



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on February 13th 2022 at 10:45, meeting once more 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 led by Paul Moores, from The Leprosy Mission, as we focus on their important work.

Paul welcomes everyone to Bethesda Chapel, and thanks the fellowship for extending both an invitation to TLM and their ongoing support over the years.

He begins by committing the whole morning to the Lord.

"Let us pray.

Father God, thank you that we are part of your family. Thank you that here in the UK and around the nations of the world Lord God there is the family of God. Thank you that your eyes are on everyone as they gather this morning to worship and to praise you. I just pray that everybody here this morning will know your love in a deeper way, Lord, will know about your kingdom in a closer way. Lord God I do pray that you will breathe upon everything that we do, in Jesus name. Amen"

We sing a hymn together - the words are shown on the screen at Bethesda. Those who wish to stand are invited to do so as Trevor plays the piano for us today, as we sing **He is exalted**.

He is exalted, the King is exalted on High,
I will praise Him.
He is exalted, forever exalted,
and I will praise His name.
He is the Lord, forever His truth shall reign;
Heaven and Earth rejoice in His holy name,
He is exalted, the King is exalted on high.

Author: Twila Paris
CCLI SONG # 17827
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Jane comes to the front to read the first of our Bible readings for today, 2 Samuel, Chapter 5, verses 17-20, David defeats the Philistines.

'When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they went up in full force to search for him, but David heard about it and went down to the stronghold. Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; so David enquired of the Lord, 'Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hands?'

The Lord answered him, 'Go, for I will surely deliver the Philistines into your hands.'

So David went to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them. He said, 'As waters break out, the Lord has broken out against my enemies before me.' So that place was called Baal Perazim.'

"May the Lord bless the reading to us."

Paul continues: "It's been a strange couple of years hasn't it?" He tells us that he actually had a 14 month period of time when he wasn't able to stand in front of any congregation at all because of Covid and where, as a team (there are six doing the same role in different locations) their interactions were all on zoom! He's seen most of the Leprosy Mission supporters faces on screens for the last 2 years so it's lovely to be back seeing people face-to-face again. He shared that he wishes to refresh our knowledge and information of what the Leprosy Mission has been doing over the previous years, reminding us that TLM serves in 10 different nations worldwide, they work in five African nations, Nigeria, Sudan, Niger, Ethiopia and Mozambique, and five Asian nations, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and more Bangladesh, India and Nepal. All countries present different challenges, and we are aware of the recent troubles in Myanmar, formerly Burma, from where they receive scary updates. He also shared information about Mozambique, TLM having had a wonderful campaign for that country last year, incredibly, because of the support they received, they raised a record amount of £2.4million, an amount which our government doubled. This meant they were able to start a program over there called their "unconditional program" which is basically building community hubs in villages in northern Mozambique. He shared that this area is now in the midst of an Isis insurgency battle, meaning that people have had to flee from the main area of work, moving all the offices to another area of Mozambique, and meaning feedback from that area is extremely distressing at present. Paul requested that we keep both Mozambique and Myanmar in the forefront of our prayers. He also wanted to share information about India which now has the largest population on the earth, overtaking China, and always has the highest number of Leprosy patients. Covid has obviously increased their workload, and the culture and lifestyle has meant that some preventative measures we found beneficial here such as social distancing have not been possible. They have had reports of a number of deaths of staff there, including the head of their biggest hospital. He asked that we remember India in prayer, TLM have been able to fund vaccination centres but it is a battle that continues. This morning though our major focus is on the nation of Nepal. He reminded us that three years ago there was a Heal Nepal

appeal. Nepal experienced an earthquake in 2015 and the appeal was to help to rebuild their hospital, sending £4million in total (as our government had doubled the donations) to enable outreach work to be re-established. Paul showed us a short video outlining the work made possible by the appeal, sharing that the main hospital which is situated near Katmandu, in the foothills of the Himalayas, has been able to respond to the Covid 19 outbreak with literally life-saving and life-changing work. (Paul shared that every item of PPE and every ventilator shown in the film was funded by the UK appeal).

We are encouraged and invited to join in song again as Trevor plays: Here I Am, Lord (I, The Lord of Sea and Sky)

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

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

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

Writer: Daniel Schutte
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Paul continues to share news from Nepal. There is a need for a further appeal as the hospital is now slowly crumbling and will shortly no longer meet the building regulations. TLM, under God, has made the decision to rebuild the hospital and laboratories, as they believe the day is coming when Leprosy can and will be eradicated. Rebuilding of the labs will enable this crucial work to go ahead, and so an appeal entitled 'Greater Heights' is being launched in order that this work and dream will come to fruition.

