



**Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on July 23rd 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 service today is being led by Alec, and began with a video on the screen playing a song entitled "Let go, Let God", which talks about God setting us free, giving us hope and security.

**Alec (after switching on his microphone!) then welcomed everyone, and led in prayer:**

"Loving heavenly Father, we praise and thank you that you are here, as you promised. You said that when two or three are gathered together in your name, you are there in the midst and we recognise your presence with us this morning. We praise you and worship you, we adore you for all you are and all you have done and are doing in our lives and in the life of the fellowship here at Blackburn Baptist Church. Lead and guide this meeting we pray, open our ears to hear what you are saying to us, not the words of a man, but the words of the living God. Speak to me speak to us, all, we pray in Jesus name. Amen."

**He then read Psalm 13:**

How long, Lord? Will you forget me for ever? How long will you hide your face from me?  
How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart?  
How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, Lord my God.  
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death, and my enemy will say, 'I have overcome him,'  
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.  
But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation.  
I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me.

**Alec invited the congregation to join in our Opening hymn, played by Trevor and Judith:**

All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice:  
serve him with joy, his praises tell, come now before him and rejoice!

Know that the Lord is God indeed, he formed us all without our aid;  
we are the flock he loves to feed, the sheep who by his hand are made.

O enter then his gates with praise, and in his courts his love proclaim;  
give thanks and bless him all your days: let every tongue confess his name.

For God, our mighty Lord is good, his mercy is for ever sure;  
his truth at all times firmly stood, and shall from age to age endure.

Praise God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit evermore;  
all praise to God the Three - in - One, let heaven rejoice and earth adore!

Jubilate Hymns version; Author: William Kethe, Copyright © Jubilate Hymns Ltd. CCL No 5664

**Notices were shared by Tony, in essence saying that the summer holidays have begun and all midweek activities are having a break.**

**Our Prayers were then led by Jean W: who began with today's short reading from "Jesus calling" then saying:**

"Let's bow our heads in prayer:

Lord, thank you for this beautiful day, It may be dull and overcast Lord but it is the day that You have given us - May peace and love fill our hearts. Heavenly Father you guide us by day and watch over us by night and In your presence we find joy and safety. Thank you for this time of worship and to sing our praises to you and offer you our prayers. You are a holy and righteous God and we lift up your name. We ask for your goodness and blessings to be poured out on us. We pray that you would work within our hearts and soul to renew and refresh us each day. Please guide our footsteps, give us a hope and a vision for the future. We know that we are sinners and we ask for your forgiveness. Please fill us with your Spirit and may we be full of grace, joy, and peace, because of your presence within us.

Father, we bring to you all those who are affected by wars and conflicts around the world. We think about Ukraine how there is so much suffering and struggles please put your loving arms around the people help them to feel your love and protection and hope. Give wisdom to the leaders of the Ukrainian army that their decisions may keep as many of their soldiers safe. Be with the medical staff who are working to help the injured sometimes under very difficult situations. Lord please work in the heart and mind of the Russian leader please let him be aware of the terrible toll he is placing on his army, the deaths and the upset that the families of the injured and dead are suffering.

Heavenly Father please be with the people in Europe who are struggling to cope with the very high temperatures. For those who are fighting the dreadful fires that are raging out of control help to keep them safe. May neighbours look out for each other especially the elderly and the very young.

We thank you for the privilege of being in a country where we are able to worship you without any restrictions. Please be with those Christians who can only meet in secret and who live in fear of being found out, let them feel your protection around them.

Lord, grant to our King and his government, and all Members of Parliament in positions of responsibility, the guidance of your Spirit. May they never lead the nation wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideals but putting aside all private interests and prejudices keep in mind their responsibility to improve the condition for us all.

We also pray for our local council guide them to make wise and unbiased decisions and that they consider all members of the community they serve.

