

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, June 8th, 2025
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Judgement
Day of Pentecost
John 7:53 – 8:11

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

The love of God has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us;
we dwell in him and he in us.

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name;
make known his deeds among the peoples.

Sing to him, sing praises to him,
and speak of all his marvelous works.

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

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

O God whom we long to know,
burning fire within our souls,
grant to us the tongues like fire,
the sound of rushing wind, your descending Holy Spirit,
that in knowing your Word we might know your presence,
that in following your ways we might live in your light.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Children's Hymn

Call to Confession

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

Prayer of Confession

Almighty God,
 you poured your Spirit upon gathered disciples
 creating bold tongues, open ears,
 and a new community of faith.
 We confess that we hold back the force of your Spirit among us.
 We do not listen for your word of grace,
 speak the good news of your love,
 or live as a people made one in Christ.
 Have mercy on us, O God.
 Transform our timid lives by the power of your Spirit,
 and fill us with a flaming desire to be your faithful people,
 doing your will for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Assurance of Pardon

In Christ you were marked with the Holy Spirit,
 a seal of our redemption in Christ.
 By the power of the Holy Spirit
 we become dead in sin and alive anew in Christ.
 May you be filled with the Holy Spirit
 so that you may have hope of new life,
 may grow in your knowledge of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 and may experience the incomparable power of God
 that raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

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: "Wonderful, Merciful Saviour"

Wonderful, merciful Savior
 Precious Redeemer and Friend
 Who would have thought that a Lamb

Could rescue the souls of men
Oh, You rescue the souls of men.

Chorus
You are the One that we praise
You are the One we adore
You give the healing and grace
Our hearts always hunger for
Oh, our hearts always hunger for.

Counselor, Comforter, Keeper
Spirit we long to embrace
You offer hope when our hearts have
Hopelessly lost our way
Oh, we've hopelessly lost the way. (Chorus)

Almighty, infinite Father
Faithfully loving Your own
Here in our weakness You find us
Falling before Your throne
Oh, we're falling before Your throne. (Chorus)

Responsive Reading

Psalm 104:24-35

²⁴ O LORD, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom have you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

²⁵ **Here is the sea, great and wide,
which teems with creatures innumerable,
living things both small and great.**

²⁶ **There go the ships,
and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it.**

²⁷ These all look to you,
to give them their food in due season.

²⁸ When you give it to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

²⁹ **When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.**

³⁰ **When you send forth your Spirit, they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.**

³¹ May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
 may the LORD rejoice in his works,
³² who looks on the earth and it trembles,
 who touches the mountains and they smoke!
³³ **I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;**
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.
³⁴ **May my meditation be pleasing to him,**
for I rejoice in the LORD.
³⁵ **Let sinners be consumed from the earth,**
and let the wicked be no more!
Bless the LORD, O my soul!
Praise the LORD!

Anthem (Music Ministry): “God is the Strength of My Heart”

Prayer for illumination
(Congregant Prepared)

Scripture

John 7:53-8:11

⁸ ⁵³ [[They went each to his own house, ¹ but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ² Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. ³ The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst ⁴ they said to him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So, what do you say?” ⁶ This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. ⁷ And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” ⁸ And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. ⁹ But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. ¹⁰ Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” ¹¹ She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”]]

Sermon

After teaching in the temple courts during the Feast of Booths the crowds returned home, however when Jesus went away for the night, he did not go to someone’s home or an inn, instead he camped out at the Mount of Olives.

Then on the very next day after his confrontation with the religious leaders who are out to kill him, he returns to their base of power in the temple and once again starts to teach the people who are gathered there.

And as he is there teaching, with a crowd of people gathered around him, listening to him intently as he speaks on the Scriptures, the religious leaders begin to push their way through the crowd of people, dragging along with them a woman.

And when they reach the front of the crowd, they stop Jesus in his teaching and tell him, 'Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So, what do you say?'

Picture that, this woman is dragged into the center of a crowd by the religious leaders, probably resisting the whole way. They intentionally did it when a crowd was gathered around Jesus, listening to him speak. But why? Why did they drag this woman into the midst of the crowd and confront Jesus?

After all, if she had been caught in the act of adultery, she should have been placed in custody and an investigation done into the legitimacy of the charge of adultery. Even if she was guilty could they not have waited until the crowds had dispersed and approached Jesus about the difficult recession that they had to make in regard to her punishment.

