

LESSON FIVE

JOHN: 7 “I AM” STATEMENTS

“The Way, the Truth, and the Life: A disciple believes Jesus is the way to God”

SCRIPTURE | John 14:1-7

MEMORY VERSE

“God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you’” (Exodus 3:14).

MAIN IDEA OF THE TEXT

Jesus is the source of all truth and knowledge about God.

GROUP TIME

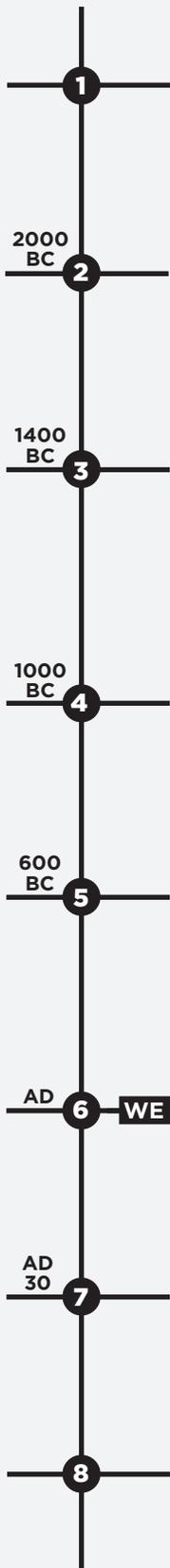
5 minutes	Welcome
5-10 minutes	Attention Grabber
10 minutes	Story / Context
25 minutes	Discussion
5-10 minutes	Closing & Prayer

PRAYER FOCUS

- **Rooted** – Pray for Rooted groups that next week will discuss generosity and how God views money.
- **Easter (Apr 4/5)** – Begin praying for Easter services and the opportunity to declare that Jesus is the Way! He is our mediator with God and we trust Him, not anything else.

BEGIN this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of his Word, and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your study.

GOD'S STORY TIMELINE



1. God Creates the World and Promises a Rescuer (*Genesis 1-11*)

God created everything good and placed humans in a garden to live in close relationship with Him. But Adam and Eve chose to trust themselves instead of God, and sin entered the world. Relationships, creation, even our connection to God was broken. Yet even in judgment, God promised that one day, a descendant of Eve would crush the serpent and bring healing.

+This points to Jesus as the promised Rescuer who defeats sin, Satan, and death.

2. God Calls a Family and Makes a Promise (*Genesis 12-50*)

God chose a man named Abram (later Abraham) and gave a covenant to him: that he would have a large family, receive a land, and be a blessing to all nations. Though Abraham and his descendants were deeply flawed, God continued His promise through Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

+This points to Jesus as the true offspring of Abraham, through whom all nations are fully blessed.

3. God Rescues His People and Forms a Redeemed Nation (*Exodus-Deuteronomy*)

Generations later, Abraham's descendants were enslaved in Egypt. God raised up Moses to rescue them from oppression and slavery. God called His people into a relationship with Himself. He made a covenant with them, gave them the law, and instructed them in worship. He was forming a people who would live differently and show the world what it looked like to belong to Him.

+This points to Jesus as the greater Moses, who rescues us from slavery to sin and writes God's law on our hearts.

4. God Gives a Home and Promises a King (*Joshua-2 Chronicles*)

God brought His people into the promised land under Joshua's leadership. Over time, they asked for a king like the other nations. It was a disaster. But God graciously gave them David, with whom he made another covenant: one of David's descendants would rule forever. Solomon built the temple, but after his death, the kingdom split into two and began spiraling into idolatry and injustice again.

+This points to Jesus as the forever King from David's line, who reigns with justice and peace.

5. God Removes His People and Reminds Them of His Promise (*Ezra-Nehemiah*)

Because of their rebellion, God allowed His people to be conquered and taken into exile. First, it was the Northern Kingdom, Israel (to Assyria), then the Southern Kingdom, Judah (to Babylon). The temple was destroyed, and the glory of the kingdom faded. Yet God continued to speak through the prophets, reminding the people of His promise to restore them, give them new hearts, and send a Rescuer.

