



**Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on April 23rd 2023 at 10:45, meeting at Bethesda Chapel.**

Whilst some are able to meet in person, others we know are still at home. We hope and pray that you will find this outline of our service helpful, as we seek to worship God as a Church family, wherever we are.

**Our service today is led by Alec, continuing our new series entitled Faith in Action, based on readings from the Book of James.**

**Alec gave a welcome and invited all to join in our Opening hymn:**

**Bless the Lord oh my soul, oh my soul, worship His Holy name;  
sing like never before, oh my soul, I'll worship Your Holy name.**

The sun comes up - it's a new day dawning,  
it's time to sing Your song again.

Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me,  
let me be singing when the evening comes.

**Bless the Lord oh my soul, oh my soul....**

You're rich in love and You're slow to anger,  
Your name is great and Your heart is kind.  
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing -  
ten thousand reasons for my heart to find.

**Bless the Lord oh my soul, oh my soul....**

And on that day when my strength is failing,  
the end draws near and my time has come,  
still my soul will sing Your praise unending  
ten thousand years and then forevermore.

**Bless the Lord oh my soul, oh my soul....**

Written by Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin CCLI SONG #6016351 COPYRIGHTS@ 2011 Thankyou Music (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd)  
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**Notices were shared by Jane, as Tony was away.** Tuesday afternoon sees the Ladies meeting, and Tiddlywinks restarts on Wednesday morning. On the Coronation weekend Alec will be away, and the service will be slightly different - there will not be a sermon, but there will be an opportunity before Communion to share together, whether not be a reading, a prayer, a hymn or a word of testimony. The Monday sees us sharing in a Celebration time with St Lukes, similar to the Jubilee Party, and we will be responsible for serving refreshments. All offers of help will be much appreciated!

**Alec shared fellowship news of the death of Dorothy this week, and led a prayer for Brian and the family, some of whom were present at the service.**

**Alec then gave a Brief update from India,** (pictures and short videos shown on the screen). He is expecting to go there in December and would value our prayers.

**Alec then introduced a time of "PRAISE AND WORSHIP"**

**1) "Ascribe greatness to our God the rock"**

ASCRIBE GREATNESS to our God, the Rock,  
His work is perfect and all His ways are just.  
Ascribe greatness to our God, the Rock,  
His work is perfect and all His ways are just.  
A God of faithfulness and without injustice,  
good and upright is He;  
A God of faithfulness and without injustice,  
good and upright is He.

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**2) "For I'm building a people of power"**

For I'm building a people of power  
and I'm making a people of praise  
that will move through this land by My Spirit  
and will glorify My precious Name.  
Build Your Church, Lord, make us strong, Lord  
join our hearts, Lord, through Your Son.  
Make us one, Lord, in Your body  
in the kingdom of Your Son.

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**3) "Christ our hope in life and death"**

What is our hope in life and death?  
Christ alone, Christ alone.  
What is our only confidence?  
That our souls to Him belong.  
Who holds our days within His hand?  
What comes, apart from His command?  
And what will keep us to the end?  
The love of Christ, in which we stand.  
    **O sing hallelujah! Our hope springs eternal,**  
    **O sing hallelujah!**  
    **Now and ever we confess Christ our hope in life and death.**

What truth can calm the troubled soul?  
God is good, God is good.  
Where is His grace and goodness known?  
In our great Redeemer's blood.  
Who holds our faith when fears arise?  
Who stands above the stormy trial?

Who sends the waves that bring us night  
unto the shore, the rock of Christ?

**O sing hallelujah! Our hope springs eternal.....**

Unto the grave, what will we sing?

"Christ, He lives; Christ, He lives!"

And what reward will heaven bring?

Everlasting life with Him.

There we will rise to meet the Lord,

then sin and death will be destroyed

and we will feast in endless joy

when Christ is ours forevermore.

**O sing hallelujah! Our hope springs eternal...**

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### **Janet came forward to lead our Bible Reading, Proverbs 1: 1-7**

The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel;

for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight;

for receiving instruction in prudent behaviour, doing what is right and just and fair;

for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young

-let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance

-for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

### **After a prayer of preparation, Alec shared his message: WORK IN PROGRESS**

'Recently, but especially in the last two months, anyone coming into this building has been able to see the work that is being done. This is a process to which we are already accustomed; workers on the site, scaffolding on the outside facade, tools visible everywhere, new materials being requested, ordered, delivered and paid for in line with the decisions that we as a fellowship have taken. The building is being renewed. This is a work in progress.

