

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
 Sunday, May 25th, 2025
 Rev. Gerry Gallant

Obedient to God
 Sixth Sunday of Easter
 John 7:14-36

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!

Let the earth rejoice and be glad,
let the heavens declare your righteousness!

May all people see your glory, O God;
may your ways be known throughout the earth.

Let us worship the God who loves us;
**We come to worship with open hearts,
 to raise our voices with thanks and praise.**

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

God of promise and purpose,
 we greet you this day with thankful hearts.
 As flowers unfurl and buds open,
 the beauty of your world lifts our spirits in praise.
 As children grow and students prepare to graduate,
 their energy and enthusiasm encourage us toward your future.
 Your world is full of such variety and detail,
 we stand in awe of your creation.
 Draw close to us in this hour of worship
 and show us the promise and purpose in our own lives.
 May we unfurl with your gift of new life,
 and move into the future, renewed by the energy of your Holy Spirit.
 We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ,
 who lives and rules with you and the Holy Spirit
 as the One True God, now and Forever. **Amen.**

Children's Video

Call to Confession

Prepare the way of the Lord!
 Let us make our confession to God.

Prayer of Confession

Eternal and merciful God,
 you have loved us with a love beyond our understanding,
 and you have set us on paths of righteousness for your name's sake.
 Yet we have strayed from your way;
 we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
 through what we have done and what we have left undone.
 As we remember the lavish gift of your grace
 symbolized in baptism, O God,
 we praise you and give you thanks that you forgive us yet again.
 Grant us now, we pray, the grace to die daily to sin,
 and to rise daily to new life in Christ,
 who lives and reigns with you,
 and in whose strong name we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Jesus said, "My peace I give to you.
 Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."
 May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.
 Let his forgiveness set you at peace with God and yourself,
 and make peace with one another. **Amen.**

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 98

1 Oh sing to the LORD a new song,
 for he has done marvelous things!
 His right hand and his holy arm
 have worked salvation for him.

**2 The LORD has made known his salvation;
 he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.**

**3 He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness
 to the house of Israel.**

**All the ends of the earth have seen
 the salvation of our God.**

4 Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;
 break forth into joyous song and sing praises!

**5 Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre,
 with the lyre and the sound of melody!**

**6 With trumpets and the sound of the horn
 make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD!**

7 Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
 the world and those who dwell in it!

**8 Let the rivers clap their hands;
 let the hills sing for joy together**

**9 before the LORD, for he comes
 to judge the earth.**

He will judge the world with righteousness,

and the peoples with equity.

Anthem (Music Ministry): “Fill Us With Your Spirit”

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

John 7:14-36

¹⁴ About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching.

¹⁵ The Jews therefore marveled, saying, “How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?” ¹⁶ So Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. ¹⁷ If anyone’s will is to do God’s will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. ¹⁸ The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood. ¹⁹ Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?” ²⁰ The crowd answered, “You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?” ²¹ Jesus answered them, “I did one work, and you all marvel at it. ²² Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. ²³ If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man’s whole body well? ²⁴ Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”

²⁵ Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, “Is not this the man whom they seek to kill? ²⁶ And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? ²⁷ But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.”

²⁸ So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, “You know me, and you know where I come from. But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know. ²⁹ I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me.” ³⁰ So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. ³¹ Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, “When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?”

³² The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him. ³³ Jesus then said, “I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. ³⁴ You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come.” ³⁵ The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? ³⁶ What does he mean by saying, ‘You will seek me and you will not find me,’ and, ‘Where I am you cannot come’?”

Sermon

Last week we learned how Jesus had travelled from Galilee to the city of Jerusalem during the Feast of Booths. However, he had not come up with the large groups of travelers at the beginning of the feast. Instead, he had come up on his own in the midst of the feast, coming into a city where he discovered that many people were talking secretly about him, debating on who he was. We discovered last week that those who had called him simply a good and moral teacher had it wrong, because of his words Jesus has only left us three choices, he is either a liar, a lunatic or Lord of your life.

Today we discover that when Jesus got to Jerusalem, he did not hide in the backstreets, or the pubs or the market stalls, instead he went to the temple and taught the Word of God. He was teaching in the temple squares. The temple of Jerusalem was huge and contained at its center the Holy of Holies, the place where God was thought to interact with his people. Around the temple were the various courts, the court of priests, the court of women and the court of gentiles. The western wall of the temple of gentiles was estimated to be close to 500m long, meaning this most outermost courtyard was huge, the size of multiple football fields.