+This points to Jesus as the one who brings the new covenant, restores hearts, and fulfills every prophecy.

6. God Sends His Son and Fulfills His Promise (*Matthew-John*)

At just the right time, God sent Jesus into the world—born of a virgin, fully God and fully man. He perfectly obeyed the law, pointed us to the Father, and laid down His life as a sacrifice for our sins. On the third day, He rose again, proving that He is the Savior, the King, and the fulfillment of every covenant promise God has ever made.

+Jesus is the center of the story—all of Scripture leads to Him.

7. God Sends His Spirit and Builds His Church (*Acts-Jude*)

After rising from the dead, Jesus ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to empower His followers. The early Church spread the good news of Jesus across the Roman world—planting churches, welcoming both Jews and Gentiles, and learning to live as God's new covenant people. Though imperfect, the Church carries Jesus' mission forward today.

+This points to Jesus as the risen King who gives the Spirit to dwell in us and send us on mission.

8. God Restores All Things and Dwells with His People (*Revelation*)

The story isn't over. One day Jesus will return to judge evil and make all things new. There will be a new heaven and new earth, where God's people from every tribe and nation will live with Him forever. There will be no more pain, no more death, and no more sin—just joy, justice, and unbroken peace.

+This points to Jesus as the one who brings the story to its perfect and eternal culmination.

1 GRAB THEIR ATTENTION

LEADER TIP

To grab your participants' attention, start your lesson by telling a story related to the lesson's main idea. We have provided you with three options in this section, but feel free to develop your own.

OPTION 1: PTOLEMY'S LIMITS

For more than a thousand years, the most trusted map of the world came from a single source, Ptolemy, a second-century scholar living in Roman Egypt. His work, *Geographia*, shaped how people understood the earth, its continents, its oceans, and what lay beyond the horizon. The problem was not that Ptolemy was careless. He was brilliant, methodical, and widely respected. The problem was that he was limited. He worked with incomplete data, secondhand reports, and assumptions no one thought to question.

For centuries, explorers trusted his maps. They planned routes and crossed oceans using them. In some cases, those maps led them dangerously off course. Not because people ignored truth, but because the source itself could only offer partial knowledge. Ptolemy was confident. His followers were confident. And they were still wrong.

History presses a sobering question on us. Confidence in a source does not guarantee its veracity or reliability. Even the most trusted guides can only take us as far as their knowledge allows. When it comes to understanding who God is, the issue is not simply what we believe, but who we trust to reveal the truth.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *Why do you think it is so easy to confuse confidence or tradition with truth? How can something feel reliable and still lead us in the wrong direction?*
- *When you face uncertainty or big questions about life and faith, do you tend to look for information, systems, or guides? What does that reveal about where you believe truth ultimately comes from?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:

This story reminds us that confidence is not the same as truth, and sincerity is not the same as certainty. When it comes to understanding who God is, the issue is not simply what we believe but who has the authority to reveal Him. In John 14, Jesus spoke to that question by identifying Himself as the source of all truth and knowledge about God.

OPTION 2 : GOD CONFRONTS JOB

The book of Job tells the story of a righteous man who lost nearly everything: his wealth, his health, and his children. As Job suffered, his friends came to sit with him. At first, they were silent. But before long, they began to speak. And once they started, they did not stop. They offered explanations for Job's suffering, insisted they understood how God works, and spoke with the confidence of people who believed they had the situation figured out.

For many chapters, their speeches pile up. They sounded theological. They sounded certain. And they were wrong. Then, in Job 38, the Lord finally spoke.

“Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?”

“Who marked off its dimensions?”

“Have you ever given orders to the morning?”

Job and his friends were reminded that they were not God and that their understanding had limits. But there was also comfort. God spoke. He drew near. He did not leave Job trapped in bad explanations or human certainty. The God who knew what they did not know is the same God who chose to show Himself to Job.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *Job's friends spoke with confidence and religious language, yet they were wrong. Why do you think confident explanations can feel so comforting, even when they are inaccurate?*
- *How does this story challenge the idea that knowing a lot about God is the same as truly knowing God?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:

The story of Job reminds us that confident explanations are not the same as true knowledge of God. Human wisdom can speak loudly and still miss the heart of who God is. In John 14, Jesus spoke into that gap by identifying Himself as the source of all truth and knowledge about the Father.