Now we bring our church family to you. You know our needs before we do. Please let those who are ill and suffering various illnesses and needing hospital appointments feel your loving

care around them and grant them patience as they wait for appointments. Be with those who are troubled. Help them to have faith that by praying and leaving their problems at your feet you will deal with them in the way that is best. We have many concerns for our church and its future direction. Lord please hear our prayers and help us to be still and hear what you are trying to tell us. Give us all wisdom to discern your will.

Lord please give us strength when we are weak, love when we feel lonely, courage when we are afraid, wisdom when we feel foolish, comfort when we are fearful, hope when we feel rejected, and peace when we are in turmoil.

Help us to see the good around us and the good in others. Fill us with happy thoughts and a thankful heart. Guide us into living like you, with selflessness and love. Please lift the things I am struggling with off my shoulders and help me to see.

Father we bring so many things to you but we know that with you all things are possible.

We pray this trusting and believing in you, Amen."

**Alec then invited all to join in a time of Praise and worship as we sang:**

There is a redeemer, Jesus, God's own Son,  
precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One.

**Thank you, O my father for giving us Your Son  
and leaving Your Spirit till the work on Earth is done.**

Jesus my redeemer, name above all names,  
precious Lamb of God, Messiah oh, for sinners slain.

**Thank you, oh my father....**

When I stand in glory I will see His face,  
and there I'll serve my King forever in that Holy Place.

**Thank you, oh my father....**

Author: Words and music, Melody Green Copyright@Word Music UK, CCL No 5664

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me,  
Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.  
Break me, melt me, mould me, fill me.  
Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God, move among us all;  
make us one in heart and mind, make us one in love,  
humble, caring, selfless, sharing.

Spirit of the living God, move among us all.

Authors: Daniel Iverson, Michael Alfred Baughen CCLI SONG # 191468 Copyrights@Words: 1982 Birdwing Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing) Michael Baughen - The Jubilate Group (Admin. by Jubilate Hymns Ltd, sub to Hope Publishing for various regions) (The Jubilate Group) Music: 1935. Renewed 1963 Birdwing Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing) CCL No 5664

Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew,  
that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure;  
until with thee I will one will, to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am wholly thine;  
until this earthly part of me glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God: so shall I never die,  
but live with thee the perfect life of thine eternity.

Authors: Edwin Hatch, Robert Jackson CCLI SONG # 99481 Copyrights:Public Domain CCL No 5664

**Our Bible reading from Ephesians 6:10-20 was read by Graham Hatch:**

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.”

**Alec delivered his Message POWER FROM ON HIGH:**

We looked last time at the prayer of Moses, the servant of God and God's anointed leader of His people at a time when he was being confronted by a rabble of so-called believing people who were complaining and complaining about the blessings God had given them. Moses probably felt deeply that to stop the people of God behaving or tending to behave like an unruly rabble, each one of them, each one of them, would need to be constantly filled together with the Holy Spirit of God. He prayed: “I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit on them.” (Numbers 11: 29b)

And you know what? God answered His prayer- about 800 years later came Joel's prophecy of what God was going to do and about another 500 years later as we read in the Book of Acts Moses' prayer became reality. So I want to encourage you to keep on praying in the Spirit as we now can as a result of the answer to Moses' prayer and the coming of the Spirit on all flesh. It might take 800 years or 1300 years or even just a long time for us to see the answer. But God always hears and answers our prayers according to His Will. Moses' prayer is answered. God says through Joel, “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.” This was anticipated by Moses, promised through Joel and given through the Lord Jesus Christ. And then God tells Joel to say that young men will see visions.

If young and younger people are mission-focused, that is to say they want to share the good news of Jesus, of forgiveness through the Cross and new life through the resurrection; of God's kindness and mercy and grace and faithfulness and compassion for mankind; if young people are like this then this just has to be evidence of the work of God's Spirit because young people generally just think about the now. Young people are generally absorbed and taken up with what is going on now; the next experience, the next event, the next whatever. Young people are very possibly the target audience, the target group for absolutely everything. Markets orientate themselves frequently on the revenue and profit potential of and the opportunities offered to them by younger people. The food that young people are ordering to be delivered has to be here now whatever it costs. The opportunities that young people are seeking after have to be fulfilled now whatever it might cost. The suggestions that young people are making perhaps rather impatiently have to be understood and accepted and followed now. It's so easy for young people to be consumed by it all and the sense of life before them.

