

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, March 30th, 2025
Rev. Gerry Gallant

God's Word
Fourth Sunday in Lent
John 5:30-47

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation!

Thanks be to God for such great mercy.

Everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Thanks be to God for new beginnings!

God has given us the ministry of reconciliation through Christ Jesus.

Together we will make a new beginning in Christ!

Let us worship God with joyful hearts, trusting God to renew us and all things.

We will lift our praises to God with hearts refreshed by grace.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

God of Mystery and Mercy,
 we gather to worship you in humility and hope
 because we believe you have the power to change the world;
 to change the world for the better with your love.
 We gather to worship you
 trusting that no one or situation is beyond your concern,
 or your embrace.
 Such love astonishes us.
 Without your grace we cannot imagine such love.
 Inspire us with a vision of love
 which will change the world and our lives
 through the love and mercy we meet in Jesus Christ,
 your Son and our Saviour. **Amen.**

Children's Video

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

**God of love and mercy,
 when we pause for a moment in your presence,
 the daily details of our lives press in on us.
 We recall things left undone; opportunities ignored.
 We remember careless words spoken,
 disappointments that trouble our souls.
 We offer to you now our repentance for our misspent moments and missed
 opportunities. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

Remember the promise that the apostle Paul declares:
 What can separate us from the love of Christ? Hardship? Distress? Peril or sword?
 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through the God who loves us.
 Neither death nor life, things present nor things to come can separate us
 from the love of God in Christ Jesus.
 Thanks be to God for such a promise!
 The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name
 Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven
 Give us this day our daily bread
 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one
 For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
 Forever and ever, Amen.**

Hymn: "O Lord, My Rock and my Redeemer"

O Lord my rock and my redeemer, greatest treasure of my longing heart
 My God like You there is no other, true delight is found in You alone.
 Your grace, a well too deep to fathom Your love exceeds the heavens' reach
 Your truth, a fount of perfect wisdom, my highest good and my unending need.

O Lord my rock and my redeemer, strong defender of my weary heart
 My sword to fight the cruel deceiver, and my shield against his hateful darts
 My song when enemies surround me, my hope when tides of sorrow rise
 My joy when trials are abounding, Your faithfulness my refuge in the night

O Lord my rock and my redeemer, gracious saviour of my ruined life
 My guilt and cross laid on Your shoulders, in my place You suffered, bled, and died.
 You rose the grave and death are conquered, You broke my bonds of sin and shame
 O Lord my rock and my redeemer, may all my days bring glory to Your name.

Responsive Reading

Psalm 32:1-5

¹ Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

² **Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

³ For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

⁴ **For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. *Selah***

⁵ **I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not cover my iniquity;
I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,”
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. *Selah***

Anthem (Music Ministry): “King Jesus Is A-Listenin”

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

John 5:30-47

³⁰ “I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me. ³¹ If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true. ³² There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true. ³³ You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. ³⁴ Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. ³⁵ He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. ³⁶ But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me. ³⁷ And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, ³⁸ and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent. ³⁹ You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. ⁴¹ I do not receive glory from people. ⁴² But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. ⁴³ I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. ⁴⁴ How can you believe,

when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? ⁴⁵ Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. ⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

Sermon

If you can remember back to last week, Jesus had made the claim that he was equal to the Father after healing the man who had been an invalid for 38 years at the pool of Bethesda. The Jewish authorities were not amazed by the miracle of this man's sudden ability to stand and walk after 38 years, instead they were more concerned that someone had healed him on the Sabbath. When they confronted Jesus about this, he had told them that 'my Father works every day, therefore I work every day.'

This upset the Jewish leader's because Jesus had violated the rules that they had created around the Sabbath, Jesus had not violated God's commands, just man's. He had violated their petty man-made rules which were religious, legalistic, and self-righteous rules. And in His defense, Jesus had referred to God as his Father, using a word in Greek which implied that close personal relationship between Father and Son.

In the verses that followed, he showed how he is equal to God in essence, works, power, judgement, honor, and resurrection. Then he says this:

John 5:31-32

³¹ If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true. ³² There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true.

Now anyone can make a claim that they are equal to God the Father, however, the question is if there is anyone there who can act as a witness and give testimony to their claim.

