

I Am: Part 2

Pastor James Bell

John 8:58 NLT

58 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I AM!"

The very name that God gave Moses to speak to the Israelites. The name that God introduced Himself to Moses as. I Am Who I Am. As we dive deeper into the meaning of His name we will find that His name is not just a name but the declaration of His characteristics, strength, authority, power, and honor. It is the defining of Holiness. The same Holiness that we have been called to operate and function in. Just as this Holiness is not a one time event for God Himself, it is not a one-time event for us. It is a lifestyle.

As we continue to bring understanding to "I Am who I Am", the Hebrew translation can also be rendered as "I Will Be What I Will Be" or "I have been and will continue to be what I need to be". We need to understand that God doesn't become whatever circumstances demand, but rather that His eternal character unfolds through covenantal faithfulness. Who God is unfolds Through revelation. The greater the revelation, the greater the knowing. Every encounter of the fear of God brings revelation of another dimension of "I Am".

This now sets the stage for us to segue into a deeper encounter of "I Am".

Philippians 4:6-7 NLT

6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. 7 Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

As many have read these verses to comfort worry, anxiety, and fear. And this is precisely the spiritual aspect that must be seen. A peace that surpasses all understanding. This understanding comes from surrender. It is trading our worry for His peace. Oftentimes peace is used in with war. Peace is the opposite of war. Peace can also be understood as the absence of conflict. Peace is not what we naturally

possess. Peace is supernatural and can only be possessed supernaturally. It is the “I Am” of peace that guards our hearts and minds as we live in Jesus. Proverbs 4:23

Proverbs 4:23 NLT

23 Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

It is the Peace of God that directs our paths. And now I understand why God directed me to introduce Him as “I Am Peace” or “The LORD is Peace” for part 2 of our “I Am” series.

Within the old testament, peace is translated as Shalom. Shalom means wholeness, health, security, well-being, and salvation. In Isaiah 26:3

Isaiah 26:3 NLT

3 You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

Perfect peace or as the Hebrews would say Shalom Shalom, is achievable by complete reliance and fixating our every thought upon His word. Perfect peace or mature peace is what every Christian must obtain to fulfill the call of God upon their life. Simply because we are divided within ourselves to walk out the commission of building God’s Kingdom. We struggle with inner insecurities because we have yet to accept the truth.

I have a sticky note that has been sitting on my computer monitor for years and I have not removed it because it is a revelation that still ministers to me each time I read it. It says, “When we believe the lies of Satan we have ultimately rejected truth (Jesus). When we believe the word of God (Jesus) we have received truth”. And this word came to me from John 8 when Jesus spoke in the temple and the Jewish people rejected the words that He spoke. And He stated that they imitated the nature of their true father, Satan. And his nature was that of a liar and that he hated the truth because there is no truth in him. Since they rejected the word of God they are imitators of Satan.

Now that we have a better understanding of what Peace is let’s see what this peace looks like within scripture. In Judges chapter 6, we are introduced to a man named Gideon. He was from the weakest clan in the tribe of Manasseh and he was the least in his family. Gideon viewed his positioning about who He was. And if we are honest with ourselves this is an insecurity for many people. We question what God has called us to do from the basis of who we are and where we come from. We instantly offer excuses because we lack confidence in ourselves. But the reality is that God doesn’t

need our abilities and our wits. He is simply looking for our yes. Our yes that is accompanied with obedience. When we give our yes then God gives His peace. Turn with me to Judges 6:11-23

Judges 6:11–24 NLT

11 Then the angel of the LORD came and sat beneath the great tree at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash of the clan of Abiezer. Gideon son of Joash was threshing wheat at the bottom of a winepress to hide the grain from the Midianites. 12 The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said, “Mighty hero, the LORD is with you!” 13 “Sir,” Gideon replied, “if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? And where are all the miracles our ancestors told us about? Didn’t they say, ‘The LORD brought us up out of Egypt’? But now the LORD has abandoned us and handed us over to the Midianites.” 14 Then the LORD turned to him and said, “Go with the strength you have, and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you!” 15 “But Lord,” Gideon replied, “how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in the whole tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in my entire family!” 16 The LORD said to him, “I will be with you. And you will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man.” 17 Gideon replied, “If you are truly going to help me, show me a sign to prove that it is really the LORD speaking to me. 18 Don’t go away until I come back and bring my offering to you.” He answered, “I will stay here until you return.” 19 Gideon hurried home. He cooked a young goat, and with a basket of flour he baked some bread without yeast. Then, carrying the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot, he brought them out and presented them to the angel, who was under the great tree. 20 The angel of God said to him, “Place the meat and the unleavened bread on this rock, and pour the broth over it.” And Gideon did as he was told. 21 Then the angel of the LORD touched the meat and bread with the tip of the staff in his hand, and fire flamed up from the rock and consumed all he had brought. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. 22 When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he cried out, “Oh, Sovereign LORD, I’m doomed! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!” 23 “It is all right,” the LORD replied. “Do not be afraid. You will not die.” 24 And Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and named it Yahweh-Shalom (which means “the LORD is peace”).

