

Oh Father, thank you. We are experiencing the joy of your Holy Spirit right now as we are bound together as brother and sister in Christ. Experiencing the joy, the hope, the peace, the love, the no-no balance because they are you and they are you within us. Thank you. Lord, we seek to bless you with our worship today. We pray that you view it and receive it as our submitted, faithful, conscious worship of you. Dear Jesus, this is your church. The church is your church. Take your place as our pastor, as our teacher and lead us in your word. Lead us in song, lead us in prayer. It's in your sweet name that we pray all of these things. Amen. We've been with John now for a while. Like I said, he's been our touchstone. We've had other services in and among other topics and services along. But he has been our touchstone now for a couple of months and you should hopefully be getting a feel for John's perspective. John's perspective is unique. That's why we call them the synoptic gospel, Matthew, Mark and Luke. And then there's John. And we look at John and John provides for us a look into and not to deny anything of the spiritual realm in the synoptic gospels. But we're looking at, he just provides this picture of God's son. And he talks about who Jesus is as God. And as we made mention on many occasions, his other big point is that he is man. And a lot of his writing, as we talked about last week, addresses the common heresy of his day that Jesus wasn't a man, that upon his baptism he received like the spirit of the Christ or he was, according to Old Testament thinking, just a sort of a use of an apparition, but a spirit body. That if you were to touch him, your hand would go through. That if you were to walk on the beach, he would leave no footprints. And that provided a more seamless way of thinking about God, because when we look at how God appears as man in the Old Testament, it is appearing as a man, not being a man. Does that make sense? So it's a little easier to grasp. I say it's ironic because John's teaching today, the biggest heresy is that Jesus is. God only. Or what am I trying to say? He's man only with this sort of spirit of God. And that because of this, when we look at this teaching that he is a man only with the spirit of God, well, that can extend to all of his followers. You are a human being born just like he was, and you too can be God just like he was if you learn certain things or do certain things or believe certain things. So the idea of this hypostatic union, Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human, is unique. It is powerful and it is a cornerstone of who we are as Christians. You cannot be a perfect sacrifice for humankind if you are not human. You cannot be the fulfillment of prophecy if you are not born of a woman in the divine nature of God's Holy Spirit. So John spends a great deal of his time speaking to these issues, trying to put forth that the Messiah is not a simple human sacrifice, nor was it some sort of a show that God decided to put on as he hung something that looked like a man on the cross that then just poofed his beard because he never really was a man. So you see that we can, right off the bat, things were beginning to get twisted. Satan was beginning to take the words of Jesus Christ himself and the words of the apostles and twist them around and say, "Was Jesus really God? Was Jesus really a man? How is that even possible? How can that work?" Well, you have to take the depth and the breadth of all of scripture and we begin to understand how that works and why it works. And we begin to understand that it was the plan from the beginning and we begin to understand that it must be a cornerstone of our faith. Otherwise, everything that is promised, everything that was said to be accomplished was just either for show or it is a total lie. So you have to land somewhere with all of this and the teachings of John are wonderful in helping us to land in the spot where we should be. Jesus Christ is fully divine. We'll read more of that today. But I wanted to go back into the Gospel according to John and talk about what this does mean, not only for Jesus and his day, but for us today following Jesus Christ. The first scripture is from John 14, beginning with verse 27, and we hear now more about this Trinity, the triune nature of Yahweh, of our Holy God. "I am leaving with you a gift, peace of mind and heart. The peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid. Remember what I told you. I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you will be happy that I am going to the Father who is greater than I am. I told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe. I don't have much more time to talk to you because the ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over me, but I will do what the Father requires of me so that the world will

