



PUBLICITY CHECKLIST

Hard Truth

Season after Pentecost 2022

Please Note: Publicity materials are available in both English and Spanish.

SERIES THEME: *HARD TRUTH*

“Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem” (Luke 13:22). Jesus knows that when he gets to Jerusalem, he is going to die. If you expect Jesus to use these final teaching opportunities to share happy thoughts, you don’t know him well. With a sense of extreme urgency, Jesus shares truths we need to hear, even if we do not want to hear them. As Jesus teaches hard truth, he challenges conventional wisdom. He reverses the normal and natural order of things. This should not surprise us, considering this Teacher’s life and work are the opposite of what one would expect.

When the truth is hard to hear, the first temptation is to deny it. We cannot do that with Jesus’ teaching, for he never lies. When the truth is hard to hear, the second temptation is to simply ignore it. To do that with Jesus is to court eternal death. Thus, Jesus’ words contain an urgent warning: Listen! Take to heart what Jesus says! For his Word, though it contains hard truth, gives eternal life.

Date & Theme	Channel	Action	Wording
Week of August 7 <i>Introduce theme</i>	Worship folder/newsletter blurb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place blurb in print and electronic versions of worship folder and newsletter • Include “Hard Truth” graphic 	“Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem” (Luke 13:22). Jesus knows that when he gets to Jerusalem, he is going to die. If you expect Jesus to use these final teaching opportunities to share happy thoughts, you don’t know him well. With a sense of extreme urgency, Jesus shares truths we need to hear, even if we do not want to hear them. As Jesus teaches hard truth, he challenges conventional wisdom. He reverses the normal and natural order of things. This should not surprise us, considering this Teacher’s life and work are the opposite of what one would expect.

			<p>When the truth is hard to hear, the first temptation is to deny it. We cannot do that with Jesus' teaching, for he never lies. When the truth is hard to hear, the second temptation is to simply ignore it. To do that with Jesus is to court eternal death. Thus, Jesus' words contain an urgent warning: Listen! Take to heart what Jesus says! For his Word, though it contains hard truth, gives eternal life.</p>
	Facebook	<p>Post "Hard Truth" 1x1 video file <i>(versions available with or without WELS logo at end of video)</i></p>	<p>Discover how even hard truth can be loving.</p> <p>Join us for a new series: Hard Truth.</p>
	Instagram	<p>Post "Hard Truth" 1x1 video file <i>(versions available with or without WELS logo at end of video)</i></p>	<p>Discover how even hard truth can be loving.</p> <p>Join us for a new series: Hard Truth.</p>
	Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post "Hard Truth" 16x9 video file to YouTube or Vimeo <i>(versions available with or without WELS logo at end of video)</i> • Show "Hard Truth" 16x9 video file during this week's worship announcements 	<p>Discover how even hard truth can be loving.</p> <p>Join us for a new series: Hard Truth.</p>
	Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post theme information • Post link to "Hard Truth" video on YouTube or Vimeo • Post "Hard Truth" graphic 	<p>"Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem" (Luke 13:22). Jesus knows that when he gets to Jerusalem, he is going to die. If you expect Jesus to use these final teaching opportunities to share happy thoughts, you don't know him well. With a sense of extreme urgency, Jesus shares truths we need to hear, even if we do not want to hear them. As Jesus teaches hard truth, he challenges conventional wisdom. He reverses the normal and natural order of things. This should not surprise us, considering this Teacher's life and work are the opposite of what one would expect.</p>

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	PowerPoint slide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use "Hard Truth" PowerPoint file • Show on digital display screens before and after worship or during announcements this week 	
	PowerPoint logo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use "Hard Truth" PowerPoint logo file or blank PowerPoint background file • Show on digital display screens before and after worship or during announcements this week 	Discover how even hard truth can be loving. Join us for a new series: Hard Truth.
Sunday, August 14 <i>Proper 15</i>	Worship folder template	Use "Hard Truth" worship folder cover PDF	
Theme of the Day: We Want Peace, but God's Word Divides	Worship folder/newsletter blurb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place blurb in print and electronic versions of worship folder and newsletter • Include "Hard Truth" graphic 	We often divide humanity into groupings that are not really significant: this ethnic group versus that one, men versus women, wealthy versus the poor. Yet, every ethnic group is under God's law. That law convicts both men and women of sin. Because of sin, the wealthy and the poor will both die. Only through faith in Christ is sin forgiven and the sting of death removed. God's Word creates that saving faith, but not in everyone who hears it. Fallen man retains the awful power to resist the working of the Spirit inside him . . . to reject the gift of faith. Therefore, God's Word produces the only people grouping that ultimately matters: believers and

