new aspect altogether. There is a satisfaction and fulfilment because we have the life of God within us.

So, the secret of real living is to know the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and Lord. Having accepted Him we are indwelt by the very life of God - by his Holy Spirit and are enabled to live lives that are victorious over sin and are pleasing to Him.

## Claim 7. The Resurrection

Twice in John's Gospel Jesus says *"I am the life"*, and on each occasion He adds something else. In chapter 14 he adds *"the way and the truth"*. In chapter 11:25 He says, *"I am the Resurrection and the life."*

The story with which these words are connected is interesting and thrilling. Jesus had three great friends in whose home He seems often to have stayed and where He was always welcome. They were Mary, Martha and Lazarus and their home was at Bethany. One day Mary and Martha sent a message to Jesus that their brother was ill. Strangely enough He did not go immediately although He loved them greatly. There was a reason for this that we cannot go into now. Before Jesus reached Bethany, Lazarus had died. When Martha knew Jesus was near at hand, she went quickly out to meet Him. She was always the more outgoing of the two. Mary stayed in the house. Martha poured out her heart to Jesus. *"If you had been here"*, she said, *"my brother would not have died."* Jesus replied, *"Your brother is going to rise again."* *"I know he will"*, Martha responded, *"At the resurrection, at the last day."* Then comes this wonderful claim of Jesus, *"I am the resurrection and the life, he that believes in me will live, even though he dies; and he who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"* Martha cried that she did believe and went away to fetch her sister Mary. Mary came with the same heartbroken words, *"If you had been here my brother would not have died!"*

Jesus was deeply moved by their sorrow and sadness, but then He acted and something remarkable happened. He went to the tomb - a cave with a large stone in front of the opening. He told them to take the stone away. They were horrified because Lazarus had been dead for four days and the smell would be awful, but Jesus persisted. *"Did I not tell you"*, He said, *"that if you believe, you will see the glory of God"*. So they took the stone away. Then Jesus prayed to His heavenly Father and cried, *"Lazarus, come out"*, and out he came, wrapped in grave clothes, but alive and well. This was Jesus' most striking miracle of raising people from the dead.

He raised Jairus' daughter just after she had died; He raised the son of the Widow of Nain as he was going to the place of burial; but only in this instance did He raise someone from the dead who had been in the grave four days.

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

It was a clear demonstration of the truth of His words, *"I am the resurrection and the life."*

These words of the Lord Jesus, *"I am the resurrection"* add some thing to the idea of life of which we have been thinking already. They add a completion and fullness to the idea. When we believe in Him and receive Him as our Saviour, Jesus gives us eternal or everlasting life. The New Testament makes it clear that if we have this life we live on after death in the blessedness of God's presence. It also says in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 that there is going to be a resurrection of the body. All the early Christian creeds said, "I believe in the resurrection of the body". This will not happen until Jesus returns in glory to set up His kingdom. It will be at the time of the new heavens and the new earth, which we read about at the end of the book of Revelation. We do not know what our resurrection bodies will be like. Paul says they are spiritual bodies, incorruptible, bodies that will not change or die. Obviously they will be the kind of bodies that can live in the new heavens and the new earth. It does not really matter, though, what they are like. What we do know is that through Jesus Christ, we shall once again be whole persons, with a body that is glorious and just what God wants it to be.

Paul also tells us in that same chapter that, if the Lord should return while we are still alive, as He well may do, our bodies will be changed and we shall receive our resurrection bodies there and then. Jesus not only does wonderful things for us now, but He also has a triumphant future for us when we shall serve, worship and praise Him with glorified, spiritual bodies. There will be nothing to limit or hinder us.

There is another side to this resurrection life. Paul speaks of it in a spiritual way and applies it to our lives now. In Ephesians 2:6, he says that God has raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms. In the letter to the Colossians 3:1, *"Since you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God."* In both these cases Paul is obviously speaking of our relationship with God in this present life. We are to share right now in the resurrection life of Jesus. This again brings the idea of fullness in Christian living. Fullness, that is, in the life that Jesus gives us. You remember that His words in chapter 10 of John's Gospel were,

*“I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.”* That is what Paul is saying - not just life, but a full, healthy, abundant life. Paul is not speaking of physical life, but of spiritual life; this refers to our relationship with God, with each other and with our circumstances. It means living a Christian life that is robust and satisfying.

Sadly, by no means all believers live a life like this, and this wrong. God wants them to live this abundant life and has provided the grace for them to do so through Christ’s resurrection and by sending his Holy Spirit to live in them. The power of this resurrection life is the power to live like Christ. We can only glorify God and serve Him as we ought by living in this way. People all around will only see what a real Saviour Jesus is, when they see Him living in his believing people.

