



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, meeting here at Bethesda Chapel on Sunday November 1st 2020 at 10:45.

If you are not able to meet with us in person at present, we hope and pray that you will find this outline of our service helpful, as we all seek to worship God as a Church family, wherever we are.

Alec is playing the piano before the service starts today, a service which includes meeting around the Lord's Table for **Communion. We may all wish to prepare 'Bread and Wine'** at home, so that we too can share this special time together, knowing that although we may be a scattered fellowship physically at present, we still belong to the one family.

Our worship today is led by **Colin** who gives us all a warm **welcome**. He welcomes those who are present, and those who may watch the recording later. We also welcome those who are reading this at home. Unfortunately the Livestream didn't want to co-operate this morning, but the service is available to watch on Youtube.

He welcomed us to Bethesda on this dank November morning, a good Lancashire word that sums up the weather today! He reminded us that yesterday was Hallowe'en, and Joy spent the afternoon carving pumpkins, which smelt horrible!! Today is All Saints Day, and we are remembering that we are all saints alive, not merely those who have passed on, but all of us presently!

Colin leads us in a **Call to Worship**, for today, **All Saints Day**, before **Alec** plays our first **hymn, For all the saints**. As those at Bethesda cannot sing any of the 8 verses, Colin suggested we may wish to lift our arms and hands to the Alleluias!!

(Whilst those meeting in person are not able to lift their voices in song, if you are at home you can sing as loudly as you wish, or read the words either aloud or silently:)

These are the very traditional words:

*For all the saints who from their labours rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest,
Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress, and their Might;
Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well-fought fight;
Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true Light.
Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*Oh, may Thy soldiers, faithful, true and bold,
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old
And win with them the victor's crown of gold.
Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*O blest communion, fellowship divine,
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine.*

Alleluia! Alleluia!

*And when the fight is fierce, the warfare long,
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong.
Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*The golden evening brightens in the west;
Soon, soon, to faithful warriors cometh rest.
Sweet is the calm of Paradise the blest.
Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*But, lo, there breaks a yet more glorious day;
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;
The King of Glory passes on His way.
Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Alleluia! Alleluia!*

And these have been changed slightly, if you wish to read words which may be more appropriate for today's society.

For all the saints, who from their labours rest;
who to the world by faith their Lord confessed,
your name, O Jesus, be for ever blessed:
Alleluia, alleluia!

You were their rock, their fortress, and their might;
you, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight,
and in the darkness their unfailing light.
Alleluia, alleluia!

So may your soldiers, faithful, true and bold,
fight as the saints who nobly fought of old
and win with them the victor's crown of gold.
Alleluia, alleluia!

One holy people, fellowship divine!
we feebly struggle, they in glory shine
in earth and heaven the saints in praise combine:
Alleluia, alleluia!

And when the fight is fierce, the warfare long,
faintly we hear the distant triumph-song;
and hearts are brave again, and arms are strong.
Alleluia, alleluia!

The golden evening brightens in the west:
soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest,

the peaceful calm of paradise the blessed.
Alleluia, alleluia!

But look! there breaks a yet more glorious day;
saints all-triumphant rise in bright array
the king of glory passes on his way!
Alleluia, alleluia!

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest shore
through gates of pearl, ascending, they adore
the Father, Son and Spirit evermore:
Alleluia, alleluia!

Jubilate Hymns version of 'For all the saints, who from their labours rest', William Walsham How (1823 - 1897)
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Colin now leads us in Prayer, followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Thank you, Heavenly Father, for this opportunity to come into your presence to praise and worship you, for the freedom at present in this land of ours to join together, both here and at home, in the warmth of your embrace, to thank you for every blessing that we have enjoyed this week, but above all else to adore you for who you are and what you have done for us in and through your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Thank you that in worship we can put aside the uncertainties of this world and rest on the certainties of your Kingdom, for your promises in Christ are not changeable as those of a politician might be, but immovable and eternal. Thank you that we can bring to you all the fears and worries that trouble us at this time, and leave them there, knowing that your strength and assurance are all that we need at this time.

Indeed, we thank you that as we draw near in worship, we are transported from a world of troubles and tensions into your presence and that of the saints who have gone before us and here find healing, wholeness and renewal.

