

Introduction >>>

Series Intro

What is our ultimate goal for being here this morning?

- What are we, what are you hoping for?
- What would be success?
- I think the only way to answer that is to ask, why does Eternal Church exist?

Is it a social club full of people who share the same code of ethics and morality?

- If yes, then a successful Sunday is one in which a lot of people show up, have comfortable conversations, and our kids don't cuss.

Is it a place to be entertained?

- If yes, then boredom is the only heresy.

Is it a place that exists to learn deep-cut facts about the Bible that will help us feel better than the church down the street?

- If yes, then success is an educational endeavor, and the sanctuary becomes a classroom with a textbook, and not a house of prayer and worship.

The danger for the Children of Israel in the wilderness was never the arid conditions or the lack of food or shelter.

- The danger in the wilderness is that the people of God forgot who, and WHOSE they were.
 - They thought success was an 11-month journey to a green pasture.
 - They thought a parcel of land and comfort was the goal.
 - And when the trip took too long, or their appetites were the headlines, they grumbled, complained, and their hearts were hardened against their God who had redeemed them.

The danger for the Children of Israel in Jerusalem was NOT ROMAN oppression; it was their arrogant, proud hearts of self-righteousness that led them to look down on those whom God loved.

This month, we're going to look at the four coordinates of Truth, Worship, Community, and Witness, and see how these things are meant to reorient us as individuals and as a church.

The hope is that we'll be reminded of why we exist in the first place, and therefore be reminded of what our goal is and how we are meant to live in the already as we await the not yet!

Truth Intro

So the first step in understanding why we exist is asking where we will find the truth.
Who will be our authority?

We live in an age when trusted sources are scarce.

- We don't believe anyone or anything.
- Every image and video is AI.
- Every news source is biased.
- Every review is a paid promotion; everything is propaganda.

And we are skeptics of anything outside of us, and so the enlightened say that truth is subjective and is defined by every individual.

And the fabric of society is being undone, and everything is in question.

But we, the church, are a people who say, truth is not from within.

It is from above. Right and wrong, good and evil are all defined by God.

And from the very beginning, God's Word breathes out the truth and sets the stage for our understanding of our entire existence, and therefore what the goal of our lives is.

Would you stand with me as we read God's Word?

Read: Genesis 1:1

Let's pray.

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Purpose Statement

God created all things, and then humanity sought truth from within and was subjected to uncreation, but God sent His Truth in the flesh so that we could be restored in Him.

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Today, we will look at the following:

1. Revelation 2. Rebellion 3. Restoration

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I. Revelation >>>

VERSE - Genesis 1:1, Genesis 1:26-28

In the Beginning

Again, God tells us **In the beginning, He created the heavens and the earth.**

At the dawn of what we call history, God created all that we know and from nothing.

- Creation was no accident. It's not a cosmic inevitability.

Illustration: Accidental Potions

When I was a little kid, I would lock myself in the bathroom and take everything out of the medicine cabinet and drawers and pour equal parts into the sink.

I didn't know what I was creating; I knew I wanted to make some type of potion.

But that's not what God did.

He didn't lock Himself in a cosmic bathroom and mix equal parts carbon, oxygen, and nitrogen in a sink in some childish experiment.

He SPOKE these things into existence.

Carbon, oxygen, and nitrogen did not exist.

- There were no building blocks to put together.
- There was only God in three persons for all eternity, delighting in each other as one.

Until, by His Will, He spoke and there was.

- And His word is effective.
- He does not say, let there be light and then DO something to make light.
 - His Word is the action; it is the cause.

Consider

Just for a moment, let's consider that Truth.

Meditate on the implications with me.

Do you know that this morning, even before you arrived, you were standing on His Word.

That is, if He spoke all of creation in Genesis 1, and it is ALSO by His Word that all things are continually being held together (Hebrews 1), that means that the bed that supported you in your sleep, and the floor that pushed back against your feet when you woke up, was the result of His Word.

- None of it exists without the Word of God; it is a common grace and testament to His power that the seat you now sit on doesn't vanish in this very moment.
- God's Word does not exist because we understand or affirm it; it is the only reason, the only reason, that you exist and have the ability to understand it.
- God's Word predates your belief: In the Beginning God said, before there were ears to hear, there was His Word.

Everything you see, everything you smell, feel, taste, and hear has been intentionally designed, created, and held together.

