

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth  
 Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
 Rev. Gerry Gallant

Liar, Lunatic or Lord?  
 Fifth Sunday of Easter  
 John 7:1-13

**Welcome**

**Announcements**

**Call to Worship**

Praise the Lord!

**Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise God in the heights!**

Praise God, all you angels; praise God, all creatures high and low!

**Rulers of the earth and all peoples, praise God's holy name!**

Young men and women alike, old and young together!

**With voices united, let us praise the Lord!**

**Prayer of Adoration and Invocation**

Holy God,

the first and the last, beginning and end of all things,

you are worthy of praise from all your creation.

Sun, moon, and stars praise you.

Earth, sea, and sky praise you.

Every living thing praises you in its own way.

And so we praise you

joining our varied voices with all your creatures in heaven and on earth.

You fill our lives with the wonder of your love in Christ Jesus.

Your Spirit moves throughout the world

to reveal your purposes for every living thing.

Receive our prayers and praise this day,

for you are the Source of our life and our hope,

Holy God, ever Three and Ever One. **Amen.**

**Children's Video**

**Call to Confession**

Prepare the way of the Lord!

Let us make our confession to God.

**Prayer of Confession**

Almighty God, we confess how hard it is to be your people.  
 You have called us to be the church,  
 to continue the mission of Jesus Christ to our lonely and confused world.  
 Yet we acknowledge we are more apathetic than active,  
 isolated than involved, callous than compassionate,  
 obstinate than obedient, legalistic than loving.  
 Gracious Lord, have mercy upon us and forgive our sins.  
 Remove the obstacles preventing us  
 from being your representatives to a broken world.  
 Awaken our hearts to the promised gift of your indwelling Spirit.  
 This we pray in Jesus' powerful name. Amen.

**Assurance of Pardon**

Hear the good news:  
 Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;  
 that proves God's love toward us.  
 In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

**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: "Psalm 8"**

When I look at your heavens  
 The moon and stars you set in motion, oh God  
 I sing all glory and honor  
 What is man that you are mindful?  
 The son of man that you would care for him?  
 We sing all glory and honor

(Chorus)

Oh Lord, our Lord  
 Oh, how awesome are Your ways  
 How majestic is your name in all the earth  
 Oh Lord, our Lord  
 May we see Your kingdom come  
 Father, may Your will be done in all the earth

In all the earth  
 You gave dominion to your children  
 And You crowned them, oh God  
 With glory and honor  
 So we'll sing of Your name  
 Live our lives for Your greatness, oh God  
 And Your glory and honor. (Chorus)

### **Responsive Reading**

#### **Psalms 148**

- 1 Praise the LORD from the heavens;  
 praise him in the heights!
- 2 Praise him, all his angels;  
 praise him, all his hosts!**
- 3 Praise him, sun and moon,  
 praise him, all you shining stars!
- 4 Praise him, you highest heavens,  
 and you waters above the heavens!**
- 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD!  
 For he commanded and they were created.
- 6 And he established them forever and ever;  
 he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away.**
- 7 Praise the LORD from the earth,  
 you great sea creatures and all deeps,
- 8 fire and hail, snow and mist,  
 stormy wind fulfilling his word!**
- 9 Mountains and all hills,  
 fruit trees and all cedars!
- 10 Beasts and all livestock,  
 creeping things and flying birds!**
- 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples,  
 princes and all rulers of the earth!
- 12 Young men and maidens together,  
 old men and children!**
- 13 Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
 for his name alone is exalted;

his majesty is above earth and heaven.  
**14 He has raised up a horn for his people,  
 praise for all his saints,  
 for the people of Israel who are near to him.  
 Praise the LORD!**

**Anthem (Music Ministry):** “Yes, Lord”

**Prayer for Illumination**

**Scripture**

**John 7:1-13**

**7** After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. **2** Now the Jews’ Feast of Booths was at hand. **3** So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. **4** For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.” **5** For not even his brothers believed in him. **6** Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. **7** The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. **8** You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.” **9** After saying this, he remained in Galilee.

**10** But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private. **11** The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, “Where is he?” **12** And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, “He is a good man,” others said, “No, he is leading the people astray.” **13** Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.

**Sermon**

Last week we finished up chapter 6 of the book of John. We studied the feeding of the five thousand, and then the sermon that Jesus gave in the synagogue in the city of Capernaum.

Throughout his sermon to the people and religious leaders gathered to listen Jesus repeated that he was the bread of Life, and that to have a spiritual life in this world we need to eat of his flesh and drink of his blood.

And even though the crowd knew that he was speaking in a metaphor, in one that they could easily understand some chose to misunderstand him and twist his words. Many chose to walk away from what Jesus asked for them to do, because they wanted to continue on in the ways of this world.

