



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on Easter Sunday, April 9th 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 Easter Sunday service today is being led by Alec, with Trevor paying the piano, Kate the violin and Nigel operating the PA system.

We were not able to record the service.

Alec shares a welcome and introduction, with an Opening greeting and response

THE LORD IS RISEN. HE IS RISEN INDEED!

Opening hymn

Low in the grave he lay, Jesus my Saviour,
waiting the coming day, Jesus my Lord!

**Up from the grave he arose; with a mighty triumph o'er his foes;
he arose a victor from the dark domain,
and he lives forever, with his saints to reign.
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!**

Vainly they watch his bed, Jesus my Saviour,
vainly they seal the dead, Jesus my Lord!

Up from the grave he arose....

Death cannot keep its prey, Jesus my Saviour;
he tore the bars away, Jesus my Lord!

Up from the grave he arose....

Author: Robert Lowry CCLI SONG # 27783 Words and Music Public domain CCL No 5664

Notices were shared by Tony

A time of Praise and worship:

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
this Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones He came to save:
till on that cross as Jesus died,
the wrath of God was satisfied -
for every sin on Him was laid;
here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
light of the world by darkness slain;
then bursting forth in glorious day
up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
for I am His and He is mine -
bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
this is the power of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
can ever pluck me from His hand:
till He returns or calls me home,
here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

Authors: Stuart Townend & Keith Getty CCLI SONG # 3350395 Copyright © 2001 Thankyou Music (Adm. by CapitolCMG Publishing.com
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How great the chasm that lay between us,
how high the mountain I could not climb.
In desperation, I turned to heaven
and spoke your name into the night.
Then through the darkness
your loving kindness
tore through the shadows of my soul,
the work is finished, the end is written:
Jesus Christ, my living hope.

Who could imagine so great a mercy?
What heart could fathom such boundless grace?
The God of ages stepped down from glory
to wear my sin and bear my shame.
The cross has spoken, I am forgiven,
the king of kings calls me His own:
beautiful saviour, I'm yours forever:
Jesus Christ, my living hope.

**Hallelujah, praise the one who set me free!
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me!
You have broken every chain - there's salvation in your name,
Jesus Christ, my living hope.**

Then came the morning that sealed the promise,
your buried body began to breathe:
out of the silence, the roaring lion
declared the grave has no claim on me.

Then came the morning that sealed the promise
your buried body began to breathe -
out of the silence, the roaring lion
declared the grave has no claim on me -

Jesus, yours is the victory, whoa!

Hallelujah, praise the one who set me free....

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Man of sorrows, Lamb of God by His own betrayed:
the sin of man and wrath of God has been on Jesus laid.

Silent as He stood accused, beaten, mocked, and scorned,
bowing to the Father's will He took a crown of thorns.

**Oh, that rugged cross, my salvation
where Your love poured out over me.
Now my soul cries out, "Hallelujah,
Praise and honour unto Thee"**

Sent of heaven, God's own Son to purchase and redeem
and reconcile the very ones who nailed Him to that tree.

Oh, that rugged cross, my salvation...

Now my debt is paid it is paid in full,
by the precious blood that my Jesus spilled.
Now the curse of sin has no hold on me
whom the Son sets free oh, is free indeed.

Oh, that rugged cross my salvation...

See the stone is rolled away behold the empty tomb,
Hallelujah, God be praised, He's risen from the grave!

Oh, that rugged cross my salvation....

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Bible Reading Luke 24:1-8 Jane

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.

Message

After the service on Good Friday morning Brenda, Jean, Jane, Janet, Trevor, Tony and I were walking through the Galligreaves Estate carrying the Cross that is once again hanging here and giving out these leaflets when one young boy came out and seeing us and the Cross we were carrying said very simply and audibly, "Has someone died?" I am so glad that he asked. I am so glad for his concern. I am so glad for his interest that he responded to what with God`s help we were trying to do. Yes someone had died. But He is not dead anymore. Maybe we should go to the same place after this service and complete the story? Maybe we should go round the whole of Galligreaves again today or tomorrow or next week or every week and talk about this and explain why Jesus had to die and what happened after Jesus died, that God raised Him from the dead and that He is alive; in His Body on earth; in this church fellowship; in our hearts and lives?