In a similar way, and we have written about this and talked about this in our fellowship meetings and in our conversations together, in a similar way, parallel to the renewal of the physical building, the church itself, by which I mean the members and the fellowship as a whole, those of us who have given our lives to the Lord and live together in Him, that is to say the body of the church, is being renewed by God; through prayer, through hearing and obeying the Word of God and through the leading and empowering of the Holy Spirit, so that we are together growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and live and worship to the glory and honour of His Name. This also is a work in progress.

These are two processes which are taking place parallel to one another. It is very exciting and at the same time very challenging. In the normal run of conversation with one another we are I think asking ourselves somewhat more frequently, "What is God doing in our church life now?"; I hear we are talking together and sharing what God is saying to us, how He is helping us and leading us in the situations in which He has placed us in our everyday lives. We ourselves are a work in progress; there are things going on in our thinking, there are changes evident in the way we live; in our relationships

and in our decision-making processes. The Holy Spirit is working in our lives, the price has been paid for the work of being forgiven and growing in love for one another, the Lord has opened our eyes to see our need to follow Him faithfully as disciples and the “building site” that is our life together is being transformed as we grow together being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

So looking together at the letter of James really fits right now; in particular what we looked at last week and are looking at this week fits. If you remember last week we looked at seeing tests and trials as things in our lives that God allows and uses to help us to persevere towards maturity. You may also remember that James encourages us and challenges us to count it pure joy when we are faced with all kinds of different trials. So how have we got on with this in the last 7 days? What difference has this knowledge, this understanding, and this insight, made to our lives this week?

Maybe we find it hard to accept it when all kinds of trials crowd into our lives and we maybe find James` advice difficult when he says we are not to resent trials and tests as intruders into our lives, but to welcome them as friends?

Maybe we have found and do find this ongoing process somewhere between difficult and very difficult, if not impossible, and wondered how it works?

James 1 from verse 3 races forward through trials to maturity and then to wisdom; it may seem a bit like a helter-skelter as we struggle to come to grips with the ups and downs this involves; but we know full well that being faced with trials is not a “joy-ride”. Or is it?

When we begin to see trials as a privilege, as a present if you like, that God allows us to experience as His children, we can discover real, lasting joy and He develops our maturity through these challenging experiences. We need God’s wisdom to grasp these things and to cope with them as we say to God why are you allowing me to experience this...again? Why did you not prevent me getting into this situation? Why haven’t you sorted this yet? Didn’t I pray enough? Do you think I don’t trust you? Where are you in this situation?

And then God caringly, quietly, gently and sensitively speaks to our hearts and says, “My child: I care. And I know what I am doing: trust me.”

One goal of playing high-tech electronic games seems always to be the fun of the experience itself, competing and reaching the next level and then eventually the highest level, the final level, the ultimate level, the final experience.

But our lives as believers, our lives as followers of Jesus, our lives as God’s children are not like that. We may of course enjoy all kinds of electronic games but our life is not about reaching the next level but about being transformed into the image of God in Jesus Christ. It is about dying to self and living in the power of the resurrected, the living Son of God.

But if we are like children we can learn quickly. If we have a child-like heart we are able to trust more easily, more simply, to trust fully in the love of a living God who knows and cares for His children at all times, giving them freedom to live and the willingness and power they need to know and obey His Will. The Lord Jesus Himself said to His disciples “unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” And are we not His disciples? I pray to God that we all are or will become such this morning before it is too late.

The letter of James is a bit like a spiral staircase. We move on through the letter and further on come back to the same point or perspective. We return to the same reference point and have basically the same view but from a different, usually from a higher but often from a deeper level. We see this with James` treatment of wisdom.

There are the verses 5-8 in chapter 1, (read); and then there are the verses 13-18 in chapter 3, (read). And of course Janet very kindly read us the verses from the beginning of Proverbs.

These verses are all linked because they are all about wisdom. And the first thing that we can say about wisdom this morning is that we all need it. In James 4:4d we read: "But you do not have because you do not ask God." We need to ask God for wisdom in the mish-mash of the uncertainties, in the thick soup of our trials which is so often difficult to continue to swallow and in the thick fog of those trials through which it appears difficult to navigate, in the confusing maze of our feelings and thoughts as we struggle with the trials with which we are faced and say to God, "What is going on here? What are you doing in my life? Why am I going through this?" Yes in all these situations, in all these circumstances we need wisdom from above. We need to ask God to help us, to lead us, to show us the way ahead. He can see the front from the back. He can see the whole picture. He has planned it, designed it and looks after it so that it doesn't get damaged or falsified.

