

The Gospel Is Trustworthy

1 John 1

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Good morning to you all at Truth Community Fellowship. I'm filming this at my home in Acton, California, wishing that I could be with you but hopefully it's not going to be too much longer before we're actually in residence in northern Kentucky and able to be with you live and these videos will be a thing of the past. For now, I'm grateful to have this means of being able to share the word of God with you on this first Sunday in June, June 3. It's hard to believe that we are already into the six month of the year but here we are and continuing on this morning in our study of 1 John. If you're a visitor with us, we're working our way through the book of 1 John. We just started three weeks ago on May 13 and now here we are, we're going to continue on and get back into that as God continues to use his word to sanctify his people. Our motto at Truth Community Fellowship is "Teaching God's people God's word." We come together on every Sunday to build up the saints through the teaching of God's word, through fellowship, and if you don't have a church home, we invite you to come join us as we seek to grow in the word of God and in our spiritual lives together. We would love to have you with us in the days to come so if you're a visitor, welcome. If you're visiting the Creation Museum over the weekend and just stop by, I wish I could be there to greet you personally but know that we are happy to have you. You're always welcome at Truth Community Fellowship. We have so much in common with the ministry of the Creation Museum, a commitment to the authority of the word of God and that's why we teach it verse by verse, week by week, month by month as long as the Lord gives us breath. That's what you'll find us doing at Truth Community so come back and visit us again if you're able to do so.

For this morning, we're going to go back to 1 John. Now, the past two weeks, the last two weeks in May, we've done a series on the humanity of Christ in connection with our introductory study of 1 John because that's where John starts his letter. He starts out by emphasizing the humanity of Christ and so we wanted to kind of fill that out from the Gospel accounts because what John assumed in so few words in the beginning of the first four verses of his book, we wanted to kind of fill that out from the Gospel so that we were thinking along the same lines with John. Well, now that we've done that, we can go back to the book of 1 John and take a look at the reason that these things are trustworthy.

I've titled this message "The Gospel Is Trustworthy." It is to be believed and the question is that how do we know that? Well, the humanity of Christ was central to John's reason

for writing his letter and we see that right from the very beginning. And remember what John was doing as we remember back to our opening message on May 13 about this book, John was writing to help believers experience spiritual victory in a hostile world. That's necessary for us to know because the world tempts us and the world hates us and tries to deceive us with its false prophets and false teachers, and those spiritual realities tend to discourage us as we feel the weight of them and sometimes succumb to those things in our spiritual lives. But the reason that John wrote is to help us understand that we do not have to buckle under the weight of the world's opposition and the difficulties that it brings into our lives. God has provided for our spiritual victory as Christians in a profound reality that is rooted in the truth that God loves his children and has provided for their spiritual welfare. He loves us. He has given us discernment. He has given us victory. He has given us Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. So when we say God loves us, we're not saying that in a sugary sentimental way. That is rooted in profound, the most profound biblical and theological realities that though we were enemies of God, Christ loved us, Christ gave himself up for us, Christ has taken our sins away when he died on the cross and rose again for our salvation.

So God has intervened in a marvelous wonderful way in the lives of Christians that has changed the trajectory of their eternal destination. Though we were once hell bound, we're now heaven bound. Though we once were in the domain of Satan, we now belong to the kingdom of God. Where as once we were in darkness, now we are in light. As the hymn writer said, "I once was blind, but now I see," because God has loved me and saved me from my sins. And it's not just me, that's true of every one of you in the exact same way if you have received Christ for your salvation from sin. We have a wonderful Savior who has given us a wonderful salvation and as wonderful as it is in this life, it's only going to get better because one day we're going to see Christ face to face in all his glory. We'll be transformed and we'll be like him and the wonder of salvation will just continue to be glorious throughout all of eternity. That's what we have. Those are glorious promises that we find for God's children in God's word.

