



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on Easter Sunday April 4th 2021 at 10:45.

Welcome back to Bethesda Chapel! As the lockdown rules are relaxed slightly, we are now able to meet in person again. We will still be using our YouTube channel to broadcast the services, and will continue to provide this written service sheet. 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.

Whilst Alec remains in Germany, he is joining us via Zoom today, and welcomes us.

Alec greets us (from the screen)

"Good morning everybody." Followed by the Easter greeting:

"The Lord is risen."

to which we respond: **"He is risen indeed!"**

Alec continues: "A very warm welcome to our Easter service of worship and celebration live from Bethesda Chapel, Blackburn Baptist Church, Galligreaves. The service is coming to you live today in the chapel and for those who are following the live streaming and those of us throughout the whole ,including ourselves here in Germany, assisting this service today, we're going to begin by singing together the song together "Christ the Lord is risen" today singing this from our hearts, Jesus is risen, alleluia!"(This version has an extra chorus which may be less familiar to some)

Christ the Lord is risen today Alleluia.
Sons of men and angels say Alleluia.
Raise your joys and triumphs high Alleluia.
Sing ye heav'ns and earth reply Alleluia.

Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where O death is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia!
Where thy victory, O grave? Alleluia!
O praise the dawning of that day,
when sin and death were rolled away,
as Christ emerges from the grave,
the risen Son of God.

Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like him, like him, we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross the grave, the skies, Alleluia!
O praise the dawning of that day....

CCLI Song # 7172019
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Alec leads us in prayer:

God of Gods, King of Kings. Lord of Lords,

We come into your presence this morning to worship you, to adore you and to praise your name.

For you are the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Who is a God like you, forgiving our sins and setting us free to live a new life in Jesus Christ who died for our sins on the Cross.

Father God today we celebrate the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ from the dead.
Hallelujah!

Death where is your sting. O grave, where is your victory. Jesus is risen, Jesus is alive and we who live in Him will never die.

Throughout the world you created to the glory of your Name those who love you will come together today to rejoice and sing, as we too will sing in our hearts here this morning. We have come together to sing your praise, to tell of your great works and to remember the way you have led us from darkness to light.

We commit this hour this morning to you thanking you for your presence with us, asking you to lead us and guide us in our worship and to open our hearts to hear and to be obedient to your Word.

We thank you also this morning that we are once again able to meet together here in Bethesda chapel. May this place be a light of your presence and your working in this town, to the many nations and cultures represented here. May Galligreaves and Wensleyfold rejoice to hear your Name and your Word and seek your Face.

For we pray in the Name of the Living God

Amen

Paul now leads us as we join together to share communion:

"Thank you Alec, and it's really great to be back here in Bethesda Chapel especially on this special Easter Sunday morning. As we come and prepare together to share in the elements of communion, I want to read to you a few verses from Romans chapter 15. "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbour for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself but as it is written 'the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.' For everything that was written in advance was written to teach us, so that through endurance and encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God, for I tell you that Christ has become the servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy." So Father God we thank you for this day and all that it represents, and as we come to share in communion together may we recall that last Passover meal shared with your disciples. Amen.

At that Passover meal, there were 4 cups of wine. The first represented a cup of sanctification and we read in the New Testament that when we come to share in communion together, we shouldn't share it unworthily or with a spirit of pride or with a spirit of non-forgiveness for others. So let's pray together.

Father God we pray that you would remove the calcium of our hearts, the stiffness of our necks, the blindness of our eyes, that we would be able to come to you, to your throne of grace, a throne that is on high; forgive us for those times when we become too familiar, picturing you as it were as if you were seated on the couch or a lazy boy seeking to be chummy, but help us to recall this day that you are the King of Kings and Lord of lords, creator and sustainer of all things. So today we come humbly to the all powerful risen Lord Jesus Christ saying together hallowed be your name. We pray for your kingdom to come on Earth as in heaven. We come to acknowledge our sins, our wrongdoings, our omissions and asking for forgiveness trusting in your mercy and grace. So we do pray that you would accept us this morning by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ and by your Spirit. Amen.