The Bayeux tapestry or embroidery is an embroidered cloth nearly 70 metres long and 50 centimetres tall that depicts the events leading up to the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, led by William, Duke of Normandy challenging Harold II, King of England, and culminating in the Battle of Hastings. It is thought to date to the 11th century, within a few years after the battle. It tells the story from the point of view of the conquering Normans but is now widely accepted to have been made in England. Sylvette Lemagnen writes that

"The Bayeux tapestry is one of the supreme achievements of the Norman Romanesque. Its survival almost intact over nine centuries is little short of miraculous. Its exceptional length, the harmony and freshness of its colours, its exquisite workmanship, and the genius of its guiding spirit combine to make it endlessly fascinating."

How much more remarkable is the tapestry and embroidery of our short lives on earth. Every colour, every contrast, every stitch, every thought of God, every idea that He has ever had for those whom He made is seen in the tapestry, in the embroidery of our lives; to say that what He has done, what He is doing and what He will do in our lives is wonderful is an understatement in two senses to a very high power.

In Matthew 7:24–27 and Luke 6:46–49 the Lord Jesus tells us a story about wise and foolish builders. He says the wise man built his house upon the rock, the waves came, and the house stood firm. The foolish man built his house upon the sand, and it collapsed. Well any child can understand this!

What's the point that Jesus is making? Who is the wise man? "The wise man," says the Lord Jesus "is the one who hears my words and puts them into practice." The foolish man is not the person who doesn't hear the words of Jesus, because the foolish man also hears the words of Jesus but fails to act with wisdom, fails to put the words of the Lord into practice.

Wisdom is the information that God supplies turned to action. Wisdom in a nutshell is knowing how to live God's way in God's world. Do we really want to know what God wants? Do we really want to do it? God knows our hearts and our minds. We need to ask Him for wisdom and then do what He says; in His Way, in His time, in His power; to the glory of His Name not ours.

Do you know who God is? He is the Creator and Sustainer of the whole universe. Do we know who we are? We are His Creation, made in His image to follow Him but we are each one of us those who went away from Him and His Word and went our own way. God has made a way open to us to come back to Him through the death of His Son making our forgiveness if we turn back to Him a reality. So now He who is involved in the macro management of the entire universe is involved in the micromanagement of those who are his children, so we need to ask Him without doubting for wisdom.

He says to His children, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives." God's wisdom makes the wisdom of the world look foolish.

It is a very old hymn. It was written I think in 1982 by Margaret Clarkson and it goes like this:

O  
Father, you are sovereign in all the worlds you made; your mighty Word was spoken and light of life obeyed. Your voice commands the seasons and bounds the ocean's shore, sets stars within their courses and stills the tempest's roar.

O Father, you are sovereign in all affairs of man; no powers of death or darkness can thwart your perfect plan. All chance and change transcending, supreme in time and space, you hold your trusting children secure in your embrace.

O Father, you are sovereign, the Lord of human pain, transmuting early sorrows to gold of heavenly gain. All evil overruling, as none but Conqueror could, your love pursues its purpose—our souls' eternal good.

O Father, you are sovereign! We see you dimly now, but soon before you triumph, earth's every knee shall bow. With this glad hope before us our faith springs up a-new: our sovereign Lord and Saviour, we trust and worship you.

Let's make it very simple. Can we say, "O Father you are sovereign in my little world" Is God too big to see and to understand what we are experiencing? Is God too small and so powerless to be unable to do anything about what we are experiencing? Is He not even able to hear us when we pray?

How much we need to be like little children trusting God that He knows and sees and plans and acts and helps and challenges and comforts according to HIS plans so that those who are His children are without exception well-loved and well-cared for. So we close with the words of the children's chorus:

"Our God is so great, so strong and so mighty there's nothing our God cannot do"

Let us follow the wisdom of the world which is foolishness but seek and follow the wisdom of God which makes it possible for us to endure all the trials that God gives to us so that we learn perseverance and grow into maturity during these few years that we are on the earth and which leads to eternal life.

We are a work in progress. Let's let God get on with it.'

### **Our Prayers were led by Shirley:**

"Living God, we thank you for your promise that when we come together in the name of Christ, he's here among us. We thank you that he is here now, ready to speak, listen, forgive, teach and love. He is present here in one another, in the fellowship we share together. He is present through the Scriptures, constantly speaking to us in new ways. He is present in the sharing of bread and wine, those timeless reminders of his life and death and his resurrection. He is present in the world around us, in the beauty of creation, and the people we meet. He is present every moment of every day, through his life, getting into life, transforming spirits. Living God, we thank you that whoever we are, whatever we may be doing, you are with us through Christ, constantly by our side, travelling with us, and looking to lead us forward into new experiences of your life.

