

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, March 9th, 2025
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Walking in Faith
First Sunday of Lent
John 4:25-54

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Let us worship God, who has done great things.

**We rejoice in our God, who made a way
through the desert of this world.**

Let us worship God, who has caused streams of mercy
to flow in the wasteland.

**We are the people God has formed through Christ;
we worship him, and we rejoice!**

Let us worship God in spirit and in truth.

**We praise God for the grace that has saved us.
Alleluia! We rejoice!**

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

O God, in creation you fashion us in your image,
in Christ you reveal to us your love,
through the Holy Spirit you welcome us into the fellowship of believers;
we bow in gratitude before you.

We constantly distort your image, but still you restore it.

We daily betray your love, but still you extend it.

We often disrupt fellowship, but still you bless it.

Come unto us at this time and in this place, O Lord,
that your image in us might be revealed, your love for us returned,
and our fellowship in Christ renewed. **Amen.**

Children's Video

Call to Confession

Prepare the way of the Lord!

Let us make our confession to God.

Prayer of Confession

Everlasting God,
 fountain of all life and the true home of every heart:
 our hearts are restless until they rest in you.
 Yet we confess that our hearts have been enslaved
 by selfish passion and base desire.
 We have sought after many things
 and have neglected the one thing needful.
 We have not loved you with our whole hearts;
 help us to turn to you and find forgiveness.
 Lead us home, that we may again find in you
 our life and joy and peace. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

By grace you have been saved through faith,
 and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.

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"**VERSE 1**

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.

VERSE 2

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

VERSE 3

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 9:9-16

⁹ Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place—
the Most High, who is my refuge—

¹⁰ **no evil shall be allowed to befall you,
no plague come near your tent.**

¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways.

¹² **On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.**

¹³ **You will tread on the lion and the adder;
the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.**

¹⁴ “Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him;
I will protect him, because he knows my name.

¹⁵ **When he calls to me, I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him.**

¹⁶ **With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation.”**

Anthem (Music Ministry): “O How He Loves You and Me”

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

John 4:25-54

²⁵ The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” ²⁶ Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”

²⁷ Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?” ²⁸ So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹ “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” ³⁰ They went out of the town and were coming to him.

³¹ Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” ³² But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” ³³ So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?” ³⁴ Jesus said to them,

“My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. ³⁵ Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. ³⁶ Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷ For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ ³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

³⁹ Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word. ⁴² They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

⁴³ After the two days he departed for Galilee. ⁴⁴ (For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.) ⁴⁵ So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast.

⁴⁶ So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. ⁴⁷ When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸ So Jesus said to him, “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.” ⁴⁹ The official said to him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, “Go; your son will live.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. ⁵¹ As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. ⁵² So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” ⁵³ The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” And he himself believed, and all his household. ⁵⁴ This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.

Sermon

I who speak to you am he.

‘Ego eimi’

This is where we left off last week. On this full revelation of who he is to this Samaritan woman.

Jesus had left the region around the Jordan river and was travelling to the region of Galilee. However, unlike most of the Jews of the day he did not cross over the Jordan river and travel north, instead he travelled west into the lands of the Samaritans.

Tired and thirsty from travelling in the heat of the day, he had stopped at the well of Jacob, just outside the city of Sychar. Last week, I spoke of how this is John once again reminding us that Jesus was both fully divine and fully human.

It is at this well that he meets this woman, who is an outcast of society because of the sinful nature, and in his dialogue with her, he tells her of her sin and offers her salvation. Once again going against the norms of the day, a man speaking to a woman was odd enough, but a Rabbi speaking to a sinful woman who was outcast from her society, was unheard of in Jesus's day.

This shows us the passion and compassion that Jesus has for the lost. He went deep into the land of Samaria to save this half-jew half-gentile sinner. This shows us that the salvation offered by Jesus Christ is for everyone, not just a specific people, or culture. Jesus came to save any who will bow their knee and humble themselves before him in their lives.