Now, the question is, if you're a thinking person, the question is: how can we know that these things are true? On what basis do we believe them? Well, you might quickly respond, "Well, that's what the Bible says and I believe the Bible." That's a good answer but the answer goes deeper than that. Why is it that we can believe the Bible? Why is the Bible trustworthy? Because the Bible tells us about the Gospel. If we say the Gospel is trustworthy, the Bible must be trustworthy, how do we know that? How can we rest our souls on these truths? Why is this credible? How can you know that you can trust these truths? Well, if your heart is weak today and you've been tossed by doubts, I'm going to give you some things to help you lay hold of these riches as we talk about the Gospel is trustworthy. And it is. You can bank your eternal soul on the truth of the Gospel and we say that without apology, we say it without fear, we say it without any hint of concern that it will ever be contradicted because the Gospel is rooted in the person and work of Jesus Christ himself.

But here in the book of 1 John, I want to give you two compelling reasons why you can trust the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and when you go back to these truths that the provision

that God has given us is adequate for our spiritual lives in this hostile world, I want you to understand with clarity why it is that your soul truly can rest on those great truths, and we're going to see these in the first four verses of the letter of 1 John. The first one is this: the eyewitnesses are trustworthy. The eyewitnesses who recorded for us the scriptural truths that we find in the New Testament about Jesus Christ, those eyewitnesses are trustworthy.

Look at the first four verses of chapter 1 here, and I'll just read them to kind of set them in our mind. John says,

1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life - 2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us - 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

What is John doing in those opening verses? He is asserting that the testimony that he gives about Christ is reliable. It's a fascinating passage, even from a grammatical standpoint. Some English translations smooth over what I'm about to tell you but the NASB from which I just read, follows the Greek order, the order of the Greek text. The main verb in this very complex sentence doesn't come up until verse 3. In verse 3, John says, "we proclaim to you." That's where the main verb of the clause is; that's where the action is, "we proclaim to you." What he's been saying in the first two verses is the content of that proclamation. He emphasizes the content of his proclamation with the way that he structured the passage. The sense of the flow of this sentence from verse 1 to verse 3, oversimplified but just to give you a sense of how the original text reads, it goes like this, "What we have heard and seen, that is what we proclaim to you." That's a basic summary of the thrust of the passage, "What we have heard and seen, that is what proclaim to you." So what John is saying is that we have seen this, we are personal eyewitnesses to the truths that we declare to you. We didn't make this up. We didn't read it in a book. We experienced it in time and space with our own eyes and with our own ears and with our own hands.

Now, the opening phrase as we look at verse 1, he says, "What was from the beginning." That sounds a little bit like the opening of the Gospel of John where it says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." So you have that "in the beginning" sense both in John's Gospel and in this letter of 1 John. And consequently many commentators believe that John is asserting the eternal preexistence of Christ as he opens 1 John, that he is referring back to the very beginning of time and that Christ existed before that moment in time, that moment of creation, and that that's what John is referring to here in 1 John just like he was in the Gospel of John. But while the language is similar, I don't think that that's what John is talking about here in 1 John. It is absolutely true that Christ was preexistent, that he was with the Father before time

began, and it's absolutely true that that's what the Gospel of John is teaching when it says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." All of that is absolutely true but the question is: what is John talking about here in 1 John? And here the context seems to be the emphasis on Christ's earthly life. John is about to speak of the realities of Christ that he had personally seen and heard. These are the human realities of the person of Christ that we've looked at over the past two weeks. Well, John is going back to that and John is emphasizing that here at the opening because the humanity of Christ and the reality of the humanity of Christ is central to his argument throughout his entire letter.

So that's why he's starting with that and as you continue on in verse 1, you realize that John is emphasizing his personal experience with Christ which points to the earthly life of Christ rather than his preexistence as the opening begins. What John is saying is that these realities of Christ are things that I experienced with my own sense of hearing, my own sense of sight, my own sense of touch. He's not dealing in speculations. The Bible isn't about abstract philosophies or moralistic theories about some Christ forgotten and buried 2,000 years ago. No, when the apostles wrote the New Testament, they were writing about realities that they had personally experienced with the same human faculties that you yourself use to interpret reality all around you. These are the means that God has given us to acquire knowledge. It's what you and I use to acquire knowledge in our lives and what John is saying is that, "My human faculties were fully engaged in the presence of the human life of Jesus Christ and therefore," this is the point, "therefore I am qualified to talk to you about the interpretation of the life of Christ as an apostle of Christ."

