

I Am

Sunday, May 29, 2022
10:30 AM

I want to continue our series entitled I AM that focuses on what the Word of God tells us about Who We Are In Christ.

We began by recounting God's use of the term I AM to describe himself to Moses and the Israelites. A name that

Jesus too spoke these words as he declared himself to be God and further revealed God's nature.

The words can be applied to ourselves as well - as each powerful I AM statement helps us understand our Identity in Christ. These assurances of worth and value are truths about who we are NOW, because of what God's love, through Christ, has done for us.

These are truths that the enemy doesn't want us to get ahold of. Truths he would like us not to believe, because he knows they undue the lies that he speaks to us to keep us from realizing the true power that God has given us.

Because of God's love and work in our lives, we can say with confidence...

I am saved...

I am redeemed...

I am born again...

I am a new creation...

I am a temple of the Holy Spirit...

I AM Loved and

I AM Forgiven

KEY TEXT

Judges 6

6 The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. ² Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. ³ Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. ⁴ They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. ⁵ They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count them or their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it. ⁶ Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help.

⁷ When the Israelites cried out to the LORD because of Midian, ⁸ he sent them a prophet, who said, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ⁹ I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians. And I delivered you from the hand of all your oppressors; I drove them out before you and gave you their land. ¹⁰ I said to you, ‘I am the LORD your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.’ But you have not listened to me.”

¹¹ The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. ¹² When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.”

¹³ “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.”

¹⁴ The LORD turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?”

¹⁵ “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”

¹⁶ The LORD answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.”

¹⁷ Gideon replied, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. ¹⁸ Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you.”

And the LORD said, "I will wait until you return."

¹⁹ Gideon went inside, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak.

²⁰ The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And Gideon did so. ²¹ Then the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread with the tip of the staff that was in his hand. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. ²² When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, "Alas, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!"

²³ But the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die."

²⁴ So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD Is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

²⁵ That same night the LORD said to him, "Take the second bull from your father's herd, the one seven years old. Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. ²⁶ Then build a proper kind of altar to the LORD your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering."

²⁷ So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the townspeople, he did it at night rather than in the daytime.

²⁸ In the morning when the people of the town got up, there was Baal's altar, demolished, with the Asherah pole beside it cut down and the second bull sacrificed on the newly built altar!

²⁹ They asked each other, "Who did this?"

When they carefully investigated, they were told, "Gideon son of Joash did it."

³⁰ The people of the town demanded of Joash, "Bring out your son. He must die, because he has broken down Baal's altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it."

³¹ But Joash replied to the hostile crowd around him, "Are you going to plead Baal's cause? Are you trying to save him? Whoever fights for him shall be put to death by morning! If Baal really is a god, he can defend himself when someone breaks down his altar." ³² So because Gideon broke down Baal's altar, they gave him the name Jerub-Baal^[1] that day, saying, "Let Baal contend with him."

³³ Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. ³⁴ Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. ³⁵ He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, calling them to arms, and also into Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, so that they too went up to meet them.

³⁶ Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised— ³⁷ look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.” ³⁸ And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.

³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, “Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece, but this time make the fleece dry and let the ground be covered with dew.” ⁴⁰ That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

Judges 7

¹ Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. ² The LORD said to Gideon, “You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, ‘My own strength has saved me.’ ³ Now announce to the army, ‘Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.’” So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

⁴ But the LORD said to Gideon, “There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will thin them out for you there. If I say, ‘This one shall go with you,’ he shall go; but if I say, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ he shall not go.”

⁵ So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, “Separate those who lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink.” ⁶ Three hundred of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.

⁷ The LORD said to Gideon, “With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home.” ⁸ So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites home but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.

Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley. ⁹ During that night the LORD said to Gideon, “Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your

hands.¹⁰ If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah¹¹ and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp.” So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp.¹² The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore.

¹³ Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. “I had a dream,” he was saying. “A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed.”

¹⁴ His friend responded, “This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands.”

¹⁵ When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed down and worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, “Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands.”¹⁶ Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside.

¹⁷ “Watch me,” he told them. “Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do.”¹⁸ When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout, ‘For the LORD and for Gideon.’”

¹⁹ Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands.²⁰ The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!”²¹ While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.

²² When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the LORD caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords. The army fled to Beth Shittah toward Zererah as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath.²³ Israelites from Naphtali, Asher and all Manasseh were called out, and they pursued the Midianites.²⁴ Gideon sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim, saying, “Come down against the Midianites and seize the waters of the Jordan ahead of them as far as Beth Barah.”

So all the men of Ephraim were called out and they seized the waters of the Jordan as far as Beth Barah.²⁵ They also captured two of the Midianite leaders, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued the Midianites and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was by the Jordan.

I am a mighty warrior

- A Mighty Warrior **BELIEVES** the proclamation of The Lord concerning their identity, purpose and potential rather than their own thoughts about themselves or the declarations that others have made over them

¹¹The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. ¹²When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.”