How did Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the 70-man-strong Sanhedrin Council, the highest ruling authority of the Jews, a good and upright man who did not support the decision of the Jews to give Jesus the death sentence, react to his death? Just like we are waiting for God to work in power and truth, in mercy and love and to break through in the hearts and minds of our communities in this borough, He too was waiting for the kingdom of God.

But his waiting was not passive. Neither should our waiting on God be a time of passive inaction. He was courageous as we also should be courageous. He was not frightened of going to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body. Just think about that for a minute. He did not dwell on the possible problems he was making for himself in going personally and directly to Pilate, who was the governor of Judea under the authority of the Roman Emperor Tiberias. Joseph's allegiance was to a higher power. In his heart he bowed before and worshipped the King of Kings.

Having been granted permission to take the body as we then read in 23:53:

In John 19:39-40 we see that Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night, went with Joseph to the tomb with a mixture of myrrh and aloes. This was late on Friday, so they had to work quickly to finish before the Sabbath began, since no work was allowed on the Sabbath, particularly not anything having to do with dead bodies. After they finished up their work on Friday, they left Jesus' body in the tomb, sealed behind a large stone.

And then we come to the women, (read Luke 23: 55-56).

The women who had been at the tomb on Friday made plans to return to the tomb on Sunday (the day after the Sabbath) so that they could go and finish the job of covering Jesus' body with spices..

While the women were planning to visit the tomb to anoint Jesus' dead body, the Jewish leaders were concerned with protecting the body. Matthew's gospel tells us that on Saturday the Jewish leaders began to get worried, because they remembered that Jesus had said he would rise on the third day after being killed, so they asked Pilate for guards who would ensure Jesus' disciples would not be able to return to the tomb, steal the body, and claim he had risen. So, Pilate gave them a group of guards

who put a seal on the tomb that would indicate if someone had tampered with it, and posted guards there so they could keep watch.

At the crack of dawn on Sunday morning, the women headed out for the tomb as they had planned. They carried with them the spices they had prepared and made the trip to the place where they had been Friday evening. Mark's gospel tells us that along the way they began to worry about how they would get in to see Jesus. They knew that he had been sealed into the tomb with a large stone and they didn't know how they would get the stone rolled away. We don't know whether the women knew or not that there were also Roman soldiers posted there. What we do know is that when they arrived, they found that the stone had been rolled away already. What they did not find, however, was the body of Jesus.

It is interesting to see the response of the women to the empty tomb.

How do you think we might have responded? Would we have expected to find the tomb entrance blocked by the stone? How would we have reacted? Would we have been more comfortable to have had closure; the moral teacher, the carpenter from Nazareth, the controversial religious figure, the creator of a new trend of anti-religious thinking and behaviour, the provocative individualist dead and buried for ever?

Would we have understood what had actually happened?

This is what the women found, (2-3)

The women did not immediately jump to the conclusion that Jesus had risen from the dead. They knew that when you died you didn't come back to life. They were not expecting Jesus to rise from the dead. They were wondering about why He wasn't there. You can imagine the thoughts running through their mind. They are the same thoughts you would have if you went to visit the grave of a loved one and discovered an empty hole in the ground where their body had been buried before. Unless you had really strong evidence to the contrary, you wouldn't think for a second that the person had somehow come back to life. These women were surely beginning to panic a bit as their minds raced through all of the possible explanations of why the body was missing.

Fortunately, they get a little assistance in dealing with their confusion. Two angels appeared to them. We believe in angels don't we? God's ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation. Look at verse 4.

The angels first of all offer them a gentle rebuke. They ask why they are looking for a living person among dead people. The question makes sense. Is the first place you look for a living person in a cemetery? You wouldn't do that unless you have a good reason to think that's where they will be. The angels wanted the women to see that Jesus was not dead, but he was alive and well. But that wasn't at all what the women expected. It didn't make sense. It just didn't fit. They had seen Jesus' dead body, so they were looking for His body and not somebody who was still alive.