This last Passover meal that Jesus shared with his disciples was a meal that was really changed into a new covenant of deliverance, from past slavery and death that it represented when the Jews were redeemed from captivity and slavery. So we share bread and wine together. The bread is not that matzo bread that they would have shared, that unleavened bread that was pierced and had stripes on it representing Christ being pierced and his wounds and whipping represented on that matzo bread, but we pray Father God that as we take this bread, that we would recall how you gave your body in our place for us. And so as Jesus broke the bread, so we break this bread to represent his broken body in our place. (Paul breaks the bread)

So take this bread and bless it together, remembering what Christ has done for us.
(We eat the bread)

At the end of the supper Jesus took that 3rd cup of redemption and said this, as you take it in remembrance of me, remember this is the cup of the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. So let's drink this together as a sign of our unity in Christ. **(We drink the wine)**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hidden, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name in our lives day by day; and as this bread and this wine nourishes our body, so your word and Holy Spirit will nourish and empower us to live and work to your grace and your glory. Amen "

**Paul says: "We're going to sing a new song now, Christ was raised."
But instead of a new song, the one that was played at Bethesda was one many of us remembered from some time ago, so we can lift our voices in song or we can read quietly:**

Alleluia, Alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord,
Alleluia, alleluia, give praise to His name.

Jesus is Lord of all the earth.
He is the King of creation.
Alleluia, Alleluia....

Spread the good news o'er all the earth.
Jesus has died and has risen.
Alleluia...

We have been crucified with Christ.
Now we shall live forever.
Alleluia....
God has proclaimed the just reward:
Life for all men, alleluia!
Alleluia...

Come, let us praise the living God,
Joyfully sing to our Saviour.
Alleluia, Alleluia.....

Donald Emry Fishel, Arranger: Richard Irwin
CCL No 5664

These are the words of the song that it had been hoped to include:

Christ was raised, even death could not contain him.
We are saved, Satan's power he overcame.
No more shame, no more guilt and condemnation,
in his name, in his name.
Christ is raised, he is seated with the Father,
and the Spirit that raised him gives us life.
So we'll live to the glory of our saviour,
Hallelujah, he's alive.

Christ was raised, the restorer of creation,
by his grace making earth and heaven new.
we are changed, agents of his re-creation
in all we do, all we do.
Christ is raised, so our struggles have a purpose,
he's alive, so our work is not in vain,
and we'll serve for the glory of our saviour,
Hallelujah, Jesus reigns.
Hallelujah, hallelujah,
hallelujah, he's alive.

Christ was raised, bringing all the world together,
making peace, breaking down our walls of hate.
And one day every knee will bow before him,
for his praise, for his praise.
Christ is raised, with a new and glorious body,
scars of love in his hands and in his side.
So we'll sing to the glory of our saviour:
Hallelujah, King of life.

CCL# 7073062

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Christ Was Raised (Resound Worship):

<https://youtu.be/Kn7Uh87cNEA>

We are thrilled to see and hear Sibylle as she reads our Bible passage for today,
Luke chapter 24, verses 1-12.

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of

Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' ” Then they remembered his words.
When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened

We join together in singing or reading : (with Tim playing this on the piano)

Come, people of the Risen King
who delight to bring Him praise,
come, all and tune your hearts to sing
to the Morning Star of grace.
From the shifting shadows of the earth
we will lift our eyes to Him,
where steady arms of mercy reach
to gather children in.

Rejoice, rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice; O Church of Christ, rejoice!

Come, those whose joy is morning sun
and those weeping through the night;
come, those who tell of battles won
and those struggling in the fight,
for His perfect love will never change
and His mercies never cease,
but follow us through all our days
with the certain hope of peace.

Rejoice, rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice; O Church of Christ, rejoice!

Come, young and old from every land,
men and women of the faith;
come, those with full or empty hands
find the riches of His grace.
Over all the world, His people sing,
shore to shore we hear them call
the Truth that cries through every age:
"Our God is all in all!"

Rejoice, rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice; O Church of Christ, rejoice!

Songwriters: Townend Stuart Christopher Andrew / Getty Julian Keith / Getty Kristyn Elizabeth Rebekah
Come People Of The Risen King lyrics © Thank You Music Ltd.
CCL no 5664

Alec brings his message for Easter: Wondering and remembering

“The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee had seen him being taken out to die on a cross. They had stood and watched everything from a distance. After that they had followed Joseph of Arimathea who had requested Pilate to be given Jesus’ body and they saw the tomb where Joseph laid Jesus. They loved Jesus. They were committed to Jesus. So they went home and prepared spices and perfumes but nevertheless rested on the following day in obedience to the commandment because the next day was the Sabbath.