know that I love the Father. Come, let's be going." This is a passage of obedience. This is a passage in recognizing Father, Son, Holy Spirit. This is a passage in recognizing the very short-term prophecy, if you will, that I will die, but you will see me again in bodily form. I will be resurrected. And we learn a little bit about spiritual warfare cells in here because we know that the Satan, the Opposer of God's will, has no power over God, has no power over Jesus, but Jesus will be obedient to His mission, His purpose here on earth. And so we say, "Good for Jesus." Well, it's also good for us. This is some pretty good teaching for us. When we are confronted with a future that perhaps for us is uncertain, Jesus understood what was happening, or we do know what is about to happen and it's going to be unpleasant. Where does our mind go? Where does our spirit go? Where do our emotions go? Do they run away from the cross as quickly as we can because we have to batten down the hatches and we have to protect ourselves? Or do we do what Jesus did? I must be obedient to the Father. And we often say when something happens, and I've shared a few recent stories about this, I don't know if God did this, but as it had happened, He used that circumstance and used it as a launching point for this new understanding or this new purpose. Trust in the Father will lead to a wider understanding of your circumstances, of your individual purpose, of your purpose as a Christian family, as your purpose as a Christian church. When things happen or the future is looking a certain way, the old saying, "Do you run to the cross or do you run away from the cross?" Human inclination is to run away from the cross. Like I said, batten down the hatches. You've been through this before. People have hurt you before. This has happened before. Whatever the case may be, I must defend myself, create my shell. Now how about we use our discernment and we depend upon the Father to take all of the circumstances of our lives and use them for the benefit of His will. And you may see absolutely no idea how that could possibly happen, but I'll bet that if I sat down with each and every one of you who has been a Christian for more than a few minutes, you can say, "Looking back, I can see the hand of God upon that. I remember bawling going to work. I didn't want to go to work where I was. I knew I was being called out of that place. It was one of the worst years of my life, yet it was like giving birth, if you will, to a brand new me and a brand new calling and a brand new purpose. In the meantime, I have a lot to learn. And one of the things that I learned in that time of transition was dependence upon the Father. Chapter 16, now let's hear some of the same things. Jesus asked, "Do you finally believe?" I love it when He'll bottom line it with His disciples every once in a while. He bottom lines it with Mary, "Do you believe this? What do you believe?" "Who do you say I am?" He says to Peter. I'm that kind of a person. If you read the Church Channel Weekly, that ending of Job speaks to me. I want that accountability in my life. I don't mind it one bit, and I don't mind giving up my sovereignty to a sovereign God. It's just He is who He is, and I am His. And so, He bottom lines it here. Jesus asks, "Do you finally believe? But the time that's coming indeed is here now when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone." That's a terrible thing to say. You know, say, "Ryan, we've finally become friends. You've been here for two weeks. We've finally become friends. Let me tell you, it's going to be rough. And probably within a week, you and I will be separate. What's He saying here? "You finally believe that I am the Christ. But let me tell you, the time is coming when that is here. You guys are going to run for your lives because of what you do believe." Again, one of the many, many reasons I love Jesus is that He just doesn't pull His punches. He doesn't pull His words back. And like I said, oftentimes as the readers of His word and/or interpreters of His word, we sort of gloss over some of these powerful things, some of the beautiful writings of John in 1 John. I've tried to bring forward and say, "Yes, it's beautiful. Yes, it's quote unquote powerful. But let's look how actually deep and meaningful and powerful this word is, this sentence is, this passage is." There's not a word of scripture that is wasted. There's not a word that goes out that falls flat on the ground. And as readers of the word, as partakers, as scripture teaches us, as digesters of the word, which is an image used more than one time in scripture, eating the word of God and letting it fill you, we must be always on the lookout, if you will, for these powerful, powerful passages. And He says, "You finally believe." This is chapter 16 of John. It's rather late into the ministry. He says, "You finally believe I am Christ, I am Savior. Let me tell you, pretty soon you'll be running for your lives." Like, thank you very much

