



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on August 21st 2022 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 Paul C, and begins as we watch and listen to a video shown on the screen. Entitled 'Build your kingdom here', it is played and sung by the Rend Collective, an Irish Band, using some traditional Irish instruments like the fiddle and pipes, and an interesting one that is banged on the ground to create a compulsive rhythm! Its a song that goes round in your brain afterwards, and Paul found the words so meaningful they were given to everyone to take home and reflect upon.

Build Your kingdom here, let the darkness fear,
show Your mighty hand, heal our streets and land;
set Your church on fire, win this nation back,
change the atmosphere - build Your kingdom here we pray.

Come set Your rule and reign in our hearts again,
increase in us we pray, unveil why we're made;
come set our hearts ablaze with hope like wildfire in our very souls,
Holy Spirit, come invade us now.

We are Your Church, and we need Your power in us.

We seek Your kingdom first, we hunger and we thirst,
refuse to waste our lives for You're our joy and prize.
To see the captive hearts released, the hurt, the sick, the poor at peace,
we lay down our lives for Heaven's cause.

We are Your church and we pray revive this earth. (we're prayin' for revival)

Build Your kingdom here, let the darkness fear,
show Your mighty hand, heal our streets and land;
set Your church on fire, win this nation back,
change the atmosphere - build Your kingdom here we pray.
(change the atmosphere)

Unleash Your kingdom's power reaching the near and far,
no force of hell can stop Your beauty changing hearts.
You made us for much more than this, awake the kingdom seed in us,
fill us with the strength and love of Christ.

We are Your church, oh, and we are the hope on earth.

Build Your kingdom here, let the darkness fear,
show Your mighty hand, heal our streets and land;
set Your church on fire, win this nation back,
change the atmosphere - build Your kingdom here we pray.
(change the atmosphere, build Your kingdom here)

Build Your kingdom here, let the darkness fear,
show Your mighty hand, heal our streets and land;
set Your church on fire, win this nation back,
change the atmosphere - build Your kingdom here we pray.(let's win this nation back)

Songwriters: Chris Llewellyn / Gareth Gilkeson / Will Herron CCLI SONG # 6186078 Copyrights © 2011 Thankyou Music (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd), lyrics © Capitol Christian Music Group, Capitol CMG Publishing, CCL No 5664

After the unannounced song, Paul welcomed everyone, including Jane's new housemate from Ukraine Edalia (who was able to talk to a fellow Ukrainian couple Nicolai and Nadia after the service) saying "Good morning Church, and a very warm welcome to everyone, visitors and regular attenders alike. The song we have just heard, from Rend Collective, forms an introduction for our thoughts this morning on the church. 'How to be a Church' and 'How to build Gods Kingdom here.'
The lyrics of this song were so significant that I have had them printed for everyone. Please take one home with you and use it in your prayer time to encourage and bless you."

Paul then led in prayer before inviting people to join in our first Hymn: Your hand, O God, has guided, which Trevor played for us on the piano.

Your hand, O God, has guided your flock from age to age;
the wondrous tale is written full clear on every page;
our forebears knew your goodness, and we their deeds record,
and both of this bear witness, 'One church, one faith, one Lord.'

Your heralds brought glad tidings to greatest, as to least;
they summoned all to hasten to share the great King's feast,
and this was all their teaching, in every deed and word,
to all alike proclaiming, 'One church, one faith, one Lord.'

Your mercy will not fail us, nor leave your work undone;
with your right hand to help us, the victory shall be won,
and then by earth and heaven your name shall be adored,
and this shall be their anthem, 'One church, one faith, one Lord.'

Author: Edward Hayes Plumptre, Music Basil Harwood CCLI SONG # 2806644 Copyright© Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd
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Victor then shared our Bible Reading: Matthew 16, 13-20 reading from the NIV

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Paul invited everyone to sing again, this time a short chorus which we sang through twice, once more played by Trevor, and during which we gave our gifts and tithes and offerings.

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.

