



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on June 18th 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 Paul C, with Trevor playing the piano, Kate the violin, Paul W the double bass and Judith the flute as they accompanied the singing.

Paul welcomed all to this time of worship, including those watching the recording at a later date and then shared family news with the fellowship. Three friends have died this last week, Jean Eccleston, whose husband John was the Minister of LRBC in the 1990's, Joan Astley, who had been a member of Leamington Road, for 70 years, and Don Bumstead, who had also been part of the fellowship since before LRBC left its original building. Paul invited all to stand as he prayed:

"Lord God, our Father, we thank you for the service of your saints through the ages. These three that we have just mentioned Jean and Joan and Don have been servants of you for many many years. We do thank you for the gifts that you gave them that they shared with us, and we do pray father God that in their passing the heritage they leave will be a good one, and their families will be upheld as they deal with the challenges of losing loved ones. Amen."

Paul then introduced the theme, appropriate for the day, looking afresh at true Fatherhood, the Fatherhood of God.

We were invited to join in song:

Father God, I wonder how I managed to exist
without the knowledge of Your parenthood and Your loving care.
But now I am Your son, I am adopted in Your family,
and I can never be alone,
'cause Father God, You're there beside me.

**I will sing Your praises, I will sing Your praises,
I will sing Your praises, forever more.
I will sing Your praises, I will sing Your praises,
I will sing Your praises, forever more.**

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How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure,
that He should give His only Son to make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss - the Father turns His face away,
as wounds which mar the Chosen One bring many sons to glory.

Behold the man upon a cross, my sin upon His shoulders;
ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held Him there until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life - I know that it is finished.

I will not boast in anything, no gifts, no power, no wisdom;
but I will boast in Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer;
but this I know with all my heart - His wounds have paid my ransom.

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Our Notices were then announced (and shown on the screen) by Tony; including advance notices of special services in July, a Dedication Service on July 2nd followed by lunch together, and an opportunity to hear and share future thoughts, followed by a Baptismal Service on July 9th, which would also include Communion.

The next Church members Meeting would be Tuesday July 18th.

This coming Saturday we will have an opportunity to "Meet the Chilvers", our BMS Link Missionaries returning from Chad. All are invited to join from 2pm, with afternoon tea included.

Paul then announced our Offering, during which the musicians played Dear Lord and Father of mankind, and then gave a prayer of Thanksgiving.

"Lord God our Father, we thank you for all the good gifts you give to us and we pray that these gifts and those that are sent to us through the bank, those that are tithed, those offerings that are given to us throughout the week, will be used well in your service. Lord God of mission, who alone brings growth to your church, send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning, wisdom to our actions and power to our witness and spiritual commitment to you, and in service to our local community. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen"

Janet was invited to read our Bible passages for today:

Matthew 3 v 13-17 then Matthew 6 v 9-15

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, 'I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?'

Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness.' Then John consented.

As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'

'This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Paul invited all to sing once more:

Abba Father, let me be Yours and Yours alone.
May my will forever be ever more Your own.
Never let my heart grow cold, never let me go.
Abba Father, let me be Yours and Yours alone

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Father, hear the prayer we offer:
not for ease that prayer shall be,
but for strength that we may ever
live our lives courageously.

Not for ever in green pastures
do we ask our way to be;
but by steep and rugged pathways
would we seek you fearlessly.

Not for ever by still waters
would we idly quiet stay;
but would smite the living fountains
from the rocks along our way.

Be our strength in hours of weakness,
in our wanderings be our guide;
through endeavour, failure, danger,
Father, be there at our side.

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Our Prayers of Intercession were then led by Shirley.

Almighty, God, we come before you to worship you. We come with all your people in heaven and on earth to lift up our hearts and voices, and give the praise and honour due to you our God and King. Almighty God accept our worship. Touch our hearts with the nearness of your presence, deepen our faith, strengthen our commitment and broaden our vision, so that we may grow as your people and play our part in working for your kingdom, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

And on Father's Day, we come reminded that you are the Father of us all. You have been with us from our birth, guiding, nurturing and sustaining us. Father God, we praise you. And now once more, dear Lord, we bring our troubled world to you. But as we pray for each situation, remembering you are a God of hope, the Bible, your word to us, is full of encouragement to hope, as in Psalm 147 "the Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love "and in Romans 15 verse 13 "may the God of hope, fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" and many more.

