

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, September 7th, 2025
Rev. Gerry Gallant

A World Divided
Proper 18
John 12:37-50

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Let us worship God, our light, and our salvation.
The Lord is the stronghold of our lives.

We desire to live in God's house
and to seek God in his holy temple.
**We have come with shouts of joy,
to sing and to make music to the Lord.**

Let us worship God in spirit and in truth.
**Teach us your ways and make straight our paths
in this hour of worship and always.**

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Dear God,
help us to worship you today.
May we listen carefully, pray honestly, and sing joyfully.
Send your Holy Spirit
so that our words will bring you glory.
Thank you that Jesus makes our worship perfect for you.
Help us remember that when we worship you,
we are part of your family;
we join everyone who loves you
around the world and throughout history.
In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Opening Hymns (2)

Hymn #292: "Father, We Adore You"

Father, We adore You.
Lay my life before You.
How I love You.

Jesus, We adore You.
Lay my life before You.
How I love You.

Spirit, We adore You.
Lay my life before You.
How I love You.

Hymn #294: "Hallelujah"

Hallelujah, hallelujah,
hallelujah, hallelujah,
hallelujah, hallelujah,
hallelujah, hallelujah!

We Praise You, We Praise You,
Hallelujah, hallelujah.
We Praise You, We Praise You,
Hallelujah, hallelujah.

We love You, We love You,
Hallelujah, hallelujah,
We love You, We love You,
Hallelujah, hallelujah.

Prayer for Students (all going to school invited to the front)

Lord, I give this school year over to your hands.
Father grant that each of your servants gathered here will learn exactly what is right for them to learn.
Help them to master new skills and increase their love of learning.
Prepare them for what you have for them in their futures.
Protect them from what is harmful to them and expose them to things which serve your purpose for them in this world.
Father give them good attitudes and a willingness to work hard, be with them when they are in need.
Grant that they will always show respect and obedience to your teachings and your will.

Please give their families the peace and support that they will need during this school year. Lord we thank you for loving them, protecting them, and caring for them in this coming year.

In Jesus name we pray. **Amen.**

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

John 12:37-50

³⁷ Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, ³⁸ so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

**“Lord, who has believed what he heard from us,
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”**

³⁹ Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,

⁴⁰ **“He has blinded their eyes
and hardened their heart,
lest they see with their eyes,
and understand with their heart, and turn,
and I would heal them.”**

⁴¹ Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. ⁴² Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

⁴⁴ And Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. ⁴⁵ And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. ⁴⁶ I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. ⁴⁷ If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. ⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰ And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”

Sermon

The truth of this life is that you are either a follower of Jesus Christ, one that is faithful and obedient, or you are not. This is a reoccurring theme throughout the book of John, every miracle divides the people, believers and unbelievers, saved and lost. John made it clear right from the

beginning of his writing, Jesus is God, and even some of those who claimed faith would not believe, while those who were considered outside of the faith would.

John 1:11-12

¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

This is still true in the world today, there are those who claim a belief in Jesus Christ, but they do not really follow him, obey him, or recognize him as the Lord of their lives.

As we come to the end of Christ's public ministry, we are presented with another instance of the religious leaders of Israel deny the truth, that Jesus is in fact God for their own worldly reasons.

These men who had studied the Scriptures, preached on the Word of God and had either witnessed or spoken to the witnesses of many of Jesus's miracles, denied him, because they valued their position, power, prestige and wealth more than God.

John 12:37-43

³⁷ Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, ³⁸ so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

**"Lord, who has believed what he heard from us,
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"**

³⁹ Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,

**⁴⁰ "He has blinded their eyes
and hardened their heart,
lest they see with their eyes,
and understand with their heart, and turn,
and I would heal them."**

⁴¹ Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. ⁴² Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

John starts by telling us that the Jewish unbelief in Jesus as Messiah was both illogical and contrary to rational thought and expectations. Anyone who had witnessed or spoken to those who witnessed the signs and miracles, and who had heard him teach and speak, could only come to one conclusion, Jesus is the Messiah.

They do not deny any of the miracles that Jesus performed, yet they denied his divinity.

When the Scripture says that **'they still did not believe in him'** it is implying that they knew he did these things and yet they still willfully chose, of their own will and volition, despite all the evidence, to deny Jesus's divinity. The Scripture wants to make it clear that they cannot shift the blame of their unbelief onto anyone else, it was their own willful disobedience of God.

Imagine seeing all the different miracles that we have studied just in the book of John and remember that John tells us that these Seven, are just a few of the many miracles that Jesus performed.

Jesus changed water into wine at the wedding.

Jesus healed the Official's son with just his words.

Jesus healed the lame man at the pool of Bethesda.

Jesus fed the five thousand.

Jesus walked on water.

