

Isaiah 55:1-13

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. 3Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live.

I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. 4See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. 5See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

6Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; 7let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. 8For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. 9For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. 10For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. 12For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. 13Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Gospel Text: John 4:13-14

13Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”

Being Brave Christians;
Letting our light shine

I want to start a conversation today, by asking how you define yourself. I'm not asking you to stand up and tell us all, I just want you to consider the question internally. Specifically, I want YOU to define for yourself:
“In what way does your Christianity define who I am?”

There is no right or wrong answer to this question, it is only you defining the question for yourself.

The follow-on consideration for you is this:

“If you define yourself as a Christian, how often do you state to others, that you are a Christian?”

I ask this because fewer Christians today are willing to identify themselves openly. There are even surveys and studies on the problem.

Why are people unwilling to say they are Christians?

Below are the results of a study:

- Religious conversations always seem to create tension or arguments: 28 percent
- I'm not religious and don't care about these kinds of topics: 23 percent
- I'm put off by how religion has been politicized: 17 percent
- I don't feel like I know enough to talk about religious or spiritual topics: 17 percent
- I don't want to be known as a religious person: 7 percent
- I don't know how to talk about religious or spiritual topics without sounding weird: 6 percent
- I'm afraid people will see me as a fanatic or extremist: 5 percent
- I'm embarrassed by the way religious language has been used in popular culture: 5 percent
- I've been hurt by religious conversations in the past: 4 percent
- Religious language and jargon feels cheesy or outdated: 4 percent

Political columnists and scientists often state that if you don't define yourself; OTHERS WILL.

Here in lies the rub for we Christians, if we don't define ourselves to others, others ARE more than willing to define Christianity for us.

The answers you heard, to the survey reflect this point very well;

religion is divisive, it isn't important, it's all political, you don't understand your own faith, I don't want to be identified, religion is weird, all Christians are extremist fanatics, my own religion is embarrassing, religion is unpopular, Christianity is "cheesy".

So I ask you; is this, how YOU define your own faith??

I hope and expect it isn't. So how do we set about changing these perspectives?

I think it is by making Christianity something real in us, that we help others to see what witnessing for Christ means; and just as importantly hear us state clearly THAT WE ARE CHRISTIANS.

Here is the part where being “brave” as Christians finds its place in our lives; we are our religion’s “face” in this world, but how will the world now who we are if we are too timid to tell them??

Here is what Christ said to us: [1 John 4:18](#) *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.*

In our lesson today, Isaiah tells us that God’s word is like water, falling to earth, that it nourishes our world and all of us. That through his word we shall be strong and go forth to enlighten the world with his word and thus bring peace and harmony.

Christ reiterates this point in our Gospel:

... those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”

The metaphor of water and God’s word are reoccurring themes in the Old Testament and New.

So here are some simple ways to add nuggets of your faith into your daily conversations; when casually departing from strangers; say that you wish them “to Have a Blessed Day”. When departing from friends; “may God Be With You today and always”. When consoling someone say; “may the Peace of Christ be with you”.

These are very small things, but they are places we can start, and like the butterfly effect, they may reverberate in ways we least realize.

You don’t have to be an expert in theology to explain Christianity. We believe in a Christ who has promised us forgiveness from our sins, and whose gift of grace encourages us to sin no more. We believe in Christ whose primary commandment for us, is to love one another, and have no other god before him. We believe in a God who listens to our prayers and quietly gives us guidance for our lives.

We believe in Christ and his father, who have given us the opportunity to choose them and the gifts they offer by accepting them.

Our secular world imagines that the central events in our liturgical calendar are about decorating trees, mass marketing of toys, spending vast amounts of money, and eating chocolate bunnies. They are unaware that the celebration of Christ’s birth is about the fulfillment of God’s promise, and that Easter is about the grace given us all, by Christ’s sacrifice on a cross.

So be not afraid my friends, and let the world know that we are Christians, and that we do not intend to hide our light under a bushel basket.

In your Holy Name we pray:

Heavenly Father,

We reflect on the profound words of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who commanded us in Matthew 28, saying, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Lord, I recognize the weight of this Great Commission. You have entrusted us with the sacred task of teaching and reaching the world with the transformative message of your word. May we provide compassionate guidance for the lost, echoing Your desire that all should come to know You.

Fill me with Your Spirit that I may go forth with boldness and love. Let me be equipped, both in knowledge and spirit, to share the Good News of Christ. I pray for wisdom — that it may resonate in the hearts of those who hear it.

AMEN

Prayer of the Church—Responsive Form

Third Sunday in Advent

14 December 2025

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Lord, You are the source of all joy. Even the wilderness and the dry land shall be glad at Your appearance. Give us patience under trials and hope that endures the changes and chances of this mortal life. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, You have sent messengers to prepare the way of Your Son's coming. Grant us ears to hear and hearts to believe the words delivered by all who bear Your Word. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious Lord, Look with favor upon the homes of our land, and grant that the faith might be delivered from one generation to the next. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, give guidance to those entrusted with positions of leadership in government. Protect service men and women who defend us against the enemies of our nation, and those who enact and enforce laws that protect us. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, our God, the prophet Isaiah looked for the day when blind eyes would see, deaf ears would hear, lame legs would leap and mute tongues would sing. Until the final day of restoration, draw near to all who have requested our prayers,*[especially _____]* and give them healing according to Your gracious will. Bind up those who grieve, that they may look for the resurrection of all flesh. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful Lord, You give strength to those who are anxious. Give us hearts that trust in You at all times. Grant us courage to confront our doubts and fears with Your Word, and give us strength to fulfill our vocations of worship, witness, prayer and works of mercy. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

With great jubilation, O Lord, we rejoice at Your Son's fulfillment of your promises. Grant us faith to receive Him worthily as He comes in this foretaste of the Lamb's marriage feast. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, Your love invites us to rejoice in Your goodness. In every circumstance of life, teach us the joy that comes from knowing Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and eagerly expecting His gracious visitation; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**