We thank you for the opportunity this morning to celebrate your Communion in this chapel after many months of lockdown and COVID restrictions. May the meaning of this sacrament, as we reflect on the cross-work of Christ, and the salvation that we have in and through him, be supremely precious to us, so that we may be filled afresh with your Holy Spirit and glorify your holy name. Loosen our hearts, we pray. Amen.

Our Father, who is 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. Amen.

He now shares our notices, which include Joyce Naylor celebrating her 80th birthday on Wednesday. Whilst we cannot sing aloud at Bethesda, those at home can sing as loudly as they can, so they can sing Happy birthday to Joyce! If in good voice, there are three verses to enjoy together, as we were taught as a Church family by Danny Cliff.

Happy Birthday to you,
Happy Birthday to you,
Happy Birthday dear Joyce,
Happy Birthday to you.

Happy Birthday to you,
only one will not do!
Give your heart to the Saviour
and then you'll have 2!

Happy Birthday to you,
from old friends and new
The Lord bless you and keep you,
Happy Birthday to you.

Colin now shares any more **notices** for the week,

He reminds us of:

- Virtual Coffee time on Zoom @ 1 o'clock – Look for the Link
- Thursday Prayer Meeting on Zoom @ 7.30 – Again, look for the link. Please join us for this precious time, it's only half-an-hour, and no one expects you to pray if you don't wish to. You can always add your own Amen to the prayers that are said, so that you make them your own.
- Operation Christmas Child – there are still boxes and forms available. Morag has already been able to make up 20 complete boxes, but items and boxes are still very welcome! Contact Morag for more details, 01254 602910.

Anne Thomas reads **Psalm 1** for us:

Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.
Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

May the Lord bless his word to us.

As we prepare to meet around the Lord's Table and share Communion for the first time, at Bethesda, since the start of the Coronavirus outbreak, we lift our voices at home and sing:
(with Tim singing a solo for us)

Behold the Lamb who bears our sins away,
slain for us: and we remember:

the promise made that all who come in faith
find forgiveness at the cross.
So we share in this Bread of life,
and we drink of His sacrifice,
as a sign of our bonds of peace
around the table of the King.

The body of our Saviour, Jesus Christ,
torn for you: eat and remember
the wounds that heal, the death that brings us life,
paid the price to make us one.
So we share in this Bread of Life,
and we drink of His sacrifice
as a sign of our bonds of love
around the table of the King.

The blood that cleanses every stain of sin,
shed for you: drink and remember
He drained death's cup that all may enter in
to receive the life of God.
So we share in this Bread of Life,
and we drink of His sacrifice,
as a sign of our bonds of grace
around the table of the King.

Alec leads us to share in Communion.

It's a bit like being in heaven isn't it, sharing in a meal together in the house of the Lord. It's a very special day today, sharing in the bread and the wine, symbols of the broken body and poured out blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, its wonderful.
But there is somebody missing this morning, In recent weeks Ruth was very glad to be physically present with us here at Bethesda, she said to me and to others it is so peaceful and so restful here. 10 days ago our Sister Ruth went to be with her Lord, and as a small, very small, tribute to her faith, and her testimony I have decided in this context and this setting to read Psalm 96, v 1-6, the Psalm she last read to us on the service here on October 4th. It is an amazing psalm. Ruth read it with an encouraging assurance and conviction, with certainty, and with a clearly apparent expectation, which you will probably experience for yourselves if you go back and watch and listen to the recording of that service.
So I will read it in tribute and memory of Ruth.

“Sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise his name, proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples, for great is the Lord and most worthy of praise. He is to be feared above all Gods, for all the Gods of the nations are idols but the Lord made the heavens. Splendour and majesty are before him, strength and glory are in his sanctuary.”

And that is precisely where our Sister Ruth is now, with her Lord and Saviour.

During his time on earth, our Lord followed all the rules, he fulfilled the law. He lived a perfect life. He was tempted as we are but he never ever, not even once, made a mistake, he always did exactly what his Father required of him, and we killed him. But not even death

could destroy him, it was impossible for death to keep its' hold on him, we killed the Author of Life, but God raised him from the dead.