And this vast outer courtyard is built out of limestone and beautiful marble, filled with thousands upon thousands of people gathered together to worship their God, preparing the sacrifices that they have brought for their sins, exchanging money so that they can pay their temple taxes. And somewhere in that huge courtyard, Jesus is teaching the Word of God.

John 7:14-16

¹⁴ About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. ¹⁵ The Jews therefore marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?" ¹⁶ So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.

There is Jesus, knowing that the religious leaders of Jerusalem are planning to kill him, and he is in the temple openly teaching the Word of God.

If you remember last week, Jesus's brothers had said to him, Jesus you might seem like you know a lot about the Word of God here in Galilee where people are uneducated, go to Jerusalem, and you will not be so special.

Yet here he is in the temple, gathering a crowd that is listening to his teaching, people who are marveling at his understanding of the Word of God. People, even the religious leaders of Jerusalem are amazed at his understanding and his ability to explain what the Scriptures mean.

They could not understand, they could not comprehend, how Jesus could be a master of this Bible when he had never apprenticed under a Rabbi. He was the son of a carpenter and was a carpenter himself. He had not been brought up in the ways of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, or the Scribes, he had not spent years upon years studying the teachings of all the rabbis, memorizing the Scriptures, and learning the ways of the Lord.

Instead, he appeared out of nowhere and began to teach the Scriptures at a level that even they could see was superior to their own teachings. To them Jesus was an anomaly, a man who had disciples of his own, but had never been a disciple himself.

Take note that they could not critique Jesus on his teaching, they in fact were marveled by it, so instead they critiqued his pedigree, his credentials, the fact that he had never been formally trained. They could not pick apart from his teaching, so they decided to pick apart his education.

Which makes Jesus' response quite powerful. He does not speak to his education, instead he speaks to his doctrine, which he says comes from God. He is basically saying if you can find a place where I am teaching something incorrectly, feel free to criticize me. If you can find a place where I am bending or twisting the Word of God, feel free to persecute me.

However, everything that Jesus taught was from the Scriptures, true to the Scriptures and honored God not the world that he lived in.

This is a powerful message, Jesus's stuck to the doctrine of the Scriptures even when he was confronted and threatened with death.

Jesus's stuck to the doctrine of the Scriptures even when he was confronted and threatened with death. Every church in the world today needs to do the same. The educational level of a person does not matter when it comes to God's Word, the truth of what they teach matters.

There are a lot of highly educated people, people who have attended seminaries all over the world, who are just like the Pharisees, the Sadducees, or the Scribes. People who have it wrong, people who had been led astray in their education, people who are no longer teaching the doctrines of the Scripture, but had bent, twisted, and edited the Scripture so that they could enjoy their own lives here on earth.

God sees no value in a ministry, or a believer who serves God for his or her own purposes. And God can teach and prepare a person to be a faithful teacher of God in a multitude of ways. What matters most is not your degree, but your doctrine. God is concerned about the right teaching of God's Word, not the degree that someone got from a school which may or may not believe in the truthful teaching of the Scriptures.

Jesus was taught by God and sent by God to teach the Word of God.

John 7:17

¹⁷ If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.

Jesus is telling those listening that if you were obedient to God, if you were doing God's will, you would better understand God's doctrine.

Simply put, if you want to understand God, you need to obey God.

For many people this is one of the biggest breakthroughs that they have in their faith. They walk with God, never really understanding God and God's will in their lives, until they decide to start obeying God's Word as it is written instead of their own edited version.

There are a lot of people who are not really living in obedience to God's Word. There is a part of their life that is off limits to the Scripture because they enjoy it very much. They are locked into disobedience, expecting God to look the other way.

Obedying God is more than an intellectual practice; it is more than just learning what the Bible says and deciding what we think it means. It is obeying God, and as we obey God, we get spiritual life, because we are taught by the greatest teacher, the Holy Spirit. The truth is that as we begin to obey God in our lives, the Holy Spirit is better able to convict us of the sin in our lives, but if instead, we choose to live in willful disobedience to God in any aspect of our life, the Holy Spirit is unable to convict us of that sin.