OPTION 3 : AUTHORS AND EXPERTS

You've just read an interesting article on underwater basket weaving (if there is such a thing). Later, you're talking about it with someone else who read it too. You start pulling it apart.

"What do you think they meant here?"

"I think the point is ..."

"That line stood out to me because ..."

Now, if an expert weaver comes along, their opinion ought to carry more weight. They should be trusted above our own uninformed thoughts. But how much more could the author of the article settle your questions?

Much of what we say about God sounds confident and informed, but it always stays one step removed. This is true even if you've studied the Bible your whole life. In John 14, Jesus did not enter the conversation as another voice weighing in. He spoke as God Himself. He did not speculate about the Father. He revealed Him.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *Why would an expert's opinion carry more weight than ours? In what ways would the author's voice carry even more authority than the expert's?*
- *How does this illustration expose the difference between interpreting something and truly knowing its source?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:

Opinions and expertise can only take us so far. Even the best interpretations remain one step removed from the source. In John 14, Jesus spoke not as an expert on God, but as God Himself, the source of all truth and knowledge about the Father.

2 SET THE STAGE

LEADER TIP

This section provides the historical, cultural, and literary context needed to properly interpret and apply the text.

OUTLINE

- I. Prologue: Christ as the Eternal Word (1:1-18)
 - A. The Word (1:1)
 - B. The Word and creation (1:2-5)
 - C. The Word and the world (1:6-18)
- II. Presentation of Christ as the Son of God (1:19-12:50)
 - A. By John the Baptist (1:19-34)
 - B. To His disciples (1:35-51)
 - C. Through miraculous signs (2:1-12:50)
- III. Instruction of the Twelve by the Son of God (13:1-17:26)
 - A. The Last Supper (13:1-38)
 - B. The way to the Father (14:1-31)**
 - C. The true vine (15:1-27)
 - D. The gift of the Spirit (16:1-33)
 - E. Jesus's high-priestly prayer (17:1-26)
- IV. Suffering of Christ as the Son of God (18:1-20:31)
 - A. His arrest, trial, and death (18:1-19:42)
 - B. His triumph over death (20:1-31)
- V. Epilogue: The Continuing Work of the Son of God (21:1-25)
 - A. Appearances to His disciples (21:1-14)
 - B. Assignment to His disciples (21:15-25)¹

CONTEXT

John 14 is part of a longer conversation that took place during Jesus's final night with His disciples. They were gathered for the Passover meal, a setting filled with memory and expectation. Earlier in the evening, Jesus washed their feet, shared the meal with them, and spoke openly about what lay ahead.

As the conversation unfolded, Jesus told them that one of their own would betray Him. He also spoke about His departure and warned Peter that he would deny Him before the night was over. The tone of the room changed. What began as a familiar gathering became a moment marked by uncertainty and questions. The disciples were left trying to process how quickly the evening has turned.

It is into that setting that Jesus spoke the words recorded in John 14. The disciples were still sitting with what they had just heard. They were not sure what to make of Jesus's talk about leaving or what it meant for them. They sensed that something significant was about to happen, even if they could not yet see how it would unfold.

John 14 continues this conversation as Jesus addressed their concerns and told them what it would mean to trust Him in the days ahead.

CONNECTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

From the beginning of Scripture, human life is marked by access to God. In Genesis 1-2, Adam and Eve lived in open fellowship with Him.

¹Andreas J. Köstenberger, "John," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1663.

God was present, walking with them, and access was assumed as part of created life. That changed in Genesis 3. When sin entered the world, humanity was driven out of the garden, and cherubim were placed to guard the way back to the tree of life (Genesis 3:24). The way into God's presence was now closed.