There is a reason that they made a show of her, they push their way through the crowd, making sure that they have the attention of the people and burst into the center where they through this woman down and proclaim the charge and guilty verdict of adultery, then demand of Jesus what should be done.

They brought this woman who was probably filled with shame and humiliation and amplified that as they paraded her through the crowd and made their claim against her.

She is probably dressed poorly, hair a mess, eyes swollen and dark from tears. She was caught in the act of adultery and dressed and dragged into the center of this crowd for all to see by the religious leaders.

It says she was caught in the act. If she was caught in the act where is that man who she was caught in the act with, after all the law did not call for just the woman to be stoned to death for adultery, it called for both parties to be stoned to death. So why is it that just the woman has been dragged here to be thrown down at the foot of Jesus Christ.

Simple, it was a setup, the religious leaders were in on it from the beginning. Like a poorly executed sting operation, they had arranged for a man to be in this adulterous relationship with this woman so that they could then arrest her, humiliate her, accuse her in front of the crowd, and utilize her in their attempt to get rid of Jesus once and for all.

This becomes clear when you understand the rules of the Jews at the time. Adultery was a crime that was punishable by death, which meant it require two witnesses, two witnesses that had to have seen the persons involved in the act of adultery. That means they had to be seen engaging in something sexual, not just out together holding hands, or even laying on the same

bed together. Not only that the testimony of the two witnesses had to match perfectly, if there was even a slight variation, they could not prosecute the people.

So, this was a setup, pure and simple, using this woman without any care for who she was or the life she lived.

They drag her in front of Jesus and hope to trap him, because in their eyes he only had two choices, stone her, or let her go.

If Jesus says to stone her, he is violating Roman law, which did not allow the Jews to carry out capital punishments, only the Roman Empire was allowed to take the life of a person for a crime.

If he says let her go, he is violating the Law of Moses and they can say that he is not a Rabbi and an unfaithful follower of God, maybe even make an accusation of being a false prophet.

They really do believe that they have trapped him, no way out. They believed that they were about to show how Jesus was either a cruel and uncaring man, one that does not truly care about the law of God, or he would face his own death at the hands of the Roman empire for murder in carrying out the law of Moses.

The proof is in the Scriptures.

John 8:6

⁶This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.

There they are convinced that they have Jesus in an impossible to win situation. And Jesus did something that appears nowhere else in the New Testament, Jesus wrote. He bent down and wrote with his finger in the sand.

What did Jesus write?

Biblical scholars have debated this for two thousand years, and there is a plethora, a whole bunch of theories and ideas, and ultimately guesses at what Jesus wrote in the sand that day. But in the end no one except those who were present that day, truly know what Jesus wrote in the sand.

Remember last week I told you there are a bunch of question I have for when I reach God's kingdom. What Jesus wrote in the sand is probably the first!

If it was important for us to know what Jesus wrote the Bible would have told us what Jesus wrote. However, it does tell us what Jesus did, he stooped down and calmly wrote in the sand. He knew that they were coming after him and he did not react in self-defense, he did not react with outrage or anger, he did not approach the woman and condemn her for her sin, he did not

challenge the religious leaders calling them hypocrites, instead he bent down on one knee and calmed down the whole situation.

He brought himself down to the level of the woman who had just been through before him in the center of this crowd of people. In a sense his action is saying 'woman you are thrown down in your sin and humiliation, let me join you there. Let me be low down with you, I will draw closer to you in this horrible situation.'

Jesus joined the woman and ignored those who were using the laws of Moses for their own purposes and wrote in the sand. By the way, there is only one other point in the Bible where we see God write using his finger on the earth, and that is when he wrote the Law of Moses, the Ten Commandments in the book of Exodus.

John 8:7

⁷And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."

The religious leaders kept at him. They kept asking him, badgering him, harassing him, demanding that he answer them. Until he stands and looks them in the eye and tells them, '**Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.**'

Jesus is not saying that only someone who is sinlessly perfect can judge another person's sinful nature. Christians are allowed to judge and confront sin, even in their own sinful nature.

The apostle Paul is a wonderful example of this. Every letter of Paul that has made it into the Scripture, is Paul confronting the sin that was happening in a church. Could you imagine the church in Corinth writing back to Paul as a way to justify their sin, 'Well Paul, let him who has never sinned cast the first stone'?

Jesus was not saying that if you have ever sinned in your life, you are not allowed to judge and confront the sin in other people's lives.