To which Jesus adds:

John 7:18-36

¹⁸ The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.

If you speak of God and for the Glory of God, you are being true. Jesus taught from the authority of God, sought the glory of God, and spoke the truth of God, and for that reason there was no unrighteousness in him.

Remember he is making this claim in public, in front of a crowd of thousands, in front of people who were seeking his execution.

Jesus said, 'I am sinless.'

What an incredible and unbelievable claim to make. Is he a liar, a lunatic or is he the Lord of your life? I choose to believe that last one, that Jesus is the Son of God, He is and was sinless, so he could publicly proclaim it without fear.

Then he turns to those who oppose him.

John 7:19- 24

¹⁹ Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?" ²⁰ The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?" ²¹ Jesus answered them, "I did one work, and you all marvel at it.

²² Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. ²³ If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? ²⁴ Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."

He points out that he keeps the law of God in every aspect of his life and then publicly proclaims how they are seeking to kill him, a clear violation of the Word of God. He exposed them, and so they accuse him of crazy talk, being possessed by a demon, being a lunatic.

So, Jesus explains the truth of why it is that they seek to kill him, something we studied a few weeks ago back in John chapter 5, when Jesus had healed the man at the pool of Bethesda. He had healed that man on the Sabbath, and it had angered the religious leaders because Jesus had done work, by their definition of work on the Sabbath. Because he had told the man to pick up his bed and walk on the Sabbath.

Jesus says if you have to circumcise a boy on the eighth day, and that day happens to fall on the Sabbath, you still do that work. So, if it is ok for you to circumcise someone on the Sabbath, to hurt someone on the Sabbath, it would only make sense that healing someone on the Sabbath would be ok as well.

And then in verse 24 we have an important lesson for all Christians.

John 7:24

²⁴ Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."

The religious leaders had decided by their own judgement that Jesus was a sinner and that they were righteous because their judgement was based on worldly things. Jesus says you need to use the right judgement, the Word of God to know what it right or wrong in this world.

Righteous judgment does not care about anything except the truth and righteousness of the scriptures. And this is the form of judgement that Christians are called to live with in the hearts, not worldly judgment that considers worldly things like class, wealth, power,

fame, influence, nationality, race. Just the word of God and its truth in our lives, which we are called to share with others, even when they do not like it. Which is what Jesus has done right here.

To which the gathered crowd reacts:

John 7:25-26

²⁵ Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, “Is not this the man whom they seek to kill? ²⁶ And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ

They could not believe their eyes, those who knew of the plans of the religious authorities to kill Jesus were amazed that Jesus was there standing up to them publicly. So amazed that they started to question if Jesus could actually be the Messiah.

However, one of the teachings of the religious leaders is echoing in their minds.

John 7:14-36

²⁷ But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.”

Many Jews in that day believed that when the Messiah appeared it would be as a complete surprise.

They based this belief of the teachings of the prophet Malachi

Malachi 3:1

3 “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.

God’s messenger will come suddenly, instantly appearing to the world and proclaiming the absolute truth of the Word of God.

And that is a true prophecy, the Messiah will come to the world instantly, appearing to all and proclaiming the absolute truth of God’s Word, like a thief in the night is how it is often described in the New Testament. Malachi was speaking of the Second Coming of Christ, at the End of Times which is described in the book of Revelation.

The first coming had no mystery, he would come from Bethlehem.

John 7:28-29

²⁸ So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, “You know me, and you know where I come from. But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent

me is true, and him you do not know. ²⁹ I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me."

Jesus says you think you know me, but you do not know me. I have come from God who has sent me. Again, remember that this was publicly proclaimed. You either believe it is the truth, or he is a liar or a lunatic.

This drove the religious leaders crazy, he had said it publicly, on the temple mount of all places.

John 7:30

³⁰ So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.

They tried, but could not arrest him, the right time had not yet arrived, it was still about six months away.

John 7:31

³¹ Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?"

Now we see some believers start to appear, people who believed the truth of Jesus's claims, people who are amazed by all that he has done. They start to believe that he is the Son of God, and not just a good moral teacher.

Which upsets the religious leaders.