Paul now shares his sermon, illustrated with a number of slides and some short videos:

GREATER HEIGHTS sermon – Leprosy Sunday 2022

Slide 1: Greater Heights (resting slide)

Slide 2: The 4-minute mile

Every new achievement, every extraordinary find, every path never trodden before throughout history has been met by dissenting voices of unbelief, prejudice, and negativity. Over 67 years ago, on May 6th, 1954, something incredible happened. Something that many intelligent people said was impossible and would cause a heart attack. Roger Bannister, a 25-year-old British medical student became the first person to run a mile in under 4 minutes. Within a year, there were another 37 sub-four-minute miles recorded. By the end of 1956 over 300 runners had broken this 'belief barrier' and reached this 'Greater Height'.

Slide 3: Stef Reid

One person who knows all about overcoming a massive challenge is Paralympian Stef Reid, who won silver medals in the long jump in London and in Rio and is a former world champion. Stef says: "When I lost my leg in a boating accident at the age of 15, I was completely devastated. One of the things that got me through is daring myself to go to greater heights. I was blessed with the opportunity to study biochemistry at university. I also had access to a state-of-the-art blade which enabled me to become a Paralympian.

Having spent time at Anandaban Hospital and research lab, it is my prayer that people affected by leprosy can also reach the heights they deserve. I will never forget the exhilaration of running up the 365 steps to Anandaban Hospital and research lab as part of my training! I now want to encourage you to join the research team working tirelessly to end leprosy". Stef had to break through physical, mental and emotional barriers to achieve her remarkable sporting success. As a Christian, she knows that it is God who gives the strength to break through these barriers, which is just what David recognises in Psalm 18 when he says, "It is God who arms me with strength" (Psalm 18:31).

Slide 4: Psalm 18:31-33

In Psalm 18 King David's is pouring his heart out towards God. He expresses his love and praise to God for His deliverance (vs.1-3). In saying, "I will love You," David used an unusual word for love, which suggests the impulsive and emotional. This love comes from a heart that has been on a battlefield & is celebrating the one who brought him victory – an overflow of gratitude! His senses begin to take in the safety of the place he has been brought to, he recognizes the broadness of his situation and the freedoms he now enjoys (vs.16-19)

David says, "He also brought me out into a broad place": Spurgeon wrote "The strong hand of God not only plucked David from the deep waters, but it also set him in a safe place" (C.H. Spurgeon - "The Prince of Preachers"). God is shining a light forward for him and empowering him for all that lies ahead. (vs.28-30)

Having come so far, having already overcome so much, King David is "drawn" to the heights, to a greater path, one that he can only ascend with feet like those of a deer!

(Jane reads)

For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God?

It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure.

He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he causes me to stand on the heights.

Slide 5: A deer

A deer's feet or hooves are anatomical wonders, when simply running, chasing other deer, or evading danger, their muscular hind legs propel their movements. The front legs serve as pivot points to help them make sharp turns. They can scale unusually high and difficult terrain.

Within every human heart there are desires to be better, to achieve more, to reach new heights. The difficulty in going to the next level, of attempting new challenges, often stops us in our tracks. God knows that in our pursuit of greater heights we need to rely on Him for deer-like surefootedness & confidence to continue, however steep and seemingly impassable the way ahead might appear.

Slide 6: Fitbit

Many of us have watched the Olympics through the years, from Sebastian Coe's battles with Steve Ovett to Sir Mo Farah & Jessica Ennis in 2012, not forgetting Usain Bolt's incredible achievements. As well as medals won, I can always remember talk before and after races of PBs. When I was younger, I had no idea what that meant, but I now know it stands for "Personal Best". Most people will be aware of a device known as a "Fitbit" - in effect a watch to measure daily steps, heart rate and much more! What a feeling, to be able to track your daily exercise performance and achievement, symptomatic of our desire to reach "greater heights"? Little wonder that sales took off: in 2010 there were approximately 58,000 Fitbit devices sold worldwide; by 2016 that number had risen to approximately 22.6 million!

Slide 7: Anandaban Research Lab

We as a mission, like King David, find ourselves in a place of broadness and blessing, but God is shining His light forward, not towards "well-worn paths" but to a never travelled route, the route towards the end of Leprosy. High on a hill at Anandaban in Nepal a pioneering work is taking place to reach that greatest height of all. In a

crumbling lab on a mountain top, the team are making scientific breakthroughs that will have a global impact.

Slides 8 & 9: Crumbling lab

But the lab is now at risk of closing. It's too small, not fit for purpose and was severely damaged in the terrible earthquakes of 2015. It won't pass the upcoming Nepali Government inspection. Without this lab, the chance to end leprosy in our lifetime will be lost forever. The research team desperately needs to develop an early diagnostic test for leprosy. This is vital to diagnose leprosy on the spot, so we can cure people as quickly as possible. They are already testing pioneering new treatments to prevent people like Shakti, who we'll meet later, suffering physical disabilities because of leprosy. To save more people from the devastating effects of leprosy, we must build a new world-class research centre at Anandaban, on the roof of the world.

