



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on April 30th 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 being led by Alec, continuing our study 'Faith in Action,'

Alec begins with a Welcome, both to those present and those watching the recording wherever and whenever that may be, an. and opening prayer.

"Loving Heavenly Father, we thank you that we have the freedom here in this place to come together on this day and worship you with one another; to share in our worship of the God who cares so much that he sent his only son into the world, the son he loved, and loves, to die for us on a horrible cross. Through your forgiveness of us through his death on the cross and through raising him from the dead you have given us hope and new life. So we come together from our hearts to praise you, to worship you, we adore you and thank you for the things we have. We pray that you will continue to lead this meeting and speak to our hearts, open our hearts and minds to hear what you are saying to us, and open our hearts and minds to be willing to do what do you expect of us. We remember again this morning, those who today are not able to come together for whatever reason, because of ill health of whatever kind, because of restrictions on coming together as believers to worship you. We pray that wherever there is someone who loves you or calls on your name, they will know your peace which passes all understanding day and night, that that they will constantly be assured of your love for them, and that they may know that they are not alone, because you have promised I will be with you, wherever you are and wherever you go. So be with us as we sing and praise and worship you today and speak to us through your word we pray in Jesus name, Amen.

Alec announces our Opening hymn "O God our help in ages past" and we are invited to stand and sing or remain seated as we wish: it's played by Trevor and Kate.

Our God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.

Beneath the shadow of Thy throne still may we dwell secure;
sufficient is Thine arm alone, and our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood, or earth received her frame,
from everlasting Thou art God, to endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight are like an evening gone;
short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever rolling stream, bears all its sons away;
they fly, forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day.

Our God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
be Thou our guard while troubles last, and our eternal home.

Authors: Isaac Watts, William Croft CCLI Song # 43152 Copyrights Words and music: Public Domain CCL no 5664

Our Notices were shared by Tony, firstly saying we should have received an email from the church talking about progress we are making - we are asked to read it and pass any feedback to the Deacons. We should also have received an updated prayer sheet, paper copies available if necessary. Following this service we will have refreshments alongside an opportunity for 5 minutes prayer. Tuesday is Ladies Bible study, there is a drop-in session on Saturday from 10.30-12, Next Sunday we will be sharing a less formal Communion Service, and Monday May 8th is the date of a Coronation Celebration together with St Lukes and St Aidans, invitation cards are available, and offers of help will be appreciated.

We share in a time of **Praise and Worship:**

"How deep the Father's love for us"

How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure,
that He should give His only Son to make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss - the Father turns His face away,
as wounds which mar the Chosen One bring many sons to glory.

Behold the man upon a cross, my sin upon His shoulders;
ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held Him there until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life - I know that it is finished.

I will not boast in anything, no gifts, no power, no wisdom;
but I will boast in Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer;
but this I know with all my heart - His wounds have paid my ransom.

Author: Stuart Townend CCLI SONG # 1558110 Copyright © 1995 Thankyou Music (Adm. by CapitolCMG Publishing.com excl. UK & Europe, adm. by Integrity Music, part of the David C Cook family, songs@integritymusic.com) CCL No 5664

"King of Kings"

In the darkness we were waiting without hope, without light,
'til from Heaven you came running, there was mercy in your eyes.
To fulfil the law and prophets to a virgin came the word;
from a throne of endless glory to a cradle in the dirt.

**Praise the Father, praise the Son, praise the Spirit, three in one;
God of glory, Majesty, praise forever to the King of Kings.**

To reveal the kingdom coming and to reconcile the lost,
to redeem the whole creation you did not despise the cross,
for even in your suffering you saw to the other side,
knowing this was our salvation, Jesus, for our sake you died.

Praise the Father, praise the Son...

And the morning that you rose all of Heaven held its breath
'til that stone was moved for good for the Lamb had conquered death.
And the dead rose from their tombs and the angels stood in awe,
for the souls of all who'd come to the Father are restored
and the church of Christ was born. then the Spirit lit the flame;
now this gospel truth of old shall not kneel, shall not faint
by his blood and in his name in his freedom I am free
for the love of Jesus Christ who has resurrected me.

Praise the Father, praise the Son....

