

# Truth and Jesus Christ

*In Defense of Truth*

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**Bible Verse:** John 1:14  
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I invite you to turn to the gospel of John 1. Over the next few weeks, we're going to look at a series of brief texts from the gospel of John cementing out theme and our focus on the theme of truth, and in John 1:14 we come to this critical text for all of Christianity that has been upon which the past 2,000 years of church history have been built. John 1:14 says,

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Last week, as most of you know, we started a series titled "In Defense of Truth." It's a series that highlights the importance of the name of our church, Truth Community Church, and gives us a sense of why we exist and what we mean and what we claim and what we assert by that name, Truth. One of the things, as I said last week, that we claim by that is that there is objective truth, there is real objective truth that transcends what any opinions of men may be, that predates our existence, that will postdate our existence, that applies to all humanity. We completely reject the idea of modern society that you can have your truth and I can have my truth and, you know, we just need to show tolerance to one another; that is a bad way to think, that's a bad way to approach the concept of truth. There is an objective truth whether someone believes in it or not and it is the truth by which we will be judged, it is the truth by which Christians live, and we have the privilege of finding that in God's word and in the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we say that we are Truth Community Church, we're saying that we exist to proclaim the truth about the Incarnate Christ, that's why we exist. We are not first and foremost a social organization on a human level. We do not exist primarily for human fellowship although that's an incidental part of it, it's an important part of it, that's not the first and foremost reason that we exist. We exist to proclaim the truth. Now alongside that, a corollary of that, is that we do not simply proclaim human morality and try to exhort people to live better lives and to love one another without mention of Christ, without mention of the need for the new birth, without mention of sin and judgment and the cross. We don't talk about these things apart from Christ. Christ is central to everything about truth itself and this text helps us to see that from John 1:14.

Look at it again with me to set it deeply in your mind as we enter into our exposition of it here this morning. "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." Focus on those early words, that first clause, "the Word became flesh," meaning that God became a man. This text brings us face-to-face with the theological reality of the Incarnation. The Incarnation, if that's a word that you don't know, it's a word that you need to know. It's central to Christianity. Incarnation is a theological term that means that the eternal Son of God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ. The eternal Son of God, the preexistent Son of God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ. You could say it this way: the second person of the blessed Trinity, without giving up his deity, became a human being. God became a man. The Word became flesh. The eternal Son of God became man without ceasing to be God, and you can see this concept expressed in Colossians 2:9 where it says in Christ "all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form."

Beloved, if you are going to be saved from your sin, you must come to the Lord Jesus Christ. You must come by faith, you must come in repentance and you must believe in him and surrender your life to him if you are to be saved, but it's important to understand that you are not free to make up your own concept of Jesus. If you are to be saved, if you are to have a true salvation, you must believe in the true Christ and believe in Jesus Christ for who he really is. You know, if you pretended to be somebody that you're not, if you claimed and wanted to be called that you were, you know, President Garfield from 1881, for those of you that are a little slow on your presidential history, you can't do that, you can't be someone else, someone can't project upon you an identity that is not yours and claim to really know you. No, you must know Christ for who he really is. You must know that he is fully God and fully man in one person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

A long time ago, I had a young woman who wrote to me and we were talking about these kinds of things. She denied the deity of Christ. She did not believe that Jesus was God, maybe a great teacher, a high human being, someone created by God but not God himself, and she went on and made this awful statement, awful in the sense of what it means for her eternal destiny, she said, "I can't believe that God would send me to hell for having a mistaken view of Jesus, but if that's what He's going to do, then that's what it will be." And just so trivializing the reality of Christ, and so much defining salvation on her own terms, that salvation will be on my terms of I won't have it. It's a grievous thing to contemplate that people don't take who Christ is and the person of who he is seriously. If you are to have true salvation, you must know the true Savior. Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through Me." Well, if you're going to come through him then you must know him for who he really is and Scripture lays this out and makes it plain. Jesus said, "If you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins, " and so this is a matter of high significance, of high importance to everyone here with us here this morning.