I will read just 2 verses from Paul's first letter to the Corinthian Church, Ch 11, 23- 24

For I received from the Lord what I also pass on to you, The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke the bread and said, "This is my body which is for you, do this in remembrance of me".

Let us pray,

Dear God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Today we gather together as brothers and sisters in Christ, to remember the extraordinary sacrifice, the amazing sacrifice you made in sending Jesus your only and beloved son to be with us. We thank you for his life, in words, actions and in obedience to suffering right up to his suffering on the cross.

Lord we come to you now to ask for forgiveness for any thoughts, any words, or any deeds that have not honoured your name, we are also from our hearts truly sorry for the times we have chosen to live selfishly rather than to follow your calling.

We invite you to live in our hearts now as we share together in this meal, come bind us together as one family, filled with your love.

As we eat this bread we remember our Lord, whose body was wounded for us. We thank you with all our hearts for the great price you paid when you were crucified on the cross for us. Yet we remember that you rose from the dead, triumphant over death as Lord of Lord and King of Kings forever.

And now , Beloved Saviour, as we take this bread we remember that you are the bread of life, you feed our souls, you nourish our hearts, you give us strength to run the race which you have set before us. Thank you. Amen.

Let's eat the bread together.

In the same way after supper he took the cup saying "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death, until he comes.

Let us pray again and talk with our Lord.

Dear God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
As we drink this wine we remember that you are the giver of life. You forgive us all our wrongs. You bring deep peace to our souls, and your love flows within us, and out from us. As we take this wine we see your sacrifice of your blood poured out for us. We see the depth of your goodness and the pain you suffered for us. We dwell upon the intricacy of human life and the price you paid to set us free. And just as the tombstone was rolled away for the risen Lord, your light shines in our hearts now, extinguishing all darkness to release heavens blessings upon us. Thank you Lord for your grace which is at work in our lives. Amen

Let's drink the wine together.

We will sing, at the close of this our communion services the 4th verse of the communion hymn, Tim will come forward and share with us again.
(Alec returns to the piano)

And so with thankfulness and faith

we rise to respond: and to remember
our call to follow in the steps of Christ
as His body here on earth.
As we share in His suffering,
we proclaim: Christ will come again!
And we'll join in the feast of heaven
around the table of the King.

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Colin thanks Tim and Alec for bringing the hymn to us today.

Shirley leads us in our **prayers**,

Let us pray.

At this time dear Lord we remember all those who are struggling with the effects of coronavirus, those who have lost loved ones, those severely ill in hospital, those recovering at home, those who see no hope for the future through loss of employment. Be with each and everyone in their despair. May they turn, lean and cling to you, the God of hope, whose word tells us he knows the plans he has for us, plans to prosper us and not to harm us, plans to give us a hope and a future.

So much has happened and is happening at the moment dear father, that it is sometimes difficult to get our heads round it all. We think of those living and visiting Izmia in Turkey who are in the midst of an earthquake and tsunami. Help them, to rescue those who may be trapped in the rubble and may many, regardless of creed or colour, come to their aid. In America we await the results of the election to be held on Tuesday. So many conflicting reports about the candidates, but you alone know their hearts and motives. We pray that the man you chose will be he who is part of your eternal plan for America and all the countries aligned with her.

Now, closer to home, at the moment, dear Lord, we can't see the wood for the trees, The virus seems to be affecting more people, especially in Blackburn. However, We pray that the latest decision to have lockdown for four weeks will prove to be effective as we long to see our country free from this sickness and prospering for the good of all.

As this day has been named All Saints day, it would be good if we remember and give thanks for all the saints we have known. Those who have led us to you, Lord, those who have inspired us and blessed us in word and deed. Thank you, Lord, for their witness, their memory is so precious to us.

And now dear Lord, we remember the saints with us. May they know your presence at all times. Comfort for those grieving, patience for those waiting for operations and appointments, your healing grace in body mind and spirit, and may they know your joy, which is their strength.

We pray particularly this morning for the family of Barbara Riding. We pray for their speedy recovery from Covid, and we pray for Barbara, in isolation. May they, and her, know your peace and assurance that you are always with them.

As we look outside our chapel, we see more houses being built. We pray dear Father, that it won't be too long before we are able to communicate and show the love of Jesus with all around us.