God orchestrated this whole encounter with the woman at the well before the world began. It all served a purpose in his plans for our salvation, and it shows in the purposeful way Jesus goes to this woman, reveals her sinful nature to her, and then offers her salvation as he reveals himself to her with the same word that God spoke in the burning bush, 'ego eimi'.

This is where we are when the disciples of Jesus return from the city with food to share among themselves.

The Scripture highlights that the disciples were surprised that Jesus was sitting there talking to a woman at the well, breaking all of the norms of that day.

John 4:27

²⁷ Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?"

Yet they did not speak out about it, instead they marveled, they were filled with astonishment, trying to figure out who it was that this Rabbi they were following really was. I too marvel at this passage, and how it shows the compassion of Jesus Christ for the lost. I marvel that even in my sinful state, Jesus Christ sought me out and revealed me to myself so that he could reveal himself to me and through his mercy and grace offer me salvation. Is it marvelous that through his grace and mercy Jesus comes to sinners and through revealing himself to them brings them eternal salvation.

John 4:28-30

²⁸ So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹ “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” ³⁰ They went out of the town and were coming to him.

Isn't it interesting that after meeting the Lord, she forgets her water pot. She forgets the job that she had gone to the well to do, that she immediately turns into an evangelist and wants to go share the who Jesus is with others.

This is part of the change in character that the Holy Spirit instigates in believers. He frees us from the mundane parts of our life and brings us to a higher calling. If you are of this world you work for money, for worldly wealth, worldly possession, to get ahead. When you become a member of the body of Christ you still go to the well to draw water, you still work, but your higher calling is to share the truth of who Jesus Christ is with those around you.

We are not meant to get caught up in our employment, but to remember that it is an avenue in which we are called to share the truth of the Gospel with others.

God calls us all differently to his purpose and to fit his plan, for some it is a call to full time ministry, for others it is a call to full time dishwashing, or farming, or teaching, or nursing, or even parenting. And regardless of our job in this world, our primary goal is the Great Commission, the sharing of the Gospel with others.

This woman at the well, the moment she committed herself to the Lord, left her water pot behind and went back into the town where she was an outcast and begins to tell people about him.

When Jesus Christ is at the center of your heart, you want to share him with others in this world. If you want to know if you have been born again, just see if you have some desire to share the truth of the Gospel with someone else. That does not mean you need to go be a street preacher, or a pastor, but maybe you have this desire to share Jesus Christ with a loved one, a family member, a friend, or a co-worker.

As the woman goes into the town to evangelize, we are given another glimpse into the relationship between Jesus and his disciples.

John 4:31-37

³¹ Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” ³² But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” ³³ So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?” ³⁴ Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. ³⁵ Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. ³⁶ Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷ For here the saying holds true, ‘One

sows and another reaps.’³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

The disciples cannot understand why Jesus does not eat the food that they have brought back for him to eat. Immediately he responds that, **“I have food to eat that you do not know about.”** We know what Jesus is speaking of, he is talking about how doing the will of the father, doing God’s work fulfills him. He is not talking about a secret stash of snacks that he has hidden away from the disciples.

The disciples cannot grasp this yet. They are still discovering who Jesus is, and when their confusion becomes apparent in their turning to one another asking who brought him food, Jesus speaks again to clarify for them.

‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.’

Congregation of the Lord, what is your food? What is your passion, what is your calling in this world? What is the gift that God has given you in this time and place to use for his purpose and to fulfil his plan?

Everyone of us has a call in this world and we need to work to discern what that call is in this world. When we discover our call, through the fruit of our lives we need to dedicate ourselves to it.

Jesus is in essence saying the most important thing we do in this world is serve God. What is more important than eating, serving God. What is more important than making money, serving God. What is more important than worldly success, wealth, fame or power? Knowing, doing and fulfilling faithfully the call that God has for you in the world.

We are all called to serve the Lord. Once again it is in different way, it does not matter what you do to earn a living in this world, as Christians we are called to a higher purpose. To live for the Lord, To testify to the Lord. Your mission field could be the people who live near you, the people you work with or even the people who you participate in hobbies with.