They must have been really tired, mentally and emotionally and physically completely exhausted. What had they been thinking as they followed Jesus through that day? What were they thinking now that he was gone from them?

They were keen to go to visit the tomb as soon as possible. So they had a very late night preparing the spices and perfumes. But they were not prepared for what lay before them. They had forgotten the most important thing.

What about our Easter? I am sure we prepared as much as possible planning menus and meals, ordering or collecting or otherwise shopping for all the kitchen needs for this long weekend, trying to work out the best way of seeing as many of our family members as possible, hoping for good weather so as to be able to gather together outside. But did we remember to include Jesus in our plans? What I really mean is did we ask Jesus into our lives for these days? He is always Lord of our lives isn’t he? Or have we also like the women from Galilee forgotten what the Lord said to us?

The women thought they were really well-prepared and thoroughly organised which in one limited sense they were. They awoke early on Sunday, the first day of the week, took the spices they had prepared and went probably sadly and resignedly but aware of their responsibility to the tomb.

They must have had a real shock. Maybe they had a kind of collective trauma on arrival. Where was Jesus? Were they maybe at the wrong place? Had their memories deceived them? Maybe what they thought they had experienced were just illusions? Whatever they felt as they were confronted by the physical reality of an empty tomb, it did not stop them from entering and going the tomb.

There appeared to be nobody in their vicinity outside the tomb. Well it was very early in the morning. This was in any case not a place that many would have either known about or wanted to come to. Better keep safe, stay at home and keep away from Jesus. It could be dangerous to go out. Anything might happen. Might make

you ill. Might be really dangerous. They went after Jesus, they might go after us. Well that`s what they could have thought!

The women had not been prepared for a tomb that was open. As Matthew records in 27:62-66:

„The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate.

“Sir,” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.”

“Take a guard,” Pilate answered. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.” So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

But you see neither Pilate, the Roman prefect under the emperor Tiberius, nor the guards, reckoned with the power of God.

Is that like us? Or do we reckon with the power of the living God? Do we reckon with God powerfully and dynamically at work in our churches, in our homes and neighbourhoods, in our workplaces?

Neither Pilate nor the guards had reckoned with a violent earthquake, with an angel of the Lord who came down from heaven and going to the tomb, rolled back the stone from the entrance and sat on it.

Matthew says the angel looked like lightning and his clothes were as white as snow and the guards were scared out of their wits, shook and became like dead men. They probably would be soon if what had now happened came out.

The women entered the tomb. But as Luke records they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

They began to wonder what this might mean. Just what was and had been going on here?

To be honest they appeared to have completely missed the point, they had utterly misread the situation, they had no idea what was going on.

You see they had forgotten what Jesus had told them.

That was a rather big mistake to have made and meant amongst other things that they could not understand what was going on in their immediate lives.

Well I am really sure that we never make this kind of mistake. We would never forget what Jesus told us or tells us would we?

And I am sure as a consequence we constantly and always understand what is going on in our day-to-day lives.

You see we walk by faith, not by sight don't we? Well maybe we say we do and perhaps sometimes we really do walk by faith. And of course that means that while we are thereby not shutting out our ability to think and our understanding, nevertheless we cannot always, we cannot even often understand what the Lord is doing with us and in our lives. So it is of course sometimes really OK not to know what is going on.

But the basic point I am making is that Jesus has taught us so much through His life and His Word and we should neither deliberately set out to ignore his Word or the parts of His Word that we don't find attractive, helpful or acceptable nor accidentally delete His teachings from our internal memory card.

The women had forgotten what Jesus had said. But God knew that. God understood that. He had also planned for that eventuality.

Let's look at Luke 24:4-8 once more.

The women had just started wondering. One translation says they were perplexed, another much perplexed. They didn't know what to make of this. They did not know what to think. They were astonished in their minds. They were amazed at what they saw, at what they experienced, at what they were involved in. They stood there puzzled about this.