Slide 10: 2 Samuel 5:20 - read by Jane earlier.

As we heard in our reading from Psalm 18, King David grew to rely fully on God to scale seemingly impossible 'heights'. He also knew that to overcome many 'immoveable' enemies he needed to look to the Lord. We see an example of that in 2 Samuel 5, when David battles against the Philistines. We read in verse 20: "So, David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, "The LORD has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water." Therefore, he called the name of that place Baal Perazim."

'Perazim' means 'breakthrough', so the meaning of 'Baal-Perazim' is 'Lord' or 'owner' of breakthrough. David recognises that it is God who has brought victory over Israel's enemies. We're familiar with many of God's names, like Jehovah Jireh (the Lord will provide) or El Shaddai (the All-Sufficient One), but perhaps we're less familiar with Baal-Perazim. But it's wonderfully true that God breaks into our lives, working in our hearts by His Spirit and doing what no-one else can!

As Christians, we worship the same God of breakthrough. But we're also blessed to live after the coming of Jesus. God's kingdom broke through in a new way through the ministry of His Son. God's Son was with him through all eternity, already enjoying the greatest of heights at His Father's side! But the Bible tells us that this Word, the 2nd person of the Trinity, came down as Jesus the Godman. He didn't consider equality with God in heaven something to be grasped, but humbled himself to be human, experiencing our suffering and pain (Philippians 2:6-8). Jesus predicted that he would die; that just as Moses lifted the bronze serpent on a pole in the wilderness and it brought healing from death for God's people, Jesus would be 'lifted up' to experience the death that we deserve for our rebellion against God (John 3:14-15).

Jesus faced the ultimate low, falsely accused and handed over to death, physically lifted on the cross. But then from this tragic low, Jesus was raised from the dead and is exalted to the right hand of the Father, in the greatest of heights again! And the cross that looked like defeat was victory, God's love breaking through, so that those who believe in him may have eternal life. And he welcomes us to join him. We only

need to look to Him and know that he has gone from the greatest of heights, to the most terrible low for us and say "Yes, Jesus! I want to experience greater heights with you! I want you to breakthrough into my life." Because Jesus has broken into our lives, we're privileged to see God's kindness breaking into the lives of people affected by leprosy, because of your generosity.

Slide 11: Shakti's story

One person who has experienced this breakthrough is Shakti. She's 16 and lives in Mahhotari, a small town located in the Terai belt of Nepal. She comes from a humble family background of farmers where she lives with her parents, grandparents, and siblings. She says, "I remember the pain in my legs and the small red bumps and discolouration from when I was aged 4 or 5 years old." She didn't know back then that these early signs of leprosy would start a cycle of hospital visits, medication and follow-up that would last until she was 16 years old. In fact, she was 14 years old when she was finally diagnosed with leprosy. She remembers feeling afraid and hopeless when she received the diagnosis, because of the social stigma for people suffering from leprosy. Tragically, some people still regard it as a sign of God's anger. Suddenly, Shakti felt very alone.

Her family took her to Anandaban for a check-up because treatment is free for people with leprosy, and they couldn't afford to pay at another hospitals. The doctors told her that the leprosy bacterium had seeped into her bones. They needed to perform surgery to amputate her right leg from the knee down. She used to feel pain in her legs but after the surgery, it has stopped. She's now recuperating at the hospital after her surgery, and she'll be fitted with an artificial limb. "Here, everyone is nice to me, I feel like they all care about me. They tell me that I will be able to walk again after soon." What a wonderful breakthrough!

But Shakti is aware of the impact of leprosy on her future. She says, "The pain is gone but I'll have to live categorised as disabled, and I feel like I have to change my dreams now." She was planning to study science to become a doctor. As she was doing well with her studies, everyone supported her. She knew the journey to become a doctor would be hard because of the financial status of her family but after the surgery, she feels like it is impossible now. She says, "I still want to study but want to pursue something realistic like accounting so I can pursue a desk job."

We want to rebuild Anandaban Research Centre so that pioneering research can lead to a breakthrough in ending leprosy. We long for a medical miracle that will mean like stories of disability and discrimination like Shakti's will be no more. We believe it's possible because we belong to the Lord of Breakthrough. With him, we can reach greater heights together to bring an end to leprosy.

Below are some of the lyrics of a wonderful worship song, they express who we serve!

