

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, September 21st, 2025
Rev. Gerry Gallant

"Identity"
Proper 19
John 13:18-38

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Praise the name of the LORD.

Blessed be the name of the LORD!

From the rising of the sun to its setting, praise the name of the LORD.

We will bless God's holy name now and evermore.

The glory of the Lord is high above the heavens,
but God raises up the poor and needy on the earth.

So we will sing God's praise.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

God our Creator,

You sustain your creation

as the source of life for every precious thing.

You have given us more than we could ever earn or deserve,

and so we offer you our love and loyalty,

for without you, we would not be.

Receive our worship this day, O God.

Speak to us in the sounds and silence of this hour,

and amaze us

with your promise of new life revealed in Jesus Christ,

and your power at work in us and among us through the Spirit.

Amen.

Children's Video: "God is Good (at all times)"

Call to Confession

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

Prayer of Confession

**Generous God,
You have enriched us with life worth living,
but we confess we often squander your good gifts.
We have wasted our time and energy,
but held tightly to things we think we need.
Forgive our foolish priorities
and those times we overlooked the needs of others.
Inspire us to live more generously,
trusting your goodness to sustain us always.**

Assurance of Pardon

Friends in Christ, while it is true that we have squandered God's good gifts,
it is a greater truth that we are forgiven through God's love in Jesus Christ.
Trust the mercy of God, and be at peace with God, with yourself and with one another.

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: "Holy, Holy"

Holy, holy, holy, holy
Holy, holy, Lord God almighty;
And we lift our hearts before You
as a token of our love,
Holy, holy, holy.

Gracious Father, gracious Father,
We're so blest to be Your
children gracious Father;
And we lift our heads before You
as a token of our love,

Gracious Father, gracious Father.

Precious Jesus, precious Jesus,
 We're so glad that You've
 redeemed us, precious Jesus;
 And we lift our hands before You
 as a token of our love,
 Precious Jesus, precious Jesus.

Responsive Reading

Psalm 145:1-8

1 I will extol you, my God and King,
 and bless your name forever and ever.

**2 Every day I will bless you
 and praise your name forever and ever.**

3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised,
 and his greatness is unsearchable.

**4 One generation shall commend your works to another,
 and shall declare your mighty acts.**

5 On the glorious splendor of your majesty,
 and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.

**6 They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds,
 and I will declare your greatness.**

7 They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness
 and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

**8 The LORD is gracious and merciful,
 slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

Anthem (Music Ministry): "On Eagles Wings"

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

John 13:18-38

¹⁸ I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' ¹⁹ I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he.

²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.”

²¹ After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” ²² The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. ²³ One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus’ side, ²⁴ so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. ²⁵ So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?” ²⁶ Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.” ²⁸ Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. ³³ Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’ ³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

³⁶ Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.” ³⁷ Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” ³⁸ Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

Sermon

Last week, we started into chapter 13 of the Book of John, we discovered that while the other Gospels all have a focus on the meal, the Last Supper, John instead focuses on the events and conversations that occurred.

In last week’s sermon we learned about Jesus washing the feet of the disciples, and the importance that Jesus placed on having your feet cleaned from the dirt of this world if you want to be part of His kingdom.

And we are picking up today in the midst of that conversation, Jesus has just told the disciples that they are to wash one another’s feet in this world, to help one another walk in the ways of the Lord.

However, there is one at the table, one among the twelve who will betray Jesus on this night.

John 13:18-20

¹⁸ I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' ¹⁹ I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he.

²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

Jesus looks around the table at the men he has walked with for the past three years, the men who had taken part in His miracles, been present for all of His teachings, broke bread with Him every day and he says, 'I know you men, I chose you men.' I know all of you like brothers and tonight the Scriptures will be fulfilled.

He is referencing a Psalm of David.

Psalm 41:9

**⁹ Even my close friend in whom I trusted,
who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.**

A man with whom I have trusted will turn against me. The disciples all knew what Jesus was saying when he made this reference, they understood that one of them would betray Jesus, one of them would do what was unthinkable, side with the religious leaders over their Rabbi.

Jesus knows he is about to be betrayed, he knows what will happen after the betrayal, and he has no fear of what is to come. Instead, he boldly proclaims that he still has sending to do, he still has work that needs to get done according to God's plan, and it will get done.

He is telling the traitor at the table that even when he betrays him, it will not stop God's plan from coming to fulfillment.

John 13:21-26

²¹ After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." ²² The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. ²³ One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, ²⁴ so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. ²⁵ So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶ Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

Jesus tells them in very plain language, someone at this table will betray me.

And the disciples are shocked. They look around at one another trying to figure out who the traitor is in their midst. They know one another, they have lived together for three years, sharing meals, sleeping alongside one another, walking day in and day out with each other, through thick and thin, they knew each other.