Authors: Brooke Ligertwood, Jason Ingram, Scott Ligertwood CCLI SONG # 7127647 Copyrights ©2019 Fellow Ships Music (Admin. by Essential Music Publishing LLC) So Essential Tunes (Admin. by Essential Music Publishing LLC) Hillsong Music Publishing Australia (Admin. by Hillsong Music Publishing UK) CCL No 5664

"Here I am Lord"

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?
Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them, they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them, whom shall I send?
Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?...

I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them, my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?
Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?...

Author: Daniel Schutte Copyright ©1985 New Dawn Music, Kingsway Music CCL no 5664

Bible Reading Letter of James 1:13.27 Jean

"When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

Listening and doing

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues in it - not forgetting what they have heard but doing it - they will be blessed in what they do.

Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. 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."

"Thanks be to God"

Alec shared his Message: "God our Father"

'If we think James is a letter of do this and don't do that and nothing else, maybe perhaps an attempt by the writer to regain a kind of Paradise Lost for legalists, we would be wrong.

Yes it is a very practical letter telling us how we should and should not behave as it aims at an authentic lifestyle.

Yes it is a very realistic letter as it seriously takes into account and focuses on the dangers of religious hypocrisy.

But today we turn our attention to the SOURCE of an authentic lifestyle; this morning we fix our eyes on the Living God and true religion and look particularly at James 1:16-18.

For as dear brothers and sisters in the Lord we do not want to be deceived, we do not want to fall into a trap, we should not err, we should not be foolish, we don't want to go astray, be led astray or be misled.

We might be deceived in so many ways. We have an enemy who disguises himself as an angel of light, who tries to lead us away from the Lord and His Word. He is an expert in deception but He has absolutely no power over those who are the children of God and who live in the power of the Spirit according to the Word.

"Do not be deceived," is a warning which points both back to what James has just said and forward to what he is now saying. All that we know of God, he says, establishes the fact that He is never the source of evil, which looks back to where Jean began our reading today in verses 13-15, but He is always the source of everything good, which brings us to verses 17 and 18.

James says every good and perfect gift comes from above. Is he thinking of some kind of hierarchical church structure where we might think that we are at the mercy of those at the top of the pyramid passing something down to us? He is definitely not thinking in that way. He is drawing our attention to our heavenly Father who is the source of every good and perfect gift.

James was not sitting in some kind of theological hothouse or bible seminary and pontificating academically or theoretically about the goodness of God. James was himself there with Jesus, he was personally actually there, he was in the presence of Jesus during His time on the earth and had heard Jesus say to His disciples:

“Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”(Mt. 7: 9-11)

The giving of gifts is an art in itself. How we sometimes struggle to find the appropriate gift for a particular person for a specific occasion. And how important it is to wrap it up properly, to present the present so to speak, to present the gift attractively and to make it look really interesting!

What does God do? He wraps His presents to us in tests and trials.

Supposing you are sending a valuable good-looking present by Royal Mail, Whistl, DPD, DHL, Evri, UPS or Parcel Force or whatever? Let`s say you are sending some kind of work of art, a painting, some beautiful porcelain, a piece of hand-made glassware or some creatively and intricately woven fabric product with a special personal design and the receiver`s name embroidered into it. It is something you have made yourself to reflect your love for the receiver of the gift; it has in its very character so to speak your own autograph on it. It is something which should communicate the importance to you of the relationship between you and the receiver of the present. For all these and probably other reasons the delicate, breakable and to you and you hope also to the receiver very valuable present is wrapped up very carefully.

You would definitely not go to the Post Office or to another collection point and place for example the piece of hand-made pottery completely unwrapped on the counter expecting the staff to accept it for posting and transport.

The outside wrapping of a present which has to go through rigorous transport conditions is usually unattractive; usually hard and robust and not of an attractive colour, often not revealing what the end-product, the gift inside might be.

If it is leaving the UK the customs declaration reveals the value but the true nature of the wrapped present is not visible to the human eye.

You may even decide to pay an additional premium as a parcel protection fee.

So it shouldn`t be surprising to us that when God our Father gives us a present He wraps it in the heavy-duty packaging of trials which enable the gift to remain undamaged; the gift of endurance, the gift of maturity and the gift of joy.

His gifts are sent and delivered personally; in the appropriate time frame; always arriving at the right time, exactly when we need them and sealed with the guarantee of the inheritance that is ours through the Holy Spirit.