Look at verse 1 with me again. He says, "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life." As you read those verbs in that verse, there is an increasing level of intimacy to the terms that John uses to describe his experience with Christ. He had heard Christ teach with his own ears over a period of at least three years. He saw Christ with his own eyes both, this is important, both before and after the resurrection. John was one of the first two to go into the tomb, he and Peter. They ran to the tomb and they saw the empty tomb and then he saw the resurrected Christ on different occasions. So he saw these things with his own eyes. He heard them with his own ears. He touched Christ with his own hands.

And John uses two Greek words for "sight" here, he says, "what we have seen and what we have looked at." One of those words refers to physical vision in the normal sense, the other word refers to a careful deliberate looking at the object in order to interpret it. What John is saying is, "I not only saw him with my eyes, I did do that, but I examined him carefully. I scrutinized this and so I can tell you with certainty that what I'm telling you is true." In other words, John not only saw the outward form of Jesus in his human body, he also discerned the spiritual reality about him. In the Gospel of John, chapter 1, verse 14, John said, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." There is that reference to the human life of Christ. And he goes on to say, "we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." John interpreted the spiritual reality.

Even though Jesus had the mere appearance of a man as we looked at a couple of weeks ago, John saw in him the glory of God in the perfection of his human character. He also saw that glory manifested in the Transfiguration and he saw that Christ was full of grace and truth. There was so much more than sight, there was this intellectual comprehension about the reality of Christ and John verified it with his own senses.

Let me take you to a couple of passages that will show that for you in the Gospel of John, John 13. You can go ahead and turn there with me, even though from this distance I won't hear the crinkling of the pages like I like to hear when it's live. But in John 13:23, it's a recitation of the last supper and it says that, "There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved." That's the way that John referred to himself in his Gospel, he was that disciple whom Jesus loved. What I want you to see is that he was leaning his head on Jesus' chest. In verse 24, "Simon Peter gestured to him, and said to him, 'Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking.' He, leaning back thus on Jesus' bosom, said to Him, 'Lord, who is it?'" My only point is that he was in close physical contact with Christ. His head was touching the chest of Jesus in the way that they ate meals together in that time. So John personally experienced the physical reality of Christ.

Then look at John 20, beginning in verse 27. I'll give you a moment to turn there. The Gospel of John, chapter 20, verse 27. You'll remember the story of Thomas and how he refused to believe the resurrection of Christ; it was a true reality until he had the opportunity to verify it with his own senses. Well, Jesus shows up in his resurrected body and he says to Thomas in verse 27, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas saw it and verified it and he answered and said to Christ in verse 28, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed." So the apostles emphasized and John himself emphasized this physical interaction with Christ.

Now, why does he do that here at the start of 1 John? Well, remember that he is facing and refuting false teachers, and what John is saying, and remember he's writing 60 years after the life of Christ with the full faculties of his memory fully engaged, and he's about to speak about Christ in this letter and what he is saying is that, "My testimony is reliable. I saw it with my own eyes. I touched it with my own hands. I heard it with my own ears. And that distinguishes me from the false teachers who are trying to trouble you." His testimony about Christ was based on his God-given faculties and he is emphasizing the reliability of his testimony, the certainty of his own experience and that positions him to properly interpret Christ to his readers in the first century, and on a human level, qualifies him to interpret Christ to us as we read his letter 2,000 years later. He is a trustworthy eyewitness. So, follow this, beloved, when the Apostle John says, when he says God loves us and gives us the victory, you can trust what he says. He knows what he's talking about and that gives us reason to believe, gives us reason to trust even on a human level, and that gives us confidence that we can build our life and rest our eternal soul upon.