Whatever it is that you are called to do that is your meat, that is your mission field where you find fulfillment in this world, by sharing the truth of the Gospel with others.

Jesus then goes on to tell them of the importance of doing that work, the importance of bringing people to the Lord, through the sowing of the seed, or through the watering of the soil, or taking part in the harvest.

Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ takes many routes in our lives, and Jesus reminds the disciples that it is not something we should delay or think we can do later. The Harvest is ready today, and every farmer will tell you that you do not wait until later to take in the harvest. As Christians we need to understand that there may be no tomorrow. This is the

first week of Lent, we just celebrated Ash Wednesday, a day meant to remind us of the fragility of our human life and how it can be taken from us at any point.

Jesus is saying that the field is ready right now and whether you are reaping or sowing you will receive a reward. Do you notice that he makes no division in his statement? The sower and reaper share in the celebration of the harvest. Sometimes you may feel like you are beating your head up against a wall sharing the Gospel with someone, you may never discover that years later they come to the Lord because of the truth you shared with them.

It does not matter who does the reaping. The harvest takes someone to sow, someone to water and someone to reap. When we share the Gospel, we are sometimes completely unaware of the relationship with God that the person we are speaking with has. The truth is that a seed must be planted first, the soil needs to be broken, and the seed placed inside, the seed needs to be watered by the Gospel and the Word of God, before it will grow and produce fruit for the harvest.

So do not be discouraged when others do not come to Christ when you share the Gospel with them, instead persevere, knowing that God is at work.

We see in the woman at the well, the effects of faithful testimony to others.

John 4:39-45

³⁹ Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word. ⁴² They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

⁴³ After the two days he departed for Galilee. ⁴⁴ (For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.) ⁴⁵ So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast.

One of the most powerful tools we have in bringing people to God is the truth of our own lives. You do not have to be a pastor, or a theologian, you just need to explain how when you were converted and you committed your life to Jesus Christ, your life changed. That is all you need to do, show people in your actions and words how the Lord has changed you from the person you were into the person you are called to be in his service.

The story of the woman at the well also shows us the many ways in which people come to faith in Jesus Christ. The woman came through a direct encounter with Jesus Christ, when it was revealed to her how her sin and selfishness were counter to God's will, and Jesus Christ revealed himself to her, she was immediately converted, committed and changed. She runs to the city and the men believe at first because of her testimony, but after hearing

the Word of God from the mouth of Jesus they believe because of their own encounter with the Lord.

God works in people in many different ways, and even after hearing the testimony of the faithful, they will often take time to come into a relationship with the Lord themselves.

Jesus after spending two days in the town of the woman at the well moves on to the region of Galilee.

John 4:46-54

⁴⁶ So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. ⁴⁷ When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸ So Jesus said to him, “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.” ⁴⁹ The official said to him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, “Go; your son will live.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. ⁵¹ As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. ⁵² So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” ⁵³ The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” And he himself believed, and all his household. ⁵⁴ This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.

This official is not a king, or prince. The term official implies that he was an officer for King Herod, he was likely a wealthy man or power and prestige. Yet notice how his wealth, his power and his prestige cannot protect him from the ills of this world. His son is sick and there is nothing that he possesses that can heal his son.

God many times uses afflictions, adversity and hardship in our lives to bring us closer to him. When you hear many people give their testimony it often contains a statement of adversity, affliction or hardship, and getting through that difficult time is what made them come to the realization of their need for the Lord.

Sometime the blessing of affliction is necessary for someone to change the direction of their lives.

That is what has happened with this official. His son is sick, and he learns that Jesus is in the region, so he seeks him out and asks for him to heal his son. In the Greek it implies that this was not just him coming up and asking Jesus to heal his child, but instead it was a repeated begging for Jesus to heal the boy.

Do you see how this time of crisis was actually a blessing in this official's life?