We remember too all those in Blackburn, struggling with financial problems, and those in need of somewhere to lay their head. Help us to be a town that truly cares for the outcast in our midst, and are prepared to do our utmost to redeem this situation.

And now a final prayer.

Loving God, we praise you for your awesome love, so great that while we were yet sinners, you gave your Son for us. We praise you for your limitless patience, always forgiving despite our failure to serve you as we should. We praise you for your constant care, watching over us as a Father watches over his children.

In One faith we have gathered, bind us together in love.

Help us to call you Our Father, not just in name but in truth, to be obedient to you, to seek your guidance, to accept your discipline, and trust your judgement. Help us to learn what it means to be your people; to appreciate just how wide and great is the extent of your love, and teach us to show that same love and care in all our dealings with one another.

In one faith we are gathered, bind us together in love.

Loving God, we meet together again as your people, May we be encouraged through being with you and with one another, so may your family in this church and all represented here in this town and every place grow and flourish to the glory of your name.

In one faith we have gathered, bind us together in love.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen

Colin brings his message, Saints Alive!!

(I Peter 1:13-16; 2:9)

Are you a saint? What is your picture of a saint? Does it involve a Halo, a white gown or robe, with angels hovering around them? Is a saint to you a patron saint, like St. George? I have to admit that at this level I could never be a saint, like I could never be a king, for who has ever heard of a King Colin or Saint Colin? It's too ridiculous! Though I could be the patron saint of afternoon siestas, or those who fall asleep at their computer with a cup of tea in their hand and wonder why their trouser legs are wet when they suddenly wake up!

Incredible though it may seem, the term 'saint' is Paul's favourite term for describing Christians because he used it about 60 times in his letters, which is especially surprising when you realize that he never once called them Christians. Here are just two. In Romans 1:7, Paul addressed his letter to *'all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints*. In I Corinthians 1:2, Paul addressed his first letter to *'the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.'*

And yet 'saint' is not a word we use much these days. I've never heard anyone in our church say, 'Yes, we are having a few saints over to our house for dinner tonight' or 'My brother is a saint.' And yet it would certainly be appropriate to say that. Because a saint, as the term is used in the New Testament, is not a specially pious Christian who has died and has been canonized by a church council, like St. Peter, St. Paul, or St. Patrick. The Greek word translated 'saint' is '**hagios**', which means 'set apart', 'special' or 'holy'. So, according to Scripture, every Christian is a saint. Indeed, the most obscure Christian is just as much a saint

as the Apostles Peter and Paul. Because a saint isn't a special or superior Christian, which unfortunately is how it tends to be understood these days.

And so if you're a Christian here this morning, you are a saint. You are special to God and holy in his sight. Do you feel special this morning? Do you even think of yourself in this way – a 'saint'? 'Special?' 'What, Me?' 'You might say. 'Crickey!' Because being a saint means that you are precious, infinitely treasured, priceless to God. Yes, you may be feeling down and depressed at the moment, whether because of age, family problems, illness, loneliness, Covid 19, and lots, lots more, but please note that God chose you in Christ to be his, and uniquely so, before the foundation of the world. You are loved with an everlasting love. Indeed, age and the illnesses that come with it are merely the birth pangs of a new order of saintly perfection that we will all enter one day, like the saints before us, if Christ does not return for us in the meantime.

So, briefly, this morning on this dank All Saints 'Day, I want us to look at what being a saint should mean to us.

A Saint is a Holy Person

- As I've already suggested, the Greek word for 'saint' is very closely connected with the Greek word for 'holy', and I suppose that's not a word we like to use much either, probably because the word these days can have a negative connotation. We hear people talk about those who have a 'holier than thou' kind of attitude, and so we avoid its use. I mean who wants to be classed as a 'goody-goody'. There's a creepiness about it!

But what does it really mean to be holy? The word 'holy' is used hundreds of times in the Bible and simply means 'to be set apart for a special purpose.' Many things are said in the Scriptures to be holy. Mountains, like Sinai and Zion were called 'holy mountains.' The temple in Jerusalem was called 'the holy temple', and two of its chambers were called the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. Indeed, the city of Jerusalem itself was called the 'holy city.' Certain days, like the Sabbath, were said to be 'holy days.'