There was nothing hidden among them, so when Jesus tells them that one of them will betray them, they are confused, if someone was not a faithful follower surely, they would have found out who that person was by now.

So, they begin to question themselves, wondering if one of them might betray Jesus by accident, by doing or saying something unintentionally.

In fact, when we read of this same event in the Gospel of Matthew it says:

Matthew 25:21-22

²¹ And as they were eating, he said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me."

²² And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, "Is it I, Lord?"

Everyone of them looked at him and asked, 'is it I?'

This tells us that not one of them knew who was the traitor among them. They did not know that it was Judas that would betray Jesus. Even though he had walked alongside them, broken bread with them, slept along with them for three years, they had never discovered his deceitful nature, they had no idea of his true intentions.

There is also a lesson for all of us in this. Notice that when Jesus says one of them will betray him, they ALL asked, 'Is it I, Lord?'

They all wondered for a moment if they could possibly be the one who could betray Jesus.

Their hearts knew their own nature; they knew that at their core they were all sinners.

We need to know this too! The Bible describes sin, it describes the things that separate us from God, it describes something that we need to correct in our lives, the things we need to change in our lives when you hear these things in a sermon or a Bible study.

Do you ask, 'Is it I, lord?' "Or do you think, 'I am so happy my husband is here today to hear this!' and give him a tiny elbow to the ribs.

Do you think, 'Is it I, Lord?' or are you thinking of a friend, a family member, or someone else that you wish could hear that same thing.

When we hear these things, our minds usually go to someone else, before they go to, 'Is it I, Lord?'

Our first thought should be, 'Is it I, Lord?'

I think I have shared this with some of you, but when I work through these sermons, that is the question that goes through my head the most. 'Is it I, Lord?'

Pastors are no different than anyone else, we struggle with all the same things, we are not holier than you, we do not have less temptation than you, we do not have less troubles, trials, temptations and tribulations.

When we read the Scriptures, we can easily think of people that we hope get the meaning of the scripture, but to effectively teach it, to effectively present it, we need to start with, 'Is it I, Lord?'

So, we need to be more like the disciples instead of pointing fingers at one another or others in this world, turning to ourselves and asking, 'Is it I, lord?'

John 13:23-24

²³ One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, ²⁴ so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.

Simon Peter wants to know who it is, so he turns to the one who Jesus loved and asks him to find out who Jesus is talking about.

Who is it that Jesus loves?

Jesus loves all of them, we saw last week that he wanted to spend the last night before his crucifixion with the ones he loved. He loved all of them, so why it is that John always refers to himself as the one whom Jesus loves?

Because John knows who he is and where the foundation of his identity is set. John is the one who Jesus loves, the same way that he loves a lot of others. However, to John what is so important is that he loves him.

John's identity is rooted in Jesus Christ.

This is where the identity of every Christian should be rooted, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

One of the biggest issues we have in the world today is people struggling to find their identity.

People are grasping at straws trying to discover who they are, trying to find their identity, trying to define themselves by their worldly aspirations and ideals.

People asking themselves, am I heterosexual or homosexual, am I old or am I young, am I a man or am I a woman, or am I something else altogether?

People confused and lost in a world that tries to categorize people and give them an identity based upon their preferences, their hobbies, the products they like, the people they follow.

The world is filled with people screaming out, 'What is my identity?' looking for some sort of solid ground from which to live their lives.

There is only one foundation for a person's identity, on solid rock on which to build your life, only one place where you can find your identity and know that your life will be as intended, and that is an identity that is rooted in the knowledge that Jesus loves you!

Jesus loves you, and you and you.

John had it correct, I am the one that Jesus loves, and that is where you need to have the root of your identity. When someone asks you to describe yourself the first words from your mouth should be I am the one that Jesus loves, I am a Christian.

I am not a Canadian who is Christian. I am a Christian who is Canadian.

God first in all things, including our identity.

There is so much identity confusion and so many people who are lost, confused and struggling in this world because they are trying to build their identity on the shifting sands of the identity politics of this world.

John 13:25

²⁵ So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?"

John leans against Jesus and asks Jesus who it is, who is the traitor among us?

This is where it is useful to remember what we learned last week, DaVinci's Last Supper is a beautiful painting but a horrible depiction of what the Last Supper looked like. They were at the triclinium. All laying around that low u-shaped table, eating from the central table between them.

So, John, just sort of rolled over and leaned his shoulder against Jesus and asked Jesus privately and asked this question.

We also know from the Gospels that Jesus was sitting at the table in the position of the host, Judas was sitting at his right hand in the position of honor and John was sitting on his left in the position of second honor.