The angels then took a different, a much more direct approach. We see this in verses 6-8. The angels came straight out with it and told the women that Jesus had risen from the dead, and then they reminded them that this shouldn't be a surprise—it is exactly what Jesus had said was going to happen! He had plainly told his followers that he would be turned over to sinful men, be crucified, and be raised again on the third day.

Living in 2023 it seems absurd that these women hadn't figured out that Jesus was going to die and then come back to life on the third day. But their response really isn't surprising. Their entire world had fallen apart; they were distraught. The one who they thought was going to become the leader of the entire world was instead brutally murdered. None of what was happening made any sense to them—

until the angels reminded them of what Jesus had said. Then they got it and after they began to put the pieces back together, the women went running back to tell the disciples what they had seen. We can perhaps almost picture them arriving back at the place where the disciples were basically hiding out. After sprinting the whole way back from the tomb, they arrive, breathless, and begin trying to tell them about the empty tomb. Maybe they spoke in short, excited sentences as they tried to catch their breath. “Jesus’ body...gone...Angels...He is Risen!” The response of the disciples was not favourable. They didn’t jump to their feet as though this was the news they’d been waiting for. As a matter of fact, their response was quite the opposite.

They didn’t believe a word the women said. The NIV says that they thought the women’s words seemed like nonsense. Literally, the word means that they thought their words were delirious crazy talk. The disciples had seen Jesus’ dead body, and they weren’t about to believe such a fanciful story from the mouths of these women.

But we need to understand that in Jewish society women had few rights, and they were not allowed to serve as witnesses in court. If you had committed a crime and the only witnesses were women, you would go free, because the testimony of a woman was not admissible in court. This may have been part of the reason that the disciples didn’t believe what these women had to say; because women were seen as unreliable witnesses.

What is interesting, however, is that every gospel account points to the fact that the women were the first to discover that Jesus had risen from the dead. They were the first eyewitnesses on the scene, and the Bible accurately records their testimony. This is one of the arguments in favour of the Biblical record being accurate history as opposed to an elaborate fabrication created by the disciples. If you were making up a story about how Jesus had risen from the dead in those days, you would not have women as your star witnesses, because their testimony was routinely ignored. But, since that is what actually happened, that is what the biblical writers recorded.

Fortunately, these women were persistent in their story, and some of the disciples went to check it out for themselves. Luke tells us that Peter got up and ran to the tomb. John says that Peter and John both did. There really isn’t any contradiction here, just a different emphasis—it makes sense that John would mention that he had also run to the tomb to see for himself.

When Peter arrived at the tomb, he saw that indeed it was empty. All that was left were the strips of cloth that Jesus had been wrapped in—maybe the cloths still even held the shape of the body that they had previously held. While the strips that had covered Jesus were there, Jesus’ body was nowhere to be found. Like the women, Peter did not immediately jump to the conclusion that Jesus had risen, but the text tells us that he went away, wondering to himself what had happened. Where is our sense of wonder?

What is most interesting about the account of the resurrection is that once Peter and the other disciples finally understood the importance of what had occurred they were forever changed. They went from hiding from the Jewish authorities to preaching at the temple. They went from hiding in Jerusalem to traveling far and wide to share the message that Jesus had risen from the dead with people they had never met. For that reason, we need to look at why the resurrection is so important. As the disciples grasped what had really happened, they became emboldened in their faith. The resurrection proved several things.

First, Jesus was who he said he was. Jesus claimed to be God, and he claimed that he would sacrifice himself in order to provide a way for his followers to be forgiven. When Jesus was killed, his followers assumed that it proved he wasn’t who they thought he was. When he rose from the dead, it proved he was exactly who we said he was.

Second, there really was forgiveness of sin through Jesus. When Jesus rose from the dead, it showed his victory once and for all over sin. Just before he died on the cross, Jesus said the words “It is finished” which also have the meaning of paid in full. He paid the penalty for sin on the cross and rose again victorious over death.