for being my friend. Pretty soon you'll be running for your lives. And that hits me. And I respect that. I respect any person on a personal level where I know, where I stand with them. And so this speaks to me, whether you like me or do not like me or like this or don't like this one, let me know we can have a human grown up conversation. And Jesus is like that. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. He has gone to the Father. Right? He turned to the Father. I will turn to the Father. I am not alone. We know that Jesus, Christ fully human, fully divine, made the correct choice, as He always did. And He turned to the Father. You and I, who may have turned away from the Father and relied on our own understanding, relied on our own devices, relied on our own fill in the blank. Jesus has turned to the Father. He is demonstrating to us He will never be alone. I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth, you will have many trials and sorrows, but take heart because I have overcome the world. Final stopping point before we sing, as you probably have guessed, Mackenzie's request, 10,000 reasons. That those words and when you look up these words, you can use your concordances and you can use all of the things. You may have peace. That one little preposition changes everything in me. Doesn't say you can have peace because of some of the things that I'm going to teach you. Or if you listen to some of the things that I will teach you, you'll feel better about something. You will have peace in me. And if you know, and I know that you do know more of John's teaching, there's a lot of this. He is in me and you are in me and I am in him and we are together. And there is community and there is communion. And that one little preposition in changes everything. It's impossible in our human strength for me to say, hey, and if I did, it would be absolute blasphemy. People of Churchtown, you may have peace in me. Why? I can't. That's not mine to give. It is God's forgive. And so he doesn't just talk about his words or he says, you may have peace in me. How is that possible when he is in you? You are in him. We are in the Father by the power of God's Holy Spirit. So this is John and this is his this is the drum that he bangs constantly. And it is a good drum that teaches about Orthodox Christianity and the belief in the triune nature of our holy God and in the power of God within you. And we see in the choices that Jesus makes the choices that we should make. He is an autonomous moral being. He makes choices. God makes choices. While we are the example of Jesus and his perfect divine nature making these choices, something inside of me tells me we should maybe listen because he's making the right choices. In this case, he turns to the Father. He is never alone. And then he turns to the people who he knows are flawed and are going to be scared. And they're going to be running for their lives and they're going to be confused. And he says a simple word. You can have peace in me. Regardless of your circumstances in me, those words hit me like a ton of bricks, as they say. All right, here we go. Here's some things that we've heard before because John is finishing his letter. So this whole chapter is more like a concluding chapter. Here's some larger general statements. And then there is an official conclusion. Goodbye, everybody. Thanks. You know, that's what we think. But John 5, beginning with verse one. And you've heard this. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has become a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too. This was primary teaching throughout the course of the letter. How do we know if we are of God? Because we believe that he is the Christ. How will I know if somebody that I meet is a Christian? They faithfully profess that Jesus is the Christ, the savior. And along the way, we learn about bodily resurrection and those sorts of things. But there's that point of discernment and we talked about it using the name of Jesus incorrectly and under the realm of Christendom. There are lots of Christian this and Christian that that use the name of Jesus. They want the name of Jesus, but they're not professing faithfully who Jesus is, according to scripture. And or they made up some other scriptures that to scripture to sort of make the point. We have the word of God and we know who Jesus is as the only begotten son of God, born of a woman, etc., etc. So you profess that Jesus is the savior of human crime. Human crime. That's a statement. Humankind. And there's your first point of discernment. If you are my brother or my sister, that's the second point that John is making, is that not every human being is a child of God. And this is another point of heretical teaching under Christendom. That all love is love and we're all children of God. Wrong on both counts. God is love, not love is love. God is love. And those who profess with their mouth, they believe in their heart that Jesus

Christ is Lord, are saved and indwelt by the power of God's Holy Spirit. Thus they earn the right to be called children of God. And so we can't be afraid to stand on that truth. We don't have to run around like, well, you know, I'm having my first conversation with the child of God. I don't care. No, no, no. But as a Christian following Jesus, we know that my goal, because of the great commission given to me, is to speak with him faithfully about Jesus and give him all the information that he needs to profess with his mouth, believe in his heart that Jesus Christ is Lord. And he becomes my brother at that time. That's the way it works. And John wants to get all of that solid, good understanding and teaching out there, because already, as I've mentioned several times, it's starting to go sideways very