Jesus had Judas the deceiver on his right, John the divine on his left, John the one who will be the receiver of the Book of Revelation on one side and Judas the son of perdition on his other side.

Even here at the table we see that message of division being presented in John's Gospel. You are either with Jesus or against Jesus, there is no middle ground, there is no shallow end of the pool, you either dive in fully or you get out.

John his identity fully rooted in Jesus asks him, who is the betrayer,

John 13:26

²⁶ Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

You need to understand what Jesus is about to do is special, he is not just dunking potato chip in some dip and handing it to Judas. When you did something like this at one of these meals it was like toasting someone, it was like calling all of those gathered to pay their respects and to honor the recipient of that morsel of bread.

Jesus took a small piece of bread and gave it to Judas, and that was Jesus's way of telling Judas he loved him, he cared for him, he favored him.

When Jesus handed that piece of bread to Judas, they had to be looking fully upon the face of one another, they had to be making eye contact. Jesus looking at Judas with eyes filled with love and compassion, even knowing that Judas will betray him. Judas looking into the loving eyes of Jesus Christ, knowing that he will soon betray him, and start the process that will result in his arrest, humiliation, torture and crucifixion.

John 13:27-30

²⁷ Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." ²⁸ Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

Jesus hands Judas the bread, Judas has a last chance to turn away from his plan. Judas had a chance to come back to Christ.

Again, look in the Book of Matthew and you will see this.

Matthew 26:25

²⁵ Judas, who would betray him, answered, "Is it I, Rabbi?" He said to him, "You have said so."

Judas knew that Jesus knew!

When Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, he did so out of the love of his friends. Showing us the importance of loving one another and making sacrifices for one another.

However, when Jesus offers this morsel of bread to Judas he is showing the love of His enemies.

Jesus reached out to Judas with an offer of salvation, and Judas denies it.

Judas hardens his heart and blinds his own eyes because of his love of himself and worldly things and in that moment when he accepts the bread and denies the salvation offered alongside it, Satan makes his move.

This is how Satan works, quietly, secretly, in the midst of people who have no idea what is going on.

Satan is at work and the moment that he entered Judas the path was set, and Judas with the taste of that bread still in his mouth and left to betray Jesus.

People of God, Jesus knows your deepest and darkest secrets, those things which fill you with shame and humiliation, he knows the truths about you that you do not share with anyone, those things that you even try to hide from yourself. He knows all your sins, even the ones you do in secret, even the ones you justify for your own reasons, even the ones you deny are sins, and He loves you.

He knows all those things, and he holds out a morsel of bread for you, he offers himself to you, he offers eternal salvation. He offers peace, joy and happiness, and you can either take that bread and be part of his family, or you can be like Judas and take that bread and then go out and betray him by continuing to live for yourself first, putting those things you love in this world first in your life.

Judas shows us that it takes more than a worldly example, more than just good teaching, more than even witnessing a miracle. Judas had the best example to base his life upon, Jesus Christ. Judas had the best teacher, Jesus taught him every day. Judas witnessed miracle after miracle in his walk with Jesus.

And he still betrayed Jesus.

Without surrendering yourself to Jesus, without humbly submitting yourself to Jesus, without the Holy Spirit at work in you, you have nothing.

Judas refused to submit, refused to give up his worldly passions, refused to place his identity in Jesus.

John 13:31-32

³¹When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. ³²If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once

Judas is gone, and instead of mourning or being angry, Jesus focuses on the Glory that is about to come.

He knows that it has all been set in motion by the betrayal of Judas.

Jesus is going to the cross, a place of humiliation, and instead of talking about the humiliation, instead of talking about the pain and suffering, instead of focusing on the people who will stand at the foot of the cross and mock him, Jesus focuses on the glorification that will occur in His death and resurrection.

The cross is where the heart of Jesus becomes perfectly clear to His people. His death upon the cross showed with absolute clarity his love for his people. The love of Jesus was revealed in his death and resurrection, and through it God is glorified.

John 13:33

³³ Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.

Jesus shocked the disciples twice at the dinner, first he tells the disciples that someone there is a traitor, the second is that he is leaving.

After telling the disciples these two things he will spend the rest of the evening preparing them for his departure.

It starts with a new commandment.

John 13:34-35

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Love one another!

When I am gone, love one another. The disciples were just men, men who had issues with one another, men who had problems with one another.

And Jesus says love one another. That was not a surprise for the disciples, even the Old Testament says to love one another. Jesus even said to love our neighbor as ourselves.

However, Jesus amplifies it in this commandment.

'Love one another, as I have loved you!'

Think about that a moment, Christians are called to love Christians the same way that Jesus loves Christians.

