

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, June 15th, 2025
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Identity
Trinity Sunday
John 8:12-30

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Ever present God,
we thank you for calling us to meet with you today.
We praise you for coming to us long before we first came to you,
for knowing who would be here today,
and for knowing even our motives for coming.
By your Spirit lead and guide us during this service,
to help us hear you when you speak
and to guide our responses with hearts and voices
that rejoice in your presence. **Amen.**

Opening Hymns (2)

Good Good Father – Chris Tomlin

Oh, I've heard a thousand stories of what they think You're like
But I've heard the tender whisper of love in the dead of night
And You tell me that You're pleased and that I'm never alone

You're a good, good Father
It's who You are, it's who You are, it's who You are
And I'm loved by You
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am

Oh, and I've seen many searching for answers far and wide
But I know we're all searching for answers only You provide
'Cause You know just what we need before we say a word

You're a good, good Father
It's who You are, it's who You are, it's who You are

And I'm loved by You
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am

Because You are perfect in all of Your ways
You are perfect in all of Your ways
You are perfect in all of Your ways to us
You are perfect in all of Your ways
Oh, You're perfect in all of Your ways
You are perfect in all of Your ways to us

Oh, it's love so undeniable
I, I can hardly speak
Peace so unexplainable
I, I can hardly think
As You call me deeper still
As You call me deeper still
As You call me deeper still into love, love, love

You're a good, good Father
It's who You are, it's who You are, it's who You are
And I'm loved by You
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am

And You're a good, good Father
It's who You are, it's who You are, it's who You are
And I'm loved by You
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am

You're a good, good Father
It's who You are, it's who You are, it's who You are
And I'm loved by You
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am
(You're a good, good Father)

You are perfect in all of Your ways (it's who You are, it's who You are, it's who You are)
(And I'm loved by You)
You are perfect in all of Your ways (it's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am)

House of the Lord – Phil Wikham

We worship the God who was
We worship the God who is
We worship the God who evermore will be
He opened the prison doors
He parted the raging sea
My God, He holds the victory

There's joy in the house of the Lord
There's joy in the house of the Lord today
And we won't be quiet
We shout out Your praise

There's joy in the house of the Lord
Our God is surely in this place
And we won't be quiet
We shout out Your praise
(Oh-oh, oh) we shout out Your praise
(Oh-oh, oh)

We sing to the God who heals
We sing to the God who saves
We sing to the God who always makes a way
'Cause He hung up on that cross
Then He rose up from that grave
My God's still rolling stones away

There's joy in the house of the Lord
There's joy in the house of the Lord today
And we won't be quiet
We shout out Your praise

There's joy in the house of the Lord
Our God is surely in this place
And we won't be quiet
We shout out Your praise

We were the beggars
Now we're royalty
We were the prisoners
Now we're running free
We are forgiven, accepted
Redeemed by His grace
Let the house of the Lord sing praise

'Cause we were the beggars
Now we're royalty
We were the prisoners
Now we're running free
We are forgiven, accepted
Redeemed by His grace
Let the house of the Lord sing praise

There's joy in the house of the Lord (there is joy in the house)
There's joy in the house of the Lord today
And we won't be quiet (oh, yeah)
We shout out Your praise (I wanna shout out Your praise)

There's joy in the house of the Lord (there is joy)
Our God is surely in this place (there is joy)
And we won't be quiet
We shout out Your praise (we gonna shout out Your praise)
There's joy in the house of the Lord
There's joy in the house of the Lord today
And we won't be quiet
We shout out Your praise (we gonna shout out Your praise)

There's joy in the house of the Lord (there is joy)
Our God is surely in this place (there is joy, joy in this place)
And we won't be quiet (we won't be quiet)
We shout out Your praise

We shout out Your praise
There is joy in the house, there is joy in the house today
We shout out Your praise
We shout out Your praise

The Lord's Prayer

Responsive Reading

Prayer for illumination

(Congregant Prepared)

O gracious God and most merciful Father,
you have given us the rich and precious jewel of your holy Word.
Assist us with your Spirit, that it may be written in our hearts
to our everlasting comfort,
to reform us, to renew us according to your own image,
to build us up into the perfect building of Christ,
and to increase us in all heavenly virtues.
Grant this, O heavenly Father, for the same Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Scripture

John 8:12-30

¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." ¹³ So the Pharisees said to him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true." ¹⁴ Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶ Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. ¹⁷ In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. ¹⁸ I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me." ¹⁹ They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." ²⁰ These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

²¹ So he said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come." ²² So the Jews said, "Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?" ²³ He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." ²⁵ So they said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. ²⁶ I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him." ²⁷ They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. ²⁸ So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. ²⁹ And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him." ³⁰ As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

Sermon

As we start into the Scripture we are studying today, I want to point out something important to you. When the Israelites wandered in the desert, God provided them with everything that they needed.