- None of it is accidental. None of it random.
- An ordered universe, with orders from its Creator.

And certainly...that Truth does not end with the creation around us; it's especially meant to be seen and revealed in our humanity.

Our Purpose: in the image

Read [Genesis 1:26-28](#)

Illustration: What do images do?

A representation of the external form of a person or thing.

If I show you a photo of Vancouver, it would be to give you a glimpse of what the city looks like. It is NOT Vancouver in itself; it is an image of it.

By showing you the image, I am spreading the beauty of that city to another person.

And maybe you would find that image so beautiful that you would say, I want to go there for myself! I want to experience that! I want to KNOW it for myself.

We are the Imago Dei - the image of God.

- God created humanity in His image.
- To bear a resemblance.
- But we are not the thing itself.
- No image is! This is Truth!
- This is the effective word of God.
- And it is the breath that God breathed into the lungs of the first man.

And God made us to reveal certain truths about Him and His nature.

Those are the communicable attributes of God.

Think the fruit of the Spirit - we image God, we resemble Him, we declare Him through revealing His patience, kindness, peace, and love...

BUT also, there are attributes that we CANNOT reveal.

- Those are called the incommunicable attributes of God.
- Like all presence, all power, all knowingness, and self-existence...we are creatures.
 - We are not infinite; we have finitude and cannot be those things.

Which leads us to our second point.

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II. Rebellion >>>

VERSE - Gen 3:1-11

Truth and Lies

Read **Genesis 3:1-7**

And the serpent asks, did God actually say?

What is that?

It is not a gun to the head of Eve; no, it is an invitation to believe a lie.

- It is a seed of doubt planted in the fertile soil of her heart.
- The enemy could not silence the Word of God; he could only try to pervert it.

And the enemy escalates in **Genesis 3:4** and says, "You'll not surely die; actually, you'll be like god."

- In other words, not only is God's truth in question, but also, God is trying to keep you from becoming like Him.
 - He is not a Good God; He is not a source of Truth. Why not be your own image?
 - And humanity believed the lie, and rejected the Truth of God's Word and the Goodness of His character.
 - And in that moment, man's relationship with God went from peace to hostility.
 - And humanity went from seeing His Word as how we flourish to an arbitrary restriction from a gaslighting narcissist.

The Results

Read **Genesis 3:8-11**

And humanity hid themselves from each other and God.

As the kids say, shame entered the chat.

And in the most heartbreaking moment in history, the man says to God, I heard you, and I was afraid of you, and so I ran.

- And God asked them, who told you that you were naked?
- Who told you that you needed to hide from me?
- **Whose truth have you believed?**
 - Who are you looking to as your authority?

And this is the two-pronged lie of the enemy.

The first lie is to doubt God.

And then, after we believe that lie, we are told to RUN and HIDE from Him and each other. That we must cover ourselves, and that if anyone truly knew us, they would not want to be around us, let alone love us.

God then explains to them the consequences of their rebellion against Him.

3:14-21

We will go to war with creation and with each other.

Everyone, everything will seem like an enemy.

And we will return to dust.

And God gives the first man the clothing of animal skins.

- A temporary covering of his shame, but it will also decay.

And all of creation will see that we are not God.

We are not self-existent. We are not all-powerful.

Because you believed that truth is from within you, and that you are the Creator, your body will experience uncreation.

- The curse is that we will wake up each day and be reminded that we are not God.

And this continues to echo throughout the Bible and today.

A fool in the Bible is one who rejects the Truth of God for a lie.

Romans 1:21-25

Humanity rejects the Word of God for its own word.

And we DISHONOR His image.

- We fall short of the beauty and worth we have each been created to show.
- We say we are products of cosmic inevitability meant to define our own purpose.
- In the Bible, a NAME is a person; it is who they are.
- And so when we fall short of the image we have been created to declare, we, those made in His image, are taking the name of the Lord in vain.
 - And we are born with a desire to declare that we created, we produced, we decide good and evil. We hold ourselves together; we are the provider and sustainer of our lives.
 - And so we do not live in constant Thanksgiving, or awareness of the face of God, because we are him.
 - And for us, the enemy is anyone or anything that goes against our word and self-sovereignty. The problem is outside of us, and not within us.

- AND we have no peace; we only have war, because we can't be god, and our word has no true power.