We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Our lives are like a wonderfully-fashioned piece of embroidery; colours, carefully chosen and matching perfectly; fit exactly for the purpose for which we are made.

The song says: “You are the Potter. I am the clay. Make me and mould me, Lord according to your way.”

In the OT in the book of the prophet Jeremiah we read: "This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message." So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, "Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?" declares the Lord. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel."

I think that is what our God is saying to us. The Living God, the God to whom we have been praying and praying to lead us on and guide us, the God to whom we have repeatedly given the ongoing authority over His church here, says to us the fellowship of Blackburn Baptist Church this morning "Can I not do with you as a potter does with clay? Like clay in the hand of the potter so are you in my hand my children. The pot I was shaping was marred in my hands; so I am forming you into another pot, as it seems best to me."

Should we not also respond this morning, "Lord God, You are the Potter, I am the clay; make us and mould us as YOU choose in Your Way."

Let`s just be quiet for a moment.

In Psalm 145:3-4; 7, 9 we read:

"Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; His greatness no one can fathom. One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness. The Lord is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made."

How great is our God!!

Who does James say God is? He says He is the Father of the heavenly lights.

When He talks about the giving of gifts, Jesus contrasts a heavenly Father with an earthly father; but James contrasts the Creator with creation itself. Everything that God has made, including the heavenly lights mentioned here, everything is subject to change. But God, he says, is unchanging in His character. We see that in verse 13. He tempts nobody and He Himself cannot be tempted by evil. Yesterday, today, for ever God is the same. He is the great I am. And he's unchanging in his gifts. We see that in verse 17. In other words, there is no inconsistency in him at all. He is completely authentic.

And then James writes that God does not change like shifting shadows.

How great is our God!

When we go to God as Father, we will never find Him to be unaware of something. We cannot take God by surprise; He knows everything. We will never find Him to be unable; He is all-powerful. We will never find him unavailable; He is always there. And we will never find him unwilling.

But then I hear you saying, is God willing to do anything and everything? Well God has a plan for you! Isn't that comforting? We don't have to struggle and fight to come up with some remarkable plan for our lives whatever that might be. God`s plans are remarkable enough. We need basically and simply only to spend time with him, listen and obey when he speaks.

What God really wants is that His Kingdom grows, (Daniel 2:44), that whatever we do, that we do it for the Glory of God,(1 Cor, 10:31), and that many people turn from their evil ways and grow in likeness to His Son Jesus Christ as His children, as His disciples, (2 Peter 3:9)." The Lord is not slow in keeping his

promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to turn away from their sin and do a 180 degree about turn to Him.”

It is His desire first of all, to be in a loving relationship with us, and secondly for us to practice good deeds. I am deliberately repeating this next verse. It is so helpful. “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:10)

Don’t think of God’s will for your life as a separate plan from His will for His kingdom. They are the same.

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern, you may understand, you may come to know what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:1–2)

God is our two-fold Father. He chose to give us birth and He chose to give us new birth through the Word of Truth.

God took the initiative in sending His only Son Jesus Christ into the world to die on a Cross, that we, believing in Him and turning away from the mess we were making in our lives, could be forgiven and have new life in the power of the resurrected Jesus. It was His response to our waywardness, His response to our selfishness, His response to the chaos we made of and in our lives.

It was God’s idea, at God’s initiative, and with God’s intention. God intends us to be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. The means of doing this is hearing, reading and obeying the Word of truth. James’ letter teaches us in particular that the proof of our new birth is holiness.

We’ve been made for His pleasure and for His purpose, and we are a kind of firstfruits of all that God was going to do and James is basically saying, “And there’s going to be much more that follows from this. There will be people from every tribe and nation and language and tongue, people from Galligreaves, people from Bank Top, people from Wensleyfold, people from Blackburn with Darwen, people from India who will believe the gospel and who even in the face of trials and temptations will continue to believe in the goodness of God.”

The spiritual new birth of believer is the most dramatic and most powerful illustration of the good things God gives. He does this through the Gospel, the Word of Truth, preached in the auditorium, communicated in the conference centre, shared in the media world but particularly IN AND THROUGH OUR DAILY LIVES.

We are to live as doers of the Word, not hearers only; otherwise we are once again simply deceiving ourselves. We might be good at listening to it; but it will produce no fruit if we don’t live it out. Read verses 22-25.