What we find in this text from John 1:14 is we find two aspects of the significance of the coming of Christ, two aspects of the significance of what this verse means. There is the historical significance of what it signifies and then, secondly, there is the revelatory

significance of what it signifies. What happened in time and space history 2,000 years ago in the land of Israel, we want to see that from this text, and what does it mean about God and what does it mean about Christ; the historical significance and the revelatory significance, that's what we're going to see as we go through this text this morning.

So point number 1 this morning: the historical significance of what happened and what this text means. The first half of this text makes two historical assertions. Look at it there with me in verse 14, the first assertion is this, "the Word became flesh." Do you see that there? It's making a statement about what happened in the past. In the past, the Word became flesh and then, secondly, you see alongside that what happened after the Word became flesh and that coordinating conjunction there, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Something happened, the Word became flesh, and then after he became flesh there was something else that happened in time and space history, he dwelt among us. So that's the historical significance that we're about to look at, the Word became flesh, we'll see what that means, and then he dwelt among us, and we'll see what that means as well.

So first of all, the Word became flesh, that's the first aspect of this historical significance. For today, we see that this was the Word that was God. Go back to chapter 1, verse 1. We covered this briefly last week but I want to show it to you again. John's gospel opens on the theme of the Word, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Now without getting into the depth of the Trinitarian significance of this passage, just notice a couple of things here. Notice that it says, "In the beginning was the Word." The Greek construction in this means that at the time of the beginning, going back to the very start of creation in a Genesis 1:1 kind of way, before that time the Word was continually existing. Before time began the Word was, the Word existed and was existing back in eternity past.

So the Word was someone who was preexistent, and as you continue on there in verse 1, you read that "the Word was with God," and that indicates that somehow the Word is separate from God. If you are going to be with someone, you have to somehow be separate from him, separate from her, not that God is a her, just speaking in human language here; if you're going to be with someone, there's a separate identity of some kind that is in place, and yet you read on and you see that it says there in verse 1 that "the Word was God." This Word who was in the beginning, this Word who was with God, was himself God and therefore equal with God. God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit, although he's not in this text, God the Son, God the Spirit fully equal in their essence. Nothing about Christ is inferior to who God the Father is.

Look over at John 14:9 for one aspect of what we need to say here and we'll probably look at this again a little later this morning. John 14:9, Jesus said to Philip there at the end of the verse, he said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." To look at Christ is to see what God the Father is like. God the Father is infinite and unchanging and perfectly holy. No one, no one is like that except God himself and yet Christ says to Philip, "When you see Me, you see God the Father, you see a perfect exact representation of what God the Father is like when you observe Me and when you study Me."

So that's the opening verse there of John 1:1, now in verse 14 this Word who was in the beginning, this Word who was with God, this Word that was God in the beginning, that Word we see in verse 14, that is the Word that we see in verse 14, "the Word became flesh." And so taken together these verses teach us that God became a man. Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, 100% deity, 100% humanity in the one person of Jesus Christ. You could say it this way, the invisible God, I'll say that again, the invisible God added visible humanity to his person, and what does that mean? It means that God has revealed himself in a person, the person of Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ, beloved, listen to these nouns carefully, in Jesus Christ dwell the depth, the substance, and the very essence of God himself. Christ is more than a good teacher. Christ is more than a prophet. Christ is not simply a god as the Mormons like to say. Christ was God himself and the grace of God and the truth of God come to men in and through the person of Jesus Christ, and these principles of grace and truth abide evermore in him. He is the exact representation of God because he is God himself. That is the Christ in whom you must believe if you are to be delivered from your sins. You must know him for who he really is.