One preacher says they were not believing. But I think this only holds if we say forgetting what God has said and promised is disbelief. It is definitely careless, thoughtless and irresponsible to forget what God has said. But I don't think it cancels out belief completely. My understanding is it makes it an inactive or a powerless belief not a non-existent belief. But that is just my opinion. Check it out for yourselves!

God had planned for the eventuality that the women would not know what was going on. So he had sent two angels. That was a kind of double-whammy for the women. Now they were not only uncertain of what was going on, they were scared out of their minds, genuinely frightened.

In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!

The lockdown did not work on resurrection day.

Jesus had confronted death itself in a three-day lockdown and won.

Easter itself was the perfect three-day lockdown that broke the chains of death.

The angels said to the women: Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: "The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again." Then they remembered his words.

Wondering and remembering. Let`s not forget what God says to us. Then we are helped to understand what is going on in God`s world, in our lives, in our town.

We do not need social distancing with God. Let`s not practice social distancing with Him. Let us get close to Him and draw near to Him and He will draw near to us and get close to us.

We need to embrace Him and His Word. To put our arms around him and let Him put His arms around us.

We have been hiding from the virus. We have been wanting to avoid the loss of human life.

But there is real hope, there is real forgiveness, there is a real relationship with God through Jesus death and resurrection. He gives us new life.

The empty tomb gives us new life and new hope. Death no longer has power over us. Death and the power of death have been defeated.

The women shared what they had experienced, what they had been told, what they had remembered, what they had seen and what they had now understood.

Of course that is what we do isn`t it. We share with our families , friends, neighbours and colleagues what the Lord does for us, that He is alive and has given us freedom and forgiven us from our wrongs, that He has given us new life. That we are His disciples.

That must have been some meeting between the women and the Eleven.

I wonder whether a recording of that is available on YouTube?

The women told the apostles all these things says Luke. But the apostles did not believe the women because their words seemed to them like nonsense. They refused to believe them.

Sometimes we simply do not want to believe do we. May I ask you, is that where we are this morning. Could it be that we see the facts of a crucified Christ, dying for our wrongs; that we see the empty tomb and the risen Christ; that we hear the words of the women and hear the Lord Himself speaking to us. But we simply do not want to believe? Let us rather open our hearts and lives to the Lord who made heaven and earth and to Jesus, who lives and reigns in the heavenly places. We no longer need to fear death. Jesus has defeated death. Those who have given their lives back to the Lord will never die.

Hallelujah.

There is one further verse in this passage which we want very briefly to look at this morning. That is verse 12. Read.

Peter went to the tomb, saw the strips of linen and went away wondering to himself what had happened. What would he have thought about? That he had denied Jesus three times as Jesus had said he would? Would he remember what Jesus had said? Would Jesus continue to hold him to account for denying him?

For Peter it must have been very painful to think back to how he had behaved, to what he had said, to what he had done. But the Lord would reinstate him as we read in John 21. And in the Acts of Apostles he would become a powerful preacher, healer and witness to the Lord and a servant and minister in his churches.

Maybe we have let the Lord down. Maybe we have been frightened of owning his Lordship. Maybe many times, again and again. Maybe we think there is no way back. But there is. Come back to Jesus today. Ask His forgiveness. He will forgive and forget. Go on from this moment on Easter Sunday 2021 with Him.

Amen.

We sing together our closing hymn today, Christ our hope in life and death"

What is our hope in life and death?

Christ alone, Christ alone.

What is our only confidence?

That our souls to Him belong.

Who holds our days within His hand?

What comes, apart from His command?

And what will keep us to the end?

The love of Christ, in which we stand.

O sing hallelujah! Our hope springs eternal,

O sing hallelujah!

Now and ever we confess Christ our hope in life and death.

What truth can calm the troubled soul?

God is good, God is good.

Where is His grace and goodness known?

In our great Redeemer's blood.

Who holds our faith when fears arise?

Who stands above the stormy trial?

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

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

Unto the grave, what will we sing?

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

And what reward will heaven bring?

Everlasting life with Him.

There we will rise to meet the Lord,
then sin and death will be destroyed
and we will feast in endless joy
when Christ is ours forevermore.

O sing hallelujah! Our hope springs eternal;

O sing hallelujah!

Now and ever we confess Christ our hope in life and death.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oibli1rz7mw>

Songwriters: Matt Boswell / Matt Papa / Keith Getty / Matt Merker / Jordan Kauflin

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**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**