As Israel's story unfolded, access to God was not removed entirely but was carefully regulated. At Sinai, God drew near to His people, but strict boundaries were established. While Moses alone was invited into God's presence, the people were warned not to approach the mountain (Exodus 19-24). God was near, but coming to Him happened only through appointed means.

That same pattern shaped Israel's worship life. In the tabernacle and, later, the temple, God dwelled among His people, but access was layered and limited. Most remained outside. Priests entered farther. Only the high priest entered the Most Holy Place, and only once a year, and only with blood (Leviticus 16). Scripture consistently teaches that God can be approached, but the way is guarded and mediated.

Alongside this, the Old Testament often speaks of "the way of the Lord." God teaches His people how to walk before Him and promises life to those who follow His way (Deuteronomy 5:33; Psalms 25:4-5). But this way is always revealed by God. It is never discovered or claimed on human terms.

Against that backdrop, Jesus's words in John 14 carry their full weight. When He said, "No one comes to the Father except through me," He was not introducing exclusivity for the first time. He was revealing where access to God was now found. What was lost in the garden, guarded at Sinai, and regulated in the temple was gathered into Him. The way to the Father was no longer a place or a system but a person.

Jesus did not point to the temple, the priesthood, the law, or sacrifice. He pointed to Himself. A Jewish listener would understand that Jesus was claiming to be the new and final locus of access to God, replacing everything that previously stood between God and His people.

FALLEN CONDITION FOCUS

Because access to God has been broken, we spend our lives searching for a way back. We rely on methods, morality, and meaning-making to bridge the gap, but none of them can restore what has been lost. We cannot know God or know about God without a mediator.

GOSPEL RESPONSE

God does not leave us to search for a way back to Him. We cannot restore through effort, morality, or understanding what God provides through Jesus Christ. Jesus did not offer a method for reaching God or a set of truths to master. He presented Himself as the way. The access to God that was lost through sin was restored through a mediator God Himself provided. To know Jesus is to know the Father, because Jesus stands between humanity and God as the true and sufficient way back into His presence.

3 LOOK AT THE BOOK

LEADER TIP

In this section, you will find exercises you can use to lead your group through Observation, Interpretation, and Application. As the leader, work through all the exercises below to ensure you understand the text well.

Jesus's opening words responded directly to the confusion created by the preceding conversation. References to betrayal, denial, and departure had unsettled the disciples (13:21, 36–38). The command, “Do not let your hearts be troubled,” assumes their inner confidence had already been shaken. This same verb had already been used to describe Jesus's own distress earlier in the Gospel (12:27; 13:21), which sharpens the contrast here. Even as Jesus moved toward suffering, He addressed the disciples' turmoil rather than His own.

The answer Jesus gave was not explanation but trust. The call to believe in God and to believe in Him places Jesus alongside God as the proper object of faith. Grammatically, the statement functions as a command, not a description of their present condition. Their hearts would not be steadied by clearer information about what was coming but by sustained reliance on who Jesus is. From the outset of the chapter, Jesus framed the entire discussion of His departure around trust in His person rather than in understanding His plan.

In verse 2, Jesus explained why trust in Him was warranted. His departure was not abandonment but purposeful movement. By speaking of “my Father's house,” Jesus shifted the frame from loss to belonging. The language assumes intimate knowledge of God's dwelling place and reinforces the personal relationship Jesus claimed with the Father. The point was not to satisfy curiosity about the afterlife but to reassure the disciples that their future with God was secure.

When Jesus said there were “many rooms,” the emphasis was on sufficiency rather than grandeur. There is ample space for all who belong to Him. His statement, “if it were not so, I would have told you,” underscores His reliability. The disciples were being asked to trust that Jesus had been honest with them about where He was going and why. What troubled them now was not the lack of provision but their inability to see how His leaving could possibly serve their good.

In verse 3, Jesus continued to frame His departure as purposeful and directed toward reunion rather than separation. The preparation He described was aimed at ensuring His followers would be with Him, not merely settled in a distant place. The focus remained relational: the promise was defined by presence, not location. Jesus made it clear that their future with God did not depend on their ability to navigate the way themselves. He would return and bring them to Himself, securing access by His own initiative rather than by their effort or understanding.