Go back to the book of Hebrews with me to Hebrews 1, and here in this text you're going to see that Christ is the climactic revelation of God; he is the final word, you could say. In Hebrews 1:1 we read this, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son," the original text says, "in Son," it's even more clear and more emphatic. It's "in Son," it's "in the Son" that God has made himself known. Verse 2, "whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." Again, you see the preexistence of Christ, that it was in Christ that the world was created. Before Genesis 1:1, Christ. And then we see this in verse 3 as it reflects on the revelatory nature of Christ, it says in verse 3, "And [Christ] is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature." There is no diminishment of the revelation of God in Christ. There is nothing missing because in Christ dwells all the fullness of deity in bodily form. That is who the only Savior of mankind is, he is God in human flesh, and you go on and read in verse 3, "and [He] upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

So in Jesus Christ, the fact that the Word became flesh, that is the historical significance of what John is speaking of here in verse 14. In Christ God became a man, that's what happened in real history. When Jesus was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary, when he was born to her nine months later, God had become a man, God had entered into the fullness of humanity even humbling himself to the lowest and lowliest position of being formed in his mother's womb. It is not that Mary is the mother of God, Mary is the mother of the human form of Jesus because God preexisted Mary and she could not in any way have given birth to God himself, she gave birth to the human form of Jesus. These are matters of great importance.

So beloved, here's what we need to see. When we come to the Lord Jesus Christ, when you read about Christ in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, you need to understand this and have it very clear in your mind: Jesus Christ does not merely teach us about God, he doesn't simply tell us principles by which we can learn about God, Jesus Christ himself

reveals God, he manifests God, God has appeared in the Lord Jesus Christ because Christ himself is fully God, he bears the full essence of God without any diminishment whatsoever. There was never a time where Jesus did not exist. There was never a time where the Son of God did not exist contrary to what Jehovah's Witnesses and other Arians might try to tell you. Christ is eternal in the same way that God the Father is eternal. These are matters of great importance.

Charles Spurgeon said this, speaking of Christ he said, "He took on Him the very nature and substance of manhood. He did not merely assume the name and notion and appearance of manhood but the reality, the weakness, the suffering, the mortality of our manhood He actually took into union with Himself. Our Lord is as truly and as really man as He is God; not only does God dwell in the body of a man but our Lord Jesus is God and man in one person."

So when the apostles and the other witnesses of the time saw Jesus in the flesh, they were not seeing an appearance, they were not seeing a ghost, they were not seeing some spiritual apparition. They were seeing a real man in real time and Christ as a man suffered hunger, he suffered thirst, he had human emotions, he lived in obedience to his parents and submitted to his parents as Luke 2 tells us. Those and all other aspects of his humanity excepting the sin of it, he experienced the fullness of humanity, experienced temptation and thus he is fully identified with men by becoming a man.

Now stay with me here and understand something. Both aspects of the person of Christ are absolutely essential if any man is going to be saved. I've said this in the past, if a bridge is going to successfully span across a body of water, it has to make contact with land on both sides of the body of water. In the same way, if a man is to be saved, if the infinite chasm between God and man not only in essence but in sin, if that infinite chasm is going to be bridged there has to be someone who has his foot both in deity and his foot in humanity otherwise the bridge collapses. In Christ we have a Savior who is God himself and therefore is fully identified with God, in Christ we have a man who is fully identified with humanity, and therefore having joined the two natures into one, he and he alone is available, he and he alone is able to be the Savior. Someone who is not God cannot die for an extended number of people. Someone who is not a man cannot die for man and take away their sins. There has to be a full identity with the essence of God and with the essence of humanity and that's what Jesus Christ has done.

So when we contemplate this, we realize that there are great realities that are unveiled in the Lord Jesus Christ and so we see this historical assertion that "the Word became flesh." Now John adds a second historical assertion. Go back to John 1:14 with me. John 1:14. We see the second aspect, not only that "the Word became flesh" but, secondly, he "dwelt among us." The Word dwelt among us. The Word became flesh, the Word dwelt among us. So 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ literally lived with men on this earth. During the course of his earthly lifetime, he moved about men who witnessed him, who felt his flesh, who heard him speak, who witnessed his works, and he lived among us.