Jesus loves me more than I love me, I can guarantee that.

Jesus knows all about me, and he loves me.

How am I ever going to love myself and others in the same way in which Jesus loves me?

There is only one way to do that, only one way to love others in the same way that Jesus loves you and that is through the Holy Spirit that is within you.

We can only love as Jesus loved if we have Jesus in us. We can only love as Jesus love if our identities, our lives are rooted in Him.

When your identity is in Jesus Christ, when your life is being lived for the Lord, if the Holy Spirit is doing its work in you, Jesus is there in you, giving you the ability to love as he loved.

The world knows if you are a Christian by the way you love.

Jesus set the standard, if you can love one another in the same way that Jesus loved his disciples, then you are a Christian.

That is an incredibly high standard, but that is the standard.

Love brothers and sisters in Christ, love them, pray for them, love them with all of your heart, even if you do not want to.

This is Jesus's commandment, love them.

If there is a brother or sister you have an issue with pray for them, pray that God would do good things in their life and let the Holy Spirit do its work in your heart and in theirs.

John 13:36

³⁶ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." ³⁷ Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." ³⁸ Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

Peter, our good friend Peter, once again telling Jesus what he will do. I will follow you anywhere, I will lay down my life for you.

Jesus sets Peter in his place, he tells him that before daylight, before the rooster crows he will deny him three times.

Peter meant it when he said he would lay down his life for Jesus. He meant it when he said he would follow him anywhere; he meant it when he proclaimed his loyal love and obedience in that room at that time.

However, he did not acknowledge his own weakness, his own desire for self-preservation, his own need for other people.

Peter could not lay down his life for Jesus, until Jesus had first laid down his life for him.

Jesus laid down his life for you and I, and we need to lay down our lives for him.

We are called to place our identity fully in him, sacrificing our life, our time, our talents and our treasures, for His kingdom in this world and to walk as the Salt and Light of his Word, bringing the glory of His name to all whom we meet!

Let us pray,

May Your Grace Move Our Love

O sweet Savior Christ,
in your undeserved love for us
you were prepared to suffer the painful death of the cross:
let me not be cold or even lukewarm in my love for you.

Lord help me to face the truth about myself.
Help me to hear my words as others hear them,
to see my face as others see me;
Let me be honest enough to recognize my impatience and conceit;

Let me recognize my anger and selfishness;
Give me sufficient humility to accept my own weakness for what they are.
Give me the grace – at least in your presence – to say. ‘I was wrong – forgive me.’

God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
increase in us faith and truth and gentleness
and grant us part and lot among the saints.

Source: Polycarp

Hymn #240: “Rock of Ages”

Rock of ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood,
from thy riven side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure:
cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Not the labours of my hands
 can fulfill thy law's demands;
 could my zeal no respite know,
 could my tears forever flow,
 all for sin could not atone;
 thou must save, and thou alone.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
 when my eyelids close in death,
 when I soar through tracts unknown,
 see thee on thy judgement throne,
 rock of ages, cleft for me,
 let me hide myself in thee.

Invitation to Offering

Offering Prayer

Closing Hymn #291: "Thou Whose Almighty Word"

Thou whose almighty word
 chaos and darkness heard
 and took their flight,
 hear us, we humbly pray,
 and where the gospel day
 sheds not its glorious ray
 Let There Be Light!

Saviour who came to bring
 on thy redeeming wing
 healing and sight,
 health to the sick in mind,
 sight to the inly blind,
 now to all humankind
 Let There Be Light!

Blessed and holy Three,
 glorious Trinity,
 Wisdom, Love, Might,
 boundless as ocean's tide
 rolling in fullest pride,

through the world, far and wide,
Let There Be Light!

Pastoral Prayer

God in whom we live and move and have our being,
each week our prayers join with those of Christians around the world
to seek your healing grace for those in need
and to pray for justice and mercy in your fragile creation.

We thank you for the ways in which your Spirit can surprise us,
bringing healing and hope in situations which cause us to despair.
Encourage us when we feel overwhelmed.

We remember before you today people living with illness and suffering,
for those struggling with disability or waiting for treatment,
and for those who know grief or fear or loneliness

We remember before you people caught up in economic uncertainty,
those worried for the future, or struggling to make ends meet

As we leave here today, Lord, we pray for your Holy Spirit to be with us
and guide us to walk in Your light and in obedience to Your scripture
so that we may be the salt and light of this world.

We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our savior
Who live and reign with You and the Holy Spirit
As the one true living God
Now and forevermore, **Amen.**

Benediction

May the blessing of God,
the giver of every good and perfect gift;
and of Christ, who summons us to service;
and of the Holy Spirit, who inspires generosity and love,
be with us all.