Of course, if we are going to share in Christ’s resurrection life, there needs to be a dying. Paul says this in Romans 6:10-11. He says that if we are to live in the likeness of Christ’s resurrection, we need to be planted in the likeness of His death. You see, the life that Jesus lived after He had risen from the dead was a very powerful one and it is that powerful risen life of his that He wants us to share and enjoy. But if we are going to do this, we must share in his death as well. In writing to the Galatians, Paul said that He had been crucified with Christ, so that it was no longer the old selfish “I” that was living, but Christ was living in Him (Galatians 2:20). It was not merely idealistic dying with Christ; something had really happened. His old sinful attitudes and outlook had been yielded up to death so that Christ might live in Paul by his Spirit in all his fullness.

When we think of it this way, the words, “I am the resurrection and the life” take on a new and wonderful meaning. We too may die to sin with Christ. Because He bore our sins on the cross, then we can begin to live for God fully and completely.

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

### For Further Study

Read: John 11: 17-45

1. Apart from physical death, in what other ways can a person be describes as “dead”? Does Jesus have authority over all kinds of death? (See Ephesians 2: 1-10)
2. In verse 25 Jesus says He is first the resurrection and then the life. Why is this order important?
3. Jesus IS resurrection and life because death could not hold Him and He gives eternal life to all who trust in Him. See John 6: 38-40
5. For more about the resurrection read 1 Corinthians 15

## Claim 8. The Good Shepherd

This time we are going back to John's Gospel chapter 10 to look at another claim that Jesus made for Himself. In this chapter He describes Himself as "*The Good Shepherd.*" It really is a wonderful description of Him, especially as the word used for "*good*" means more than generally good. It does mean that, but it means also all that is lovely and delightful. Jesus is the Good Shepherd in that way.

Then the Good Shepherd reminds us of Psalm 23. Let's remind ourselves of the words of that Psalm:

*"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."*

This Psalm is a very real description of what the shepherd does for his sheep and what the Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd, does for those who trust in Him. He cares for us. He makes us lie down in lush pastures and leads us beside still waters. He knows where the best places are for our comfort, strength and help, and He leads us to them.

Then He also provides for us, "*I shall not lack anything*", says the Psalmist. I shall not be without anything I really need. The Good Shepherd provides a table of good things for me even in the presence of my enemies, even, that is, when things are difficult and hard. Right then, when all seems most wrong, my cup runs over. He gives me the peace and comfort we have discovered already in this series of studies. When we most need it, He gives us an overflow of his blessing in our hearts. It is this overflow, which brings blessing to others.

Then He protects us as well. "*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,*" says the Psalmist. The idea is not limited to death, it can

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

also mean “the valley of deep darkness.” Remember, it is a Psalm about a shepherd. Now shepherds in Israel had to lead their sheep through many deep, dark valleys. They were far from pleasant and were often the haunts of robbers. So, you see, the Psalmist could have been thinking of the valley of death, but he could also be thinking of any of the other dark and difficult times through which we have to pass in life. Even here the Good Shepherd is with us to protect us in every dark valley, and will not leave us in the final dark valley of death. And as for the Psalmist so for us, the Good Shepherd will provide goodness and mercy all the days of our life, and when life is over He will take us to be with Himself, in his presence forever.

Then notice what else Jesus says about Himself as the Good Shepherd. In John 10:11, Jesus says that “*the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep*”; and He says it again in verse 15. This reminds us of what John the Baptist said about Jesus when he saw Him: “*Look! The Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.*” You will find this in John 1:29.

The Good Shepherd wants to care and provide for us and to protect us, but He knows there is a great barrier between us and God, which stands in the way of His being able to care for us, as He wants. This barrier is sin and unless He deals with that and takes it away, He cannot do for us all He wishes. But He was willing to lay down His life for us, to bear our sin, so that we need not bear it and so it need no longer be a barrier between us and God. It was something that Jesus did deliberately for us. His purpose in becoming a man was to die for us. He says in verse 18 that no one takes his life from Him, but that He lays it down of his own free will. He did this so that we might belong to Him as his sheep, and so that He might be our shepherd.

Just two other points to notice about the Good Shepherd and his sheep. In Biblical times the idea of shepherd meant more than care. It meant also, rule and lordship. In Old Testament times, to be the shepherd of the flock of Israel was to be their ruler. The sheep’s protection and care lay entirely in its obedience to the shepherd. Jesus is the one who cares for us and protects his own. In the Psalms the people of God are described as “*the sheep of his pasture*” (Psalm 100:3).