The song is called God of Breakthrough (written by Mack Brock from Elevation Church, Charlotte, North Carolina):

Who can open doors no man can open? Who can heal a heart that once was broken?
Only You can, only You can
Who can turn our failures into glory? Who can bring a hope to any story?
Only You can, only You can

You're the God of breakthrough, You're our rescue
You can make a way, You can make a way
God of breakthrough, we will trust You

There is no impossible, even in the darkest storm
You are always working miracles
You work all things for our good

As people of faith, we acknowledge that God is leading us to amazing scientific breakthroughs which will transform lives. We know that improving treatment and ending leprosy globally will not be possible without discoveries at Anandaban Research Centre, Nepal. Today as we've looked afresh at our God, He wants all of us to also take the opportunity to allow Him to be the God of breakthrough for us, whatever the challenge, the mountain, the problem, He can make a way!

Slide 12: Play the Greater Heights FILM

Slide 13: Ask

One way you can help the Research Facility at Anandaban Hospital to reach Greater Heights is through prayer. The Leprosy Mission began with a couple and their three friends praying in their front room, thinking "What can we do for these people with leprosy we've met in India?" Because of God's kindness to answer those prayers, we're now able to reach out to people affected by leprosy in 10 countries. Please pray with me that the Lord of Breakthrough will supply what's needed for the Research Lab and that it will be a place of vital discoveries to bring lasting change for people just like Shakti. You can pick up a prayer diary from the back of the church or if you're watching online, please go to our website www.leprosymission.org.uk

Please will you join us to build this new world-class research facility on the roof of the world? With your help, scientific breakthroughs from this laboratory will end leprosy and lift people affected by this disease to the Greater Heights they long to achieve. A regular gift of £18 a month provides 30,000 bricks in a year. That is the power and impact of a monthly gift, which also helps us plan for the future. If you would prefer to make a one-off-gift, £36 buys 5,000 bricks or you may want to give £105.60 for 15 bags of cement! As a church or by partnering with other local churches, you may want to commit to giving £8,000 to build a research laboratory. Please give using the envelopes provided, using the card machine after the service or on our website.

Slide 14 - Thank You

Thank you so much for your compassion. Every brick makes a difference to bring medical miracles for people affected by leprosy! With a new state-of-the-art facility, the sky's the limit! May God bless you.

(In your prayers at home this week you may wish to pray:

- For Shakti in her recovery and with her further studies
- For the building of the new Research Facility to go smoothly and to be timely
- For medical breakthroughs in finding a diagnostic tool to help see an end to leprosy
- For wisdom for research staff)

As we near the end of our time together, we lift our voices in song for one final time today: Jesus Shall Take The Highest Honour (during which song our offerings are accepted)

Jesus shall take the highest honour, Jesus shall take the highest praise,
let all earth join heaven in exalting the Name which is above all other names.
Let's bow the knee in humble adoration, for at His Name every knee must bow.
Let every tongue confess He is Christ, God's only Son,
Sovereign Lord we give You glory now.

For all honour and blessing and power belongs to You, belongs to You.
All honour and blessing and power belongs to You, belongs to You,
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God.

Author: Chris Bowater
CCLI Song # 451380
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Paul shares a prayer:

"Let's give thanks for the offering

Lord God, thank you that we are part of your kingdom. Thank you for these monies
Lord God, I do pray that they would bless people across your kingdom Lord, that they
may be used to see people who are lost, found; people who are sick, healed; and that
they would bless the community of Blackburn and those beyond there. In Jesus name.
Amen"

Paul tells us that the notices for the week will be shown on the screen, reminds us that all are invited to stay for refreshments and lunch, and then shares in a final prayer:

"Lord God we thank you for your great blessing upon us, thank you that you are the owner of Breakthrough. I do pray that each of us this morning will know your breakthrough Lord, that faith will come arising in our hearts Lord, to see a change where a change is needed in all sorts of circumstances in our lives. We do commit this whole 'Greater Heights' campaign to you and ask that you would help us to fulfil this task, Lord God, of seeing a new research Centre built for your glory. In Jesus name. Amen.

(If you would like to make a donation to the Greater Heights appeal, you can contact Jane for more details)

Notices for the week:

- Refreshments are available after the service
- Coffee Morning - Tuesday @ 10
- Ladies' Fellowship - Tuesday @ 2.15pm
- **(NO TIDDLYWINKS - WEDNESDAY AM - HALF TERM)**
- Fellowship Meeting on Thursday @ 7.30pm
- Film Club - Saturday @ 10.30
- Saturday 16 April, 18.30 - **The Gospel in the Passover** with Igal Vender

Please note the following message from Alec, with his updated details:

"New contact details for Alec from today:

Landline remains the same: 01254-433929

Work mobile number: 07726 348 202

E-Mail address: alecjohnston101@gmail.com

Please send a text including your name to make sure you are included in my mobile database"