Do you remember what I said earlier about the Jewish legal system, how two witnesses were required, how specific and detailed the testimony of those witnesses must be, well I left out one aspect until now, the person who carried out the sentence of death, the one who cast the first stone to kill the violator of law, had to be one of the witnesses to the crime.

So, Jesus is saying to the witnesses, if you are sinless in your accusations against this woman, then you cast the first stone.

He was challenging the religious leaders and their corrupted sense of justice, this charade of a crime, the humiliation and degradation of this woman for their own twisted purposes.

He was saying if you are without sin in this situation, then carry out the sentence, because he knows that this was all a horrible act of injustice. After all, where was the man?

There is still an important lesson in this verse for us, a reminder that we are indeed all sinners, and we need to keep that in mind when we confront others in their sin. It stands as a reminder that maybe we do not need to confront sin quite as often as we feel the need to because we were once sinners too, and according to His plan, at the right time and place we were convicted of that sin.

It reminds us that when we do feel we are convicted to confront someone else about the sin in their lives, it should be with a broken heart, as we take a knee humbling ourself and recognizing that we share a common ground with the person we are confronting as people who desperately need the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ in our lives for our sins.

We should never address the sins of others as if we were above them, never with a haughty, holier than thou attitude, which is a stench in the nostrils of God.

Instead, we are to be like Jesus.

John 8:8

⁸ And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground.

Jesus calmly confronted them, and instead of staring them down, or engaging them in a debate, once again bends down and shows his compassion for the woman before him.

John 8:9

⁹ But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.

When confronted with their own sin, their own complacency, their own prideful trap, the accusers slowly begin to walk away. From oldest to last. Again, we have no idea why they left in this order, the Bible does not tell us, it simply tells us that in the end, every accuser of this woman leaves, until it is just the woman, Jesus and the crowd who had come to hear Jesus teach.

John 8:10-11

¹⁰ Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" ¹¹ She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."]]

Once they have all left, Jesus once again stands. And speaks to the woman, standing they look at one another, face to face, eye to eye.

And he asks where the accusers have gone to, he asks if there is anyone else there who can condemn her for her sin. She looks around and realizes that they are all gone, the case has been thrown out of court, the ultimate mistrial has occurred, the corruption of the court has been exposed.

She was guilty of the sin, guilty of a sin punishable by capital punishment and she knew that. Yet here she was, standing in front of Jesus Christ and the crowd a free woman, saved from the penalty of her sin because Jesus in his mercy, in his compassion and in his humility had drawn himself closer to her.

Is that not how Jesus works? When we finally are honest with ourselves about our sin, we become convicted of our sin, and when we are in the midst of shame and humiliation, when we are punishing ourselves for our weaknesses and wicked ways, Jesus in his humility, his compassion, and filled with his grace and mercy draws himself close to us, and forgives us of our sin, so that we can begin to forgive ourselves.

Jesus took her sin upon himself, and he will carry it with him to the cross, in just six months, where he will pay the penalty for her sin, he will die so that she will be forgiven.

And then he tells her, **'go, and from now on sin no more.'**

Jesus sent her away with the call to stop her sin. Notice that Jesus did not hesitate to call her adultery sin, after all it is sin. She sinned against God, she sinned against her marriage, she sinned against her family. It was without a doubt sinful.

Jesus acknowledges it was sin; he tells her repent from this sin and go and sin no more. He gave her hope that she could live a life without sin. He told her in the past sin might have ruled your life, but now that you have met me, I have freed you from that bondage, that slavery to sin that is part of the human condition.

You have changed because you have a relationship with me now, He gave her hope that she could stop sinning when he told her to sin no more.

Her shame did not end that day, everyone there knew that she was the woman caught in adultery, her guilt was known by everyone who had witnessed the whole event that took place in the busiest place in Jerusalem. Her shame, her guilt and her sin did not end that day, but she walked away knowing that Jesus Christ, the Son of God had taken on her condemnation. Jesus had freed her of the shame, knowing that Jesus had given her the hope of living a life free of sin and shame.

There is one final part of this piece of Scripture we need to think about.

Do you think that this woman would have felt the shame of her sin if she had not been caught?

It is in our human nature to believe that this woman would have only felt that shame because she was caught. However, the truth is that she would have felt some sense of shame even if she had not been caught, some sense of guilt at her core, because all people, ALL PEOPLE, were created in God's image. And in the very core of who we are, we feel guilty and shame when we violate God's laws, which is why so many people push back against Christianity in the world today.