Finally, speaking to the twelve disciples, Jesus asked them what they planned to do, to walk away or stay. And Peter spoke for the twelve, affirming that they believed that Jesus Christ was indeed the son of God, and the one and only way to eternal life.

The whole message of the chapter can be summed up simply. You need a personal relationship of Love and Trust with God for your salvation. You need to follow Jesus because of who he is, not because of his miracles, his fame, his goodness, but because of the sacrifice he made upon the cross to pay for your sins. And when you have this personal relationship built on love and trust, you will begin to obey God's Word, not because of religious reasons like the religious leaders of the day did and got wrong, but because of your desire to please your Savior.

Which makes chapter seven an interesting continuation of this message.

It begins with Jesus still in Galilee, not wanting to go to Judea, the region to the South, because the religious leaders whom he has harshly corrected about their wrong interpretation and application of the Scriptures a few times now have decided that their best way to get rid of this rabbi who refuses to give into the religious order of the world is not to just force him to convert to their ways or be silent, but to kill him instead.

Jesus was staying in galilee not because of fear for his life, but because he knew the time of his death was still to come according to the father's plan.

However, it was the Feast of the Tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles takes place sometime in September or October according to our modern calendar. It was a harvest festival that was meant to remind the people of God how God had taken care of them after they had escaped from Egypt and were on the way to the promised land.

The Israelites had spent forty years travelling from Egypt to the promised land, and that meant that they had spent forty years living in tents. So, to commemorate this time of living in tents and relying on God for everything, the people of Israel and some Jews still today, during the Feast of Tabernacles will build themselves temporary shelters out of a frame of wood and palm branches, and camp out. They do it to remember that time in the wilderness, and God's faithfulness to them in their journey.

That is the setting for today's Scripture.

### **John 7:3-5**

**<sup>3</sup> So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. <sup>4</sup> For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." <sup>5</sup> For not even his brothers believed in him.**

Let's start with verse three, it is one that we do not spend enough time thinking about. Jesus had brothers, more precisely half-brothers and half-sisters. Jesus is the one and only son of God, but not the one and only child of Mary and Joseph.

We forget this because all of our focus is on Jesus Christ, but he did indeed have an earthly family which he spent the first 30 years of his life with, and they did not just disappear when he began his work as the Son of God in this world.

Jesus had brothers and sisters; he had all of the same family experiences that many of us have had. Who here has an older sibling? Could you imagine if your older sibling was Jesus? Your parents constantly comparing you to Jesus, who actually was perfect, who always was obedient, who never sinned.

So, when we read about the difficulties that existed between Jesus and his sibling's like in the Scripture today, we should not be surprised. He made their lives difficult with his Holiness.

His brothers tell him to go to Judea, go there and prove who he was in Jerusalem. They were basically saying to him, sure you are the big fish in this little pond on Galilee. Go and try to do the same thing in Judea, in Jerusalem, where the people are more worldly and less impressed by the things that they see and hear.

Remember the people of Judea, looked down on the people of Galilee, and most of Jesus's ministry took place in Galilee, and this allowed the religious leaders of Jerusalem to claim that it was all rumor, all hearsay and that Jesus was not the true Messiah. They believed that if the Messiah came, he would come to the most important city of the Jews and prove himself there in front of them.

His brothers were essentially saying, 'If you really are so great, if you really are the Messiah, go and prove it to the world.'

His brothers did not even understand what Jesus had come to do in this world. They believed that he was here for fame and notoriety. To be a king, not a sacrifice. In their minds, Jesus's ministry was about fame and power.

His brothers like many of the people who had just walked away from him believed that his Glory was in his miraculous works and good deeds. They did not know of or understand what he was about to do on the cross.

This is true of all of the miracles described in the Bible. If the miracle was all that mattered Jesus could have done them from heaven. If Jesus being famous and powerful, if healing, if feeding, if walking on water or calming storms, was the point of his ministry, he would have walked with angels and glowed in the dark. However, the point of his ministry was a sacrifice for us, human flesh and blood to pay for human sins, all of the signs and miracles that he performed on the way to that sacrifice were to disciple his followers so that they could teach future generations about the importance of that sacrifice.

Jesus is the only way for people to get into right relationship with God. Jesus sacrificed himself on the cross, flesh and blood, and he told us that it is only by consuming his flesh and his blood, by accepting his sacrifice that was freely given into our self that we can have that personal relationship of love and trust with God.

Notice in verse five tells us that even his brothers did not believe in him. Sure, we can understand the multitudes walking away because they cannot accept what Jesus has told them, but his brothers knew him, knew of his sinless and obedient nature and even they did not believe in him. It is not until after his death and resurrection that his brothers believe in him.