Jesus healed the man born blind.

Jesus brought Lazarus back to life.

After witnessing even just these seven signs, how could you deny the divinity of Jesus?

Through these seven signs Jesus has shown how he is Master over all of the world, if we were to include all of the miracles that are recorded in the Gospels we would have more than thirty reasons to believe that Jesus is God, and remember that they are still not all of the things that he did in his public ministry.

So, it is both illogical and irrational to deny Jesus despite all the miracles he performed.

This is still true today, despite all the evidence that points to God in our world and in our lives, there are still people who will choose to ignore all that evidence and willfully deny the existence of God in their lives.

People will choose the theory of evolution, something which still cannot explain the origin of life, something that still cannot prove its own theories, rather than in a God who created all things because they want so desperately to deny God's existence in their lives.

There is more evidence in this world of a creator than of evolution, yet people deny the truth, it is both illogical and irrational, it is a willful and deliberate unbelief, the same as that of the religious leaders.

And John tells us that this is the fulfillment of the prophecies of Isaiah. God knew that they would not believe, he knew that they would willfully deny the divinity of Jesus.

Isaiah 53:1

Who has believed what he has heard from us?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

Isaiah chapter fifty-three describe the rejection of Jesus and what he will suffer at the hands of the Jewish nation. God knew that Jesus could be rejected even though he was spoken of in the Scriptures, even though he performed all those different miracles.

God knew and yet he still sent Jesus, because God's plans are not dependent on man.

God's purposes and plans are not frustrated by the unbelief and opposition of evil men.

We need to remember that as we look at the world around us, no matter what is happening, no matter what people say and how they oppose God and his Word, God sits supreme over all things. He knows what is happening and he is King over all things, no matter how many people reject God in this world, no matter how far this world moves against God, God's plan is being fulfilled.

Even here in the rejection of Jesus, God is using these wicked and evil men for his purpose of bringing salvation to the world, and that should give all Christians peace and hope in the world we live in.

Then perhaps the most severe part of the Scripture is that '**Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,** ⁴⁰**"He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them."** '

They first chose not to believe, and God allowed them to continue in that unbelief. And as they continued in their unbelief, they became blind, their hearts hardened, and they lost the ability to understand the Word of God.

This is a result of not listening to the Word of God because of their own will.

If we look at the Scripture from Isaiah, we can see this is a result of a warning that Isaiah brought to the people.

Isaiah 6:8-10

⁸ **And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"**

Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." ⁹ And he said, "Go, and say to this people:

**“ ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand;
keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’
¹⁰ Make the heart of this people dull,
and their ears heavy,
and blind their eyes;
lest they see with their eyes,
and hear with their ears,
and understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed.”**

The message of either belief or unbelief is not new, it is one that God has delivered to his people from the very beginning.

God is sovereign, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but man has free will.

And God in his grace and mercy saves his people.

Those who want to see and hear are healed.

Those who refuse to see and hear, have their hearts hardened and their eyes blinded as a consequence of their own choices in this world.

When people are faced with the choice of recognizing God or not in their lives, that is their choice, and John is saying that the only way that you can deny Jesus as the Messiah is by ignoring all of the evidence that points to the truth that he is the Messiah.

And when you chose to deny those truths, you eyes will become blind and you heart will become hardened, because you willfully denied God in your disobedience.

Perhaps one of the best examples of this is Pharaoh in the book of Exodus. With each of the plagues we are told that Pharaoh’s heart was hardened. This is Pharaoh being allowed his own free will, being allowed to follow his own heart and to do the things he wanted to do.

This is perhaps one of the greatest judgement that God can bring upon a person, allowing them to follow their hearts. When God takes his hands off you and allows you to follow your hearts desires, and you suffer the consequences of your choices, it is because you rejected God, you hardened your heart and he allowed it to happen, you rejected the light that came to you.

This is why the worldly motto of ‘follow you heart’ is such a danger to Christians. Our hearts will lead us astray. The prophet Jeremiah said this:

Jeremiah 17:9

**The heart is deceitful above all things,
and desperately sick;**

who can understand it?

Remember that the next time you choose to follow your heart and go against the Word of God.

In the book of Romans, it tells us what happens when God allow people to follow their own hearts.

Romans 1:24-32

²⁴ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; ²⁷ and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

²⁸ And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹ foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³² Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

God let them do the things that they wanted to do, and they did the things that have become prevalent in the world today. God did not make them sinners; he just let them go their own way after they refused to believe in Him.

Salvation comes to those who open their eyes to their own sinful nature, to those who open their hearts to the truth of their need for salvation, their need for God.

It is not until we are broken, until we see the weight of our sin and our defiance against God, that we can come humbly before him and be healed by the presence of the Holy Spirit in us.