quickly with this old Jesus risen from the dead thing. And Satan's like, "Uh-uh, not on my watch. You're not starting any global church." "Uh-uh, no." And he's trying to shut everything down with a bunch of lies right off of the bat. We know we love God's children if we love God, redundancy here, and obey his commandments. And we're not going to rehash all of that, because John has fooled us many times with this. "You may know you love God if you follow his commandments." And everyone's like, "See, I told you. It's just a bunch of rules and regulations." And then John says, "And his commandment is this. Love one another." So he's done this to us a couple of times. So we know to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. We know that this is what John is teaching, and when he's talking about following the commandments of God, love God, love our neighbor as ourselves. It's the love of God because God is love in you. Do you demonstrate it first in the church to fellow believers? Yes. And now, as we are edified, strengthened, and understand the good word, we take it to the world. It's the old airplane rule. Right? The oxygen mask falls. Take care of yourself before you can take care of anybody else. We come together to take care of ourselves, grow in our understanding, become the disciples of Christ that he sees. Now we go, and what we're saying about Jesus is true. And that's the importance of this. Right? Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. If you didn't take my word for it, you can read it here in the Bible. For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God. This is the drum that he is beating. Again, ostensibly in his time to speak against the heresies of the time. But it's in our Bibles for posterity, so that in 2024 we're reading it and understanding the same things. This is the point of discernment. How are you using the name of Jesus? What are you saying about Jesus? First and foremost, do you have any faith that Jesus is the Christ, the savior of humankind? And Jesus Christ was revealed as God's Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross. Now I'm going to take a little tiny pause here, because if you look at the different translations of this, most of them will say it is revealed by the water and the blood. And so scholars throughout the years have tried to determine what is meant by the water and the blood. And so the New Living Translation has taken this interpretation that the water means the beginning of his baptism. John the Baptist, under the water, Jesus goes in obedience to the law. And now as he rises, we see Father, Son, Holy Spirit all together. He begins his ministry. Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand. And the blood, the blood that is shed on the cross as the nails go into his hands and his feet. And the blood that is shed on the cross when the Roman soldier jams the spear up into his heart and the blood in the water come out, ending his earthly ministry. Now that is an interpretation that the New Living, a position that the New Living Translation has taken. It is my position as well, which is why I'm happy to read it to you. But as you read your other translations, you may simply say, "By the blood, by the water and the blood, he has made Christ." But that's what it means. My estimation, in my studies, there's where I have landed as well. Just where the New Living Translation has landed and they brought it forward for you. So his son, it revealed God's Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross. Not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms it with his testimony. So we have these three witnesses, Spirit, water and blood. All three agree. Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God. This is my Son with whom I am well pleased. The voice comes from the heavenlies as God's Holy Spirit rests upon the Son. And we hear that testimony. This is my Son with whom I am well pleased. That's where

my mind goes when I read this scripture. It is the very testimony of Father, Son, Holy Spirit as to who God is. Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and the person of the Trinity, Jesus the Christ, who he is. So don't be confused by that and who's testifying in what. We have the testimony of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit here. We have it throughout scripture. And if we're going to get together, I've been using examples with people, so I'll just pick on a couple of people. There's Brittany and Connie, they're very nice people. I believe what they have to say, no reason to disbelieve them. And they say that Dan Caliman is picking on them. I'm going to believe them. And if I'm going to believe these human beings in whom I trust and say, "Dan, quit picking on those ladies, right?" Why am I not believing the testimony of the Word of God? That's what John is saying. Why am I not believing the testimony of the Word of God? If I think Brittany is a fine person, I believe what she has to say, why would I not believe the Word of God? But we're more apt, right, to quickly jump to the human thing, like I said earlier. We're more apt to jump to the human thing and say, "Well, Spirit of God, where is he?" All that different