First dear Father, we bring before you the Ukraine and the talks that have been happening in St Petersburg as Africans are bravely speaking with President Putin. We pray that his heart will be softened as they share of the consequences of the war with Ukraine. As we remember the people of Ukraine, we remember too the continuance of suffering from the

earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. We pray for all men, women and children in dire circumstances that help will be swiftly increased, and that your peace above all will prevail. We think and pray to for those ministering in Chad and look forward to meeting Brian and Jackie Chilvers, our BMS partners, on Saturday June 24th as they fellowship with us, and we hear more about their journey in Chad.

Two more recent happenings need our prayers. The sinking of the overcrowded boat in Greek waters, so many many feared drowned and so many anxious souls, fearing the worst and waiting for news of their loved ones. Be with them Lord we pray. And the latest horrific attack on the primary school in West Uganda. 37 killed and six abducted. Comfort those families who mourn dear Lord, and made the young ones who have been abducted be found alive and the perpetrators brought to justice.

Now closer to home, we bring before you the families of those mourning the loss of two young students and a caretaker in the murderous attack in Nottingham. Comfort them, as only you can dear Lord, and bring calm and peace in that city. May they seek and find you, the God of love whose perfect love drives out fear.

And now to our families and to our family here at BBC. First of all dear father, we bring before you the family of Joan Astley, who is now in your loving arms. We thank you for Joan's love and service for many years at BBC and pray that you will comfort her family and all who knew her. We pray also for those mourning the loss of Don, and we have today heard of the death of Jean Eccleston, whose husband, John was minister at Leamington Road some years ago. We pray that all who knew them will be aware of your love and comfort. At this time, we think too of those others recently bereaved, those in care homes, those under medical care at home and those waiting for appointments. Give strength dear Lord to all who care in hospital or at home.

As we think of our own families, we pray for all who have not yet recognised you as their precious Lord and Saviour, and pray that, through the love and prayer that we pray for them, they might soon accept Jesus into their hearts and lives.

We pray now for Alec, our pastor, and our deacons, Jane, Janet, and Tony, and all who serve in our church family. Continue dear Lord, to unite us in your body here at BBC that we may go forward in your will and your way. We think particularly of Alec and Jane at the Baptist assembly this weekend, and pray that they will have been encouraged and have much to share with us. We think too of Sibylla as she will now be back in Germany. What a joy to see her and we pray a blessing on her and the family.

And finally loving God, it is sometimes hard to believe those around us, still less the world around, can ever change for the better. We see countries broken by war, people consumed by hatred, thousands living in fear, nations turned against nations, multitudes made homeless by disaster, continents facing famine, and again, we wonder what the prospects really are, what help anyone can offer, what help can possibly be given. Transforming God, may your light shine where there is darkness. Help us to see beneath the surface, recognising you are at work and that things can change. Help us to see beyond appearances, recognising you are a God able to transform even the most helpless of situations. Give to us, and to all people the assurance that there is no one, and no situation, unable to be transformed by your power. Transforming God, may your light shine where there is darkness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Paul shared his Message "Refocusing on True Fatherhood"

He began his message with these 2 images:

1. For those with glasses - please take them off - who has been wearing glasses since junior school? How many times have our glasses needed changing - for us to see clearly without distortion? We seek help from an Optician / Optometrist/Ophthalmologist.
2. Who has never seen a hall of mirrors at a fun fair? Explain - looking at ourselves or navigating our pathway through a hall of mirrors can be fun as we see a distortion of ourselves or a distortion of our way through these warped, twisted and deformed mirrors.

In addition to the attrition of time and health affecting our view and perspective, we also live in a world that often shows us a distorted reality.

"The ability to see clearly is important.