God provided them with mana, the bread from heaven, and we saw Jesus Christ declare himself to be the bread of life when he fed the five thousand.

God provided them with the water that they needed for survival, and Jesus declared himself the living water when he preached in the temple during the Festival of Booths.

God also provided them with light at night, and as part of the Festival of Booths, there were four large candles, about seventy-five-feet tall were lit that would burn and provide light through the entire festival for all of Jerusalem, reminding the Jewish people that God had provided them with the pillar of fire by night as they wandered in the darkness of the wilderness. And in today's Scripture Jesus will once again speak to his holiness, and his Godliness as he declares himself to be the light of the world.

Today's Scripture starts with Jesus saying, **"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."**

Throughout his teaching Jesus was constantly teaching people about who he was, we see it clearly done here, very publicly, around the Festival of Booths.

And this last example is perhaps the clearest of the three he used at this time. Light is something that everyone understands. There is no need for anyone to explain what light is, or if it is present. When we walk into a room, light is evident, there is no need for us to discover it.

Light proves itself and it shows the existence of other things that exist in the darkness. How many times in your life have you stubbed your toe or bang your knee as you walked through a dark room, unaware of where everything was because there was no light to show you the way.

Yet if someone was to turn on the light it reveals the truth of its existence, and everything around you in its presence.

That is the same thing that Jesus does. When he reveals himself in your life, your life changes, you can see the path you need to walk to be safe, because his light reveals all of the dangers that are hidden in the darkness of the world around you.

The truth is that you cannot understand life in this world until you have the light in your life. You cannot understand your place in this world, your identity until you have Jesus.

Just look at the youth of the world today wandering around in the darkness trying to discover their identities. They try all of the things in the dark, putting each on for a little time, until they bump into something else and feel like they are forced to change. It is not until they discover Jesus Christ that they can see those things in the dark for what they really are, harmful, sinful, and dangerous. Once they have the light of Christ in their lives, they can see the path they are called to walk and discover the foundation of their identity is in the Lord.

Jesus said 'I am the light of the world', in the temple, in front of his enemies. In front of people that opposed him, hated him, wanted to shut him up or even kill him.

So, when he says, 'I am the light of the world', they are probably thinking 'I see no light.' Just because someone does not see the light does not mean the light is not shining. Maybe you're blind to the light. The religious leaders were blind to the light, spiritually they were blind. They

could not see the light because their eyes were covered over with the scales of the sins of this world.

When you are in the darkness, caught up in its ways, it can prevent you from seeing the light. It is not until you humble yourself before God and accept his ways, placing your love and trust in him that you receive the light which removes those scales from your eyes and reveals the path through the darkness of this world.

People of this world either walk in the darkness or in the light. Jesus is saying if you follow him closely you will always walk in the light. We live in a dark world, and we need his light to push back the dark and show us the way to eternal life.

Those Pharisees who could not see the light, yell out at him in the midst of his teaching, **'You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true.'**

They are trying to discredit him. Jewish law said that every testimony required two witnesses. He had just proclaimed he was the light of the world. And the Pharisees, who were blinded by this world said we cannot see the light, your testimony is false, show us who is your second witness to prove what you say is truth.

¹⁴ Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶ Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me.

The religious leaders were trying to discredit Jesus, and he pushes back at them and says it may be true that a man's testimony about himself is not true, however, I know where I came from and where I am going. Jesus knew he was the Son of God, that he was God himself, and that he was on the way to the cross to die for the sins of the world. He also says that he judges righteously, he tells the Pharisees that they use the world and its ways, the flesh, to judge wrongly and that he uses the righteous judgement of the Word of God. Finally, he says that when he judges righteously it is done with the Father, he says that God the father backs up his testimony.

Jesus knew who he was without a doubt. He knew he was the Son of God and God the son eternal. He knew his identity without any hesitation. His testimony here proves that. He had no self-doubt, when he was teaching and the Pharisees yelled out, 'just who do you think you are to say such things,' Jesus did not have to think about it, he just responded.

There is a lesson here for the faithful, we are meant to be settled and secure in our identity as Christians in this world. It sounds easy, but it is not.