			unbelievers. We want to overcome division and live in peace with other people. Here is a hard truth: total peace is impossible for the believer to achieve. Those who embrace the gospel in faith will inevitably face hostility and opposition. Following Jesus will come at a price. Yet he promises us our perseverance will be rewarded.
	Facebook	Post "Hard Truth" Facebook graphic	Here is a hard truth: Total peace is impossible for the believer to achieve. Those who embrace the gospel in faith will inevitably face hostility and opposition. Following Jesus will come at a price. Yet he promises us our perseverance will be rewarded.
	Instagram	Post "Hard Truth" Instagram graphic	Here is a hard truth: Total peace is impossible for the believer to achieve. Those who embrace the gospel in faith will inevitably face hostility and opposition. Following Jesus will come at a price. Yet he promises us our perseverance will be rewarded.
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Sunday, August 21 <i>Proper 16</i>	Worship folder template	Use "Hard Truth" worship folder cover PDF	

<p>Theme of the Day: The First Will Be Last; The Last Will Be First</p>	<p>Worship folder/newsletter blurb</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place blurb in print and electronic versions of worship folder and newsletter • Include “Hard Truth” graphic 	<p>When it comes to the difficult and uncomfortable topic of who goes to heaven and who goes to hell, it is natural to want to avoid the issue. One way we do that is to direct our attention to theoretical questions. “What is heaven like?” “How old will we be there?” Today, someone asks Jesus, “Lord, are only a few going to be saved?” Jesus brushes these questions aside. Instead, he answers the question we should be asking. Rather than talking about how many will be saved, Jesus explains how to be among the saved. What he teaches today through his Word is a hard truth. The doorway into heaven is narrow. Scripture consistently teaches that those individuals who are certain they will be first through that door are more likely to be last, if they make it through at all. Instead, the one who believes he is the last one God should let into his kingdom and that his only chance of getting in is through the grace of Christ will enter first.</p>
	<p>Facebook</p>	<p>Post “Hard Truth” Facebook graphic</p>	<p>Here is a hard truth: The doorway into heaven is narrow. Scripture consistently teaches that those individuals who are certain they will be first through that door are more likely to be last, if they make it through at all. Instead, the one who believes he is the last one God should let into his kingdom and that his only chance of getting in is through the grace of Christ will enter first.</p>
	<p>Instagram</p>	<p>Post “Hard Truth” Instagram graphic</p>	<p>Here is a hard truth: The doorway into heaven is narrow. Scripture consistently teaches that those individuals who are certain they will be first through that door are more likely to be last, if they make it through at all. Instead, the one who believes he is the last one God should let into his kingdom and that his only chance of getting in is through the grace of Christ will enter first.</p>
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	PowerPoint logo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use “Hard Truth” PowerPoint logo file or blank PowerPoint background file • Show on digital display screens before and after worship or during announcements this week 	Hard Truth: The First Will Be Last; The Last Will Be First
Sunday, August 28 <i>Proper 17</i>	Worship folder template	Use “Hard Truth” worship folder cover PDF	
Theme of the Day: The Humble Will Be Exalted; The Exalted Will Be Humbled	Worship folder/newsletter blurb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place blurb in print and electronic versions of worship folder and newsletter • Include “Hard Truth” graphic 	Everyone knows that humility is a positive trait and pride is a negative one. So, why bother talking about what we already know? Because in spite of that knowledge, we still helplessly fall into the trap of pride. We cannot help but think that our ascent to the exalted status we desire is our responsibility. We even take our exaltation into our own hands, either by treating poorly those we believe we can stand on top of or by showing favoritism to those we believe can provide us with upward mobility. Rather than minimizing pride as a sin that is common or harmless, Jesus’ words today confront us with this hard truth. Those who exalt themselves will be humbled by God. But Jesus also gives us the promise we need to be freed from pride’s trap. Our exaltation doesn’t need to be our responsibility because Jesus has already made it his. Those who humble themselves, Christ will exalt.
	Facebook	Post “Hard Truth” Facebook graphic	Here is a hard truth: Those who exalt themselves will be humbled by God. But Jesus also gives us the promise we need to be freed from pride’s trap. Our exaltation doesn’t

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Sunday, September 4 <i>Proper 18</i>	Worship folder template	Use "Hard Truth" worship folder cover PDF	
Theme of the Day: Put Down What You Love; Pick Up What You Loathe	Worship folder/newsletter blurb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place blurb in print and electronic versions of worship folder and newsletter • Include "Hard Truth" graphic 	It is an unavoidable hard truth. Our relationship with Jesus will put us in situations where we must decide where love for him ranks compared to love for other people and things. And Jesus is not content to be one of many important things in our life; he wants to be first. He wants us to follow his Word unwaveringly, even when he asks us to do difficult things. As a result, following Jesus will force us to let go of things we love and embrace things we would naturally loathe. Jesus is loving and honest. He doesn't hide this hard truth! Instead, he tells us up front that we must count the cost of following him. That means calculating what we