Where do you turn in a time of crisis, in a time of affliction, in a time of suffering? Do you turn to the world as many do, with food, alcohol, drugs, shopping or some other form of sinful entertainment? Do you seek a few moments of satisfaction in the things of this world, or do you turn to the Lord?

Whenever you face these things in your life turn to Jesus. Do as Mary did at the wedding feast, bring your problem to the Lord, and leave it with him.

The official's request shows that he is still young in his understanding of God. He begs for Jesus to come and heal his son. Jesus does not need to go and heal his son, Jesus can heal with a word, he does not need to be present to heal the boy.

He also did not understand that Jesus has power over death itself and even if the boy were to die, Jesus could raise him from the dead.

Many of us have shallow faith like this official. We are strong in our faith as long as everything is going our way. We have such a difficult time walking by faith and not by sight.

We want to see, touch, feel and experience, rather than just stand in our faith and trust in the Lord to do everything according to his will.

Learning to trust in the Word of God and in the promises of the Bible is part of our walk with the Lord. It is another of those things that change in us through the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Jesus turns to this official and tells him to go home, his son will be healed. And the man believed. His faith had grown, he trusted in the word of God and started on his way home.

And as he was headed to his home, he came across his servants, who met him and told him that his son's fever was broken. When he asked of the hour, he realized that the fever which had threatened his son's life was broken at the same time which Jesus had said to him, **'Go; your son will live.'**

And at the moment not only did he believe it, but his whole house believed.

Jesus gave this man his word and the man trusted in the Lord and was blessed. The official did not continue begging for Jesus to come to his house, he did not demand proof or evidence. He just trusted in the word of the Lord and began his journey home.

Jesus tests our faith the same way that he tested the official's faith. And we need to learn to be more like the official, and trust in the Lord. The official placed his faith in the Lord, and he received a blessing from the Lord.

In the story of the woman at the well we see someone who is converted and changed by the presence of Jesus Christ in their lives. And in the story of the official's son, we are shown what it means to be committed to the Lord, trusting and obeying in his Word.

The committed faith of the official brought salvation to not only himself, but to his entire household.

So, we too must be like this official trusting in God and not our feelings, not our emotions, not our circumstances, but the Word of God, as we walk as his Salt and Light in this dark and broken world.

Let us pray,

Give Us Highest Comfort in Your Grace

Lord God, heavenly Father,
in your fatherly grace you did not spare your only Son
but gave him up to death on the cross.
Pour your Holy Spirit into our hearts.
that we may find our highest comfort in your grace.
Protect us from temptations to sin more,
and help us patiently bear whatever hardships may come,
so that through him we may have eternal life.

Source: Veit Dietrich, d. 1549, Lent 6 / Palm Sunday

Hymn #400: "Spirit of the Living God"

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me;
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Break me, melt me, mold me, fill me;

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Spirit of the living God, move among us all;
Make us one in heart and mind, make us one in love.
Humble, caring, selfless, sharing –
Spirit of the living God, move among us all.

Invitation to Offering

Offering Prayer

Closing Hymn #389: “Breathe On Me, Breath of God” (V 1,2,3)

Breathe on me, breath of God;
 fill me with life anew,
 that I may love what thou dost love
 and do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, breath of God,
 until my heart is pure,
 until with thee I will one will
 to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, breath of God,
 till I am wholly thine,
 until this earthly part of me
 glows with thy fire divine.

Pastoral Prayer

Maker of heaven and earth,
 you are our help; we lift our eyes to you.
 As we walk this Lenten journey,
 you watch over our coming and our going
 both now and forevermore.
 You are our shade and our protection;
 you keep us from all harm.
 We ask that you strengthen and guide us
 as we do your work in your world.
 Convict us of our disobedience,
 and enable us to obey your call in our lives.
 Open our ears to the cry of the poor.
 Teach us to seek and to do justice,
 to stay in the path of understanding,
 to pursue righteousness and love
 in the strong name of your Son, our Savior. **Amen.**

Benediction

Grace and peace to you
 from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,
 who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age,
 according to the will of our God and Father,
 to whom be glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**