

**Tuesday, October 6, 2020**  
**Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...**

**"Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.'  
So they picked up stones to throw at him,  
but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple."**

*John 8: 58*

Have you ever heard of such a harsh response over someone using poor grammar? Why were the Jews so angry at Jesus that they picked up stones to throw at Him? The poor grammar I'm referring to is when Jesus says, "before Abraham was, I am." I think we would all agree that correct grammar would be to say, "before Abraham was, I was." Do you happen to know why Jesus did not say, "I was," but rather, "I am"? The reason is that Jesus was not primarily talking about the fact that He existed before Abraham did, which in and of itself is a big deal! But Jesus was saying, "before Abraham was, 'ego eimi,'" (which is Greek for "I am"). In Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, Jesus would have said, "before Abraham was, 'Yahweh!'"

"Yahweh" is the name for God. It was the name that God used to introduce Himself to Moses at the burning bush. The name "Yahweh" means "I am who I am" or "I am that I am." The shortened version of this Name is "I Am!" The Jewish religious leaders knew what Jesus was saying. Jesus was saying that HE (Jesus) is Yahweh – the God that the Jews had been worshiping for over 2,000 years! This is why they picked up stones to throw at Him. To refer to oneself as God or God's equal was a crime worthy of being stoned to death.

So, why am I giving you this theological lesson? I just want to make sure that you and I recognize Who Jesus is. Jesus was not just a great man or a great teacher. He was not just a rabbi who happened to get on the wrong side of the religious leaders and was then crucified because they didn't like Him. Jesus is God! I'm sure that you already know this and believe this. But don't be surprised if you meet people who don't believe this, or who don't live as if they believe this.

It's important to remind ourselves every so often that Jesus, the One who died on the cross for our sins, is God Almighty! He's the same God who created the universe and Who has commanded us to be holy and righteous in His sight. God Himself took the punishment that He said we deserve for our sins. Instead of you and me getting the punishment for our sins, God got that punishment.

So, do you ever wonder if God is a God of love? You can stop wondering. He has loved us so much that He gave Himself the punishment that we deserved. That would be like a judge sentencing himself to the death sentence so that the murderer could go free! I know ... kind of hard to think about it when you put it that way. But that's exactly what has happened. Jesus, the second Person of the Trinity, bore the wrath of God in our place! And because of that, your sins have all been forgiven!

God's Peace!  
Pastor Jim