There is an inherent guilt and shame attached to sin, and when Jesus told her to go and sin no more, he was giving her a way to stop that sense of shame that could come into her life through a multitude of ways.

Notice Jesus did not say, 'Go and commit adultery no more' or 'Go, and do not get caught again'

He says, '**Go, and from now on sin no more.**'

Jesus tells us how to not have shame in our lives, follow his laws, he knows that we cannot do it perfectly, but he wants to prevent as much of it as possible in our lives.

Then when we do sin, when we do fall into the traps of our flesh, when we disobey the laws of God, he bends down with us and draws us to him, and in his infinite mercy and grace forgives us, takes the sins we have committed onto himself, and carries them to his cross where his blood pays the price of our sins.

So brothers and sister in Christ, if you have sin in your life, if you have shame in your life, draw close to the Lord who is bent down beside you, let his mercy and grace come upon you, let your sin be placed upon his body and '**go, and from now on sin no more.**' As you walk in this world as the Salt and Light of his Word.

Let us Pray,

Lord God Almighty,
 shaper and ruler of all creatures,
 we pray for your great mercy,
 that you guide us towards you,
 for we cannot find our way.
 And guide us to your will,
 to the need of our soul,
 for we cannot do it ourselves.
 And make our mind steadfast in your will
 and aware of our soul's need.
 Strengthen us against the temptations of the devil,
 and remove from us all lust and every unrighteousness,
 and shield us against our foes, seen and unseen.

Teach us to do your will,
 that we may inwardly love you before all things with a pure mind.
 For you are our maker and our redeemer,
 our help, our comfort,
 our trust, our hope;
 praise and glory be to you now and forever. **Amen.**

Source: Alfred the Great, 9th century

Hymn #650: “He Leadeth Me” (V 1,3,4)

He leadeth me: oh blessed thought!
 oh words with heavenly comfort fraught!
 Whate'er I do, where'er I be
 still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

Refrain:

He leadeth me! He leadeth me!
 By his own hand he leadeth me!
 A faithful follower I would be,
 for 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

Lord, I would clasp thy hand in mine,
 nor ever murmur nor repine,
 content, whatever lot I see,
 since 'tis my God that leadeth me! (Refrain)

And when my task on earth is done,
 when by thy grace the victory's won,
 e'en death's cold wave I will not flee,
 since God through Jordan leadeth me. (Refrain)

Invitation to Offering

Offering

Offertory Prayer
(Congregant Prepared)

Closing Hymn #687: “Blessed Assurance”

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;
 Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!

Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Pastoral Prayer

Gracious God,
because we are not strong enough
to pray as we should,
you provide Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit
to intercede for us in power.
In this confidence we ask you
to accept our prayers.

Faithful God,
you formed your church from the despised of the earth
and showed them mercy,
that they might proclaim your salvation to all.
Strengthen those whom you choose today,
that they may faithfully endure all trials
by which you conform your church to the cross of Christ.

Judge of the nations,
you created humanity for salvation,
not destruction,
and sent your Son to guide us
into the way of peace.
Enable people of every race and nation
to accept each other as sisters and brothers,
your children, on whom you lavish honor and favor.

Compassionate God,
 your Son gives rest to those weary with heavy burdens.
 Heal the sick in body, mind, and spirit.
 Lift up the depressed.
 Befriend those who grieve.
 Comfort the anxious.
 Awaken those who damage themselves and others
 through the use of any drug.
 Fill all people with your Holy Spirit
 that they may bear each other's burdens
 and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Eternal God,
 your love is stronger than death,
 and your passion more fierce than the grave.
 We rejoice in the lives of those
 whom you have drawn into your eternal embrace.
 Keep us in joyful communion with them
 until we join the saints of every people and nation,
 gathered before your throne in ceaseless praise.

God of glory,
 you see how all creation groans in labor
 as it awaits redemption.
 As we work for and await your new creation,
 we trust that you will answer our prayers with grace,
 through Jesus Christ our Lord,
 who live and reigns with You, and the Holy Spirit
 as the One true God,
 now and forever. **Amen.**

Benediction

The God of peace,
 who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,
 make you complete in everything good
 so that you may do God's will,
 working among us that which is pleasing in God's sight,
 through Jesus Christ,
 to whom be the glory forever and ever!