The Implications

Again, the curse of humanity deciding to reject the truth of God and seek their own truth is that we will return to dust.

Romans 8:20 For the creation was subjected to **futility**, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it,

Futility is decay; it is a trajectory of being undone.

This is what we will find in our pursuit of truth.

It is the realization of the writer of Ecclesiastes - It is all a vapor! It all falls apart.

Maybe you're not 48 yet, and you don't see it in the mirror, but have you not seen and felt the curse yet? Have you not understood that the just wrath of God is already being poured out.

- Have you not felt the futility of believing that some created thing could give you purpose or wholeness?
- Have you not yet experienced the bitter aftertaste of the fruit you desired?

Going back to the image of Vancouver on my phone

- If I said, "Do you want to go to Vancouver?" and you said yes, and I said, "Great, here is a photo on my phone." Enjoy it!
- And let's say you believed that lie, and you packed all your bags and then tried to visit Vancouver by stepping on my phone.
 - The phone and the photo would be crushed.
 - In a manner of speaking, asking the image and image bearer to be the thing itself would lead to the thing turning to dust.
 - It cannot support the weight you are putting on it.

The photo was only ever meant to point you to, and stir you towards that which it imaged!

And I don't think that is a surprise to any of us...

BUT AGAIN, this is the lie the ancient enemy of God has been telling us since the beginning!

- This is the anti-truth.
- It is the perversion of God's revelation.
- **We look to images as if they were the thing itself.**
 - And our appetites become our god.

- And we see creation as something to be desired on our own terms, and we clamor for it, and we scratch and claw to obtain it.
- We toil and strive and stack the bricks of career, relationships, bank accounts, and status symbols to build a tower of our own name, so that we could ascend into heaven and be like god.
- And in doing so our hearts darken, chaos and confusion reign, and we cover our shame and failures in a fresh coat of paint, hoping the inspector doesn't find out.

BUT! The declaration of Romans 8 that we have been subjected to decay and futility is not how verse 20 ends!

Which brings us to our last point!

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III. Restoration >>>

VERSE - John 1:1-5, Revelation 21:1-5

The Snake Crusher

The protoevangelium is the first Gospel.

- The first promise of Hope.
- And it arrives in tandem with the curse.
- It is the promise that while the curse may threaten destruction and forever separation, it is only for a little while.
 - It is the assurance in our mirrors that the wrinkles, aches, diagnosis, and pains that declare our finitude will not be the end of us!
- The protoevangelium declares that another man will arrive.
 - That there will be another Adam in a Garden.

And we see this in Genesis 3, when God speaks to the serpent:

Genesis 3:15 (ESV)

15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

This is the prophecy of Good News.

That there will be One whose heel will be bruised by the curse of untruth, BUT that Man will crush the head of the serpent, and His lies.

And then, because God’s Word is TRUTH, we get this in John 1.

John 1:1–5: 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Hear the reorientation and echo!

In the Beginning!

- And instead of the Word being spoken and there WAS light, now the Word becomes flesh, and it enters INTO creation!
- And that Word in the flesh has a name, and His name is Jesus.
- And He became the LIGHT that shines in the darkness!
- And what we know is that He did not simply come to redeclare the Truth of God.

- He became the Truth of God.
- He was what we fall short of.
- He is the perfect imago dei.
- He is the full revelation of the beauty and worth of our eternal Creator.

And after living a faultless life of showing and proclaiming Truth, He then did the unthinkable.

- He went to the cross and took the curse of the fool.
 - He became our sin!
 - He bore all that is our shame.
- And His body was bruised as if He was the one who believed the lie.
- And His body was hidden and sealed into a dark tomb to decay.
- To turn to dust.

And again, consider that it was by the Word of His power that He was beaten and crucified.

- He was not helpless when they spit on Him.
- He was not a victim when they slapped Him.
- In reality, in Truth, He was holding the molecules of their bodies together as they mocked Him.
 - He did not need to DO anything to escape the suffering; he simply had to stop sustaining the universe in the Word of His common and special grace, and it all would have ceased.
- And while they derided Him on the Cross, and said, if you are the Christ, then save yourself and come down from, He stayed nailed to a piece of Creation, the tree of the Great Curse, because of the Love of the Father and all those who were His.

And then on the morning of the Third Day!

