



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on April 28th 2024 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 being led by Alec.

### Welcome

**Opening hymn "Amazing Grace"** (accompanied by Precious on piano) first and last verses only.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,  
we've no less days to sing God's praise, than when we've first begun.

Words John Newton CCLI SONG # 2762836 Public Domain. CCL No 5664

**Notices were read by Jane.**

### **Bible reading 1, 1 Kings 17:1-24, Graham**

Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."

Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: "Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there."

So he did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. Then the word of the Lord came to him: "Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food." So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?" As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread."

"As surely as the Lord your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die."

Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.'"

She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. She said to Elijah, "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?"

"Give me your son," Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. Then he cried out to the Lord, "Lord my God, have you brought tragedy even on this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?" Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried out to the Lord, "Lord my God, let this boy's life return to him!"

The Lord heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, "Look, your son is alive!"

Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth."

**Alec shared the first part of his message: GOD FIRST, GOD LAST, GOD IN-BETWEEN**

### **SCENE 1 GOD'S PROVISION**

We are looking today at a biblical narrative story and its applications to and in our lives. These are historical events, true stories, things that actually happened, wonderful pictures of God speaking and working. God speaks through the Bible to all people at all times everywhere. But do we always want to listen to what He is saying? Let's ask God to speak to us this morning through His Word.

Pray

The Bible speaks today. God, the living and everlasting God speaks today. To us.

We are not all angels, and neither was a man called George Mueller an angel. Exactly the opposite.

Those of us who know of him will know that he was not always a person of great faith and good character. As a young boy growing up in Prussia in the early 1800s, he often stole money from his dad. As a teenager, he sneaked out of a hotel twice without paying for the room. One time he was caught by police and put in jail. As a Bible college student, George loved going to bars, drinking, gambling, and being the life of the party. He also loved making fun of people, especially Christians.

One day, a friend invited George to go to an off-campus Bible study. He went only because he wanted to make fun of the Christians later. But to his surprise, he liked the Bible study. For the first time, he saw people who really knew and loved God. He attended each evening. Before the end of the week, he knelt at his bed and asked God to forgive his sins.

George's friends saw a change in him immediately. He no longer went to bars or made fun of people. He spent more time reading his Bible, talking about God, and going to church. Soon he found that his friends did not want to be around him anymore.

When George told his father that he had decided to become a missionary, his father became very upset. He wanted George to have a high-paying job and not to be a poor missionary. He told George he would not give him any more money for his studies. George knew he had to do what God was calling him to do, even if his dad didn't support him.

So he went back to college without knowing how he was going to pay his tuition fees. He did something he thought was a bit silly for a grown man to do. He got on his knees and asked God to provide. To his surprise, an hour later, a professor knocked on his door and offered him a paid job as a tutor! George was amazed! This was the beginning of George Mueller's dependence on God.

After finishing college, George was ready to begin his missionary work in England. But there was one problem: his government required all healthy men to serve at least a year in the army. George however became very sick. His illness was so serious that he almost died. It also made him unable to serve in the army. He was free to go to England as a missionary.

He worked in many places, moving to work at Bethesda Chapel in Bristol from 1832. Four years later he began orphanage work, and in 1849 opened an orphanage at Ashley Down in Bristol. There were five houses built to house over 2,000 children. One day the housemother of the orphanage said to him:

"The children are dressed and ready for school. But there is no food for them to eat. George asked her to take the 300 children into the dining room and have them sit at the tables. He thanked God for the food and waited. George knew God would provide food for the children as he always did. Within minutes, a baker knocked on the door. "Mr. Mueller," he said, "last night I could not sleep. Somehow I knew that you would need bread this morning. I got up and baked three batches for you. I will bring it in."

Soon, there was another knock at the door. It was the milkman. His cart had broken down in front of the orphanage. The milk would go off by the time the wheel was fixed. . He asked George if he could use some free milk. George smiled as the milkman brought in ten large cans of milk. It was just enough for the 300 thirsty children.

It is about faith in God and in His provision for our needs. It is about experiencing day by day the goodness of God to our church just as the widow of Zarephath experienced God's love and provision for her and her son.