Finally, we reach a bit of Scripture that I believe needs to be widely shared among Christians today.

John 12:42-43

⁴² Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

People who believed that Jesus was the Messiah, still denied him, not because they were illogical or irrational, but because they loved the praise of man more than the glory of God.

There are so many people in the world today who claim to believe in Jesus, yet they refuse to obey Jesus, because they value the opinions and love of the people of this world more than the glory of God.

Churches and denominations that go against the Word of God so that they can find acceptance in the world.

This is what John is speaking of, there are lots of people who believe in God, but do not obey him, because they love their way of life, and if that is you, remember that the love of this world separates you from God. You cannot serve two masters.

John makes this even clearer in first John.

1 John 2:15-17

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

If you love man more than God, reassess your faith.

Remember the story of Peter denying Jesus three times and how with each denial he became more determined that he did not know Jesus and was not associated with him. Hardening his heart each time more and more.

Peter the one who loved Jesus denied him because he feared the persecution of this world, and in the end when the rooster crowed, he recognized his sins and repented and eventually he was restored by Jesus.

The book of Luke says this:

Luke 9:26

²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Are you ashamed of sharing your faith? Are you hesitant to live a life that is obedient to Christ because you fear the judgement of this world? Do you fear speaking to others about God because of the possibility of losing friends or family?

Or do you live your life for Christ, obedient to his Word and sharing his truths with everyone you can?

Do you love the praises of man more than the Glory of God like those religious leaders of that day?

That is the context you must have to understand what is being said in the final verse of chapter twelve.

John 12:44-50

⁴⁴ And Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. ⁴⁵ And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. ⁴⁶ I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. ⁴⁷ If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. ⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰ And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”

The whole public ministry of Jesus is summed up in these final verses of Chapter twelve.

If you believe in Jesus you believe in God the Father, and if you reject Him, you reject God.

This means that if you are wrong about Jesus, or you refuse the God of the Old Testament, you have created your own God to worship and you do not have the Jesus of the Bible, and the salvation that he offers.

If you see Jesus with spiritual eyes you see God.

If you believe in Jesus you live in the Light and if you do not you live in the darkness.

If you reject Jesus, if you live in the darkness, if you reject the Word of God, you are not judged immediately, instead the Day of Judgement is coming for you.

In his first coming Jesus came to offer salvation to everyone, to try to save everyone, but when he comes again and brings about the Day of Judgement those who choose to reject him will face his judgement.

And on that Day of Judgement, there is a division, those who believe go onto everlasting life in God’s eternal Kingdom, and those who do not believe go unto eternal condemnation in the lake of fire.

Jesus was God's final attempt to save mankind, if you reject him, if you deny him, if you pick and choose what parts of Scripture you want to obey, God will allow you to harden your heart and blind your eyes. This is the unforgivable sin, the denial of Jesus and the denial of the Holy Spirit that is spoken of in the Scripture.

This is why if you feel that God is speaking to you, you need to listen, you need to embrace the Scripture and begin to walk with God in your life, do not worry about the things of this world, do not seek the praise of man over the glory of God, instead pick up your cross, give up those things of this world which harden your heart and blind your eyes, and be the Salt and Light of God's truths in this dark and broken world.

Let us pray,

Help, Enlighten and Guide Us

Lord Jesus Christ,
 my Lord and my God,
 you know our weakness,
 and that we cannot do anything
 without your help and support.
 When we depend and trust in ourselves
 we fall into a thousand errors.
 Have mercy on us in our distress.
 Help, enlighten and guide us,
 that we may see what is truly good,
 desire it, and obtain it.
 We commend ourselves, body and soul, to you alone.
 With the Father and the Holy Spirit,
 you are worshiped as one God,
 forever and ever.
Amen.

Source: Wilhelm Löhe.

Closing Hymn

Hymn #300: "Father, We Love You"

Father, we love You, we worship, we adore You,
 glorify Your name in all the earth,
 glorify Your name, glorify Your name,
 glorify Your name in all the earth.

Jesus, we love You, we worship, we adore You,

glorify Your name in all the earth,
glorify Your name, glorify Your name,
glorify Your name in all the earth.

Spirit, we love You, we worship, we adore You,
glorify Your name in all the earth,
Glorify Your name, glorify Your name,
glorify Your name in all the earth.

Closing Prayer

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we, your unworthy servants, give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life,
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up ourselves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. **Amen.**

Benediction

May you, people of God, know that
God our Father made you and guides your every step;
Jesus Christ gave his life for you and brings you new life;
The Holy Spirit keeps you in the Lord's presence and empowers you to serve.
May almighty God continue to bless you and move you to place him first in your life as you
serve Him in this world. **Amen.**