In verse 27 we are told that the Good Shepherd knows his sheep. He knows them individually. Like many shepherds today who can pick out individual

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

sheep from the whole flock, although to the untrained eye they all look the same, the Saviour knows his own. He knows who they are that believe on him. Christian, He knows all about you, your circumstances and needs. You are not just one sheep among thousands or millions, but you are known personally by the Good Shepherd.

This leads us to the other point. In verses 27 and 28 Jesus tells us what his sheep are like. He says they *“hear His voice and follow Him.”* The sure sign that we are his sheep is that we are following Him, listening to his voice, and doing what He says. Those who belong to Him, He will keep and they will never perish. Here is the eternal security of the believer.

Our salvation does not depend on our own efforts but solely on the death of the Lord Jesus. It is by the grace of God that we are saved, through faith. It is not by anything we can do. Our part is to keep on believing and trusting and to show this by the way we live.

I wonder whether you are among Christ’s sheep, someone who has been pardoned and received eternal life. If you are, He is your Good Shepherd and what a wonderful shepherd He is! Make sure you are one of His sheep.

## For Further Study

Read: John 10: 1-21

1. Think of some ways in which people are like sheep.  
Look up Isaiah 53
2. What does it mean “to find pasture” in verse 9 - Read Psalm 23
3. How do we hear the voice of the Good Shepherd today?
4. Verse 12 tells us that the shepherd owns his sheep. Why does Jesus own those who follow Him and what rights does that give Him over their lives

## Claim 9. The Way

In an earlier study we were thinking of Jesus Christ as *“the Life”*, and the verse in the Gospel of John where Jesus again says, *“I am the Life”*, but adds two other claims as well. You will find them in John 14:6. Here they are: *“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*

Those last words are important - *“No one comes to the Father except through me.”* The only true way to God is through Jesus. No one can find the truth except through Jesus and no one can reach the source of life except through Jesus. This verse only confirms what we said right at the beginning of these studies that the claims that Jesus made for Himself were truly remarkable. He stands out as the only Saviour and the only way to God. He is unique and there is no message like or equal to the message He proclaimed.

Now let us think first of what was happening when Jesus said these words. This fourteenth chapter was part of Jesus' last talk with his disciples in the upper room just before his crucifixion. In this chapter Jesus is preparing them for what is to come, and He begins with the words, *“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”* He had told them, and He was going to tell them again, that He was going away from them, but they were not to worry because He was going to prepare a place for them in his Father's house. After this He was going to come back again to receive them to Himself. He says that they ought to know where He is going and the way to get there. They don't understand though, and obviously do not really know what He is talking about. So Thomas says, *“Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”* Then Jesus speaks the words we are thinking about. *“I am the Way”*, He says.

The whole idea of a way is to reach the place you want to go to. That is what Jesus meant. I am the way to my Father's house. Life has a purpose; it has a goal for which you are heading. There is an end, a goal to every life. This is true even for people for whom life seems to be without purpose. Just because people have no purpose it does not mean there is no result to life. There is, although it is a tragic and sad one. It is being in hell, being lost to God forever.

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

There is another side to it as well. Though their lives are aimless and seemingly useless, it does not mean they have no influence on others. They do, and others who are influenced by them also find themselves in a lost eternity. We cannot live without influencing others; we can do them good or we can do them evil or harm. What a tragedy to do harm to others rather than good. God wants something quite different for us. He made us for Himself and wants us to live for Him now and with Him eventually in the delight of his heaven forever. That is God's purpose for us, and Jesus is the only way to our being a part of that purpose. It is only by turning away from our sin and trusting Him as our Saviour and asking Him into our lives that we can ever reach God's heaven.

But God's purpose for us is not only something in the future. He wants us to belong to Him in the present. That is why Jesus came and died that we may enjoy the life that He alone can give, the life of God Himself here and now. *"To me to live is Christ,"* says Paul. That is the only way. The only satisfying way is to know Jesus Christ and to walk with Him. That is why Jesus said in answer to Thomas' question, *"I am the way to the Father."*

But this is only the beginning. God has a purpose for the details of our lives, for every moment that we live. It is only as we know Jesus as our Saviour that we can even begin to fulfil the more detailed purpose of God for our lives. In the Philippians 3:12, 13, Paul wrote that he was pressing on to lay hold of that for which Christ had laid hold on him. Jesus Christ had saved Paul and given him eternal life so that He might carry out His plan and purpose in Paul's life.

Paul wanted the Lord Jesus to fulfil that plan, and so that was the goal he pressed towards. God has a purpose for each of our lives as much as for Paul. He has a work for us to do, a place for us to be in and people for us to reach with His message. May the one desire of our hearts be to walk in this way and fulfil the purpose that Jesus has for us.