Last Thursday Satesh texted me from India saying he had received our Easter gifts for the orphanage I visited on your behalf at the close of last year. I am very glad to be able to pass on his thanks to you all. Our church gift to the orphanage is greatly appreciated.

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." (James 1:27)

Looking after orphans is part of this!

In Psalm 23 we read **"The Lord is my shepherd I shall lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me besides the still waters, He restores my soul."**

God provides for us a roof over our heads. He provides for us the food and drink we need. We lack nothing.

But there is something else. There is something more than this. Graham read:

"There was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah. Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. She said to Elijah, "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?"

"Give me your son," Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. Then he cried out to the Lord, "Lord my God, have you brought tragedy even on this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?" Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried out to the Lord, "Lord my God, let this boy's life return to him!"

The Lord heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, "Look, your son is alive!"

Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth."

God always provides us with what we need. He does not want us to die.

He provides life and new life through the power of the resurrection.

The Author of Life returned the boy's life.

This is what shows and demonstrates and proves without a shadow of a doubt the reality of God and the truth of His Word. He is the Word of Life, the Resurrection, and the Life.

God in Jesus Christ gave His life that we may live. Give your life back to Him today

### **Hymn/Song "**

**El-Shaddai, El-Shaddai, El-Elyonna Adonai  
Age to age You're still the same by the power of the name  
El-Shaddai, El-Shaddai, Erkahmkana Adonai  
We will praise and lift You high, El-Shaddai**

Through Your love and through the ram You saved the son of Abraham,  
through the power of Your hand turned the sea into dry land;  
to the outcast on her knees You were the God who really sees  
And by Your might You set Your children free.

**El-Shaddai, El-Shaddai...**

Through the years You made it clear that the time of Christ was near  
though the people couldn't see what Messiah ought to be;  
though Your Word contained the plan they just would not understand,  
Your most awesome work was done through the frailty of Your Son.

**El-Shaddai, El-Shaddai...**

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### **Bible reading 2, 1 Kings 18:17-46 read by Graham**

Ahab went to meet Elijah. When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"

"I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals. Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." But the people said nothing.

Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only one of the Lord's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. Get two bulls for us. Let Baal's prophets choose one for

themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire—he is God." Then all the people said, "What you say is good."

Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire." **26** So they took the bull given them and prepared it.

Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been torn down. Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, "Your name shall be Israel." With the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs of seed. He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, "Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood."

"Do it again," he said, and they did it again.

"Do it a third time," he ordered, and they did it the third time. The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!"

Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!" They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there. And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain." So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees.

"Go and look toward the sea," he told his servant. And he went up and looked.

"There is nothing there," he said.

Seven times Elijah said, "Go back."

The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea."

So Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'"

Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain started falling and

Ahab rode off to Jezreel. The power of the Lord came on Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

### **Alec shared: SCENE 2 GOD'S POWER**

The background: the behaviour of Ahab, the King of Israel (16: 28-35)

[\*\*\* Mention 16:34-35?]

As punishment for their disobedience – God placed a curse on Jericho.

Joshua 6:26 NIV “At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: “Cursed before the Lord is the one who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: “At the cost of his firstborn son he will lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest he will set up its gates.””

Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho, laying its foundations at the cost of his firstborn son Abiram, and setting up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub.

It is about who is running the show, who is ruling the roost, who is controlling the world, who is the Lord of our lives, who is worthy of our praise, worship and adoration? In this context it is not about tolerating other religions and allowing false teachings do enter, influence or even dominate the church. It is about love and truth. Truth without love or love without truth are not options.

Elijah goes forward in the Name and with the authority of the only living God and in His strength alone.

Elijah communicates a very clear message to Ahab:

He says he is not troubling anybody, he is not getting in any one's way. He is not menacing anybody.

But he says Ahab himself is and he issues a challenge.

(We were shown a Children's cartoon video depicting the Bible passage Graham had just read)

### **And Alec continued**

“The Gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes”-Romans 1:16

Paul writes “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.”

Do we believe that?

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

This is DYNAMITE!

Moving people, transforming hearts and minds!

Moving churches, transforming lives and fellowships!

### **Hymn/Song**

Who else commands all the hosts of heaven? Who else could make every king bow down?  
Who else can whisper and darkness trembles? Only a Holy God.