We all struggle with accepting our identity in the light, away from the ways of the world. I can tell you I know that having Jesus Christ in my life has changed the way I live. I know that when I

humbled myself before the Lord and placed my love and trust in him, my life changed, I was born again. The Bible says in Romans that, ¹⁶**The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,** ¹⁷**and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.**’ (Rom 8:16-17)

However, I am still a sinner. I still sin, from time to time. Just like any of you, I struggle with sin in my life and when I do so I begin to question my relationship with God and where I stand before God. Then I ask myself, ‘Am I really a transformed man who sometimes sins?’ or ‘Am I a sinner who is sometimes transformed?’

We do not discover the answer for that question in ourselves; we find the answer to that question in God’s Word. Where it tells us that the faithful believer is; forgiven, a new creation, adopted by God, received into the family of God, justified, sanctified, glorified, and resurrected.

We know all these things, but sometimes they are hard to see in our lives as believers, and we need to go back to the Word of God and find our identity there in his light. And as we do that, as we go back to God’s Word and its light and truth, as we humble ourselves before it, giving up our own preferences and trusting in its truths, it becomes more and more real in our lives and more and more who we are in this world.

Jesus is standing in front of his enemies who are questioning his identity, and he responds with absolute confidence that his identity is in God.

We stand in front of a world full of enemies, full of people who cannot see the light, who constantly question our identity in Christ. The world, the flesh and the devil will constantly seek to make you question your identity.

Jesus himself in his response to the Pharisees testifies that he is God and that God says he is God. Jesus was able to give that perfect testimony because he was sinless and perfect.

We are not sinless and perfect, our testimony about ourselves is often twisted by the ways of this world. So, we cannot base our identity on what we think about ourselves, if we do, we might place ourselves too low or too high.

We all know people who place their own identity too low, people who think I am nothing I am the worst, I am a sinner of such extreme that even God could not love me. They need to understand that no one is so low, so sinful, so broken that God cannot lift them up and transform them through the Holy Spirit.

We also all know some people who place themselves too high, people who think they are the spiritual elite, people who believe that they are ‘God’s gift to the world’, people who hold their faith as some sort of judgement ruler over others in this world, the Roman Catholic Church, as

well as many denominations are just as guilty of this today as they have been in the past. People who believe that it is their right to look down upon others instead of coming alongside the lost and help them to discover the light. They need to understand they are wrong too and humble themselves and allow the Holy Spirit to transform their lives so that can be true representatives of Jesus Christ in this world.

The high and the low, the lost and the found need to find their identity in Christ. We need to put our identity in the rock of Jesus Christ in the foundation of God's Word, so that we can stand on solid ground in this world.

Not relying on our own thoughts, feelings, emotions, ideas, or preferences, but relying on the truth of God's Word, even when we do not like what it says, even when it calls for us to change the way we live.

When the Spirit of God speaks to us through the Word of God, we need to learn to just accept its truths, even when it is not what we want to hear.

The Pharisees did not succeed in challenging Jesus in his identity so they change tactics, **"Where is your Father?"**

They are questioning his parenthood. They are questioning the virgin birth; to put it bluntly they are calling him a bastard. A son without a legitimate father. They thought this would be a scandal that would destroy his credibility with those who were there listening to him.

Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." ²⁰ These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

Jesus says you do not know what you are talking about. You are ignoring the Scriptures, they teach you of the virgin birth, and you are ignoring it, because of your hatred of me and my challenge of your worldly ways.

Jesus was confident in his identity.

Think about how this world, how the devil will sometime bring up some scandal, some sin from your past to make you question your identity in Christ.

You think you are a believer, a new creation in Christ, 'Then what about this?' What about this sin, this wrongdoing, this time in your past when you stumbled in your walk with the Lord?

When this happens to us, we need to respond in the same way that Jesus did, we need to root the foundation of our identity in Christ.

'You do not know me and the transforming work that God has done and is doing in my life! And you do not know my Father who is in heaven who loves me despite my failing and is genuinely working a work of transformation in my life.'

When the devil plays his cards, when he brings out things in our past to show us how we have failed in our walk with God, we just need to take that card and through it back at him. We need to tell him that God has forgiven me of worse than that.

We need to remind him that even though each and every one of us has sinned against God, each and every one of us has a multitude of sins for which we owe a great debt, we have a Savior that is greater than all of the sins of the world put together, who went to the cross died and paid the debt of our sins, and the work of transformation he is doing in our lives is to free us from that bondage of sin that is inherit in our flesh.

Jesus did not stop there, he continued.

²¹ So he said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come." ²² So the Jews said, "Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?"

Jesus says I am going to heaven, and you are not coming with me. He is saying if you do not follow me in the light here in this world you will not be able to follow me to Heaven.

The Pharisees once again prove their blindness, **'Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?'**

This was an insult, in the Jewish belief of the time, and in the Roman Catholic Church still today, it was taught that those who committed suicide went immediately to the lowest depths of Sheol, the lowest depths of hell, with no chance of Salvation.