Now this word for "dwelt among us," it's from the Greek word "skeno," and it means "to take up residence, or he lived, or he dwelt," and what it's saying is that when the Word became flesh, when Jesus Christ became a man, he took up residence among men. He lived among men. And what's fascinating about that verb is that the noun form of this verb in the original language refers to the tabernacle, the place where God manifested his presence and met with his people in the Old Testament. God in the Old Testament manifested his presence in the tabernacle, later manifested his presence in the temple, and thus, in a sense, he dwelt among us in the temple but not in bodily form. With Christ, what we have now is God has manifested his presence, God has taken up residence and met with his people in the person of Jesus Christ and so Christ was manifesting the very presence of God to those who saw him as he lived among men.

So compared to the Old Testament and the shadows of the tabernacle, in Christ in the New Testament era God was now dwelling with his people in a far more personal way, in the most intimate of ways. It far exceeded what Israel knew in the shadows of ceremonies and animal sacrifices, and this is one of the reasons, beloved, why it is so important for you not to be drawn in, not to be tempted to go back to Old Testament rituals, to Old Testament feasts and things like that, those were shadows that were inferior to the greater coming of Christ. And because Christ has come, the shadows go away. When the fullness of light comes, the shadows disappear and in that way, in the same way the coming of Christ has done away with those ceremonies that looked forward to Christ. Now that we have the fulfillment, we do not dabble in the shadows.

So as Christ lived among men, men were able to see him, hear him, feel him, and touch him. They heard his authoritative teaching. Look over at Matthew 7 with me. They heard his authoritative teaching and it astonished them. Matthew 7:28, after Jesus finished preaching the Sermon on the Mount, "the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." Jesus' teaching was such that they knew that they had never heard anything like that. It was astonishing to them to see a man of such authority, of such power in his speaking, of such wisdom and insight and depth of understanding, "never a man spoke like this," it was said of him elsewhere in Scripture.

In addition to hearing his authoritative teaching as the Word dwelt among them, they witnessed his supernatural miracles. Look over at Luke 5 with me. Luke 5. I want to spend just a moment looking at this. There's a lot to be said from this text in Luke 5 as we see the Lord dwelling among men. Luke 5:1, "Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the people from the boat." Do you see the emphasis on teaching while the Lord was on earth; his ministry was one of teaching and proclaiming the word of God? Nothing has changed, beloved, in the ensuing 2,000 years. The teaching of the word of God is central to true ministry. It cannot be marginalized and still claim to be a biblical ministry. That is essential and critical for us to understand.

Jesus was teaching there in verse 3 from the boat, "When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.'" I'll give you a preview of what's about to happen here. Jesus having taught verbally the people is now going to do a sign to authenticate and verify the veracity of his teaching. He's going to do something that no man could do in order to show that his teaching was the very word of God. And so he tells Simon in verse 4, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon, the fisherman, the professional fisherman, "answered and said, 'Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing,'" in other words, "Lord, this is not a good idea. I know that there are no fish here. We've just worked all night, we're professional fishermen and so this is not going to prove anything, but," verse 5, "I will do as You say and let down the nets." This was hardly Peter at his highest moment of trusting faith. "But I'll do it. You say to do it, I'll do it but, Lord, You're on Your own on this one. Whatever happens, You're responsible. I warned You ahead of time this wasn't going to work."

Verse 6, "When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break; so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink." The Lord whom we saw earlier through whom God created the world, was continuing to exercise his sovereignty over creation and natural elements. And so he supernaturally called together fish to come into those nets and it was so massive and so beyond human ability, so beyond human capacity that there was no other conclusion to draw but the fact that this was God in human flesh who was speaking and who had just performed this miracle.