Now, we're used to emphasizing the divine inspiration of the Scriptures when we teach on the authority of the Bible as we did back in March when we taught on Psalm 19, and it

is important that we do that. The Gospel is absolutely trustworthy and the Bible is inerrant and infallible because the Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures which we have in our hands. Today we're making a different point, a related point but a different point. Today what John is emphasizing and what I want you to see is that the Gospel is trustworthy even from a human perspective because it is based on the testimony of eyewitnesses who have handed it down to us. It's not just a religious story, this is what the Apostle John saw in time and space.

So when you read the Bible, beloved, you're not going back through several hundred years, 2,000 years of it being passed down like the old telephone game, you know, where you tell one person the story and then he repeats it to another, repeats it to another, and then by the time it circles back around, it's something completely different than what you started out with. That is not what the Bible is like at all. When you read the Bible, you are reading the account of an eyewitness and you're reading what he personally wrote as the Holy Spirit gave him the words to write. So you're skipping over 2,000 years of history and you are getting the testimony about Christ directly from an eyewitness when you open up a New Testament and read it. That ought to send chills down your spine and it sends chills down my spine as I think about it even as I'm teaching you here this morning. We have a direct eyewitness account in our hands when we read the New Testament and so we have a direct eyewitness and it's just one link between us and Christ and that is the Apostle John who was there, who saw it, who heard it, who touched him, and when we read what he wrote, we have a direct link with the Christ that he saw. It's a wonderful gift that God has given us in the Scriptures, isn't it? No wonder we spend our time teaching it. No wonder we love the Bible. That is the greatest gift, that is the greatest book in the world by far. Every other human book combined does not begin to approach the value of the holy Scriptures that God has given us in the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments of our Bible. The testimony of the eyewitnesses is trustworthy and that's why the Gospel is trustworthy and that's why you can rest your soul in the fact that God has given us spiritual victory in the midst of this hostile world. Those are the truths that God has given for us in his word.

Well, there is more to it than that. It's more than the fact that the eyewitnesses are trustworthy, although that's very true. The second point this morning, it's not just that the eyewitnesses are trustworthy, the Savior is trustworthy. Jesus Christ is trustworthy. John opens by emphasizing his own experience as we saw in verse 1, but he goes on a little bit of a tangent in verse 2 to expand on the person of Jesus Christ. Look at verse 2 with me, chapter 1, verse 2. John says, "the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us."

Now, I want to use this verse to highlight two aspects of Christ himself that makes the Gospel trustworthy and the first one is this, the Savior is trustworthy and how do we expand on that? Well, the person of the Savior is trustworthy. The person of the Savior is trustworthy. At the end of verse 1, John says that he was writing about "the Word of Life." Now, verse 2 is a parenthetical statement. He had been talking in verse 1 about his personal experience of Christ, now in verse 2, he's going to go on a little bit of a tangent and talk about Christ himself before he gets back in verse 3 to his main point that he's

making. The word "life" here in verse 2 refers to Christ. It was the life that was manifested. It was the life that John had seen. It was the eternal life that was continuously with the Father and was manifested to us. You see, the person of the Savior is trustworthy. God had previously been hidden from human eyes but when Christ came, God revealed himself in human flesh. Christ was with God the Father from all of eternity in face to face intimate communion, but when he became a man, when he came to earth, the life of God was manifested to all of those human witnesses who observed Christ over the course of his earthly life. John uses the phrase "the Word of Life" at the end of verse 1 to refer to the Gospel message about Christ. His eyewitness testimony from verse 1 about the Gospel is based on the reality of Christ made manifest in verse 2.

Let me try to summarize all of that for you. John's argument is a little bit complex here. Basically what he's saying here is that the Gospel interprets the historical facts about Christ so that those who hear the Gospel can believe in him. John in the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, tell us the story of the earthly life of Christ and, loosely speaking, generally speaking, the epistles of Romans through the book of Jude interpret that life for us; they help us understand the significance of those historical facts that are found in the Gospel. That's an oversimplification but it serves our purpose for this morning. The Gospel interprets the facts so that you and I can believe in Christ. John comforts his readers with a trustworthy Gospel about a trustworthy Savior. Jesus is God in human flesh and because he's God in human flesh, he was manifested from heaven. He's God in human flesh. Watch this, because he is God, that means that he has the power to save us. He has the power to preserve us. He has the power to glorify us when we are in his presence in heaven. Jesus' power, Jesus' person makes the Gospel trustworthy.