In verse 4, Jesus stated that the disciples knew the way to where He was going, a claim meant to be understood in light of what He would shortly make explicit. The statement was not an assessment of their present clarity but an anticipation of the truth that knowing Jesus Himself constitutes knowing the way to the Father. John expected the reader to hear this line with verse 6 in view. The disciples possessed what they needed because they possessed Jesus, even though they did not yet recognize that this is what “the way” means. The verse therefore functions to set up the clarification that follows, pressing the

conversation toward the disclosure that access to the Father is personal rather than procedural.

Thomas, in verse 5, represented the group as he voiced confusion over Jesus's statement. His question was direct and practical. If they did not know where Jesus was going, then the idea of knowing the way made little sense. Thomas was not resisting Jesus's words, nor was he challenging their truthfulness. He was expressing the gap between what Jesus had said and what the disciples were able to grasp. Thomas's response reveals the underlying assumption the disciples were still carrying, that destination and direction were separable. A place must be known before a route can be identified.

In verse 6, Jesus responded directly to Thomas's question by identifying Himself as the way to the Father. The statement was not offered as a metaphor or general spiritual principle but as an answer to the problem of access. Jesus did not describe a route others might follow independently. He placed Himself at the center of the movement toward God. Coming to the Father is not possible apart from Him.

The accompanying claims, "the truth" and "the life," explain why Jesus alone can function in this role. Jesus is the truth because He embodies the definitive revelation of God. In John's Gospel, truth is not merely correct speech about God but faithful disclosure of who God is. Jesus did not point beyond Himself to another source of truth. He is the one in whom God is made known. Likewise, Jesus is the life because He possesses life in Himself and makes that life available to others. Life is not something He distributes at a distance. It resides in Him.

The final clause presses the claim to its necessary conclusion. "No one comes to the Father except through me" is not an abstract theological boundary but as a statement about how access to God actually occurs. If Jesus alone reveals the Father and shares the life of God, then access cannot be found elsewhere. Within the logic of the gospel, to reject Jesus is not to choose an alternative path to God but to forfeit the possibility of coming to the Father at all.

In verse 7, Jesus drew out the implication of what He had just said. Knowing Jesus and knowing the Father are inseparable realities. It does not suggest that the disciples lacked all knowledge of Jesus, but their understanding of what that knowledge entails was incomplete. Jesus pressed the point that true knowledge of God is not gained apart from Him or added on later. It is bound to recognition of who He is.

Jesus then stated that from this point forward they did know the Father and had seen Him. The claim did not contradict their confusion; it redefined what knowing and seeing mean. To have encountered Jesus was already to have encountered the Father He reveals. The disciples' desire for access to God did not require another vision, experience, or mediator. What remained was not a new disclosure but a clearer grasp of the one standing before them.

JOHN 14:1-7

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. 2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And

if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going.”

5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Gather in groups of three to five people to discuss the Observation and Interpretation questions.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 1: JESUS’S CALL TO TRUST

Read John 14:1. What did Jesus tell the disciples not to let happen, and what did He tell them to do instead?

Suggested Response: Jesus told the disciples not to let their hearts be troubled. He told them to believe in God and believe in Him. The verse presents trust in Jesus alongside trust in God as the response to their troubled hearts.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 2: JESUS DESCRIBED HIS DEPARTURE

Read John 14:2-3. What did Jesus say about where He was going, what He would do there, and what He promised to do afterward?

Suggested Response: Jesus said He was going to His Father’s house, where there are many rooms. He said He was going to prepare a place for them and promised He would come back and take them to be with Him. The focus of His promise is that they would be where He is.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 3: JESUS’S SELF-DESCRIPTION

Read John 10:14-18. How did Jesus describe Himself?

Suggested Response: Jesus said He is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through Him. He also said knowing Him means knowing the Father and seeing Him means seeing the Father. The passage links access to the Father directly to relationship with Jesus.

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 1: HOW DOES TRUST HELP?

Based on John 14:1, why did Jesus connect trust in Him with calming troubled hearts?