The danger of being deceived is carried over as a theme into verse 26. This is a real challenge which we might like to look at in the following days. Is there any one of us who will be here in 7 days’ time and then will be able to say to God in the Communion Service that he or she was always able to avoid saying things that he or she should not have said? James said those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. You see that is a clear and devastating judgement isn’t? He doesn’t say it is OK to say what you want, when you want, how you want, to whom you want. He says not controlling what we say results in our deceiving ourselves and makes our religion worthless. That is one challenge.

The final challenge and encouragement pairing is in verse 27. What do we read there? Let’s make it clear what it says by saying what it doesn’t say; for example it doesn’t say our religion is pure and

faultless if we have a bible at home; he doesn't say our religion is pure and faultless if we are a member of a church or attend church services when we are able to or when it suits us; though of course having a bible at home and being a member of a church is something from which many of us greatly benefit. He says," 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."

With these challenging words we close, but may these words also be an encouragement to us to go on living more and more according to the Word of God which is the truth that rescues us and in the power of the Holy Spirit who makes us holy as He is holy, transforming us daily into the image of God's Son Jesus Christ until we see Him face-to-face and are changed into His likeness. Come soon Lord Jesus!

Our Prayers were led by Jane

Our God in heaven, we bring our prayers to you today humbly because we know that we so often fall short of what you desire in us. We thank you again for the sacrifice of your only Son, Jesus, who willingly went to the cross to pay the price for our wrongdoing, so that we may have a new restored relationship with You. Thank you that Jesus did not remain dead but came alive again on the third day and so conquered sin and death that we too may have everlasting life with Him. We are sorry for the times we have done or said the wrong things, causing hurt to others. Help us also to be willing to forgive those who have hurt us by their careless words or deeds, just as you have forgiven us; bring Your healing into our lives and so fill us by Your Holy Spirit that daily we may be renewed into the image of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of His Name.

We pray again for the troubled areas of our world, thinking especially of Ukraine and Sudan but also remembering the people still suffering from the effects of the devastating earthquakes in Turkey and northern Syria. Father, please send them the help they need and turn the hearts of people to seek You, the only true living God. We pray for all world leaders that they would turn away from aggression and oppression and seek peace and co-operation with all nations. We pray for protection and power for all those working to bring the Good News of Jesus to the difficult areas of the world.

This week, we pray especially for our King, Charles III, and his Queen Consort, Camilla, that You would be close to them and they may be aware of Your presence with them as they prepare for the Coronation. May this reign be one of peaceful progress for the country and may the honour of Your Name be restored so that many would turn back to You. We pray for our celebration here jointly with St. Luke's, that the invitation leaflet distribution would bring in just the right number of guests. We pray for safety for everyone, for all the arrangements to go smoothly, that everyone would have a good time and you would spark an interest in many to want to know more about Your unfailing love.

We pray for those we know who are frail and suffering ill-health, for those mourning the loss of a loved one and for all feeling weighed down by the pressures of life today. We ask for Your comfort, love and peace for each one in our thoughts at this time. We pray too for Miyuki and Laurin as they prepare for their marriage on Saturday and for Alec as he travels to be with his family for this very special occasion. Lord, we pray you would continue to lead us as a fellowship of Your disciples in this location, with thankfulness for recent developments and new contacts. Help each one of us to be open to your Holy Spirit's leading that we may know Your perfect will in all things.

We ask all these things in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.

We closed with our offertory hymn "Great is thy faithfulness"

"Great is Thy faithfulness," O God my Father,
there is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
as Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

**"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
great is Thy faithfulness," Lord, unto me!**

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"....

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"...

Authors: Thomas Obediah Chisholm, William Marion Runyan CCLI SONG # 18723 Copyrights © Words and music: 1923. Renewed 1951 Hope Publishing Company CCL no 5664

Alec received our offerings and gave a prayer of thanksgiving:

'Loving Heavenly Father we thank you for all the gifts that you give us, all the good gifts that you give us, for you cannot give anything which is not good. Thank you for the packaging that you use even though it is very hard sometimes to experience the trials and the tests that we have. We thank you for sending your son as the greatest gift we could ever receive, to give his life for the forgiveness of our sins, that you raised him from the dead to live that we might live, and we humbly ask you to accept the gifts that we give back to you and use them for the extension of your kingdom and for your namesake. Amen'

And finally we all joined together in saying:

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.