What other beauty demands such praises? What other splendour outshines the sun?  
What other majesty rules with justice? Only a Holy God.

**Come and behold Him, The One and the Only;**

**Cry out, sing holy, forever a Holy God;**

**Come and worship the Holy God.**

What other glory consumes like fire? What other power can raise the dead?  
What other name remains undefeated? Only a Holy God.  
**Come and behold Him...**

Who else could rescue me from my failing? Who else would offer His only Son?  
Who else invites me to call Him Father? Only a Holy God. Only my Holy God.  
**Come and behold Him...**

Songwriters: Michael Farren / Rich Thompson / Dustin Smith / Jonny Robinson CCLI SONG # 7073332 Copyrights © 2016 CityAlight Music (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd)Farren Love And War Publishing (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd)Integrity's Alleluia! Music (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd) Integrity's Praise! Music (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd) CCL No 5664

### **Bible reading 3, 1 Kings 19:1-21 Graham Hatch**

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."

Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. There he went into a cave and spent the night.

And the word of the Lord came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

The Lord said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who



escape the sword of Jehu. Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.”

So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. “Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye,” he said, “and then I will come with you.”

“Go back,” Elijah replied. “What have I done to you?”

So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant.

### **And finally from Alec: SCENE 3 GOD'S PRESENCE**

Again, we watched a video of the Bible reading, the same child friendly cartoon representation.

**Alec continued:** Psalm 23 for you are with me

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. Psalm 23:5

Where can I go from your presence?

Psalm 139:7-12 (NIV)

7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,

10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

11 If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,”

12 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

James 5:17-18 shows Elijah as a man of prayer a man of faith

Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

But as Graham read Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. Ahab’s wife Jezebel was out to kill him.

### **READ 1 Kings 19:1-5a**

God didn’t think less of him. God didn’t reject him. God loved him and accepted him as he was with all his thoughts, feelings, doubts and fears. God was with Him.

As he lay down under a tree and fell asleep something happened straightaway. God didn’t waste time to help his servant. All at once an angel was there.

This faithful servant of God, this prophet of God needed to eat. He needed to drink. He needed to rest,(verses 5-9).

Deuteronomy 31:8 NIV reads: “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

Isaiah 41:10 says: “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

The writer to the Hebrews says: ”Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5 NIV)

### **READ 1 Kings 19:7-9a**



## READ 1 Kings 19:9b-11

Hospital, home, on the street, on the phone THE IMPORTANCE OF JUST BEING THERE FOR SOMEONE

First an angel of the Lord, then the angel of the Lord, then the word of the Lord, then a voice spoke with him.

Get up and eat.

Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.

What are you doing here Elijah?

What are you doing here Elijah?

He ate and drank and rested and journeyed and felt he was the only one left. And God knew and cared and acted. He sent him back to work with new clear instructions, with fresh commands and with a fresh awareness of His, the Lord God's, presence.

The Lord was not in the great and powerful wind that tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks.

The Lord was not in the earthquake that followed the wind.

The Lord was not in the fire that followed the earthquake.

He spoke in a gentle whisper. Be still and know that I am God. In quietness and in confidence shall be our strength.

Elijah had fought hard for the Lord. He had served Him faithfully. He was on his own. So God sent another man to help him. Elijah went and found Elisha, who set out to follow Elijah. He became his attendant.

God's provision, God's power and God's presence.

What a mighty God we have.

Let's worship together in singing these wonderful words.

### Hymn/Song

What love my God would bring you down to earth?  
What king would take a low and lonely birth?  
Yet to this dark and broken place you came  
to sleep beneath the stars that you had made.

What love my God would send the Way of Life  
to walk the road, rejected and despised  
that you might know the weakness I possess  
and be my rock of strength and righteousness.

**O Your love my God like a flood  
as heaven opened up pouring out on us.  
O praise the King who came to the world  
in his love like a mighty flood.**

What love my God could hold you to the tree  
to bear that overwhelming debt for me?

The Son of heaven leaves the Father's side,  
The Healer bleeds, the Life was made to die.

**O Your love my God like a flood....**

What love my God, so gracious and extreme  
was strong enough to come and fight for me,  
to go through hell and down into the grave  
and raise me up to see you face to face?  
You raise me up to see you face to face.