But God tells Joel to say, young men will see visions. This is the work of the Holy Spirit whom God is pouring out on all flesh. These young people see beyond the material. They have a special kind of like X-ray eyes or abilities to see like those available through CT or MRI machines; these young people grasp, perceive and understand the timeless wonders of eternity although they are still on the earth; they have a passion to glorify God and make a difference in the world, for them eternal things matter.

The world's strongest MRI machines are pushing human imaging to new limits. Yet whilst researchers are looking to scanners with 10.5-tesla magnets and beyond for unprecedented detail about the brain, young people filled with the Spirit see far beyond that, see far beyond the flashing screen. They see through the trivia and shallowness that is like an ocean all around them. They know even though they are young that life on the earth is short and after that comes endless eternity. They are living in the Spirit and they see it. They know the cost of following Jesus and they have decided to be His disciples whatever that costs. Members of Generation Z and Gen Alpha are seeing visions in these days.

But those around them who are simply living in the flesh don't.

We can be like these young people.

Are we living in the Spirit or according to the flesh?

"Those who live as their human nature tells them to, have their minds controlled by what human nature wants. Those who live as the Spirit tells them to, have their minds controlled by what the Spirit wants." (Romans 8:5, GNT)

Are we being filled daily with the Holy Spirit of God instead of being filled with unforgiveness and hate?

Are we being filled daily with the Holy Spirit instead of being divisive and destructive?

Joel said to the people of God there is going to be a time when the prayer of Moses is going to be wonderfully answered, and a lamenting and repenting people becomes a community of love. And then it happened! According to Acts 1:15 there were 120 people in the gathering, not just the apostles; the same number that would just comfortably be able to be seated in this room.

So what happened? Let's read Acts 2: 2-4.

"Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

God gave these believers the ability to speak spontaneously in languages they had never learned. These believers were Galileans, rough people, basically non-educated people. They could possibly sometimes barely speak coherently and understandably in their own dialects and colloquial language style. They knew how to communicate with their own sort but they weren't normally interested in or able to communicate with others probably also feeling that there was no need to do that anyway. They had their own way of life, their own traditions and ways of doing things and routines and right now in Jerusalem there were only 120 of them. They had also been scared stiff and very frightened because the guy they had followed had died and they were working through a challenging and emotionally demanding period of coming to terms with that and its consequences as he had been brought back to life which they had heard of but not really understood or expected. These people began to speak spontaneously and simultaneously in languages they had never learned. The significance of this was that there was a large crowd in Jerusalem of people from every nation under heaven (Act 2:5). When people gathered, they heard the 120 believers all speaking different languages at the same time. It must have sounded quite chaotic. But as each of the people listened carefully, they realised that someone was talking their language, and of course, the natural thing was to gather around them.

When I worked for Wycliffe Bible Translators in High Wycombe I was fascinated by the grace of God in the idea that the multiplicity of world languages was caused by the arrogant, independent hearts of mankind wanting to build their own tower up to heaven so to speak. Yet creating a written form for as yet unwritten spoken languages, even language learning itself can be so fascinating. Many African languages with their click sounds, (demonstrated!), at the beginning, in the middle or at the ends of words are simply fascinating. God takes even the consequences of the arrogance and disobedience of man and makes a beautiful linguistic tapestry out of the selfish and egoistic mess we have made of our lives without Him.

When Peter gets up and speaks to the crowd, he says as written in Acts 2:16-17: No, they are not drunk. This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.”

All were filled with the Holy Spirit.