Now understand this, this is a really important point: the Gospel does not describe how you can save yourself. The Gospel is not about how you can do good works in order to merit the favor of God. The message of the Gospel is the exact opposite of that. The Gospel says that you are a lost and ruined sinner, dead in trespasses and sin, and you have no capacity in yourself to save yourself. I'm speaking especially now to those of you who are not Christians. The Gospel is a message, in one sense, of utter hopelessness to you in the sense that it tells you that it is hopeless for you to try to save yourself because you cannot do it. You have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Your good works can't save you and if you keep trying to do good works, you're only multiplying your sin in trying to establish your own way of righteousness instead of submitting to the righteousness of God that's revealed in the Gospel. So to you, my unsaved friend, I declare to you the reality of the Gospel and it is this: it's that Jesus Christ saves sinners. Jesus Christ will save you if you come to him and come out of the world, come out of yourself, justification, come out of your works and come to him and declare spiritual bankruptcy, as it were, and tell him, "I know that I'm a lost sinner. I know that I cannot save myself. Lord Jesus, you must save me or I will be eternally lost." The Bible says that based on the death and resurrection of Christ when you come to him in that kind of saving faith, that Christ will save you. It is the promise of the Gospel that he will save everyone who comes to him and so come to him, my unsaved friend. Come to him in faith. Come to him in repentance. Leave your old life and leave your sin behind so that

you might receive the salvation that God offers to you in the Gospel. Jesus Christ is the Savior of sinners. His person is trustworthy and therefore the Gospel is trustworthy. Come to Christ for salvation. I beg you, come to him so that you can be saved along with the rest of us who have been saved in just that same way because he will save you. His love guarantees it and his honesty guarantees that he'll keep his promise that he offers to you in the Gospel.

Well, there's a second aspect of the Gospel that makes it trustworthy, it's wrapped up in the person of Christ, that's true, but it's also true that the trustworthiness of the Gospel is wrapped up in the work of the Savior. The person of the Savior, he's God in human flesh. There is the work of the Savior and here briefly I want to highlight four aspects of the work of Christ that show that he is a trustworthy Savior and that undergirds the fact that the Gospel is trustworthy and that undergirds your hope as you go through this life trusting in Christ. We'll look at all of these more closely in days to come but I just want to give you the overview. We've referred to this in the past, what is the work of the Savior? Well, first of all, Christ cleanses us from sin. Christ cleanses us from sin. We alluded to this three weeks ago, May 13, maybe that was four weeks ago. But Christ cleanses us from sin. It was three weeks ago, I just did the math in my mind, how about that? Christ's death on the cross cleanses us from sin. It was a perfect sacrifice, and even your sins as a Christian cannot diminish your standing before God. Chapter 1, verse 7 says, "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." In chapter 2, verse 12 it says, "little children, your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." That's why he wrote, "little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake." The Scriptures talk about how that God has removed our sins as far as the east is from the west and they are buried in the depths of the ocean, as it were, never to be found again; so separated from our account that they will never be brought to bear against our case again. Our sins have been washed away by the blood of Christ and that shows that his work is sufficient. His work is trustworthy. That's what Scripture says.

So my Christian friends, if you are weighed down this morning because you fall short in the pursuit of righteousness, you have stumbled with your lips, stumbled with your hands, stumbled with your thoughts, fractured relationships with unnecessary harshness perhaps, well listen, take heart. That is why Christ came and died for you. It's because he knew you were sinful. He knew you fell short and his death was a perfect sacrifice for your sins and God does not hold those sins against you any longer. That's what it means to be forgiven and that is a wonderful concept for us to go through life with and we can trust it, we can trust that promise because the Gospel is trustworthy.