So, Jesus is once again going to use an Old Testament teaching in an attempt to show the Jewish Religious leaders who he really is.

Deuteronomy 19:15

¹⁵ "A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established.

Jesus is going to make a reference to three witnesses who will testify to the truth that he is indeed the son of God. What is important to understand is that these three witnesses to which Jesus will make reference were all put in place by God the Father. So, when Jesus says, **'There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that**

he bears about me is true.' He is saying that God the Father also testifies to the truth that I am His Son.

Jesus is telling these religious leaders that behind each of his witnesses is the character of God the Father, a trustworthy, holy and righteous character that can be trusted to give true testimony.

John 5:33-35

³³ You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. ³⁴ Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. ³⁵ He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.

The first witness that Jesus makes reference to is John the Baptist. John was a man sent by God to bring light to the world. John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets and the first of the New Testament preachers.

John was unique in this role and Jesus himself said this about John the Baptist.

Matthew 11:11

Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

God spoke to the world through the Prophets in the Old Testament, and the testimony of John the Baptist that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God.

John 1:14-15

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.' "

John was older than Jesus, yet he makes this reference to Jesus being eternal.

John 1:29

29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

John tells us clearly that Jesus, the lamb of God is the one who can save us by paying the debt of our sins.

When Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus and the voice of God was heard

Matthew 3:16-17

¹⁶ **And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”**

For this reason, John confidently declares that Jesus is the Son of God.

John 1:34

³⁴ **And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”**

This first witness came to prepare the way for the Lord.

Then Jesus calls the second witness:

John 5:36

³⁶ **But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.**

Jesus is making reference to his miracles or as John likes to call them signs, signs that point to Jesus Christ's divinity. Remember that the Gospel of John tells us that:

John 20:30-31

³⁰ **Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are 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.**

Jesus did things that no man could do, things that only God could do, and John picked just seven of these to use in his book that would directly point to Jesus as the Son of God. Each one that we study, points to a different aspect of the divine nature of Christ and help us to better understand our salvation through him and him alone.

We have seen water turned into wine which showed his glory and taught us of the conversion that we go through in Christ.

Then there was the healing of the official's son which taught us that we are to trust God through faith and be committed to him.

We are in the midst of studying the healing at the pools in Bethesda, and this shows us the mercy and grace that Jesus possesses and how we have to be willing to be changed.

Coming up next, we will have the feeding of the five thousand. A sign which once again points to the Glory and that he cares for us which remind us to turn to Christ in this world in all things.

Then he will still a storm and walk on water, where we will witness his power of the things of this world which we consider untamable. Showing us how God can bring peace to our lives even in the chaos of this world.

Next, he heals the man who was born blind. Once again displaying his mercy and grace and showing us how he is the healer and restores us from death in the darkness to life in the light by being reborn in him.

Finally, we have the raising of his friend Lazarus from the dead.

Each sign that John refers to, shows us that Jesus is indeed the Son of God and has power over all things.

Then Jesus Calls his last witness.

John 5:37-38

³⁷ And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, ³⁸ and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent.

Jesus calls upon the Scriptures, the word of God himself to testify to the truth that he is indeed the one and only living son of God.

Jesus says that Moses wrote the Scriptures by the inspiration of God the Father and that those writings point to Jesus Christ.

God reveals himself to us when we search for him, and the most glorious and wonderful way that he reveals himself to us, the way that he talks to us in the world today is through his written word, the Bible.

When we get to know him through his Word, we see all of the ways in which God reveals himself to mankind. Through nature, through dreams, through angels and a multitude of other ways, and it is all recorded for us in the Scriptures. A book that is authored by God himself, penned by men all across time, sewn together with one theme the redemptive plan of Jesus Christ. Think about that for a minute. God the Father wrote a book for you using around forty different authors over 4000 years all so that you could know that Jesus Christ is the one and only way to salvation.

God the Father testified to the truth of Jesus as his Son audibly at his baptism and it is recorded for us, he spoke audibly on the Mount of Transfiguration, and it is recorded for us

in his Word. He spoke a third time which we will read about in Chapter 12 of the book of John, which many people witnessed and is recorded for us in the Word of God.

