

TRUE

Convocation Theme, Focal Passages, and Teaching Vision

2024–25

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THEME: TRUE

Before making the most important decision of his life, the Roman governor of the province of Judea asked the seemingly simple question, “*What is truth?*” (John 18:38). This question still consumes us today, two thousand years later. We want to know what is true, want to live in a world that is true, want to *be* true.

When Pontius Pilate asked, “What is truth?” he failed to understand that the better question to ask was not “What” but “Who is the truth?” Pilate didn’t recognize that the ultimate answer to this and all his questions was standing in front of him—the one who is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). Jesus Christ is the “true light,” who has come from God the Father “full of grace and truth,” who came into the world for the very purpose of bearing witness to the truth (John 1:9, 14, 17; 18:37).

Because Jesus is the authentic image of God’s very being, knowing Jesus the Son allows us to know God the Father—the essence, source, and sustainer of all that is true. As John later writes: “And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, *so that we may know him who is true*; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. *He is the true God and eternal life*” (1 John 5:20; cf. John 17:3). While the Lord Jesus reigns from heaven, he continues to give us true knowledge of the true God through “the Spirit of truth,” who guides us into all truth and who gives us confidence to await Jesus’ return with hope (John 16:13; 1 John 2:27–28). To do this guiding, the Spirit has breathed out the Scripture, that “proves true” and whose “sum...is truth” (Pss 18:30; 119:160; cf. John 17:17).

God is true because God himself defines the nature of reality as the Creator and Sustainer of life and all things. God is true because he is perfectly authentic—his integrity means he cannot be

The hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ is that, though we have suppressed the truth, the Truth has come to us to seek us out and show himself to us. Reality can be righted. Inadequate imitation can become unimpeachably genuine. Those who are false can be made faithful.

Unlike sin, the Christian Faith is rational. It is rooted in history and makes best sense of the world. There is no contradiction between reason and faith. The basic truth about God can be known by way of reason but needs the light of divine revelation to complete our knowledge of him and kindle our affections for him. Through the Scriptures we gain the fullness of God's self-revelation to humanity. The Bible is our best guide for true knowledge of who God is and who we are.

And when we receive Jesus' testimony about the truth, then we come to know the true life and true freedom for which we are created (John 8:31–32). The life of discipleship to the Lord Jesus is the life of coming to see him as the Truth that defines all things, to define ourselves in light of him, to become true as he is true. But rather than constraining us, this truth releases us into a greater freedom than we've ever known in the distorted reality we've contrived for ourselves apart from him. It sets us free to find our greatest joy as we live all our lives for the glory of the One True God.

What is true is what is conformed to reality as it actually is. The only way to live life well is to live it along the grain of the world as it is and as it will become in God's new creation. *What is true is genuine and authentic, uncontaminated with anything artificial, contrived, synthetic, or faked.* We recognize the rightness of a life where there is perfect coherence between identity and experience, a life that matches its purpose and its potential, fulfilling what it can be and ought to be. *What is true is durable, dependable, loyal, and faithful.*

TRUE Community

MISSION: *We will reinforce **the irreplaceable importance of the local church in the life of every disciple of Jesus.***

MISSION: *We will illuminate and incarnate **the mystery of unity in Christ.***

The New Testament does not imagine the life of discipleship lived alone as a solitary spiritual quest. Union with Christ also means union with his body, the church—and not merely as a spiritual or eternal reality, but as the lived experience of each Christian and as the communal context in which each disciple is increasingly sanctified into the glorious image of Jesus. It fulfills the God