Now, secondly, there's another aspect of the work of Christ, the work of the Savior. It's not just that he cleanses us from sin but, secondly, Christ intercedes for us in heaven. Christ intercedes for us in heaven. Marvelous truth here. Jesus continually represents you if you are a believer in Christ, he continually and in an unbroken fashion, represents you in the throne room of God as your perfect Advocate, as the one who has satisfied the law on your behalf and paid the penalty of all your sin.

Look at chapter 2, verse 1 with me. John says, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if," in case this happens, "anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins." That is a statement that Jesus Christ stands before God like the great high priest did for the sins of Israel when he entered into the Holy of Holies. Christ has entered into the holy throne room of God having fulfilled all of the law during his earthly life, having paid the penalty for your sins on the cross, raised from the dead to show the perfection of his sacrifice, and when he went to heaven, Acts 1 talks about how he ascended into heaven and the clouds received him up into their midst, you remember that from Acts 1, right? Well, understand this, beloved, in a very real sense when Christ ascended into heaven, he took your name with him and carried it back into the throne room of God on your behalf because his work of salvation was complete for you. He died for your sins on the cross and now as he ascended into heaven, one of his acts on our behalf, one of the aspects of his work, is that he represents us in the presence of God and makes the statement settled once for all, for all time, "Father, their sins are paid for. I have done the work on their behalf therefore there is no barrier between us and them. I have done the work, Father, they are fully reconciled to us, the Triune God." Wow. I mean, words fail me to talk about the magnificence of this work of Christ on our behalf. We have a brother in heaven who loves us, who has done it all for us, and now continually stands and represents us, having fully reconciled us to our heavenly Father. That is the work of Christ on our behalf. He is our Advocate. He is our Helper. He is the one who has come alongside to assist us and his work can never fail.

That perfect intercession is ongoing for you right now as you sit in that seat in Legacy Hall in the Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky. Christ, if you belong to him, has your name guaranteed in the throne room of heaven and is fulfilling his intercessory work right now on your behalf. It's a marvelous truth and because his work is so perfect, so unbroken, you can trust the Gospel that when God promises you spiritual victory in a hostile world, that is rooted not in your efforts, it is rooted in the perfection of the work of Christ on your behalf and that's why you can have confidence because he carries his own all the way to the finish line, and beyond the finish line into heaven itself. We serve a great Savior. I love him, don't you? What else could you do but love a Savior like that and give to him your unqualified affection and devotion for as long as he gives you breath? You see, when you understand the truth about the work of Christ, it has a transforming impact on your life and you can believe it because the Gospel is trustworthy.

Well, there's another aspect of it. You know the devil is a continual foe for us while we are here on earth, well, third aspect of the work of Christ is that Christ destroyed the works of the devil. That's what John says here in the Gospel. As a believer in Christ, the power of the devil has been broken over you. God will eventually banish him forever but as it is now, you are under the domain of Christ and not under the domain of Satan.

Look at chapter 3, verse 8, 1 John 3:8, he says, "the one who practices sin..." Let's start at verse 7 just for fun. "Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is

of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning." Now watch this, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil." That's why Christ came. He came to break the dominion of Satan over the ones that Christ would save. I know there are a lot of people that go around worried about the devil and the devil is going to do this and the devil is going to do that and Satan did this to me and all of that. Look, look, your life is under the reign of Christ and while there may be times where we go through trials and there are afflictions that we go through, you are not under the domain of Satan. Colossians 1:13 says that God transferred us from the kingdom of the devil to the kingdom of Christ and Christ is your King, not the slave master, the devil, that it was before you came to saving faith in Christ. Christ has delivered you from that. That's what 1 John 3:8 says. He has destroyed the works of the devil.

Well, that brings us to our fourth and final aspect of the work of Christ here this morning and it's this: it's that Christ will return again. Christ will return again. We've looked at so many aspects of his wonderful work on our behalf: he cleanses us from sin; he intercedes for us in heaven; he has broken the works of the devil; and now we see that he's going to return again. Christ will return one day with great power and glory, that's what the Scripture says, and when he does, he will transform you into his image when you're in his presence.