But more often in Scripture it is people who are called 'holy.' The Holy Bible talks about the 'holy prophets'. We read of 'holy men' and 'holy women' and the 'holy child.' In the Book of Leviticus, God tells his people: *'I am the Lord, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.'* Indeed, we are all to be holy. But what does that mean?

You see the gods of the ancient world were generally anything but holy. The gods of Canaanites were known for their cruelty and lust. Greek gods were drunken, incestuous, vindictive and murderous. So when Moses taught Israel that their God was holy, he was telling them something new, something unheard of. Israel's God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, was an upright God who could be depended on to do always what was right. We are so used to the idea of God's holiness that we perhaps take it for granted, but in view of the kind of gods the world worshipped in ancient times, the idea of God being totally holy and righteous was a radically new idea.

So, I want to stress this morning that the word 'holy' has to do with God and the presence of God. And that's where we should begin when we try to understand the idea of the holy.

Our holy God manifested himself through his Spirit throughout the Old Testament times. He appeared to Moses, for example, on Mount Sinai. But uniquely he appeared in person over two thousand years ago in the person of Jesus Christ (**Luke**). In Christ, we see the holiness of God as purely and completely as a human life can possibly manifest it. The heavens declare the glory of God, but when God wanted to reveal to humankind the glory of his character, the beauty of his holiness, he manifested himself as the man Jesus Christ. John says, *'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory...'* (John 1:14). For a few brief

years, God came close enough for men to behold his glory. That's the meaning of the name Emmanuel – 'God with us.' He was there in flesh and blood. You could see him. You could hear him. You could touch him. God was right there in human form among human beings. You could ask him questions. You could listen to him preach. You could worship him face to face.

But we might fall into the trap of thinking that God will never be that close again. And yet Jesus promised his disciples that after he left this world, he was going to come even closer to us through the Spirit of God. Indeed, he was to dwell within us. In other words, God was going to come close just one more time, and this time he was coming so close, so very close that he would move right into our bodies making them his own!

And when God comes close, something becomes holy. This time there is no tabernacle and there is no temple. This time that which became holy because God came close is your body and my body. The holiest place on the face of this earth this very moment is the body of the one in whom God lives. That's Paul's point in I Corinthians 6:18-20, *'Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.'* Which moves us nicely into our next heading.

A Saint is a Heavenly-minded Person

What we must realise here is that becoming a Christian is not simply about being saved, about going to dwell in heaven when we die, but also about being sanctified in this life, being made holy in thought, word and deed so that our hearts and hands fulfil the will of God and display the likeness of Christ. It is about heaven coming to dwell in us through the Spirit of the Living God. It is about being wholly devoted to God; about being made wholly complete in Christ.

You see, our bodies are now God's temple, and they are holy because of his presence. When God comes close, something becomes holy. This time, that something is you and me. We are holy! We are holy because we are called to be children of God, called to be saints. Because God lives within us through his Holy Spirit, that means there needs to be something different about the way we live. Holiness means letting Christ rule our lives, doing what he wants us to do. It means that we must make a concerted effort to rid our lives of ungodly traits and strive to add those qualities that make us more like Christ. Living a life of holiness makes a difference in the way we act toward others, the way we talk, in our very character. Indeed, the Fruit of the Spirit is the character of Christ and therefore the fruit of holiness.

That's important for us to remember. Sometimes we lose our focus. Some Christians, for example, see the church building as that place which is holy. You just can't do certain things in the church building because it is the house of God. But it is our body that is holy, not the building! The church building is not holy; it is just brick and mortar, wood and nails. But you are the temple of the Holy Spirit. When God comes near, something becomes holy. And God dwells within your body, within you. And so, if knowledge of this fact doesn't make a difference in the way we live as Christians, then nothing will.

So, as Christians we are not special because of who we are. We are special because of the one to whom we belong. Because we are the children of a holy God, we must allow his holiness to dominate our thinking. As Paul says to the saints in Rome: *'Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.'* Please note very carefully here that the saying that a Christian can be so heavenly minded that they are of no earthly use is far from the truth of what a true saint is supposed to be like, which is *'let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus'*, whose heavenly-mindedness was of incredible earthly use, for he became as we are that we might become through his death on the cross as he is.