Now what happened at that manifestation of the person of God? What was Peter's response? "When Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, 'Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!'" There's a lot to be said there. In the context of John 1:14, what I want you to see is that God became a man and his disciples witnessed his supernatural miracles. They were direct eyewitnesses of it and saw it and verified it in the same way that you and I verify reality around us with their five human senses. They saw it. It was real.

Now along with that, let me say this. A couple of weeks ago, I made a comment about Muslim visions and I got some questions about that and that was fine, I was glad to hear from people and glad that that connected to a reality that, you know, people were wondering about and had read about. Understand this and use this as a principle of discernment every time you hear someone saying that they had a vision of Jesus and then going on and talking about what a great and wonderful experience it was for them, and how, you know, they talk about it in rather dreamy terms and, you know, and how it just made them feel warm and peaceful inside and all of that. Beloved, there's a couple of things that you need to understand about that and the reason that we don't rely on visions to be the basis upon which we find a revelation of God, first of all, Scripture says definitively that Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light. The fact that someone sees a supernatural vision is no indication that it's a vision from God, quite to the

contrary, it's going to be a manifestation of Satan himself because revelation is over, it is complete in the Scriptures and God is found in the Scriptures now, not through visions, and Scripture explicitly warns us about basing our experience of God on visions. Colossians 2 speaks about this as well, "Don't be led astray by someone who takes his stand on visions that he has seen."

Very important for you to understand this. This is critical to biblical discernment. But going further as we contemplate "the Word dwelt among us" and God having manifested himself, what is Peter's response when he realizes that he's really in the presence of God? He falls at Jesus' feet and he says, "Lord, go away from me, I'm a sinful man! I cannot as a sinful man tolerate the reality of Your presence!" He was undone just like Isaiah in chapter 6 says, "Woe is me for I have seen the Lord and I'm a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips!" In Scripture when people saw a manifestation of the holiness of God, they fell down in terror and, beloved, that is not, that is not the spirit that you find in these supposed modern-day miracles, these modern-day visions, I should say. This is not the experience. When Paul was caught up into heaven as he talks about that in Corinthians, he said, "I saw things that man is not permitted to speak." And yet today we have all kinds of people saying they've gone up to heaven, they come back and now they tell us everything that they saw. Nothing could be more contrary to the word of God than that. People who are exposed to real realities of the holiness of God are shattered by it. They are convicted of sin when it happens in Scripture, and today's claims to vision are nothing like that at all.

So we have to have the discernment and we have to have the willingness to say, no, Scripture alone. True faith in Christ comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. It is based on the revelation of God found in his written word these days. That's one point of discernment and the other aspect is what these modern visions lead to and the way that people talk about them is nothing like the reality of someone that has seen Christ as shown in Scripture. This is so very critical for us to cling to and to hold to and to insist upon.

The Word became flesh. The Word dwelt among us. And so with that little bit of summary, understand this, that for three decades Jesus took up residence among men. They really saw him and it really had an impact on him, and the entire New Testament testifies to these realities, and in the subsequent 2,000 years since Christ became a man, the world has never been the same since then. Everything is changed. We measure time by the Incarnation of Christ, and I realize that there are academics that are trying to, you know, that don't follow the long-established measurement of time and talk about the Common Era, Before the Common Era, After the Common Era, well, what's the dividing point? What's the dividing point? The dividing point is, even in that scheme the dividing point is found in the person of Jesus Christ. So as a matter of historical reality, God actually became a man, actually walked on earth, actually dwelt among men.