This is the Tower of Babel in reverse. At Babel the people were separated by the judgment of God when he confused their language. But here God is drawing people together through the speaking of different languages. It is the language barrier being crossed for the purpose of the communication of the Gospel. Think about how different these people are from the crowd in the time of Moses. The congregation in the desert was taken up with complaining, but the congregation in the city was taken up with, “declaring the wonders of God” in the mother tongues of all those present. It would be like us in Blackburn hearing Urdu, Bengali, Hindi, Yoruba, Nepali, Polish, Punjabi, Russian and Ukrainian as well as English and each one of us hearing our main mother tongue clearly.

On the day of Pentecost it wasn't the fact that they were all understanding each other and thinking wow, these tongues that's really wonderful, although it was a wonderful experience. What was really important was that they all heard and talked about the wonders of God! They were proclaiming not complaining. That is what we should be doing! That is what I hope we are all doing! Not complaining but listening and talking to others about the wonders of God. In the amazing created world around us, in the love and forgiveness of God at the Cross, in the new life He gives through Jesus Christ risen from the dead, in His help each day and night as we struggle with depression, with anxiety, with sleeplessness, with all kinds of physical challenges, and so on and so forth. He is interested in us where we are and longs to transform us into the image of Jesus Christ His Son. And above all, last but not least, He is coming again soon to take us with Him to a home which He is preparing for us where there

is no crying, no tears, no pain, no suffering and no death where we will see Him face to face and be changed into His likeness; and in the meantime His Spirit lives in us, comforting, challenging, leading and guiding, strengthening and enabling.

What a wonderful God we have! What a wonderful God He is! Let's share our faith with others so that they do not die but also give their lives back to God, turning back on the mess they are making of their lives and turning to Him the author of life.

"The Lord is not slow in doing what he promised—the way some people understand slowness. But God is being patient with you. He does not want anyone to be lost, but he wants all people to change their hearts and lives." (2 Peter 3:9)

As we sang in our opening hymn today, "we are the flock He loves to feed, the sheep who by His hand are made."

As sheep in God's flock we are not just here to bleat out or sing joyful and meaningful songs of praise. God says to us through Jesus Christ, "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." (John 10:16)

The Spirit is poured out on those who look to him in faith and walk with him in obedience. (Acts 5:32). Let us as a fellowship do just that; look to God in faith and walk with Him in obedience and lead others to become His disciples and then make disciples of Jesus themselves.

The congregation in the desert was self-absorbed. The congregation at Pentecost was God-filled. The congregation in the desert was ungrateful. The congregation at Pentecost was filled with praise. The difference is overwhelming. Where are we in all this? Let us live in the Spirit and let us share with others the good news of new life in Christ.

**Alec announced our Closing hymn:played (as have been all the other songs) by Trevor and Judith:**

Holy Spirit, living breath of God,  
breathe new life into my willing soul.  
Let the presence of the risen Lord,  
come renew my heart and make me whole.  
Cause Your Word to come alive in me;  
give me faith for what I cannot see,  
give me passion for Your purity;  
Holy Spirit, breathe new life in me.

Holy Spirit, come abide within,  
may Your joy be seen in all I do.  
Love enough to cover every sin,  
in each thought and deed and attitude.  
Kindness to the greatest and the least,  
gentleness that sows the path of peace.  
Turn my strivings into works of grace;  
Breath of God show Christ in all I do.

Holy Spirit, from creation's birth,  
giving life to all that God has made,  
Show Your power once again on earth,  
cause Your church to hunger for your ways.  
Let the fragrance of our prayers arise;  
lead us on the road of sacrifice,  
that in unity the face of Christ  
may be clear for all the world to see.

Authors: Keith Getty & Stuart Townend CCLI SONG # 4779872 Copyright © 2005 Thankyou Music (Adm. by CapitolCMGPublishing.com  
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**We remained standing and joined together in our Closing prayer:**

**The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be  
gracious to you, the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Amen**

**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.**

**We were invited to either go through for tea or coffee, or move to the back of the  
church for a 5 minute time of prayer.**