That which was being uncreated was born into a new creation.

And Jesus the Christ went from declaring Truth to becoming Truth.

- He became the Way and the Life of all those who would believe in Him.

The Already Restoration

And just like there were implications of believing a lie, there are implications of believing the Truth.

When we place our trust in Christ as the Truth, the dead are brought to life - Our sin on Him, and His righteousness on us!

The animal skins of Genesis 3 that covered man's shame are replaced by the robe of Righteousness of the Only Begotten Son of God!

The Not Yet Restoration

But the implications and consequences of this ALREADY covering have not yet been fully realized.

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Romans 8:20–23 (ESV)

20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope
21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Clothed in Truth, we now eagerly wait for the fullness of our redemption.

- The Person of Jesus Christ is not a temporary covering that moths will destroy.
- He is our incorruptible covering for all of eternity.
- And God's Word declares that there will be a day in which we will be fully restored.

Revelation 21:1–5 (ESV)

The New Heaven and the New Earth

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and **true**."

We should be of great joy even in the decay, that these words, this Word is True!

And it can be trusted!

The curse we were born into, and continued to deserve through our rejection of God's truth, separated us from Him.

- Exiled from His presence, and sent into the wilderness.
- But God, by His mercy, has made a way for us to once again dwell with Him.
 - He sent His Son, the Perfect and Full image of God, into exile and wilderness, to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life by which we come BACK to the Father!
- To walk in His presence without the fear of condemnation.

- To no longer RUN from Him and try to hide when we fall short.

And on THAT day we will stand before Him in the confidence of the Son's clothing, and we will see His surpassing beauty and worth!

- We will KNOW that He is God, and we are His people forevermore!

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Conclusion >>>

Remember

Church! Remember, we have been made to be images.

- In a high-achieving, high-earning, highly connected context like this, the danger is that we have an illusion that we're all-powerful, all-knowing, and self-existent... and we exhaust ourselves, because we have finitude.
 - And we burn out, because our frames can't keep up.
 - And we look for creation to satisfy our deep longings.
 - We try to find the truth of our purpose and calling apart from God, and everything becomes vapor.
 - And none of it can support our lives or give us life

These lies of the world that we scramble to believe tell us we can be like god.

- And that in being like god, we will find satisfaction.
- And we daydream of having more and more so that we can rest and be above any valley and safe in any storm.

But we need a Truth, or better put, a Person of Truth.

A person who invites us to Himself.

That we would just be who we were created to be.

That He would be our God, and that we would be His people.

The Creator and Creature walking in Shalom, in fullness.

Saving Faith

But the question of Truth never ends with Do you know or agree with it.

Illustration: Stepping off a dock

A boat: you understand buoyancy and agree that it is true, but that is not what gets you across the water.

At some point you have to transfer your weight.

The reformers wrote that saving faith had three components to it:

1. **Knowledge** - that is, do you know the Gospel?
2. **Assent** - Do you agree that it is true?
3. **Trust** - Do you trust it? Is your confidence in Christ as your Life?

The Truth of God is a person, and we are meant to transfer our weight onto and into Him.

- It is not enough to learn about Jesus; although that is vital, it is not enough to agree to the Good News of Jesus; although that is vital as well, we must trust Him with our lives!
- He is our hope, our ambition, our treasure, our satisfaction, our goal, our life!
- Monday through Saturday, our desire is Christ!
- To walk with Him

Church Family, there are so many lies being told to our hearts.

Even today, I am sure there is a lie about who you are, and where you'll find joy, satisfaction, and life that you're thinking about believing, that you're thinking about putting your weight on. Lies that tell you that you can be god.

Take that thought captive and make it obey Christ!

Don't trust the vapor lies of this world.

You are not meant for dust.

You are Eternal.

You are a child of the One True God.

Trust the Truth of God.

Trust Christ in all things, and you will not find the shame of a fool.

Pray

Benediction

And hear me clearly!

I am not asking you to trust me.

The ask is that we consider God's word and trust Him.

Students - there is a lie echoing from the whisper of the Prince of the Air, and that lie is that truth can be found from within.

That you can decide what is good and bad.

That all things are relative.

That there is no North Star of Truth.

And that lie whispers that you will find joy, satisfaction, meaning, identity from yourself and things.

Don't believe that lie.

And it will eventually crush you.