Gideons original posture was of anxiety and fear, which is the opposite of Peace. It was not until Gideon asked for a sign where he placed his offering before the Lord. And the sign was fulfilled because fire consumed what Gideon had presented as an offering. This now becomes Gideons surrender.

As we look back at verse 18, Gideon said stay here until I return with my offering to you. The word offering within this context means gift. As we read on through verse 19, what Gideon was offering was a meal. This correlates that Gideon was looking to present a Peace offering but we must notice that in verse 21 that all of the offering was consumed by fire. According to scripture, this is known as a burnt offering. And a

burnt offering symbolizes a total consecration, complete surrender, and atonement between God and humanity.

Gideon had the hope of sharing a meal but God was demanding more. The more comprised of total surrender. Giving all of himself. A total surrender to what God was calling him to do. This same outcome is experienced within each of us. We want to share the glory with God but God is demanding total surrender. We want to share the sacrifice with God but God is desiring the entire sacrifice. Our total surrender. When Gideon realized what God was asking instead of what he was offering, the fear of the Lord encompassed him. His experience was just like that of Isaiah in Isaiah 6.

We will always find that when we the fear of the Lord is apparent within scripture that God reveals Himself in a way that man has never experienced. And we spoke about this earlier within our sermon. "Who God is unfolds with revelation". The Fear of God hit Gideon in a manner that he thought he was going to die. Do we live in the fear of God to the degree that his presence is so overwhelming. And because Gideon feared God, God assured him that he would not die. Through this encounter, Gideon built an altar and named it Yahweh Shalom. The LORD is Peace. The altar that Gideon built was not the Peace of God. It only served as a memorial of His revelation.

From then on, Gideon did everything the LORD commanded him to do. With every commandment the odds did not seem to be in Gideons favor, but God told Gideon how this was going to play out from the very beginning. He only needed to fully surrender to the peace of God that guards our heart.

After this God instructed Gideon to pull down the altars build to baal and to cut down the Asherah pole. The Peace that God wanted to bring back to Israel begin by removing idol worship and removing what is not sacred. Peace begins with tearing down idols and removing what is not sacred within our lives. Peace will bring our hearts back to obedience. We must realize that there are two thing we will be judged by when we stand face to face with God. Our obedience or our disobedience. And the very first command that God gave the Israelites was "You shall have no other gods before me". This has not change for us. The position of mans heart becomes more and more obvious as scripture is revealed. Man does not have peace because they worship other gods. And those gods take many different forms. I'm not taking about Baal or Molech. I'm taking about money, tv, phones, food, entertainment, Hollywood, fame, fortune, popularity, notoriety, fashion, job status, political party, social status, friends, and things of this manner. The very things that become gods in our lives. If we desire to know the "I Am" then we must remove our sandals so that we can come into contact with what His holiness.

Gideon was challenged to bring peace back to Israel but he had to abandon what he was doing to fulfill the call of "I Am". No where in scripture does anyone fulfill God's plans by continuing to be who they were before hand. David was called to be King so he had to abandon being a shepherd. Samuel was called to be priest and prophet so he had to abandon apprenticeship. Abraham was called to Canaan so he had to abandon his family and home.

Judges 8:28 NLT

28 That is the story of how the people of Israel defeated Midian, which never recovered. Throughout the rest of Gideon's lifetime—about forty years—there was peace in the land.

God wants to bring peace into your situation but you must first recognize Him as Yahweh Shalom - The Lord is Peace. And the only way to know "I Am" in this way is to bring a burnt offering unto the LORD and not a peace offering. He is not looking to share a meal without first giving your all. What have you not abandoned today that has kept you from knowing "I Am"?

Matthew 16:26 NLT

26 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?

Let me pray with you today!