¹⁵“Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”

- A Mighty Warrior **TAKES RESPONSIBILITY** for their past but is not defined by it

⁶The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites.

⁷When the Israelites cried out to the LORD because of Midian, ⁸he sent them a prophet, who said, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ⁹I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians. And I delivered you from the hand of all your oppressors; I drove them out before you and gave you their land. ¹⁰I said to you, ‘I am the LORD your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.’ But you have not listened to me.”

¹³“Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.”

- A Mighty Warrior is **NOT PERFECT** and may wrestle with insecurity, doubt and fear

¹⁵“Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”

¹⁷ Gideon replied, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me.

²⁷ So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the townspeople, he did it at night rather than in the daytime.

³⁶ Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised—³⁷ look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.” ³⁸ And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.

³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, “Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece, but this time make the fleece dry and let the ground be covered with dew.” ⁴⁰ That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

- A Mighty Warrior is **WILLING** to make sacrifices for the call of God

¹⁸ Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you.”

And the LORD said, “I will wait until you return.”

¹⁹ Gideon went inside, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak.

²⁵ That same night the LORD said to him, “Take the second bull from your father’s herd, the one seven years old. Tear down your father’s altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. ²⁶ Then build a proper kind of altar to the LORD your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering.”

- A Mighty Warrior must take a **PUBLIC STAND** against the evils of their day

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- A Mighty Warrior may face **PERSECUTION** and disdain even from those closest to them

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When they carefully investigated, they were told, “Gideon son of Joash did it.”

³⁰ The people of the town demanded of Joash, “Bring out your son. He must die, because he has broken down Baal’s altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it.”

- A Mighty warrior will **OBEDIENTLY FOLLOW** God’s plan even when it doesn’t make sense in the natural

⁷ Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. ² The LORD said to Gideon, “You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, ‘My own strength has saved me.’ ³ Now announce to the army, ‘Anyone who trembles with fear may turn

back and leave Mount Gilead.” So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

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⁷ The LORD said to Gideon, “With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home.” ⁸ So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites home but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.

- A Mighty Warrior **LISTENS** for the prophetic and finds encouragement in the promises of God

¹⁰ If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah ¹¹ and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp.” So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp. ¹² The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore.

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three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside.

- A Mighty Warrior **GUARDS THEIR HEART** from bitterness, anger and unforgiveness

⁴ Gideon and his three hundred men, exhausted yet keeping up the pursuit, came to the Jordan and crossed it. ⁵ He said to the men of Sukkoth, “Give my troops some bread; they are worn out, and I am still pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian.”

⁶ But the officials of Sukkoth said, “Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your troops?”

⁷ Then Gideon replied, “Just for that, when the LORD has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will tear your flesh with desert thorns and briers.”

⁸ From there he went up to Peniel^[a] and made the same request of them, but they answered as the men of Sukkoth had. ⁹ So he said to the men of Peniel, “When I return in triumph, I will tear down this tower.”

¹⁰ Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with a force of about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of the armies of the eastern peoples; a hundred and twenty thousand swordsmen had fallen. ¹¹ Gideon went up by the route of the nomads east of Nobah and Jogbehah and attacked the unsuspecting army. ¹² Zebah and Zalmunna, the two kings of Midian, fled, but he pursued them and captured them, routing their entire army.

¹³ Gideon son of Joash then returned from the battle by the Pass of Heres. ¹⁴ He caught a young man of Sukkoth and questioned him, and the young man wrote down for him the names of the seventy-seven officials of Sukkoth, the elders of the town. ¹⁵ Then Gideon came and said to the men of Sukkoth, “Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you taunted me by saying, ‘Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your exhausted men?’” ¹⁶ He took the elders of the town and taught the men of Sukkoth a lesson by punishing them with desert thorns and briers. ¹⁷ He also pulled down the tower of Peniel and killed the men of the town.

- A Mighty Warrior continues to focus on their own **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP** with God

²² The Israelites said to Gideon, “Rule over us—you, your son and your grandson—because you have saved us from the hand of Midian.”

²³ But Gideon told them, “I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD will rule over you.” ²⁴ And he said, “I do have one request, that each of you give me an earring from your share of the plunder.” (It was the custom of the Ishmaelites to wear gold earrings.)

²⁵ They answered, “We’ll be glad to give them.” So they spread out a garment, and each of them threw a ring from his plunder onto it. ²⁶ The weight of the gold rings he asked for came to seventeen hundred shekels,^[b] not counting the ornaments, the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian or the chains that were on their camels’ necks. ²⁷ Gideon made the gold into an ephod, which he placed in Ophrah, his town. All Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family.

²⁹ Jerub-Baal son of Joash went back home to live. ³⁰ He had seventy sons of his own, for he had many wives. ³¹ His concubine, who lived in Shechem, also bore him a son, whom he named Abimelek. ³² Gideon son of Joash died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

³³ No sooner had Gideon died than the Israelites again prostituted themselves to the Baals. They set up Baal-Berith as their god ³⁴ and did not remember the LORD their God, who had rescued them from the hands of all their enemies on every side.