



CHRIST COMMUNITY  
CHURCH  
*Changed Hearts. Changed Lives. Changed Community.*



*Easter 2023:*

*The Witness of Christ in the  
Gospel of John*

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# *Introduction*

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Since the fall of mankind into sin truth has been in dispute. No generation has escaped the need to confront these twin, ever-present questions: what is truth and how can we know it? In addition, no generation has been without conflict over the answers that have been proposed. Even so, for some generations this conflict loomed larger than it did for others. For them, the seemingly settled answers of the past suddenly lost their credibility. New experiences challenged old beliefs and sudden calamities revealed ancient convictions to be only paper-thin.

The generation that lived in the first century after the birth of Jesus was a generation that lived amid a conflict over truth that was more intense than it had been in a long time. The rapid spread of Christianity quickly challenged the settled order of things. People, from the highest to the lowest, began to sense that the news about Jesus had massive implications that would sooner or later turn the whole world upside down. The question about truth and how we can know it confronted them with fresh urgency.

In this moment, probably sometime near the end of the first century, John the disciple wrote his Gospel account. In it, John claimed to be an eyewitness of the deeds and words of Jesus. He claimed to be an authoritative interpreter of their meaning and significance. To a degree that distinguishes it from the three other New Testament Gospel accounts that preceded it, John structured his narrative specifically to confront, head-on, the age-old conflict over truth.

In his introduction John presents to us Jesus as the Word who from the beginning was with God and is God. This reminds us of the Old Testament's absolute truth claim that God is the all-wise Creator of everything that exists. Indeed,

in John's Gospel we find Jesus claiming not merely to *speak* truth, but to *be* the Truth. Almost all the conflicts between Jesus and his opponents are cast in terms of who it is who truly knows the truth, and thus who can authoritatively reveal the truth. John lays special emphasis upon the way that, first John the Baptist, then the disciples, serve as witnesses to the truth. Even the narrative arc in John's gospel serves this larger purpose, leading the reader inexorably along to the fateful moment at Jesus' trial when Pilate asks the critical question: "*What is truth?*"

As in John's day, ours is a time of intense conflict over truth. Many continue to ask Pilate's question. The four or so generations that make up our church family continue to navigate cultural shifts that often hinge on particular conceptions of truth and how we come to know it. For many of us, these shifts seem to challenge and upset a once-settled cultural consensus, but we feel at a loss how to correct them. The story of the last several years especially feels like one successive political or social controversy after another, leaving the cultural discourse in our country ever-more tribalized around narratives about "what's really going on." Even as Christians we increasingly feel the pull towards a hermeneutic of suspicion, the sense not only that once-trusted sources of truth no longer have credibility, but that the final arbiter of truth is our own knowledge and sense of what is right. Pilate asked, "What is truth?" Increasingly our culture seeks to answer with the trendy phrase, "do your own research." We have decided that each of us must find the truth for ourselves.

It is for such times that God in His grace has given us the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, told from the disciple John's perspective. When we are tempted to despair of knowing the truth, John presents to us Jesus, who summed up His mission in the world as the task of bearing witness to the truth (**John 19:37**). When we are tempted to believe that truth will be overcome by lies and evil, John presents to us Jesus, who went to the cross in the full knowledge of all that would put him there—

the lies, false testimony, denial, and preference for a thief over a King (**John 18:4**). When we are wrestling with doubt, John comforts us with the details, the words, and the witnesses of his account, written “so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name” (**John 20:31**).

Our hope for this Easter series is that we will grow in our confidence of the truth of the Gospel. Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit will use the Word preached, discussed, meditated on, and prayed over to keep us firm in faith, despite the swirling suspicion about truth that is current in our culture. We are also asking Him to use this season to draw others into His family as they discover Jesus as the Truth. His character, compassion, and witness reveal His trustworthiness.