There is also something else about a way; it is to keep going on. We do not get onto a road or path to stand still, but to keep going; we want to get somewhere. Jesus wants us to keep going on His way too. In most towns and cities there are places where vehicles are not allowed to stay - "No parking" the notice says. This is true of the Christian way. Jesus says, "No

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

parking". We must always keep moving on. God is always giving us something fresh to do, fresh challenges to face, and always we are to go on. In the same passage in Philippians Paul goes on to say: *"I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."* We are always to be pressing on along the way.

There is one other point to think about. Here it is: a way or a road keeps you going in the right direction. You know where the road is going and you know that if you keep on it you will reach the place you want to go to. However, if you get off onto some bye-way, you might get lost and end up almost anywhere.

The book "Pilgrim's Progress" by John Bunyan is a story of two people on their way from earth to heaven. It is about the people they meet and the adventures and dangers through which they pass. The main character is Pilgrim and his companion is Faithful. It is a picture story to help us to understand how we are to trust the Lord Jesus for ourselves and all the things that will happen to us on the way. At one place the two companions are led astray into bye-path meadow, away from the main road. Because of this they find themselves prisoners in Doubting Castle. This is what happens if we stray from the way of Christ. We become prisoners of all kinds of doubts and fears. But if we stay on the way, talk to Jesus and walk with Him, we shall keep going in the right direction. We shall be fulfilling Jesus' purpose for us and finally arrive at the Father's house where Jesus has prepared a place for us.

## For Further Study

Read: John 14: 1-14

1. How many ways are there to come to God? See verse 6.  
Look up Acts 4: 12
2. What did Jesus mean when He said "I am...the truth"? Is this the same as if He said "I will TELL you the truth"? What is the truth of which He speaks?
3. Think about verses 7-10. Why is it possible to know all about the life and teachings of Jesus and yet not really know Him?
5. How does the fact that Jesus is coming back influence you day by day?  
Read: 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18

## Claim 10. The Truth and the Vine

For the last study in this series we will be discovering two more claims made by Jesus in John's Gospel. The first is found in chapter 14 verse 6. Here Jesus makes a threefold claim. He says, "*I am the way, the truth and the life.*" In previous studies we have considered his claim to be "*The Way*" and we have seen that He is the only way back to a living relationship with God. We have also seen that He only is the source of spiritual life. It is only as we turn to Him for salvation from our sins that we can know what eternal life truly is. And then He claims in this verse that in Him lies all truth, and with that there is all reality and all fulfilment.

Before we go on we must pause with a warning. This does not mean that Jesus reveals to people the truth about everything that they need to know. The ordinary things of everyday life, the scientific truths, the truths about biology and astronomy He leaves men to find out for themselves through the intellectual and critical powers that He has given them. Just because we know Jesus as our Saviour and Lord it does not mean that we can through Him know every bit of truth about all that is in the world. He is the basis and fount of all knowledge, but He does not reveal it all to us. When it comes, though, to our relationship with God, that is different. He came to earth to reveal God to people, to reveal to them their sin and show the way back to God.

Let's think for a little while along these lines. "*I am the Truth,*" says Jesus. He is the one who reveals God to us, His nature and reality. A little further on in this chapter John tells us that Jesus said, "*He who has seen me, has seen the Father.*" He was the revelation of God, first of his reality, then of his nature. Jesus knew God was real. He knew his Father in a very special way and the relationship between Jesus and his Father was a real one. They could commune intimately together. This Gospel of John tells us so clearly that Jesus did his Father's will, heard His Father's voice, was sent by his Father, and was one with his Father. Jesus reveals just how utterly real God is.

Jesus also reveals the nature of God. In his life and in the attitudes He took, Jesus showed what God was like. He revealed his hatred and opposition to sin and to all hypocrisy. He was scathing in his condemnation of these things.

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

But He revealed God's love and care for those who were weak and downtrodden and for those who fought against sin and longed to be different, though without success. You can see something of this in the loving, helpful way He dealt with the woman taken in adultery, recorded at the beginning of chapter eight of John. In his miracles He showed the power of God over nature, demons, disease and death.

Yes, Jesus is the truth; He is the only one who can show us the truth about God - what He is really like. He is the truth, too, because He reveals the awfulness of sin and its final result which is eternal separation from God in the place the Bible calls hell. But we see the revelation of the awfulness of sin most on the cross where Jesus gave his life for the sin of the world. There we see it at its worst. But there, too, we see the love of God at its highest and best. Sin did its worst, but God did his finest and best.