**O Your love my God like a flood....**

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

Shirley began by saying that as she prepared these prayers, she was reminded of the words:  
"Onward Christian Soldiers, marching us to war  
with the cross of Jesus going on before.  
Christ, the Royal master leads against the foe,  
forward into battle see his banners go....."

We know we have an enemy, but our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. We also know that our God is Sovereign.

Let us pray.

Sovereign God.

We praise you that you are able to do more than we could ever ask, or imagine; where we can do so little you can do so much, when we can do nothing you can do everything. Teach us to believe that not just with our heads but in our hearts.

When life seems dark, the future frightening, our problems insurmountable and our resources to meet them too few, we praise you that you are able to see us through.

When life feels good, the days ahead full of promise, our worries are few and our joys many, we praise you that you are able to offer more still.

When loving is hard, caring involves pain, sharing means sacrifice and believing entails cost, we praise you that you are able to bring us strength.

When loving is easy, our relationship bring joy, our friends bring pleasure and our faith brings rewards, we praise you that you are able to bring yet greater happiness.

When hopes are dashed, dreams lie broken, visions have faded and plans are thwarted, we praise you that you are able to bring new purpose.

When opportunities excite us, prospects beckon, possibilities unfold and challenges present themselves, we praise you that you are able to help us grasp them.

Sovereign God in these things and so many more, you are able, not simply to meet our needs, but to transform our lives, able to bless us beyond word. Receive our praise and teach us that whatever we face, whether good or bad, whether we feel able to meet it or not, You are able to do more than we ever ask or think of. Amen.

Once more, we bring our troubled world before you dear Lord, knowing that of ourselves we can do nothing, but that you hear our heartfelt prayers for all those in need. We pray now

for every nation, especially for those people who are suffering from war, corruption, climate change and so much more. Give wisdom to all you have placed in authority, the leaders in government, councils, healthcare, banks, schools et cetera that they may not be led by greed or egotism but may seek the common good, and when challenged and have feelings of despair may they seek you, the way, the truth and the life

Father, with so many conflicting reports from the Media regarding Gaza teach us how to pray that your kingdom will come on earth, as it is in heaven. Even Christians are in disagreement as to the rights and wrongs of how we should proceed in this terrible conflict. Of course, we pray and our hearts break for the suffering from the bombing in Gaza, and we pray that the hostages will be released and come home and that peace will eventually come as and when it is your will.

But one thing we do know is that in your word we are told to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. So we pray - 'May those who love you be secure. May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadel.' For the sake of my/our family and friends, I/we say 'Peace be within you.' For the sake of the house of the Lord of God I/we will seek your prosperity.

Now to home dear Father. We thank you for our families and Church family, and all who make life worth living. The joy of sharing and praying for one another, especially as we pray now in the silence, or if you feel led to pray aloud, as we bring before you those who are in need of a special touch from you this day. Those who are very ill and those who care for them. Those praying for early hospital appointments and those with troubled minds in need of a peace that only you can give. Let's pray. (Silence)

Today is a very special day in the life of our fellowship when in our special members meeting, after our refreshment time, we have to make important decisions regarding our ministry here in Galligreaves and beyond. We pray especially, dear Lord, for Alec our Pastor who has served us faithfully, and that our decision for him to stay or not to stay will be in your will alone.

In all the thoughts that fill our minds at this time, may we hear the gentle whisper of your voice, as Elijah did. Amen

### **Final (offering) hymn**

I know not why God's wondrous grace to me hath been made known;  
Nor why, unworthy as I am, He claimed me for His own.

**But I know whom I have believed; and am persuaded that he is able  
to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day.**

I know not how this saving faith to me He did impart;  
Or how believing in His word wrought peace within my heart.

**But I know whom I have believed;**

I know not how the Spirit moves, convincing men of sin;  
revealing Jesus through the word, creating faith in Him.

**But I know whom I have believed...**

I know not what of good or ill may be reserved for me,  
of weary ways or golden days before His face I see.

**But I know whom I have believed...**

I know not when my Lord may come; I know not how or where,  
if I shall pass the vale of death, or meet Him in the air

**But I know whom I have believed...**

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Closing prayer

Five minutes of prayer