John 7:14-36

³² The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him. ³³ Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. ³⁴ You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come." ³⁵ The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? ³⁶ What does he mean by saying, 'You will seek me and you will not find me,' and, 'Where I am you cannot come'?"

They were both confused and captivated that he told them he would not be arrested right now, but in the future, he would go along with them willingly. I will be a thorn in your side a little while longer, according to my Father's will, and when the time is right, I will hand myself over to you.

Jesus's words to the religious leaders are not done, we are only a little more than half way through this part of the Scriptures, next week when we continue, we will see him

continue to confound and confront those who have the Scripture wrong and continue to make it clear on what it means to be a faithful follower, someone who is living in a loving and trusting relationship with God.

Let us Pray,

Perfect Love

Grant me, even me, my dearest Lord,
to know you, and love you, and rejoice in you.
And, if I cannot do these perfectly in this life,
let me at least advance to higher degrees every day,
until I can come to do them in perfection.
Let the knowledge of you increase in me here,
that it may be full hereafter.
Let the love of you grow every day more and more here,
that it may be perfect hereafter;
that my joy may be full in you.
I know, O God, that you are a God of truth,
O make good your gracious promises to me,
that my joy may be full;
to your honor and glory,
with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Source: Augustine of Hippo, Fourth Century

Hymn #677: "My Faith Looks Up to Thee"

My faith looks up to thee,
thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine:
now hear me when I pray;
take all my guilt away;
oh let me from this day
be wholly thine.

May thy rich grace impart
strength to my fainting heart;
my zeal inspire;
as thou hast died for me,
oh may my love to thee
pure, warm and changeless be,
a living fire.

While life's dark maze I tread,
 and griefs around me spread,
 be thou my guide;
 bid darkness turn to day,
 wipe sorrow's tears away,
 nor let me ever stray
 from thee aside.

Invitation to Offering

Offering Prayer

Closing Hymn # 683: "I Know Not Why Such Wondrous Grace"

I know not why such wondrous grace
 to me God has made known;
 nor why, unworthy as I am,
 Christ claimed me for his own,

Refrain:

but I know whom I have believed
 and am persuaded that Christ is able
 to keep that which I've committed
 unto him against that day.

I know not why this saving faith
 to me God did impart,
 nor how believing in the word brought
 peace into my heart, (Refrain)

I know not how the Spirit moves,
 convincing me of sin,
 revealing Jesus through the word,
 creating faith in him: (Refrain)

Pastoral Prayer

Almighty God, gracious Father,
 in the presence of your bounty keep us humble,
 in the presence of all people's needs make us compassionate and caring.

Give us faith in our praying and love in our serving,
 knowing that by your power
 all may find a new balance in living and a new victory in adversity.

We pray for all unhappy lives,
those who are bitter and resentful, feeling life has given them a raw deal,
those who are sensitive to criticism and quick to take offense,
those who desire their own way, whatever the inconvenience
or cost to others.
May your judgment and mercy be for their healing.

We pray for those who are lonely,
who are shy and self-conscious,
who find it hard to make friends;
those who are nervous and timid,
who ever feel themselves strangers in a world they can scarcely understand.
May your presence inspire confidence and ensure companionship.

We pray for those who live with bitter regrets,
for loving relationships brought to ruin,
for opportunities freely given and woefully abused,
for the bitterness of defeat or betrayal at another's hand,
or for failure in personal integrity.
May your grace give new hope to find victory in the very scene of failure.

We pray for all in illness and pain,
weary of the day and fearful of the night.
Grant healing, if it be your will,
and at all times through faith the gift of your indwelling peace.
Bless the company of Christ's folk, the church in every land.
Make her eager in worship,
fearless in proclamation of the gospel, and passionate for caring.

Bless our country. Bless our leaders.
Bless our children and grant us peace within our borders.
Grant us as a nation to be found effective in establishing peace
throughout the world.
Bless us, each one, in the communion of the saints,
and keep us ever mindful of the great cloud of witnesses that,
following in their steps, as they did in the steps of the Master,
we may with them at the last receive the fulfillment
promised to your people.

We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ,
who lives and rules with you and the Holy Spirit
as the One True God, now and Forever. **Amen.**

Benediction

May the grace of Christ, which daily renews us,
and the love of God, which enables us to love all,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, which unites us in one body,
make us eager to obey the will of God until we meet again,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**