			<p>might have to give up as his followers. He wants us to do that now, ahead of time, rather than waiting until we are in the heat of the moment and emotions are running high. However, our calculations should not only consider what we might give up for Jesus. They also entail calculating what we get through him! When we perceive the infinite blessings we find in Christ, the decisions we must make, while difficult, will be clear. Whatever is lost as we follow Jesus pales in comparison to what we gain.</p>
	Facebook	Post "Hard Truth" Facebook graphic	<p>Here is a hard truth: Our relationship with Jesus will put us in situations where we must decide where love for him ranks compared to love for other people and things. And Jesus is not content to be one of many important things in our life; he wants to be first. As a result, following Jesus will force us to let go of things we love and embrace things we would naturally loathe.</p>
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Sunday, September 11 <i>Proper 19</i>	Worship folder template	Use "Hard Truth" worship folder cover PDF	
Theme of the Day: The Found Are Left; The Lost Are Found	Worship folder/newsletter blurb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place blurb in print and electronic versions of worship folder and newsletter Include "Hard Truth" graphic 	"He's lost." We use that term not only to refer to someone who is bewildered about where they are but also to refer to someone who is in a helpless, hopeless state. Mankind's natural state is one of complete spiritual helplessness, a profound lostness. It manifests itself in countless ways. The one who simply wants God to leave him alone: lost. The one who feels she can handle life on her own: lost. The one who thinks he has the right to repent of his sins on his own timetable and on his own terms: lost. The one who thinks God owes them in some way: lost. Wandering around physically lost can lead to winding up in bad places. But the hard truth is that wandering around spiritually lost puts you in the worst place of all. Fortunately, Jesus does not leave us alone in our lostness. He relentlessly seeks us. He involves the rest of the Christian community in seeking the lost and rejoicing over the found.
	Facebook	Post "Hard Truth" Facebook graphic	Here is a hard truth: Although wandering around physically lost can lead to winding up in bad places, wandering around spiritually lost puts you in the worst place of all. Fortunately, Jesus does not leave us alone in our lostness. He relentlessly seeks us. He involves the rest of the Christian community in seeking the lost and rejoicing over the found.
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Sunday, September 18 <i>Proper 20</i>	Worship folder template	Use “Hard Truth” worship folder cover PDF	
Theme of the Day: Serve God with Money; You Can’t Serve God and Money	Worship folder/newsletter blurb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place blurb in print and electronic versions of worship folder and newsletter • Include “Hard Truth” graphic 	There are more than 2,300 Bible passages that speak about money. Why? Money is a master Satan frequently tempts us to serve. And that evil foe knows how successful his efforts with money can be. Money provides us with a false comfort and a sense of security. It serves as a source of pride. It serves as a wonderful tool for a favorite pastime: justifying ourselves in our own eyes and the eyes of others. Jesus knows that serving money makes it impossible to serve God. The human heart is not big enough for both. As a result, Jesus does all he can to expose the futility of serving money. He also helps us see that the only one truly worth serving is our gracious, loving God. When we serve God, money is put in its proper place. Instead of money being a lord to serve, it becomes a resource for serving the Lord. This is the hard truth. There is no way for us to serve both God and money. But we can serve God with our money.
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Sunday, September 25 <i>Proper 21</i>	Worship folder template	Use "Hard Truth" worship folder cover PDF	
Theme of the Day: What Seems to Help in Life Fails in Death; What Seems to Fail in Life Helps in Death	Worship folder/newsletter blurb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place blurb in print and electronic versions of worship folder and newsletter • Include "Hard Truth" graphic 	Last week we learned the hard truth that while money can help make life easier in some ways, it cannot bring true happiness and fulfillment. This week we see that as much as money lets us down in life, its ultimate failure to deliver on its promises happens in death. Those who live with hearts filled with love for money and void of love for God will receive the only eternity that money can buy: one void of God and filled with pain. Though we might be fooled into thinking money helps in life, it will certainly fail us in death. Conversely, that which seems to offer little help in life will

			<p>never fail us in death. The best example of this is the gospel. Those who hear and heed the Scriptures often appear to receive little benefit in life. Living by God’s Word doesn’t make life easier. In fact, faithfully following Christ often means a more challenging life, one filled with crosses and self-denial. Great wealth gains you the admiration and respect of the world. Being true to Scripture is more likely to gain you scorn and ridicule. Yet those who find the help they need in God rather than in money will never be disappointed. In death they will receive a reward that dwarfs even the best things money can buy.</p>
	Facebook	Post “Hard Truth” Facebook graphic	<p>Here is a hard truth: Though we might be fooled into thinking money helps in life, it will certainly fail us in death. Conversely, that which seems to offer little help in life will never fail us in death. The best example of this is the gospel. Those who find the help they need in God rather than in money will never be disappointed.</p>
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