And while you're in Luke, let's just remind ourselves of something else of the utter humility that that act was on the part of our Lord Jesus. Look at the end of chapter 9 of Luke down in verse 57. Luke 9:57, "As they were going along the road, someone said to



Him, 'I will follow You wherever You go.' And Jesus said to him, 'The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.'" He dwelt among men but he had no dwelling place of his own. Think about that, God on earth, on the earth that he created without a place to lay his head. Verse 59, "He said to another, 'Follow Me.' But he said, 'Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.' But He said to him, 'Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.' Another also said, 'I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.' But Jesus said to him, 'No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'" You find in Christ this call to absolute discipleship, this call to absolute, unreserved, unqualified commitment to him that human loyalties cannot transcend, human loyalties must bend, human loyalties must yield to the supreme loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is his authority as God and in his humanity we see how much he humbled himself, not only taking on human flesh, not only leaving heaven and the worship of angels, but humbled himself to the point of death even death on a cross after he had lived a life in his adult ministry where he had nowhere to lay his head.

As you start to contemplate the glories of Christ, you get lost in the wonder of it, where to even start to contemplate and to meditate upon the glories of who he is. Do you focus on the greatness of his deity? Do you focus on the greatness of his humility, that he would leave heaven to come on a mission to save sinners who had rebelled against him? Do you focus on how he lived, a perfect life utterly devoid of the trappings of royalty to which he deserved? Do you focus on the fact that he went to the cross and suffered in agony hanging literally between heaven and earth for the salvation of sinners? Do you focus on that? Not only is there no exhausting the glory of Christ, beloved, there is no exhausting the different aspects at which you could begin to consider it. He is so far above us. He is so great, so glorious, and yet glorious in his humility as well.

This is what we contemplate when we see that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, the glories of Christ now revealed for us perfectly and in an inerrant, reliable way in the 66 books of the Bible. That's who Christ is, God in human flesh, and the fact that perhaps if we've grown up in the church and we've been in the church for a long time, we started to hear this and it's kind of become familiar truth for some of us, we should never accept the lethargic spiritual state that just accepts that and just kind of yawns at it as though this is something that I've heard many times before. No, this is the reality of the glory of God found in the person of Christ and the true Christian never tires of it, the true Christian never exhausts the fullness of what it means.

So the Word became flesh, the Word dwelt among us, those are the historical assertions that we see in this passage in John 1. Now let's go on and consider the revelatory significance of it, the revelatory significance of John 1:14. Let's look at the verse again and as we do understand this, that the Incarnation was nothing less than the very revelation of very God himself. John 1:14, "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and," so you've got the Word became flesh and he dwelt among us, and there's something else, there's something further, "we saw His glory." The word "and" there, that coordinating conjunction indicates that there was a consequence to Christ's coming.

Something had happened, something took place while Christ was dwelling among men, and what John is saying is that "we saw Him," we, meaning the apostolic circle; those that were close to Christ, the verified apostles, they saw him. John and his contemporaries beheld him and they saw something, they saw his glory.

The verb there "saw" is from the Greek word "theaomai." It means more than a passing glance. It's more than just seeing somebody drive by on the street and say, "Oh, I saw the car go by." Or you bump into somebody and you have a five minute discussion with them, "I saw Jane when I was at the store today." That's not the idea of "saw" here. This is more than a passing glance. One lexicon says it means "to look upon with special interest." There's a gazing that has the idea, an intent focus. "We looked upon Him with intent focus and we saw His glory." So the apostles did not merely observe Jesus as he walked by, they looked upon him and they took notice, as it were, they sat up straight and looked and paid attention as they saw Christ, and as a result of that, the apostles have and had a special perception about Christ, a special understanding, a depth of recognition that goes past a casual acquaintance; aided by the Holy Spirit the apostles realized that they were looking at glory in the highest sense and they were looking at truth Incarnate.