Our journey over the next six weeks will take us through **John 18-20**. Each week our Call to Worship will come from a text drawn from **Isaiah 40-55**. In these words, God will invite us to consider the witness to the truth that He has given us both in Word and deed as Creator and Redeemer. We will be called to respond in worship as we put our faith in Him and disavow the false idols which compete for our trust. Our weekly congregational response is **Question and Answer 21 of the Heidelberg Catechism**. This catechism question will give us the opportunity to proclaim what true faith is and how we receive it. Our assurances of pardon will come from **Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer in John 17**. In these words, we will hear how Jesus prays for us to be kept in the truth once-for-all delivered to the saints by His atoning work on the cross. The benedictory blessing will come from **Hebrews 13:20-21**, which will send us out each week with the assurance that God will continue to keep us in the truth of the Gospel as we await the return of the resurrected and ascended Lord Jesus.

This devotional is designed to encourage daily meditation and prayer in personal devotions and/or family worship. You are encouraged to use it the week

prior to the associated sermon so that you and your family are prepared for worship. In addition to the Scriptures and associated questions, there are opportunities to pray for the various aspects of the Church. On Wednesdays, we will pray an aspect of **Jesus' High Priestly Prayer** for various ministries at CCC. Saturdays will continue this theme as we pray for the Lord to use ministries in our church family as witnesses to His truth and love as revealed in Jesus Christ. On Sunday, the Lord's Day Sabbath, we will pray for the means of grace to bear specific fruit in our lives as witnesses to the saving power of Jesus. Our desire is to continue to grow in our dependence on the Lord through prayer.

May God bless our time in personal devotion, family worship, and corporate worship as we seek for the Church to grow in the knowledge of the Truth revealed in Jesus Christ!

*Soli Deo Gloria!*

# Sermon Schedule

DATE	CALL TO WORSHIP	ASSURANCE OF PARDON	BENEDICTION	SACRAMENT
<i>Sunday, 3/5</i> John 18:1-14	Isaiah 41:21ff. - 42:1-4	John 17:1-5	Hebrews 13:20-21	Lord's Table
<i>Sunday, 3/12</i> John 18:15-27	Isaiah 44:21-28	John 17:6-9	Hebrews 13:20-21	Baptism
<i>Sunday, 3/19</i> John 18:28-40	Isaiah 45:18-25	John 17:10-12	Hebrews 13:20-21	
<i>Sunday, 3/26</i> John 19:1-16a	Isaiah 49:1-7	John 17:13-19	Hebrews 13:20-21	
<i>Sunday, 4/2</i> John 19:16b-37	Isaiah 53:1-6	John 17:20-23	Hebrews 13:20-21	Lord's Table
<i>Good Friday, 4/7</i> John 19:38-42	Isaiah 53:7-11	Responsive Reading	Depart in Silence	
<i>Easter Sunday, 4/9</i> John 20:1-31	Isaiah 55:1-9	John 17:24-26	Hebrews 13:20-21	



# *Weekly Congregational Response*

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Leader:

“What is true faith?”

Congregation:

“True faith is  
not only a sure knowledge by which I hold as true  
all that God has revealed to us in Scripture;  
it is also a wholehearted trust,  
which the Holy Spirit creates in me by the gospel,  
that God has freely granted,  
not only to others but to me also,  
forgiveness of sins,  
eternal righteousness,  
and salvation.

These are gifts of sheer grace,  
granted solely by Christ’s merit.”

*Heidelberg Catechism:  
Lord's Day 7, Q & A 21*

# *Weekly Benediction*

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Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

*Hebrews 13:20-21*

# The Week of March 5<sup>th</sup>

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*Monday 2/27:* **Isaiah 41:21ff. - 42:1-4:** In these verses God contrasts the many false gods in the world with the His own Chosen Servant. What does He tell us the Lord's Servant does for His people that the false gods cannot?

*Tuesday 2/28:* **John 17:1-5:** What does this prayer reveal about how Jesus defines eternal life? Give thanks to the Lord that Jesus intercedes for you so that you may see His glory and share in the fellowship of the Triune God!

*Wednesday 3/1:* **Pray John 17:3** for the Children's Ministry at CCC, that the Lord would use this ministry to equip the next generation to be witnesses about the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He sent.

*Thursday 3/2:* **John 18:1-14:** Meditate especially on the weighty words of John 18:4. Consider the many things about Jesus and His character that are revealed in the fact that He went out in the full knowledge of what was about to befall Him at the cross.

*Friday 3/3:* **Hebrews 13:20-21:** In what ways has the Spirit been at work in your life this week to remind you that God is a God of peace? Give thanks to the Lord for His goodness and seek to share this evidence of His grace with someone this weekend.