That is a wrong teaching, nowhere in the Bible does it state this. Suicide is not the unforgivable sin, denying of the deity of God is the only unforgiveable sin. Living in the darkness, rejecting the light is the only unforgiveable sin. Suicide, just like any other sin, is forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ, for any true believer.

So those Pharisees are saying, well Jesus you must be going to hell as a suicide if you are going to a different place than us.

²³ He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins."

Jesus pleads with them to see the light, to see the truth, to remove the caked mud and scales of this world from their eyes. He says believe in me or you will die in your sins.

Jesus never hesitated to tell the truth of the Word of God. The Bible tells us that we either die in the Lord or Die in our sins. All people, everyone either dies in the Lord or dies in their sins, the course is set, there are only too possible results of our life on earth, eternal life in heaven or eternal life in hell, and that is why Jesus pleads with the Pharisees to see the light.

²⁵ So they said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. ²⁶ I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him."

²⁷ They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father.

The Pharisees refuse to see the light; they refuse to acknowledge the truth. They ask, 'Who are you?' not really asking who he is, but instead they are asking, **'Who do you think you are?'**

²⁸ So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. ²⁹ And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him." ³⁰ As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

Jesus tells them they will understand when he is crucified, when he is lifted on the cross. When he is raised from the dead, and when he ascends into heaven.

In Mathhew, it tells us:

⁵⁴ When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!" (Matt 27:54)

After Jesus died upon the cross, many believed, and Jesus told them that that would happen.

Jesus continued, he told them that he was without sin, that he always obeyed the Father in all things. He always did things that pleased God. And Jesus is the only one who has ever lived who can make this claim. He is once again claiming his deity, that he is the Son of God and God the Son.

And many believed in him. This is the truth of the Word of God. The light is visible to some, and there are others who are blind to it. That day some did not believe in him, those who were blinded by the ways of this world, those who were blinded by the passions of their flesh, those who were in bondage to their sin.

However, there were many who believed. The truth is that people will always reject the truth, people will always choose the darkness over the light, but there will be many who see the light, who find their way out of the darkness, who learn to humble themselves before God and place

their love and trust in him, so that they can place their foundation, their identity in the Word of God and begin to walk as the Salt and Light of God's word as a light for others in this dark and broken world.

Let us Pray,

Hold on to this Comfort in All Trials and Temptations

Lord God, heavenly Father,
through your Son
you promised us your Holy Spirit,
that he will convict the world of sin,
of righteousness and of judgment.
Enlighten our hearts,
that we may confess our sins,
obtain eternal righteousness through faith in Christ,
and hold on to this comfort
in all our trials and temptations,
that Christ is Lord over the devil and death and all things
and that he will graciously deliver us
out of all our afflictions
and make us partakers of eternal salvation;
through your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one true God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Source: Veit Dietrich, d. 1549, Easter 4, Cantate

Invitation to Offering

Offering

Offertory Prayer

(Congregant Prepared)

Almighty and most merciful God,
from you comes every good and perfect gift.
We give you praise and thanks for all your mercies.
Your goodness has created us, your bounty has sustained us,
your discipline has chastened us, your patience has borne with us,
your love has redeemed us.
Give us a heart to love and serve you,
and enable us to show our thankfulness for all your goodness and mercy
by giving up ourselves to your service

and cheerfully submitting in all things to your blessed will,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

Closing Hymn

Revelation Song – Phil Wickham

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
Holy, holy is He
Sing a new song to Him who sits on
Heaven's mercy seat

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
Holy, holy is He
Sing a new song to Him who sits on
Heaven's mercy seat

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty
Who was and is and is to come

With all creation I sing praise to the King of kings
You are my everything and I will adore You

Clothed in rainbows of living color
Flashes of lighting rolls of thunder
Blessing and honor strength and glory and power be
To You the only wise King

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty
Who was and is and is to come
With all creation I sing praise to the King of kings
You are my everything and I will adore You

Filled with wonder awestruck wonder
At the mention of Your name
Jesus Your name is power, breath and living water
Such a marvelous mystery

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty
Who was and is and is to come
With all creation I sing praise to the King of kings
You are my everything and I will adore You, I will adore You

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 in our time of fellowship
Bless the hands of all who prepared the food we are about to share
And sustain us with it as we go forth and share your light with 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.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
now and forevermore. **Amen.**

Benediction

The love of God the Father, the faithful creator,
the peace of Christ, the wounded healer,
the joy of the challenging Spirit,
the hope of the Three in One
surround and encourage you
today, tonight, and forever.