This verse alone speaks to the truthfulness and integrity of the Bible. If it was written as a made-up story, you would have his brothers and sisters, all of those close to him his strongest supporters. However, it was not that way, they were not supportive.

So, when we find no support sharing the message of the Gospel in this world we should not be surprised. Jesus himself did not have the support of those who were supposed to be closest to him. So, when we are tested in our faith in the home, in our families and in our communities we should not be surprised. We need to be like Jesus and continue living a Godly life even when those around us do not support us.

Look at how Jesus responds to his brothers:

**John 7:6-9**

**<sup>6</sup> Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. <sup>7</sup> The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.**

**<sup>8</sup> You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come." <sup>9</sup> After saying this, he remained in Galilee.**

Jesus told his brothers that they have no understanding of the will and the timing of God, so anytime seems to be the right time to them. However, he must obey the will and the timing of the Father, that he has a task to do, and its timing is critical.

Jesus obeyed his Father in all things, knowing that the timing of things was an important expression of God's will. There will be many times in our lives as Christians that we will need to be patient and wait for God's timing, and that is no easy task, it requires patience and perseverance. It requires humbling ourselves, and understanding that his will means that things are done on his timeline.

It means that sometimes we have to let what seems to be a worldly opportunity pass by us, and it can also mean that at some times we need to push ahead with things even though the world resists us. It means prayerfully approaching the things of this world with God first in our minds and the idea of living in obedience and building disciples at the forefront of our choices.

It is prayerfully trying to live our lives by both the will of God and the timing of God.

Jesus was waiting for his appointed time. So, he tells his brother's, **'The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.'**

He is telling them you go along with the world, so it likes you. I stand up against the world and point out its wicked and evil ways, so it hates me.

He is saying you go with the cultural current and because of that your life is easy. People of God a dead fish can float along with the cultural current of this world. It takes life and strength and perseverance to swim against the current of this evil culture.

This is why Jesus does not go to Jerusalem with the crowds and instead as we see in verse ten goes up alone.

**John 7:10-12**

**<sup>10</sup> But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private. <sup>11</sup> The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?" <sup>12</sup> And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, he is leading the people astray." <sup>13</sup> Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.**

This is the setting for next weeks' sermon. Jesus did go to the Feast of Tabernacles as was required for all Jewish men of age. Jesus did not go with the crowds or caravans to Jerusalem, but he went instead in secret.

And when he got there, he heard people complain about him. People were wondering where he was, people were wondering why he wasn't there performing miracles, feeding people, healing the blind and invalid, doing good works in their minds. People who were looking to be entertained by him.

He also heard the contradictory opinions of the people of Jerusalem, some believing that he was good and others believing he was a deceiver of the people. Jesus divided people during his ministry, the same is still true today. Anyone who learns of Jesus takes one side or the other, no one remains neutral about Jesus Christ. Christianity is the most attacked religion in the world.

There are no movies, shows or music that mocks Buddhism, Hinduism or Islam. Yet there are constant attacks in popular culture against Christianity.

If a Christian is called an infidel by a Muslim, it does not offend us because we do not believe in their religion. However, if a Christian calls someone a sinner, even if they do not believe in God, it offends them, because they have chosen to be against God.



So, the people in Jerusalem believed that Jesus was either good or a deceiver. If we jump down to verse twenty that we will look at next week, we will see this.

**John 7:20**

**<sup>20</sup>The crowd answered, “You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?”**

So, to the people of Jerusalem, Jesus was good, a deceiver or crazy. And all three had it wrong.

Just look at what Jesus said about himself, about being the son of God, about the sacrifice he would make, that he would raise himself from the dead, about the need to consume his flesh and drink his blood, about him be the one and only way to eternal life and that he will be the one to judge the whole world. And that is just a small sample of what he has said so far in the Book of John.

Everyone must choose what to do with the claims that Jesus made.

The first is that he lied about those things, and that would make him a liar, which makes it impossible for him to be a good man like so many people in this world want to believe, showing that they have it all wrong. People that claim Jesus was a good and moral teacher, are just looking for an easy way out of calling him Lord.

The second choice is that Jesus lied about all of these things but did not know he was wrong. He believed it, but it was fantasy, he was crazy. He believed he was God and walked around the world claiming that.

The third choice is that Jesus is the son of God, and he is right about all of those things he claimed, and for that reason we are called to place all of our love and trust in him and focus on him alone in our lives. He deserves our worship and praise.

So, is Jesus a liar a lunatic or Lord? That is your choice after you read the Scripture.

Here two thousand years later, the man who has had more impact on human history than any other living being. Still makes those same claims and people still need to make those same choices.

Is Jesus a liar, a lunatic or is he your Lord?