Look at it there with me again, "we saw His glory," and then he expands on what the glory was, "glory as of the only begotten from the Father," glory that was "full of grace and truth." The wonder, the excellence, the majesty of Christ that they saw, John says, was a revelation of the very glory of God himself. So "His glory" refers to the glory of Christ and what a privilege it is for us to contemplate this and for me to even be able to say something like what I am about to say. We are really privileged to have the word of God in our own language. Beloved, we are privileged to be able to study the word of God in peace. Whatever else is happening around us, we are privileged to hear about the Christ who came to save sinners just like you. We're privileged to have the Holy Spirit with us to help us understand. All of these things are great privileges from God that we should never take advantage of or assume that it's always going to be like this. We need to capitalize on the opportunities while we can.

So as we contemplate the glory of Christ, let me say this, that Jesus Christ has intrinsic, infinite merit. He is infinitely worthy of worship. There is no exhausting his goodness and his greatness because Jesus Christ is uniquely the representative of God the Father. There is no one else like him. There is no other place where God has revealed himself in a man but in Christ, and so because he represents the infinitely holy God, because he himself is the infinitely holy God in human flesh, the fullness of sovereign majesty, the fullness of God's omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence, all of the essence of God somehow localized in the person of Jesus Christ, when we look on Christ we are seeing the greatest one in the universe. We cannot comprehend his greatness. We can know it truly but we cannot know it exhaustively. That's how great Christ is. That's how infinite he is. His merit, his righteousness, his greatness is beyond all measurement and it is because he uniquely, in a way no one else does, reveals and manifests God. It is an appearance of God in Christ.

Now many Scriptures speak of Christ in these revelatory terms. Let me just camp on this for just a moment. This is so important to understand, that in Christ God is making himself known. God is revealing himself. He is manifesting himself to those who look upon Christ and that's why it is so important for you, my friend, it is so important for you to consider carefully how you are responding to Christ, how you respond to this truth, because how you respond to Christ is how you respond to God himself, and the one who rejects Christ rejects God and seals their doom for an eternal judgment in hell. This is no academic matter that we are considering here today, we are dealing with matters of eternal life and eternal death as we proclaim Christ to you. We are standing, as it were, we are standing with our heels on the cliff without a rail in front of us, we're standing on a cliff over which eternity hangs and the question is whether you're going to ground the heels and the feet of your soul on the rock of Christ or whether you'll take another step forward and plunge into an everlasting fall that leads into everlasting doom. Nothing less than that is at stake in what we are considering here.

So Scripture speaks of Christ in these revelatory terms, these terms by which he makes God known to us so that you read in 2 Corinthians 4:4, "Christ is the image of God." In Colossians 1:15, "He is the image of the invisible God." Christ manifests exactly who God is because he is God. Jesus said in John 8:19, "If you knew Me, you would know My Father also. He who has seen Me has seen the Father."

John Owen, I've quoted from this book in the past, a little Puritan paperback published by the Banner of Truth titled "The Glory of Christ," I highly recommend that book to you. John Owen says this, "Christ is specially glorious because He and He alone perfectly reveals God's nature and will to us. Without Christ we would have known nothing truly about God for He would have been eternally invisible to us."

Jesus Christ put God on display in a way that was new in the progress of revelation so that, look back at John 1:14, John identifies the glory here, "glory as of the only begotten from the Father." When they heard the astonishing teaching, when they saw the astonishing miracles, beloved, they were seeing not the glory of a mere man, they were seeing the glory of God, the unique non-repeatable glory of God, and the Father loved Christ like no one else so that the Father speaks from heaven at different times in the gospels and says, "This is My beloved Son. In Him I am well-pleased." God pleased with Christ. God perfectly pleased with his Son. It's rather challenging, very humbling, for us as sinful creatures to look upon Christ and say are we perfectly pleased with him as our Beloved? Are we well-pleased with Christ? In Christ do we find our all-in-all? In Christ do we find our reason to live? In Christ do we find our highest loyalty, our highest priority? Are we pleased with him like that? In Christ do we find our satisfaction even in the midst of distressing circumstances?