*Saturday 3/4:* Take time to read the Communion preparatory letter and pray as you prepare to participate on Sunday. Give thanks to the Lord for this means of grace given so that you may have assurance that Jesus died and was resurrected for you.

*Sunday 3/5:* The Lord's Day Sabbath with Bread and Cup: Pray for the means of grace to strengthen our faith in Jesus so that by believing we may have life in His name.

# The Week of March 12<sup>th</sup>

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*Monday, 3/6:* **Isaiah 44:21-28:** In these verses God calls for His people to remember who and Whose we are. What does He say the result of this remembrance must be?

*Tuesday, 3/7:* **John 17:6-9:** What does this prayer reveal about how Jesus defined His mission in the world? Give thanks to the Lord that Jesus intercedes for you so that you may be assured that you belong to God through Christ!

*Wednesday, 3/8:* **Pray John 17:7** for the Permanent Facility Fund at CCC, that the Lord would use this opportunity to make us cheerful, sacrificial givers who witness the generosity of our Heavenly Father who has given us all thing in Christ.

*Thursday, 3/9:* **John 18:15-27:** Mediate especially on Jesus' words in verses 20 and 23. Consider the contrast between Jesus' open and frank witness to the truth and the secretive and duplicitous plotting of His accusers.

*Friday, 3/10:* **Hebrews 13:20-21:** In what ways has the Spirit been at work in your life this week to remind you of the hope of the resurrection? Give thanks to the Lord for His goodness and seek to share this evidence of His grace with someone this weekend.

*Saturday, 3/11:* Take time to read the Baptism preparatory letter and pray as you prepare to improve upon your own baptism as you witness the baptism this Sunday. Give thanks to the Lord for this means of grace given so that we may be sure the guilt and stain of our sins have been washed away in Christ.

*Sunday, 3/12:* The Lord's Day Sabbath with Baptism: Pray for the means of grace to bear fruit for eternity in all those who have died and been resurrected with Christ as signified and sealed in their baptisms.

# The Week of March 19<sup>th</sup>

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*Monday, 3/13:* **Isaiah 45:18-25:** In these verses God compares His own activity as the Creator who speaks truth and saves with the impotency of idols who have no knowledge and cannot save. What does God say the witness will be of those who, in humility and repentance, acknowledge this truth?

*Tuesday, 3/14:* **John 17:10-12:** What does this prayer reveal about Jesus' desire for His people as we navigate life in a fallen world? Give thanks to the Lord that Jesus intercedes for us so that we may demonstrate the unity of the Trinity by our unity as the people of God!

*Wednesday, 3/15:* **Pray John 17:11** for the Youth Ministry at CCC, that the Lord would use this ministry to make the Middle and High Schoolers in our church family witnesses to the One who keeps and guards them as they navigate life in this world.

*Thursday, 3/16:* **John 18:28-40:** Meditate especially on Jesus' words and Pilate's response in verses 37 and 38. Consider how Jesus' witness to the truth corresponds with the call to worship from Isaiah 45:18-25.

*Friday, 3/17:* **Hebrews 13:20-21** In what ways has the Spirit been at work in your life this week to remind you that Jesus is the Great Shepherd of the sheep? Give thanks to the Lord for His goodness and seek to share this evidence of His grace with someone this weekend.

*Saturday, 3/18:* Pray for the Missions Care Team at CCC. Ask the Lord to use their ministry as a witness to the unity of the church as they care and pray for the missionaries that we support through Faith Promise.

*Sunday, 3/19:* Pray for the means of grace to build us up in the Truth so that we will become those who more effectively witness in word and deed that only in the Lord is righteousness and strength.

# The Week of March 26<sup>th</sup>

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*Monday, 3/20:* **Isaiah 49:1-7:** In these verses God lets us listen in on the call and response between Himself and His Chosen Servant. What does God declare to be the ultimate destiny of His Chosen Servant?

*Tuesday, 3/21:* **John 17:13-19:** What does this prayer reveal about how Jesus expects we will be kept from the evil one? Give thanks to the Lord that Jesus intercedes for you so that you may be sanctified by the truth as it is revealed in His word!