As saints, we are called to be servants of the King of kings and Lord of lords, to live for him in the situation in which we have been placed and in the circumstances we find ourselves, showing the world that there is a much better way to live day by day and that is to live for Christ. Our beatific vision must surely be: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' So, what is the ultimate expectation of every true saint? Here we come to our final heading.

A Saint is a Hope-filled Person

Because we have God's Holy Spirit indwelling us, we have a blessed hope that one day we will be with our Saviour and Lord beyond this veil of tears for all eternity. That is our dear sister Ruth Martin's supreme joy and serene peace as we speak. And indeed of all the saints we know who have passed on into the direct presence of their Lord. Because Christ has been raised from the dead, we know that God will raise us up as well. Because we are now a part of the family of God, we know that we have a heavenly inheritance waiting for us. It is on the basis of this hope that God calls us to a life of holiness. We are to live holy lives because of what lies ahead for us, something so tremendous and out of this world that Saint John struggled to describe it in the last book of the Bible. As he expressed it in the first of his letters: *'Beloved, now we are the children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when he is revealed, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.'*

So, to sum up, what makes Christians saints is not that they are above it all, but that they are in the midst of it all, active in the work of the Lord. Saints, just like the Lord they serve, are not afraid to get their hands dirty for the cause of the gospel. In other words, the saintly life is not equivalent to the respectable life. It is not about just hanging around with religious people. The saintly life does not consist in just being nice or petting the neighbour's dog. The saintly life is the incarnational life, the life that reflects the God of the universe, who in Jesus Christ threw respectability out the window in order to hang out with the riff-raff of humanity (which includes each and every one of us); and God is the loving father who with open arms welcomed his son back home after his shameful behaviour.

The saints of the past whom we look up to – and there's nothing wrong with that – are always dangerous. Because they invariably challenge any notion of discipleship as something that is easy and part time, any notion that following Jesus is just one more thing to be done in the midst of everything else in the routine of the day—like shopping, cooking, and cleaning. We remember the saints of the past precisely because they instruct us how to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in the nitty gritty of the world, where Jesus wants to be through his people. The nitty gritty matters to Jesus and it should matter to us too. The opening line of our first hymn was 'For all the saints, who from their labours rest.' They are saints who now rest from their labours, not those who rested on their laurels. May this be our profession of faith in the Lord; our saintly joy, to see him more clearly, love him more dearly, and follow him more nearly day by day, so that when we meet our Lord in the sweet by-and-by we will hear the words, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Come now and share in the joy of the Lord.' For his name's sake, Amen.

Colin then introduces our **final song**, which is sung by Kristyn Getty. This may be unfamiliar to some, and if you are at home you may wish to simply read the words.

Those at Bethesda are able to see the video.

For the cause of Christ the King
we give our lives, an offering
'til all the earth resounds

with ceaseless praise to the Son.
For the cause of Christ we go
with joy to reap, with faith to sow,
as many see
and many put their trust in the Son.
Christ we proclaim,
the Name above every name:
for all creation, ev'ry nation,
God's salvation through the Son!

For the King once lifted high
to cries of rage, of 'crucify!'
endured the cross
as every sin was laid on the Son.
To the King who conquered death,
to free the poor and the oppressed;
for lasting peace
for life and liberty in the Son.
Christ we proclaim...

Let it be my life's refrain:
to live is Christ, to die is gain;
deny myself, take up my cross
and follow the Son
Let it be my life's refrain:
to live is Christ, to die is gain;
deny myself, take up my cross
and follow the Son.
Christ we proclaim...

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Getty Music and others are allowing churches to use their music in worship during the present time, waiving the usual copyright licensing arrangements, which is why we are able to watch and listen and read it today.

<https://youtu.be/PHuL0dZdqs8>

This is the internet link if you wish to use it, although I know some areas of Blackburn are having difficulty accessing the internet at the moment!

Colin closes our service today as we **share the Grace together:**

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

May you know God's peace in your hearts and lives in this time of renewed lockdown.

We are sure you are all aware that the new Government restrictions (Lockdown) will mean that we are unable to meet at Bethesda on Sundays for at least the next four weeks. We will let you know when we are able to meet in person to worship again.

OPERATION CHAD

Hope and healing in a Sahel hospital.



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