stuff. And it comes back to what we talk about here all the time, and it is your faith. I believe the Word of God. I choose to believe the Word of God. Not blindly, but a lot of time and reading and even study and exposition into the Word of God. I love the Word of God. I want to dig into the Word of God. In today's sermon, we've cross-referenced from Old Testament to New Testament on the Word of God and how it is one unified message. Why? What reason do I have to doubt the Word of God? Father, Son, Holy Spirit and their testimony about the Christ and the risen Lord, our risen Lord. None, I have none. If I were to believe human sources in my trust, why would I not believe the Word of God? There may be your challenge question, teachers, there you go. Here's your challenge question to take home tonight. Stand in front of the mirror and say, "Do I believe the Word of God? Am I 100% believing the Word of God? Do I have that faith?" So we have these three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, the blood, all three agree. And since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God. And God has testified about His Son. All who believe in the Son of God know in their hearts that this testimony is true. Because what does Jesus say? "I am bringing forth the Spirit of truth." He will lead you in all truth. The Spirit of God is within you and you are in the Word of God. You are convicted of its truth. And you feel odd not believing it as opposed to believing it. Because God's Holy Spirit is saying, and He is bringing forward the meaning of these words, and you're like, "Yes, I believe." All who believe in the Son of God know in their hearts that this testimony is true. Those who don't believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don't believe what God has testified about His Son. And there we go again. He's speaking in His world to the heresies of His world. And Scripture today is speaking to us and the umbrella of Christendom about the heresies of today. And it's very simple. Who is Jesus? Why Jesus? Answer those two questions correctly and you can. And John is saying, "Welcome to the family, child of God." Those who speak otherwise, being that we have our holy scriptures that have been canonized, and we believe that they are the divinely inspired and fallible Word of God. If you would like to add to them, you'd like to take some things out, you'd like to change a bunch of words to fit another narrative about Jesus, you are calling God a liar, taking it upon yourself to be your own God and moving forward in that capacity. Good luck. Enjoy yourself. If you're very popular and you're getting very rich doing that, as Jesus would say, enjoy yourself now, for surely this is the only pleasure you will ever have. And we can take heart in that. And this is what God has testified. He has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. Are you picking up what John is putting down about Jesus? How many times has he said pretty much the same thing? Because he knows Brian Warner, right? He knows that, "What did he say? What did he say? What did he say?" He says it over and over and over again, like a good teacher actually does and would. This is what he testified. He's given us eternal life and this life is in, in, in His Son. There's that preposition, "in." It's in His Son. Not in His teachings or even in what we may know about Him historically or in, it's in Him as He is in us. This is the impossibility that becomes possible by the very power that raised Christ from the dead. "Whoever has the Son has life. Whoever does not have God's Son does not have life." And he goes on to talk about the sin that brings death. What do you think that, and I think we're reading that here again, what do you think this, when John says, "But there is sin that brings

death to you." If he just said, "In the Son is life," then what's the conscious sin that brings death? Not believing in the Son of God. Not believing in the Son of God. You, especially, right, you have the information, all the information that you need, and you say, "Nope, no thanks." There's your sin. You're not a Christian and you're not my brother or sister. I love you because you are an image bearer of God and my heart burns for you to be my sister, to be my brother. But you're not because you're denying that, and that is the sin that will lead to your death and damnation. And you're consciously making it. That's not a God problem. That's a you problem. And we all have to come to terms with that in front of the mirror. All of us. So there you go. Last week I preached a sermon that convicted me so much I reached out and started asking for forgiveness from people that I hadn't spoken to in a long time. So I waited a couple of hours to see how this sermon convinced me. Because you're always putting a little bit of your own blood on the sermons and the Lord is saying, "Yeah, this whole mirror thing that you talk about." "You're doing it, Brian?" Like, leave me alone. I said to some of my friends last week, "Gang on that Holy Spirit! He's given me!" "And now I've got to do some things because I just told everybody else that this is what God wants!" It's good stuff. It's good stuff. But there's John.