*Wednesday, 3/22:* **Pray John 17:17** for the Small Group Ministry at CCC, that the Lord would use this ministry to make those who participate witnesses in their various spheres of influence to the sanctifying power of the word of truth.

*Thursday, 3/23:* **John 19:1-16a:** Meditate especially on verses 14-16. Consider the ways in which this scene enacts what God had foretold concerning His Chosen Servant in Isaiah 49:1-7.

*Friday, 3/24:* **Hebrews 13:20-21** In what ways has the Spirit been at work in your life this week to remind you that Jesus shed His blood so that you may be made a partaker of all the heavenly blessings of His eternal covenant? Give thanks to the Lord for His goodness and seek to share this evidence of His grace with someone this weekend.

*Saturday, 3/25:* Pray for the team from CCC who will be serving and worshipping with the saints at Legacy Assisted Living Facility on Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>. Ask the Lord to use their witness to make known the sanctifying power of His word of truth.

*Sunday, 3/26:* Pray for the means of grace to help us to behold Jesus as our King.

# The Week of April 2<sup>nd</sup>

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*Monday, 3/27:* **Isaiah 53:1-6:** In these verses God begins by calling us to examine whether we have been paying attention to what He has revealed about His Chosen Servant. What does He say about the experience of His Chosen Servant that the world will fail to understand?

*Tuesday, 3/28:* **John 17:20-23:** What does this prayer reveal about how Jesus prizes the unity of His people? Give thanks to the Lord that Jesus intercedes for us so that we may pursue unity as the family of God!

*Wednesday, 3/29:* **Pray John 17:21** for the Worship Ministry at CCC, that the Lord would use this ministry to make us worshippers who witness the perfect unity that is only possible through Him.

*Thursday, 3/30:* **John 19:16b-42:** Meditate especially on verses 19-35. Consider the ways the testimony of both these witnesses calls for us to acknowledge who Jesus is and the meaning of His death on the cross.

*Friday, 3/31:* **Hebrews 13:20-21** In what ways has the Spirit been at work in your life this week to remind you that God equip you to do His will? Give thanks to the Lord for His goodness and seek to share this evidence of His grace with someone this weekend.

*Saturday, 4/1:* Take time to read the Communion preparatory letter and pray as you prepare to participate on Sunday. Give thanks to the Lord for this means of grace given so that you may continue to grow in your knowledge of all that Jesus' death and resurrection has accomplished for you.

*Sunday, 4/2:* The Lord's Day Sabbath with Bread and Cup: Pray for the means of grace to nourish your faith so that you may become a more effective witness in your various spheres of influence about the meaning of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

# The Week of April 9<sup>th</sup>

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*Monday, 4/3:* **Isaiah 55:1-9:** In these verse God invites us to respond to the witness of His Chosen Servant by receiving from Him the abundant blessing of His grace in repentant faith. How does God assess the comparison between His grace and the ways of man?

*Tuesday, 4/4:* **John 17:24-26:** What does this prayer reveal about Jesus' desire for us above all things? Give thanks to the Lord that Jesus intercedes for you so that one day you will be like Him as you see His glory in its unveiled splendor!

*Wednesday, 4/5:* **Pray John 17:26** for the leadership of CCC (Elders, Deacons, & Staff), that the Lord would use their ministry to equip us to be hope-filled, patient witnesses as we eagerly await the return of the risen and ascended Lord Jesus.

*Thursday, 4/6:* **John 20:1-31:** Meditate especially on verses 30-31. Consider the result the apostle aims for among those who hear and read his testimony. Consider how this challenges you to make a response to his testimony for yourself.

*Good Friday, 4/7:* **Hebrews 13:20-21** In what ways has the Spirit been at work in your life this week to remind you that God is working in you things which are pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ? Give thanks to the Lord for His goodness and seek to share this evidence of His grace with someone this weekend.

*Saturday, 4/8:* Pray for the Hospitality Team at CCC who will be serving this Sunday. Ask the Lord to use their hospitality as a witness to the love of the Lord who sent His Son for the life of the world.

*Easter Sunday, 4/9:* The Lord's Day Sabbath: Pray for the means of grace to create and strengthen faith among those who may worship with us today who do not know Jesus, so that believing, they may have life in His name.