Scripture lays it all out. Christ displayed God in truth, in other words, he showed God's glory as it really is. Charles Spurgeon said this, he said, "The grace in Christ is true grace. It is not fiction or vague hope. It is grace which, in fact, brings redemption and pardons sin. It, in fact, gives new life and a salvation which completely saves." You see, it's true. Beloved, you see the theme? Truth. The way things really are. The way that it is

accurately. And it is in Christ as fully God, fully man in one person. It is in Christ, Christ crucified, Christ resurrected, Christ ascended. Only in that Christ is true salvation found.

Do you know Christ in that way? Do you confess Christ with your mouth in that way? Do you own him as Lord and God in that way? Do you rely on Christ and Christ alone for your righteousness before God in that way? Or are you still trafficking in the cheap wares of, "I've been a pretty good person. I'm sure God will let me into heaven." Understand that those words can never come from the lips of a true Christian because a true Christian understands that it's in Christ alone where glory and truth are revealed, where God is revealed. It is in Christ alone that we find this gracious truth.

Spurgeon again says, "It is not the truth in Christ, the truth in Christ is not truth which condemns and punishes, it is truth," these are sweet words, "it is truth steeped in love, truth dripping with mercy. The truth Christ brings to us comes not from the judgment seat but from the mercy seat."

Now beloved, this revelation of Christ that we've seen here today, it's no longer visible to human eyes. Christ went up to heaven. Christ is at the right hand of God and when he comes a second time it's not going to be in private visions, he's going to come in a way that every eye will see him and look upon him whom they pierced. So we don't look for spiritual visions, rather we look in the written word. The knowledge of Christ is manifested to us now to our minds by the Holy Spirit through the word of God. That's where Christ is found. And as he saves and builds up his people, as you and I look upon Christ and contemplate these truths to us, he changes us. The contemplation of the truth of Christ, the Word made flesh, the Word dwelt among us, the Word revealing God, as we contemplate these truths about him and we contemplate them as Christians, the contemplation itself changes us from one image of glory to another. It changes us from one particular kind of likeness to Christ to a greater likeness of Christ.

Colossians 1:28 and 29 says this and, beloved, this is why we do what we do at Truth Community Church and this is what we do at Truth Community Church. Paul says, "We proclaim Him," in other words, we proclaim Christ. That's what we have done today, we have proclaimed Christ as a body. And he goes on to say, "admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ." Paul says, "For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me." You see, the true church doesn't simply proclaim Christ, it admonishes men to hear and to heed when he is proclaimed. There is accountability within the body of Christ that comes from the proclamation of this authoritative word.

John Owen, again, says this, "Satan deceives many into a false assurance by which they promise peace to themselves and so live in a vague presumption that they will be saved by Christ even though they have no idea how. This is why Paul presses on Christians the duty of self-examination. We must ask ourselves whether Christ is in us or not, and He cannot be in us unless He has been received by that faith with which we behold His glory." You must behold the true Christ and receive him by faith if you are going to be saved from your sins.

So my friends, I ask you, are you in Christ? You young people, are you in Christ? Do you see the true glory of God in Christ and in Christ alone? O beloved, I beg you, I beg you, I plead with you in the spirit of 2 Corinthians 5 as Paul begged the Corinthians, I beg you, do not settle for vague notions of religion that do not save. Don't settle for simply appearing amongst the people of God for a period of time while holding all of the reality of it at arm's distance. You must embrace Christ or you will be lost. You must embrace Christ as God in human flesh, crucified, buried and risen for your sins and for your salvation. You can't rely on what the person next to you is going to do. You can't rely on anything like that. Beloved, you yourself must go directly to Christ and plead with him for mercy upon your soul. Ask him to save you and to make himself known to you so that you can say, "By faith I see the glory of Christ. It is the glory in Him of the only Begotten from the Father full of grace and truth."

Let's pray together.

*O Christ, corporately we receive You as exactly as You are revealed in Scripture, individually we pray that it would be true for each man, woman, boy and girl here. In the name of Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.*

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