In mere Christianity C.S. Lewis said it this way.

**You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.**

So those who were in Jerusalem calling him a good man also had it wrong.

**John 7:13**

**<sup>13</sup> Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.**

And even as they talked about him, they did so in secret. The religious leaders of Jerusalem wanted to squash all rumors and talk about who he was and what he did. They wanted to push him out of the minds of the people.

This still happens today, people are encouraged to think about anything but Jesus, they are encouraged to think about the things of this world, about denominations, about papal elections, about political events, about religious ceremony and tradition, about social justice, about anything but the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made upon the cross for your sins.

About anything that keeps Jesus at arm's length instead of in a loving and trusting personal relationship with you.

The Bible wants you to think about Jesus, let his flesh and blood be the focus of your thoughts, consume it each and every day in all that you do. Abide in him so that he will abide in you in all that you think, all that you say, all that you do. Jesus should be the cornerstone of your life and the most important relationship you have.

So, what will you choose? Is Jesus a liar, is he a lunatic or is he the Lord of your life?

If he is the Lord of your life, you are duty bound to come to him humbly, to surrender your life to him at the foot of the cross where he bought you with his flesh and blood and to enter that personal relationship with him and you walk as the Salt and Light of God's Word in this dark and broken world.

Let us Pray,

**Govern, Guide, Comfort, Lead and Uphold Us through Your Holy Spirit**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
 Son of almighty God,  
 send your Holy Spirit  
 into our hearts through your Word,  
 that he may govern and guide us  
 according to your will,  
 comfort us in all afflictions and misfortunes,  
 lead and uphold us in your truth against all error,  
 so that we may stand firm in your love  
 and offer ourselves to do good works,  
 and through the certain hope of

your free grace be blessed forever;  
 with the Father and the Holy Spirit  
 you live and reign, as the One True Living God  
 now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**Hymn #445: “Open Our Eyes Lord”**

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,  
 to reach out and touch Him  
 and say that we love Him.  
 Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,  
 Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.

Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen,  
 open our eyes, Lord, and say that we love Him.  
 Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen  
 open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.

Open our mouths, Lord, and help us to praise Him,  
 open our eyes, Lord, and say that we love Him.  
 Open our mouths, Lord, and help us to praise Him  
 open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.

**Invitation to Offering**

**Offering Prayer**

**Closing Hymn: “Speak O Lord”**

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You  
 To receive the food of Your holy Word  
 Take Your truth, plant it deep in us  
 Shape and fashion us in Your likeness  
 That the light of Christ might be seen today  
 In our acts of love and our deeds of faith  
 Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us  
 All Your purposes for Your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience  
 Holy reverence, true humility  
 Test our thoughts and our attitudes  
 In the radiance of Your purity  
 Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see

Your majestic love and authority  
 Words of pow'r that can never fail  
 Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds  
 Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us  
 Truths unchanged from the dawn of time  
 That will echo down through eternity  
 And by grace, we'll stand on Your promises  
 And by faith, we'll walk as You walk with us  
 Speak, O Lord, 'til Your church is built  
 And the earth is filled with Your glory.

### **Pastoral Prayer**

We praise and thank you, O Lord,  
 that you have fed us with your Word.  
 Grateful for your gifts and mindful of the communion of your saints,  
 we offer to you our prayers for all people.

God of compassion,  
 we remember before you  
 the poor and the afflicted,  
 the sick and the dying,  
 prisoners and all who are lonely,  
 the victims of war, injustice, and inhumanity,  
 and all others who suffer from whatever their sufferings may be called.

O Lord of providence  
 holding the destiny of the nations in your hand,  
 we pray for our country.  
 Inspire the hearts and minds of our leaders  
 that they, together with all our nation,  
 may first seek your kingdom and righteousness  
 so that order, liberty, and peace may dwell with your people.

O God the Creator,  
 we pray for all nations and peoples.  
 Take away the mistrust and lack of understanding  
 that divide your creatures;  
 increase in us the recognition that we are all your children.

O Savior God,  
 look upon your church in its struggle upon the earth.

Have mercy on its weakness,  
bring to an end its unhappy divisions,  
and scatter its fears.  
Look also upon the ministry of your church.  
Increase its courage, strengthen its faith,  
and inspire its witness to all people,  
even to the ends of the earth.

Author of grace and God of love,  
send your Holy Spirit's blessing to your children here present.  
Keep our hearts and thoughts in Jesus Christ, your Son, our only Savior,  
Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit as the One True Living God,  
Now and forever, **Amen.**

### **Benediction**

May our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the one who came with grace and truth,  
also fill your hearts with grace and truth,  
as you serve him in the days ahead.  
And may the joy of the Lord—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—  
be your strength. **Amen.**