Third, it proves there is life beyond the grave. Jesus proved once and for all that it is possible to live even though you die. We can trust Jesus when he says there is life beyond the grave because he has proved it in his own life.

Fourth, it proves he is still living today. Unlike the founder of every other religion in the world, Jesus is still living. Mohammed is dead. The Buddha is dead. Joseph Smith is dead. Jesus died too, but he didn't stay dead. The Bible tells us that Jesus is still at work on our behalf, offering strength, comfort, and guidance as we live our daily lives. Jesus is not dead, but alive! This means that Christianity is not about principles, but a person. Jesus did provide an example of how to live and gave instructions on how to live, but Christianity is about having a relationship with Jesus, not just following his example. We don't gather together to learn more stuff, but to follow the living Christ!

What we find in the resurrection is that everything in our faith hinges on whether Jesus really did rise from the dead. Later on, the apostle Paul tells us that if Christ is not raised then our faith is in vain. The resurrection is not just an event in history; it is the event that changed history. If Jesus' resurrection proved all of these things, if it really is such a landmark event then our lives should be changed by an encounter with the risen Christ. If we have truly believed that Jesus rose from the dead and continues to live today, then we should live differently.

We say all sorts of things have changed our lives, and we say those things truthfully. Maybe you've made some of the following things: GPS has changed my life; the internet has changed my life; having a smartphone has changed my life; my children and grandchildren have changed my life; my friends have changed my life; the pandemic has changed my life; leaving the EU has changed my life; the Ukrainian war has changed my life.

Maybe we have said one or more of these things? But let me ask you this. Has the resurrection of Jesus changed your life? What's different as a result of Jesus rising from the dead? What about your life and my life has changed?

The disciples could say with assurance that the resurrection of Jesus changed their lives because they were totally different people. They went from being people who were defeated and in hiding to being people who boldly proclaimed the Gospel message. They went from being people who were concerned about their own comforts to being people who were concerned about God's glory. They were changed. The resurrection made all the difference to them.

The resurrection should make a difference to us as well. If Jesus was dead and rose again, if he paid for the sins we have committed throughout our lives, if he continues to live on and offer help to us as we live our lives, shouldn't that impact the way we live? If we really believe these things about Jesus, then Jesus' resurrection should have a far greater impact on our lives than GPS, the internet, or even having children or grandchildren!

If we believe that Jesus died and rose again how do we think? How do we behave? In what ways does this impact our lives and the lives of others?

Maybe in that our lifestyle is not controlled by our past sins, but we are free and thankful because we know they are forgiven.

Maybe we seek God's help as we face struggles in life, realizing that we don't have to live life in our own strength because Jesus is still alive and will guide us as we live.

Maybe we are excited knowing that we are forgiven and will have life beyond the grave? Maybe we are so excited that we want to share the news with everyone we care about. Maybe we are so excited that we even want to share this with people we don't know!

Maybe we are willing to offer forgiveness, understanding the difference that forgiveness has made in our own lives and wanting to extend that same kind of grace to others?

These are the kind of radical changes we see in the disciples who believed in the resurrection. They were totally different, Jesus had changed their lives. They were different because they truly believed in the resurrection. The person who claims to believe in the resurrection but is unchanged by that belief doesn't really believe at all.

In his letter from prison to the Philippian believers 3:7-11, Paul writes. We need to live in the power of the resurrection.

Matthew 28:18-20 We have the authority; we have the power; let's go ahead and make disciples.

Prayers were led by Jean W

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father we rejoice today at the resurrection of your son. After the horrific events of Good Friday today is such a joy. Dear Lord, may we realise afresh today what Your death and resurrection mean for us forgiveness, freedom, and the ability to walk with You through into eternity. We thank you for our ability to rejoice openly of the resurrection and we ask for Your love and protection for those Christians who must be secret about their faith and we ask you to give them the confidence to keep going and keep them safe.

We pray for our world, for areas of violence and hostility, for lands where famine and disease are rife, for peoples who look in vain for the rains to come to guarantee a harvest.