In the name of Christ, we praise you amen

We have so much to thank you for dear Father. Our families, our homes, food on our tables,

our church, family, friends, sunshine and rain, although sometimes we feel we have a little too much rain in Blackburn, but we live in a green and pleasant land, where we can share the good news of our gift of your beloved son, Jesus, who came to die and rise again, setting us free from sin. Help us to share this good news, wherever your Holy Spirit prompts us to, remembering that at this time, we are not persecuted for doing so as many of your Saints are.

As we are full of thankfulness for your goodness to us, we remember those less fortunate than ourselves. Particularly at this time we pray for peace in Sudan, following the heavy fighting that started last Saturday, where at least 185 people have been killed, including 3 aid workers, and more than 1800 others wounded so far. We pray that the number of casualties will not climb affected. Also, that your hands dear Lord will be upon the leaders of the country, bringing wisdom and calm.

We pray also for John and Seela and their families, who run a specialist clinic in the whole of Sudan, that you will provide for their needs at this dangerous time and that a shield of protection will be around them and all those caught up in the unrest. We pray too that the British nationals will soon be airlifted back home. We pray to for all aid workers wherever you have sent them, especially Jackie and Brian Chilvers, our BMS partners in Chad, that they may know your peace and protection. We continue to remember those dear ones in Ukraine, particularly those men having left their families to train to be soldiers for five weeks in the UK so that they can fight for their beloved country. Be with their families as they too pray for their safety.

This weekend we think also of Israel as Passover, Easter and Ramadan have come within a few weeks of each other. Knowing the tensions that come at this time we pray for the peace of Jerusalem. May all who love you be secure. May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels. For the sake of our families and friends, we will say peace be within you. For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, we will seek your prosperity. So many troubles, disasters and needs Lord, it is hard to know how to pray, but we know you are a God of miracles and as in the life of Joseph, you sometimes allow things to happen so that eventually you're well is accomplished.

Now nearer home we are reminded of those seeking asylum in this country. We pray that those who are genuine in their applications to live here will be treated with respect and that the governmental authorities will speed up the administration. We think particularly of Kairos house, a project of the Community Church and pray that it will go from strength to strength to facilitate those in need.

Now, dear Father, as we look forward to the coronation of King Charles, we pray that he will reign with honesty and justice, having the example of his dear mother, our late Queen Elizabeth, and that in all things he will seek your will.

As we celebrate the coronation here at BBC on Monday, the 8th of May, we pray that you will draw many from the community to celebrate with us. Give wisdom and clarity to Alec and the deacons here and to Jason and Rachel from St Luke's. T

No to our dear family here at BBC. Too many names to mention dear Lord, except perhaps for Becky and for Eddie who has been in hospital. You know each and everyone of our church family who are in need, but in a moments silence we bring them all to you.

We close our prayers with the words of a hymn:

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,  
whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy:

be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,  
your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,  
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe:  
be there at our labours, and give us, we pray,  
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,  
your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace:  
be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,  
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,  
whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm:  
be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,  
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

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**Alec returned to the pulpit to introduce our final hymn "Restore O Lord the honour of your Name"**

Restore, O Lord, the honour of Your name,  
in works of sovereign power come shake the earth again;  
that all may see and come with reverent fear  
to the living God, whose kingdom shall outlast the years.

Restore, O Lord, in all the earth Your fame,  
and in our time revive the church that bears Your name.  
And in Your anger, Lord, remember mercy,  
O living God, whose mercy shall outlast the years.

Bend us, O Lord, where we are hard and cold,  
in Your refiner's fire come purify the gold.  
Though suffering comes and evil crouches near,  
still our living God is reigning, He is reigning here.

Restore, O Lord, the honour of Your name,  
in works of sovereign power come shake the earth again;  
that all may see and come with reverent fear  
to the living God, whose kingdom shall outlast the years.

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**As we brought our service to a close, Alec invited all those who wished to remain standing to sing the Caribbean version of the Lord's prayer (- with everyone joining in the Hallowed be thy name), sung at the Maundy Thursday Communion Service. Our offerings were also taken whilst we sang.**



Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowéd be Thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, hallowéd be Thy name,

On earth as it is in heaven, hallowéd be Thy name.  
Give us this day our daily bread, hallowéd be Thy name,

Forgive us our trespasses, hallowéd be Thy name,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us, hallowéd be Thy name,

Lead us not into temptation, hallowéd be Thy name,  
But deliver us from all that is evil, hallowéd be Thy name,

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, hallowéd be Thy name.  
For ever and for ever and ever, hallowéd be Thy name.

Amen, amen, it shall be so, hallowéd be Thy name.  
Amen, amen, it shall be so, hallowéd be Thy name,

Caribbean Lord's Prayer composed by [Fr. Richard Ho Lung](#), CCL No 5664

**To close our service, the Grace was said together:**

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.**