

The

GOD

We Can Know

EXPLORING THE "I AM" SAYINGS OF JESUS

LENT BIBLE STUDY

7:00 PM

FELLOWSHIP HALL & ZOOM

MARCH 8, 15, 22, 29 APRIL 5

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The God We Can Know

“Let us occupy ourselves entirely in knowing God. The more we know [God] the more we will desire to know [God].”

- Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*

Recap: I AM the Bread of Life: Knowing God's Satisfaction

I AM the Light of the World: Knowing God's Guidance

I AM the True Vine: Knowing God's Power

I AM the Resurrection and Life: Knowing God's Possibilities

Is it “The Raising of Lazarus” or “Martha’s Confession?” Is this story about Lazarus or about the people who have to live with death?

Read John 11:17-26.

“Lord if you had been there....

...the accident wouldn't have happened.

...this injustice would not have occurred.

...I would still have my job.

...that attack would have been prevented.”

I AM the Resurrection and Life: Knowing God's Possibilities

Read John 12:10-11.

Why do you think the raising of Lazarus caused such great alarm within the religious establishment, so much that they wanted to not only kill Jesus but Lazarus too?

When was the first time you encountered death? What questions or fears did it raise? How did it impact your understanding of God?

I AM the Resurrection and Life: Knowing God's Possibilities

What do you think Jesus wanted Mary and Martha to know?

Where did Martha get the idea of resurrection?

It already existed in Judaism. (See Daniel 12:2) But it was just an idea, a belief, not a present reality. Something that's happening in the future is not much good right now!

John 11:25-26: key word is not resurrection or life but believe - *pisteuo*, which also means trust. Try reading this again, substituting the word *trust*. There's a difference between believing in something and trusting in it. We truly believe someone when we are able to put our trust fully in that person.

I AM the Resurrection and Life: Knowing God's Possibilities

Karl Barth:

One evening a blind man stumbled upon the circular stairway of the bell tower. As he got near the top he lost his balance and started to fall into the deep abyss. He reached out to grab the handrail but instead his arm found the rope of the bell. He grabbed it and pulled down to steady himself. Then he heard the loud gong peal out, shattering the silence of the still night.

I AM the Resurrection and Life: Knowing God's Possibilities

It was in those times of desperation when he felt there was nowhere else to turn that he discovered the sureness of God's presence. In his stumbling, the beauty of God found a way to shine through.

The real goal of the spiritual life is not only to believe in God but to believe God - it is a trust issue.

I AM the Resurrection and Life: Knowing God's Possibilities

Our own resistance can hold us back from experiencing God's possibilities, but when we accept, new possibilities can unfold. We can be resistant to the new because we want to hold onto the old; but at some point there has to be the acceptance of the new reality, however unwanted it may be. Only then can we be open to what God has next for us.

I AM the Resurrection and Life: Knowing God's Possibilities

Easter occurs not in spite of death but because of it. Christian faith offers hope because it faces death squarely and moves through it, not around it. It means that pain, disappointment, and heartache are not final realities (only stopping points!)

I AM the Resurrection and Life: Knowing God's Possibilities

Resurrection vs resuscitation

Resuscitation means bringing back to life what used to be - resurrection is a whole new life.

What happens when you play a country song backward?

Jesus doesn't just restore - He transforms.

Lazarus was brought back to this life - Jesus was brought back to a resurrected life. What's the difference between resuscitation and resurrection to you?

I AM the Resurrection and Life: Knowing God's Possibilities

He did resuscitate Lazarus - it was a postponement of the inevitable. But when that day came, now his sisters could face it with not only a belief but a trust. The One who is the Resurrection and the Life works on both sides of the grave.

Death takes away. Death forever changes things. But death cannot create. Death cannot give a future. Death cannot do a new thing. Only the great I AM can do that.

I AM the Resurrection and Life: Knowing God's Possibilities

When have you experienced some kind of death in order for God to give you new life?

God wants to be known - not just to know about God but to know God. We are not just made by God but out of God.

Read John 17:3