On this wonderful day we are also aware that there is great sadness, turmoil and desperation around the world. Countries like Turkey and Syria who are trying to recover from the dreadful earthquake earlier in the year. Help the people to cope with this disaster and who are trying to make a new life with so little and help grandparents who are now left to bring up their grandchildren and help the children to make sense of their loss. Please give wisdom to the aid workers who are trying to help.

Be with the people of all the conflicts round the world. Give the people of Ukraine courage to face each day and confidence to try and rebuild their lives. Put a restraining hand on the perpetrator help him to see the awful damage he is doing, not only to the country he has invaded but to his own people.

Israel and Palestine are suffering unrest again this is such a fragile situation and seems to be simmering all the time let them see that if they could all live together sharing love and tolerance all their lives would be good. I know it sounds naïve Lord but with You all things are possible.

We worry about the disturbances that Ireland is experiencing and we ask for your peace over this country and that the concerns the police the have re unrest tomorrow come to nothing. Please prompt the consciences of the dissidents to stop whatever they have planned

and to enjoy the celebrations of the 25 years of peace that the Good Friday Agreement brought.

Be with our government and guide them to be open and to serve the people they represent with honesty and integrity.

Lord help to guide Sir Mark Rowley of the Metropolitan Police to carry out the stringent vetting of the police nationwide that sadly seems to have been lax over recent years and allow us to once again have confidence in all police officers.

Please bless our town of Blackburn and those who are elected to serve the residents. Help them to consider all ethnicities and beliefs when making decisions and to be fair and just in their decision making.

None of us can escape the worries of the world. We all know someone either in our own families or here in our church family who are struggling with ill health, sickness, marriage problems, financial concerns. Lord may we always be kind, and considerate and offer help where we can and always to keep them in our prayers. None of us know what the other is going through so please help us to be patient and caring. Guide our Deacons and show them the way you want our church to go. Help our numbers to grow and to hopefully bring back to worship with us those who have felt unable to come in recent months.

Heavenly father we know after the crucifixion the guards drew lots for Your sons clothes. His robe was woven in one piece and like Jesus' character was seamless and perfect. We know Jesus died like a common criminal for sins he did not commit so that we can wear the garments of His righteousness. Jesus not only prepared a place for us in heaven He made sure we would be properly dressed for the occasion.

So on this Easter Day may we always keep our eyes on You Lord, help us all to listen for Your voice and we thank you with all our hearts for everything you do in our lives. Please hear our prayers and we ask that you intercede on our behalf for all our concerns and worries

In the loving name of Jesus. Amen."

Hymn

Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia,
our triumphant holy day; alleluia,
who did once upon the cross; alleluia,
suffer to redeem our loss; alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing; Alleluia,
unto Christ our heavenly king; alleluia,
who endured the cross and grave; alleluia,
sinners to redeem and save: alleluia!

But the pains which he endured; Alleluia,
our salvation have procured; alleluia,
now above the sky he's King; alleluia,
where the angels ever sing: alleluia!

Concluding music "Jesus is alive" CityAlight

Verse 1

There is now a hope that lasts beyond our days
for the One that once was buried lives again,
now the tomb is bare and empty
and the stone is rolled away -
praise the Risen One who overcame the grave.

Verse 2

All you broken hearted, all you worn and weak
come find living water, everlasting streams
to the wandering spirit, lost and searching
wanting something more -
find the Risen King who overcomes the world.

**Let there be dancing in the darkness
and let our song break through the night.
Lift your voice and sing that Christ is King
for Jesus is alive.**

Verse 3

No more condemnation, no more doubt and fear,
for our sin and shame they have no power here.
In His resurrection perfect love has set the captives free,
praise the Risen King who stands in victory

Let there be dancing in the darkness...

Bridge

Hallelujah, death is undone.
Hallelujah, Jesus has won.
Hallelujah, we over come.
Oh in Jesus, Oh in Jesus.

Let there be dancing in the darkness

Lift your voice and sing that Christ is King
for Jesus is alive.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-70IOsdU7I>

And finally:

**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.**