Jesus then, is the truth concerning salvation. What a glorious word that word salvation is. It makes us think of all sorts of exciting things, such as being rescued from dangerous and difficult situations. Jesus came to tell us the truth about this wonderful salvation and as we have said, we see it all at the cross where Jesus died for us. *"He came to give His life a ransom for many"* (Matthew 20:28).

We have already seen in this Gospel that John said of Jesus, *"Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."* So Jesus came not only to reveal the truth about salvation from sin but also to make it ours through what He did on the cross. In Jesus alone can we find the truth about God, about sin and its consequences and about salvation and eternal life. God out of his love to us poor lost sinners laid our punishment on his own beloved Son. This is the truth about God that is revealed in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Have you taken hold of this truth for yourself and placed your faith in Him for your salvation?

Then Jesus is the truth in another sense also. He is the revelation of God who is utterly true and utterly trustworthy. When we hear Jesus saying, *"I am the Truth,"* we hear Him declaring, *"I am utterly trustworthy and completely able. I will always keep my word and what I promise, I will do."* How good it is to know this when we read the promises that Jesus makes in

## The Claims of Jesus Christ

the Bible. How good to know that what He says He will and He is able to do. Praise be to God for this.

We have one more claim of the Lord Jesus to discover. If we move on now to John's Gospel chapter 15 we find Jesus calling Himself "*the true vine.*" It is a very good picture of the relationship of the Christian believer with the Lord Jesus. He says that He is the vine and that believers are the branches. The relationship between the two is quite clear in a general way. The branch is altogether dependent on the vine for all its life and strength and for the fruit it bears. The life is in the vine itself and comes up from the roots. The branch can only live as it is joined to the vine and allows the life, sap and strength of the vine to flow into it. Only so can it bear fruit. In the same way the believer is dependent upon the Lord Jesus. "*Apart from Me,*" Jesus says, "*you can do nothing.*"

Jesus draws one or two lessons from this illustration. First, He speaks of branches that do not bear fruit. A branch that does not bear fruit is useless; no one wants it. He says it does not bear fruit because it is not abiding in Him, so it withers away and dies. It is then thrown away. This is a terrible picture. May the Lord keep us from being barren and useless and being cast away as a fruitless branch that the Lord cannot use.

Then He speaks about those who do bear fruit. He says first of all that he prunes or purges them. He wants each branch to be the very best possible, so He cleanses away everything about it that might hinder the growth of the fruit, and stop it being the best fruit bearer possible. The fruit mentioned here may refer to the fruit of the Spirit, which we have already mentioned in these studies. It will mean that love, joy, peace and all the other kinds of fruit spoken of will abound in the life of the believer. It could also refer to men and women won to the Lord by our witness. Jesus is almost certainly speaking of both kinds of fruit.

Through the whole illustration Jesus is saying that the only branches that are any good are those that remain firmly fixed in the vine, drawing all their strength and fruitfulness from it. When applying this to the believer He says that they abide in Him and He abides in them. What does this mean? It means first that there must be continual faith and confidence in the Lord Jesus. Just as the branch rests simply and securely in the vine, so must the

believer rest all his confidence in the Lord Jesus. He must trust Him fully in every area of his life, knowing that He always does all things well, and knowing too that all his salvation, grace and strength comes from the Lord. If we have put our trust in the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, we too are branches, united to Him and receiving all our life and strength from Him. There is another side to this, too. We must also take care that there is nothing in our lives, plans and desires or affections, which would prevent our resting with, utter faith and confidence on the Lord Jesus. There must be no unconfessed sin that would stop the life of the Lord Jesus flowing into us in full measure. Abiding in Jesus also means that in a positive way we walk in obedience to Him. Whatever He says we obey, wherever He sends we go, whatever task He asks us to take on we will do it. This will mean putting Him first in our lives in a very deliberate way.

## For Further Study

Read: John 15: 1-17

1. How do we “remain in Christ”? See verses 9-14
2. What is meant by “fruit”? See Galatians 5: 22-25
3. Why are believers expected to “bear fruit”? (See verse 16)
4. What is the condition for the Father giving what we ask in Jesus’ name?



**“Discovery” talks are also available on  
our internet web site at  
[www.gbsradio.org.uk](http://www.gbsradio.org.uk)  
and on You Tube**

**You may contact us at the address given on  
the programme or at:**

**GBS Radio,  
14 Grange Road West  
Birkenhead  
CH41 4DA  
England, UK**

**or by e-mail: [listeners@gbsradio.org.uk](mailto:listeners@gbsradio.org.uk)**

**Published by Gospel Broadcasting System Ltd.**