Suggested Response: Jesus connected troubled hearts with the question of where trust is placed. He presented belief in Him, alongside belief in God, as the stabilizing response to fear and uncertainty. The verse suggests that peace does not come from understanding what will happen next but from trusting who Jesus is.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 2: WHY DID JESUS NEED TO DEPART?

Based on John 14:2-3, what does Jesus's description of His departure reveal about its purpose for the disciples?

Suggested Response: Jesus's departure is presented as something done for the disciples' benefit rather than their loss. His going prepares a place for them and secures their future with Him. The emphasis on returning and bringing them to Himself shows that His leaving is meant to guarantee ongoing relationship, not separation.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 3: KNOWING AND BELONGING

Based on John 14:4-7, what did Jesus mean when He said He is "the way," and how does that shape what it means to know God?

Suggested Response: Jesus meant that access to the Father comes through relationship with Him, not through a path, system, or set of teachings. Knowing God is inseparable from knowing Jesus because He fully reveals the Father. The passage teaches that apart from Jesus, true knowledge of God is not possible.

APPLICATION: HOW DO I RESPOND?

QUESTION 1: Which of Jesus's words in John 14:1-7 felt most personal or relevant to where you are right now?

Suggested Response: Responses will vary. Encourage participants to name specific words, phrases, or moments in the conversation that caught their attention. Use follow-up questions to invite deeper reflection rather than quick answers.

LEADER TIP

In this section, you will find questions to choose from that will help your group consider how God calls them to respond to the text. Help your group set measurable action steps.

QUESTION 2: Jesus told His disciples not to let their hearts be troubled, and then immediately called them to trust Him. Where do you notice troubled thoughts or restlessness shaping your decisions right now?

Suggested Response: Some may point to uncertainty about the future, strained relationships, or unresolved fears. Others may recognize a general sense of anxiety that influences how they plan, protect themselves, or relate to God. This question helps reveal where trust feels hardest.

QUESTION 3: Jesus said no one comes to the Father except through Him. Where are you most tempted to look for guidance, security, or meaning apart from Him?

Suggested Response: Common answers may include relying on personal control, past experience, success, or the approval of others. This question invites honest recognition of the ways we try to find direction without depending fully on Jesus as the way to God.

QUESTION 4: Jesus linked knowing Him with knowing the Father. What does it look like to know about God without really knowing Him?

Suggested Response: Some may recognize patterns of religious familiarity without relational closeness. Others may notice how easily information about God can replace dependence on Him. The goal is not to create guilt but to name the difference between knowledge and relationship.

QUESTION 5: If trusting Jesus as the way means releasing the need to manage access to God on your own, what is one small step of trust you could practice this week? How could our group walk with you in that?

Suggested Response: Examples might include surrendering a specific fear, resisting the urge to self-direct, or turning to Jesus in prayer instead of immediately seeking control or answers. Group support could include prayer, follow-up conversations, or simply holding that step together with grace and honesty.

4

CHALLENGE

LEADER TIP

End your study time with one final challenge and prayer. Your final challenge should pull together everything you covered in this lesson and call your participants to action.

When life feels unsettled, our first instinct is often to look for a clear path. We want direction we can understand and outcomes we can anticipate. Over time, that instinct can turn into the quiet belief that peace depends on how well we navigate uncertainty. Jesus spoke into that assumption by placing Himself at the center, not as one option among many but as the way to the Father. His words invite us to consider whether we are trusting a path we have mapped out or a person who knows where He is leading.

Following Jesus as the way means releasing the pressure to secure our own access to God. It is an invitation to trust that relationship, not control, is what anchors us when the way forward feels unclear.

- Where in my life am I most tempted to rely on my own understanding instead of trusting Jesus as the way forward?
- What situation right now feels uncertain or unresolved? How might trusting Jesus rather than demanding clarity first reshape how I respond?
- How can our group help one another stay oriented toward Jesus rather than toward solutions, explanations, or control?

The way of Jesus is not built on certainty or self-direction. It is formed by trusting the one who brings us to the Father when we do not know the way ourselves.

Let's pray.