Author: Dave Richards CCLI SONG # 33801 Copyright © 1977 Thankyou Music (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd), CCL No 5664

Paul received the offering and gave thanks:

Lord God our father, we come and we bring these tithes gifts and offerings to you, to be used and distributed according to your will here, and we ask for wisdom for those who have the administration over this money, which is indeed all of us as we share together in our church members meetings. We pray that we will use this money wisely, that it will be multiplied in its effectiveness as we seek to do what you would have us do with what we have given and with our lives too Lord, we bring them and ask that you will multiply their effectiveness in the service of your kingdom. Amen

Before Jane led our Prayers of Intercession, Judith shared some church family news. Mr Geoffrey Bradley has moved into residential care, in Hollymount, and is quite unwell at present. He is now 99 years old, and for the first time had not wished to share communion on Friday. Judith had also been in touch with the family of Jack and Dorothy Taylor, who were received into membership at Leamington Road in January 1963, and who have both died recently. The service of thanksgiving for their lives will take place at Pleasington Crematorium at Friday at 3pm. Judith invited those who wished to stand as she prayed for the family at this time. **Jane then led our prayers of intercession together.**

"Dear Heavenly Father, we come to you today to bring our thanks and praise for being who you are, for your love and care for each one of us day by day. We thank you for the way you have helped us in the last week; you have been with us in the happy times and you have helped us in the difficult times. We thank you most of all for sending

your son Jesus, to show us your character, and for the fact that he was willing to die on the cross in our place, so that we could be forgiven for all the wrong things in our lives.

We are sorry, Lord, for the times we have not behaved as you would want us to, following our own way instead of yours. Please help us by your Holy Spirit to hear your voice prompting us and directing us, and give us the courage to follow only you. We ask this as individuals who have been saved by your grace, and as the church, your body in this place.

Today we think again of a troubled world, the countries suffering because powerful leaders prefer to follow their own ways rather than your way of peace and love. We pray for Ukraine, for Yemen, for Afghanistan, and for all the other places of war and conflict. Only you, Lord, have the power to change hate into love, and violence into peace.

Today we pray especially for the country of Myanmar where due to the state of emergency at this time many hospitals have closed, and we use the words of a prayer from the Leprosy Mission, a prayer for Myanmar.

'Sovereign Lord, we appeal to you for Myanmar where such tyranny rains. Soften the hearts of those in positions of power. Remove all danger and fear. May all those who seek treatment find it. Let Myanmar find your light in the darkness, that the Christian Leprosy hospital will bring glory to your name as the team continues to strive alone to offer Leprosy treatment. Provide daily their spiritual and physical needs. We know from scripture you are always at work even in the darkest of times. We pray place Myanmar into your faithful hands. Amen.'

Father we lift before you our own government at this time, asking that you will guide our leaders into making the right decisions with compassion for all the people who are struggling with the cost of living crisis, not knowing how they could ever pay the increasing prices of energy bills and every day items in the shops.

We also pray for the struggling NHS, and the many people who have to wait hours for an ambulance or many months for treatment. Lord, please encourage our health workers, and may they receive the help and support they need from the government to be able to work effectively.

We pray for this area of Galligreaves, for the families we know, and especially for our neighbours in nearby houses. We pray for protection for them, from those who threaten to disrupt their lives. We pray in Jesus name that you will hold back the powers of evil in this neighbourhood and cover the area with your peace, that your glory may be known.

We continue to pray for our friends within the church who have ongoing health problems. For those who struggle to get out and about, for those missing loved ones and grieving, and for those who are lonely. Help us each to grow closer to you day by day, knowing the certainty that you are always close to us. By your spirit may we open our hearts to you more and more, seeing Jesus more clearly and allowing you to change us continually into his likeness. For we ask all our prayers in his precious name. Amen."

Paul then shared his message:

Today's message is the 4th in our series on the Church. For those who were not here Alec led the first two, firstly by looking at what the church is, and what it is not! About us being called out ones in contrast to the rest of the world, to be salt & light, for the world to taste and see Gods plan and purpose. The second message we were reminded of our unique relationship with Jesus as he compares the church to his bride and how in spite of *our* unfaithfulness, God remains faithful to his promises to us. Colin led our third message last week contrasting the buildings with the body of the church, focusing on the headship of Christ in all things. The Origin, the Order and the Outcome of the Church.

Next week Alec will be concluding the series as we apply some of these truths to our place in the church.