The Word of God speaks to God's people. Which is why, what Jesus says to those religious leaders next is so powerful, **'you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent'**

He tells those men who had devoted their lives to the Word of God that they do not have the Word of God. How is this possible? Because they have not really accepted the Word of God, they have not been convicted, they are not committed and therefore they cannot be changed by the Holy Spirit.

This is still true today, and there will be many who do not want to hear this, but 2 Timothy teaches us that.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

God breathed out every word of the Bible. God breathed upon them, and they were convicted to write what they wrote.

That means that as Christians we have to believe that God wrote the Bible, it was penned by man, but God wrote it, and that is why we need to obey what it teaches, as it is written.

Christianity is based upon the truth that the Bible is inerrant and infallible.

And there are many people out there who are actively seeking to change this viewpoint, so that they can pick and choose what parts of Scripture they think were written by God and what parts were written by man. So, they can pick and choose what parts they like and what parts they feel were mistakes, so that they can create the God that they want and live their lives as they choose.

All Scripture, from the very first word of the book of Genesis to the very last word of the book of Revelation is God's Word and it is infallible and inerrant. Never doubt that.

2 Peter 1:16-21

¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," ¹⁸we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹And we have the

prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Peter was there on the Mount of Transfiguration and heard God audibly speak, yet here he is telling us that we can place our faith in the same voice that is recorded in the Scriptures.

Peter is saying this is not man's ideas of God that are written in the Bible, the Scriptures are God's words recorded for us according to his will and his ways.

John 5:39-47

³⁹ You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. ⁴¹ I do not receive glory from people. ⁴² But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. ⁴³ I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. ⁴⁴ How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? ⁴⁵ Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. ⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

So, he tells them, you look in the Scriptures, you dig into the Word, you memorize the words, but you do not understand them.

If you read the Bible and it does not convict you, cause you to commit your life to Christ and change you from who you were into someone who walks with Christ, then you do not understand the Word the same way that the religious leaders of Jesus' day did, and you too do not know Jesus.

The Bible is written for Gods people, and when you are one of God's people you will get great pleasure from his Word.

The modern church looks for new interpretations of the Scripture, new ideas in the Scriptures, things which affirm the modern way of living. If they come up with some new idea or interpretation it is probably because they have chosen to ignore or misrepresent the Word of God, based upon their belief of man's mistakes or man's bias in the Scriptures.

God's Word has always been the same and it will always be the same. Simply put, if it's new it's not true, if it's true it's not new'

You might have picked up by now that the Scripture is pretty repetitive. God has to tell us the same thing over and over because we constantly rebel against his Word in our lives.

The purpose of the Scripture is not for us to gain a lot of knowledge about God, it is to change us from sinners into children of God. So, if the God that you learn about is not one that requires you to change, perhaps you are not reading the Bible as intended. God's Word is meant to challenge us, to confront us, to offend us and ultimately for us to give up us and follow him. It should make us come to him in humility, brokenness and repentance of our sinful life.

So, Jesus tells them that it is Christ that saves, and because the Jewish leaders believe that the knowledge of the Bible is what saves, they have it wrong and they will miss out on Salvation.

In verse 39 he says that the Scriptures point to him. Every word of the Scripture testifies to Jesus Christ.

The Bible study that Walter is leading 'Dust to Glory' teaches this, Genesis to Revelation points to Jesus Christ.

He then tells them that they have the wrong motive because they are proud and full of themselves. They would not come to him; they would not humble themselves before the Scriptures but instead took pleasure in lording themselves over others.

He says that they did not have the love of God within them. They loved themselves more than God. They read the Bible and studied the Scripture because of what they felt they could gain out of it for themselves, not because of their love of God and a desire to know him better.

Think about young couples in times of separation. When you loved one sends you a message you read it right away. You do not let it sit forever, because you love them you want to read it as soon as you can. If you never read a message from someone, leave them on read as many young people say today, it means that you do not care what they have to say.

How many Christians are leaving God on read, not picking up their Bibles and reading what he has to say to them in their lives today.

Jesus then says that they were more concerned with being honored by man than in believing in God. They boasted of their commitment to the words of Moses, of how they studied and obeyed the words of Moses, yet they did it so they could be looked up to in the courts of the church, not because of a desire to be faithful to God.

He even says that Moses wrote of him, and that they do not believe what it says about Jesus because it went against their own ideas of what God should be.