Look at chapter 3, verse 2. This is probably my favorite verse in the whole Bible if you can say such a thing. This is a verse that I come to again and again. "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." Monosyllabic words that convey the greatest truth that a believer could ever experience. "We will be like Him for we will see Him as He is." Those are simple one syllable words, and yet they express the most profound glory and aspirations of being a Christian. Those simple words describe the future that belongs to you as a believer in Christ. Jesus Christ is going to return to earth and when he comes, we will see him, and when we see him, the glory and the majesty of his person will instantly transform us when we see him face to face and we will be like him and we will be perfected by the presence of Christ when we are with him in his physical presence. That is going to be the absolute capstone, the culmination, the glory, the goal of your salvation is headed toward that great moment. We have a glorious present tense life now because we belong to Christ and we walk with him in this world but, beloved, the glory that is yet to come when we are with Christ, when we are like him, is going to dwarf our present glory; the glory of our present position is going to be swallowed up in an even greater glory when we are like him, perfected, no longer subject to sin, no longer subject to the hostilities of this world, entered into the utter perfection of what God has appointed for us from the beginning of all eternity. That is the goal that we are moving toward and it is going to be glorious and that is a reflection of the perfection of the work of our Savior. It is guaranteed by the total trustworthiness of Scripture.

Beloved, here's what I want you to do, I want you to take these great truths that we've talked about here this morning and I want you to realize every one of us, your pastor included, every single one of us need to cultivate a much greater view of the work of

Christ than what we've been accustomed to. You know, we can't reduce it to a moment in time when we prayed a prayer or something. This is so much greater. This expands from eternity to eternity. This is the guarantee of heaven for you that we're talking about, and the guarantee of heaven is a guarantee of perfection in glory with Christ. And even now we have a Savior in heaven continually representing us before the Father? Even now, a holy God does not hold our sins against us? Oh beloved, oh beloved, we must expand our view, expand our mind, expand our appreciation for this great work that Christ has done on our behalf. And we can believe it because the Gospel is trustworthy. The eyewitnesses are trustworthy and Christ himself is trustworthy and that is the guarantee of the outcome that we're all hoping for, those of us who believe in Christ. Our hope is not in vain. The Bible says that, "He who believes in Him will not be disappointed." I'm not going to be disappointed when I get to heaven and you're not going to be either if you're a believer in Christ. It is going to be so much greater than we can even imagine. Being with Christ, being perfect with him, is going to be wonderful beyond the capacity of words to express it. And what we do now is we look forward to that with hope, with anticipation, and with trust, we rejoice in it now though it's not yet experienced by us, we rejoice in it now because we walk by faith and not by sight.

Why can you trust the Gospel? The apostles who testified to it are trustworthy. The Savior is trustworthy. Beloved, as they say in the vernacular, take it to the bank. God has provided a perfect refuge for your soul in the Lord Jesus Christ. You can rest in the assurance of eternal life. And if you're here this morning and you don't know Christ, let these words be the enticement that your soul needs to come to him. See the glories that we've talked about, desire them for your own, leave behind your sin and come to a saving faith in Christ.

Would you bow with me in prayer as we close our consideration of these wonderful truths together?

Our Father, we do thank you for the trustworthy nature of the Gospel. We thank you that the men who wrote this word trustworthy men who had the experience to draw upon to testify to these things. And yet, Father, even as we consider that and swallowed up in the even greater reality that our Savior is trustworthy, we thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ here today. We thank you for his person, we thank you for his work, all of which is an expression of your love for us and a reflection of the fact that, God, you have given a gift to Christ, the people that he has redeemed, and one day we will all celebrate that in eternity as we are gathered around your throne together. Father, move us to that end. Help us to trust the Gospel. Help us to be transformed by the Gospel. And Father, may we give you our lives as a living sacrifice of praise in response to all that we have heard today. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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