I want to display a picture on the screen taken from Facebook this week. Entitled **Did you know?**

The posting states **the only knowledge that really matters is -**

1. How to purify water
2. How to grow your own food
3. How to cook
4. How to build
5. & How to love

And follows up with the statement - and funnily enough, **we're not taught any of it in school.**

Undoubtedly not many exam results this week will have come from knowledge about these five topics.

As utility prices are climbing exponentially, causing inflation and many people have severe concerns for this winter, you may think, like the person posting this caption, that knowledge about these things (food, water and shelter with someone to love) will be the only things that really matter. But surely this is not the only knowledge that really matters!

Q. What knowledge really matters?

Q. Why do we go to school. If school does little to explain the only knowledge that really matters? What's the point and purpose of it all?

We could say and question similar things about Church!

Every Sunday, Christians gather together to worship God and spend time in fellowship,

But do we actually know why we do this?

Do we pause to consider the purpose of the local church?

In this country at this time, while many people have an increasing hunger for spiritual things, few are looking for a church to help them. Instead, many are leaving churches in record numbers or not even going in the first place, perhaps this comes from a common misunderstanding of what the church should be.

So - Why does the church exist?

Is it here to help meet the needs of you and your family?
Is it here to win the world for Christ?
Is it here to right the world of social wrongs and do good things?

There are three false yet common views among churchgoers -

The first is the local church exists for evangelism. In this view, the primary purpose of the local church is to draw unchurched people to the Christian faith. Because they believe reaching the lost is the ultimate purpose, everything the church does - from preaching, worship, the design of the building etc, etc - should all be determined by the perceived needs or desires of the unchurched. These people say we must do anything and everything we can to make church a place where they feel welcome and comfortable. It will determine our music style, message topics and everything else beside. This view insists the more we learn to consider unbelievers, the better we will do in drawing them to church, and then from church to Jesus Christ.

The second common view among churchgoers -is that the local church exists for **discipleship**, those who have this view believe the purpose of the church is to serve the needs of Christians, the church exists for discipleship! To serve and strengthen Christians, they claim instead of making decisions based on the preferences of unbelievers, the church should make decisions based on the preferences of Christians. In this way building up the body of Christ becomes the ultimate purpose of the local church.

The third most common view among churchgoers - is the local church exists for primarily serving others. We have all heard the saying, so and so (let's call him Alec) Alec is so heavenly minded that he is of no earthly use! So some churchgoers view that our sacrificial service to others is the real sign of our faith.

All three of these views are problematic. (and I could have listed other purposes) The first view assumes that unbelievers know what they need most. It assumes that their spiritual desires are genuine and that by following them they will arrive at truth and salvation.

While Jesus was attentive to the needs of the crowds of unbelievers , He was also sure to point out that they were not able to recognize their greatest need - **namely, eternal life in him** (John 6:26 & 27 - do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life) their seeking was self-centred which led only to Jesus greater condemnation. Because this view emphasizes the needs and desires of unbelievers, it inevitably and unsurprisingly causes - the church to become more like the world, by adapting to the world in order to win the world, it ends up looking like the world. Charles Spurgeon said "I believe that one reason why the church of God has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the church". "The very church that the world likes best is sure to be that which God abhors"

The second view, that the church exists for the needs of Christians, still misses the priorities set out in the bible, believing the perceived needs of Christians become

the ultimate determining factor for all that the church does. Churches that hold this view make their focus on “faithfulness” and “discipleship” but often this can simply cover up a lack for evangelistic zeal. Without the mission, a church is not a church, but just a group of disobedient Christians hanging out, in other words a church with well-taught Christians who have not seen someone saved for far, far, too long.

The third view, that the church exists to serve and care for others in our world is undoubtedly noble and caring, but can often be an end up being end in itself, and even evil people know how to give good gifts to their children, so without giving a reason to others why we are caring and serving, this cannot be the ultimate purpose of the church.

So the question is what does the bible say about church.

You should not be surprised by the bibles answer to our purpose.

1 Peter 2:9 says “but you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light”.

Ephesians 1:12 God calls us to live “for the praise of His glory”

Therefore, surely the primary purpose and central focus of the church is for it to exist for God and for His glory. When we understand that the local church exists by God and for God, we will see that God’s glory, not the needs of saved, unsaved or needy people, is meant to be the ultimate determining factor for all that the church does.