What a hard message for the world today.

You either have the God of the Bible, the Jesus of the Bible or you have no God at all.

If you want to know the God of the Bible, the Jesus of the Bible, read the Bible humbly. God is in heaven, and we are on earth. It is his infallible and inerrant Word, and we need to read it with humility and dependance upon it. We need to pray for the Holy Spirit to help us understand it as God intended and not how we want to know and understand it.

Secondly, we need to read it with intent, with the love of Christ in our hearts and with a burning desire to know him better. Finding him in every page, finding his promises, finding out more about his character, his grace, mercy, love and justice. Finding out more of the sins which he calls for us to avoid in our lives.

Finally, we are to read it obediently. Humbly, purposely and obediently.

We are called to be doers of the Word, people who live out the Word of God as it is revealed to us in his Scriptures. We are to be converted by his Word, committed to his Word and changed by his Word as we walk as the Salt and Light of his word in this dark and broken world.

Let us pray,

Preserve Us from Greed and the Cares of this Life

Lord God, heavenly Father,
in the wilderness your Son fed over five thousand people
with five loaves and two fish.
Graciously remain with us and bless us.
Preserve us from greed and the cares of this life
that we may seek first your kingdom and your righteousness
and in all things remember your Fatherly goodness;
through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one true God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Source: Veit Dietrich, d. 1549, Lent 4

Hymn #746: “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear;
what a privilege to carry

everything to God in prayer.
 Oh what peace we often forfeit,
 oh what needless pain we bear,
 all because we do not carry
 everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations?
 Is there trouble anywhere?
 We should never be discouraged:
 take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Can we find a friend so faithful,
 who will all our sorrows share?
 Jesus knows our every weakness:
 take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy-laden,
 cumbered with a load of care?
 Precious Saviour, still our refuge:
 take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
 Take it to the Lord in prayer;
 in his arms he'll take and shield thee;
 thou wilt find a solace there.

Invitation to Offering

Offering Prayer

Closing Hymn #742: “Lead On, O King Eternal”

Lead on, O King eternal:
 the day of march has come;
 hence forth in fields of battle
 thy tents shall be our home:
 through days of preparation
 thy grace has made us strong,
 and now, O King eternal,
 we lift our battlesong.

Lead on, O King eternal,
 till sin's fierce war shall cease,
 and holiness shall whisper
 the sweet Amen of peace;
 for not with swords' loud clashing
 nor roll of stirring drum,
 but deeds of love and mercy,
 thy reign of peace shall come.

Lead on, O King eternal:
 we follow, not with fears,
 for gladness breaks like morning
 where'er thy face appears:
 thy cross is lifted o'er us;
 we journey in its light;
 the crown awaits the conquest;
 lead on, O God of might.

Pastoral Prayer

Gracious God,
 you have called us together as your people,
 to be the church of Jesus Christ.
 Make us one in faith and discipleship,
 breaking bread together, and telling the good news,
 so that the world may believe you are love,
 turn to your ways, and live in the light of your truth.

Jesus Christ, Prince of peace,
 you taught us of God's reconciling grace
 in the story of a father who welcomed back his wandering son
 and invited his jealous son to open his heart.
 Speak to the hearts of all your people
 in this time when so many neighbors and nations sit in judgment on each other,
 provoking conflict and resentment.
 Teach us how to seek peace on earth together.
 Call those in positions of power and influence to work for the common good.
 Turn us away from anger, fear, violence or vanity,
 which can turn neighbor against neighbor and nation against nation.
 May all who claim your name be known as makers of the peace.

O Christ, healer of hearts and hopes,
 you desire health and wholeness for each one of us:
 We pray that those who have lost their livelihoods
 may find true abundance.

Grant rest and renewal to those who are broken in body, mind, or spirit,
 and bring comfort and hope to all who face loss and loneliness.
 we lift before you the names of all those on our hearts today.

Spirit of power and promise, embrace us with hope this day
 so that we may live faithfully,
 encouraging each other by the commitment we see in Jesus Christ
 In whose name we offer these prayers. **Amen.**

Benediction

May the grace of Christ attend you,
the love of God surrounds you,
the Holy Spirit keep you
now and forevermore.