Yes, the church should reflect the Devine character of God by reaching the lost and enabling the saved to grow in the grace and love and obedience of God, and caring for our broken needy world.

Therefore, we are being reminded this morning that primarily to give glory to God through worshipping him, is as the Facebook page suggests is “the only thing that really matters”.

We the church gather together to worship God in the ways he has revealed in the bible.

The organization 9Marks (resource & equip church leaders)is fond of summarizing the basics of Christian worship in the simplest of terms: “Read the Bible, preach the Bible, Pray the Bible, sing the Bible. Our worship services are a means of grace through which God meets with us, speaks to us and transforms us by his presence, through his word, and by his power as we worship Him.

Some of you may have been around our fellowship 19 years ago when we used this book by Rick Warren to help us consider our focus in order to be a healthy church. Many have benefited from this bestselling book which - as it says on the back cover - shares a proven five-part strategy that will enable your church to grow by becoming: -

1. Warmer through fellowship
2. Deeper through discipleship
3. Stronger through worship
4. Broader through ministry
5. Larger through evangelism

We could all rightly be encouraged to seeing these as our main Purpose

Rick Warren says, if you concentrate on building people, God will build the church.

Undoubtedly building people is good.

However, Jesus was asked, what is the greatest, the very best teaching in God's Law.

Jesus replied " Love the Lord your God.....heart, soul and mind (with everything you have)"(Matthew 22 :37)

Jesus asks Peter at breakfast one question.

The same Peter Jesus called a rock on whom he would build his church so strong that even the gates of hades will not overcome it.

Q. Do you love me? This to the man who in our reading today recognised Jesus as the Messiah the son of the living God.

The question I am asking this morning, **the only knowledge that really matters is.**

Do you know what Peter knew. That Jesus is the Messiah the son of the living God and the Purpose of the Church is to love him with all your heart and soul and mind.

Yes we will care for the world, we will care for evangelism, we will care for building disciples **but we need to trust in God to build his church.**

There is a lovely analogy in this Book (PDC) about the Chinese bamboo tree (p393) Plant a bamboo sprout in the ground and for 4 or 5 years (sometimes much longer) nothing happens! You water and fertilize, water and fertilize, water and fertilize but see no evidence that anything happens Nothing. But in the fifth year things change dramatically, in a 6-week period the Chinese bamboo tree grows to be a staggering 90ft tall. In a single 24hr period this once dormant plant can grow 3ft this is explosive growth.

So don't worry about the growth of your church, focus on fulfilling your main purpose which is the same as that given to Peter, to know who Jesus is and to love, worship and obey his word.

Close with the Lord's Prayer. Which begins with these priorities.....

Our Father.

who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Our service came towards a conclusion as we sang our final Hymn:

Lord of the church we pray for our renewing,
Christ over all our undivided aim.
Fire of the Spirit, burn for our enduing,
wind of the Spirit, fan the living flame.
We turn to Christ amid our fear and failing,
the will that lacks the courage to be free,
the weary labours all but unavailing
to bring us nearer what a church should be.

Lord of the church we seek a Father's blessing,
a true repentance and a faith restored,
a swift obedience and a new possessing
filled with the Holy Spirit of the Lord.
We turn to Christ from all our restless striving,
unnumbered voices with a single prayer-
the living water for our souls' reviving
in Christ to live and love and serve and care.

Lord of the church we long for our uniting,
true to one calling, by one vision stirred;
one cross proclaiming and one creed reciting,
one in the truth of Jesus and His word.
So lead us on till toil and trouble ended
one church triumphant one new song shall sing -
to praise His glory, risen and ascended
Christ over all the everlasting King.

Author: Timothy Dudley-Smith, Unknown CCLI SONG # 4524302 Copyright ©1984 Hope Publishing, Music Public domain, CCL No 5664

Paul shared the usual notices for the week, including a note that next Sunday will **not** be the final service of this series, but will be an all-age service led by Tim! We will have to wait until the following Sunday for Alec to conclude the theme of the Church!

And so we joined together in a Benediction as we said:

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.