Fatherhood and fatherlessness are issues that are in desperate need of immediate clarity of our focus and attention today. Just as for many of us as our eyes can grow dim with age, so can our view of the importance for the need of a good father within a family setting. Also, the world/environment that we grow up in has a significant impact of how we are expected to view fatherhood and family.

Our world today, on one hand, would seem to want to misrepresent or reinterpret God's word, and at the same time in the other hand, accept a culture that wants us all to accept 'so called' individual self-determination and freedom of rights of every individual. When I was growing up at school, it would have been unthinkable to imagine living in a time when you could lose your job as a teacher for calling a biologically born woman, a woman, or a biologically born man a man. And unthinkable the gender of anyone could be self-assigned, self-determined or change by the so called legal rights of anyone, to be whoever and whatever they want to be, simply by declaring they wanted to be regarded, as male, female or any number of 'sis genders' in between! And many countries laws including those of this country are being changed to make this illegal.

This is our world today, but we are here to celebrate a real Father's Day.

So, What is Father's day all about, well one little boy said Father's day is just like Mother's day only you don't spend as much, and you know he was actually right. If you do your research as I did, you will find that in 2022 the UK spending for Father's day was - £951 mil, = average gift budget of £24.

Surprisingly still the most popular gift was sadly - a Tie. Why a tie - probably because it's affordable and one size fits all.

In contrast - For Mother's Day the average gift spend was £72 (3x) higher, no doubt as the advert says "because she's -worth it" - perhaps that's fitting - I could not possibly comment!

I can tell you from experience - being a Dad is - what's the word Alec uses a lot - "Unbelievable", being a Dad is Unbelievable, and I mean **Unbelievably Good**, and I am told that being a grandfather is on a whole new level, Someone once said having grandchildren is Gods reward for you not killing your kids. Having Children and Grandchildren are one of the greatest privileges and pleasures in life. It is not without its challenges as those of us who have experienced it first hand know, but we do have Gods perspective to help, some of which I will try to share clearly with you today.

Janet shared with us two bible readings earlier. The first from Matthew 3 where we see Jesus Baptism. As a Baptist you would expect me to hold Believers Baptism in high regard, for me it is one of 3 Ordinances of the church (=a Commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ for the Church) if baptism is one ordinance what are the other two? (The Lords Supper & John 13:34 which says (sing) a new commandment I give unto you that you "Love one another as I have loved you ") the Baptism of Jesus speaks powerfully about fatherhood. Through this passage we are shown the most intimate interactions between Jesus and His Father.

We see Jesus acting in loving obedience to his Father, and the Father disclosing to the world unashamedly how deeply he loves his son.

In the latest UK government statistics (2020) 2.4 million children live in Separated Families = 3.6 mil children altogether. 86% of those non resident parents were biologically Male. Therefore = 3.096 mil children are living with absent Dad's, being raised like many of our own children who long daily for their Dad's love and affection.

God the Father does not abandon his Son Jesus 'to get on with it on His own' this passage in the bible tells us that when Jesus came out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended and rested on him. Undoubtedly the Spirit was given as an empowering agent in Jesus ministry, however this was also clear sign that God was always going to be present with his Son. How important it is for all good fathers to be present with their children.

Also, in statistics for 2022 - 2,950 children were officially adopted, with another 1,990 who are awaiting adoption. the average age of a child adopted is 3yrs 3 months. Many of us will be aware of those who have adopted children that have been without parents or who have come from parents who have been unable or unwilling to raise them.

In Eph 1:5 - God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. He also gives us His presence through the Holy Spirit as our Comforter to bring us his peace and understanding "which passes all understanding", the world around us may try to distort it but God by his Spirit promises hold us fast and give us his understanding.

In this passage we see the Father acknowledging His Son, speaking from heaven, God the Father boldly declares "this is my Son". God makes clear to Jesus who his father is and announces how delighted he is with Him. He does it publicly for all to hear. And have you noticed when He chose to share this news of his love and being pleased with Jesus? It was before he preached a sermon, before he healed the sick, before he raised the dead before he cast out any demons before he died on a cross and was risen from the grave. Father God affirms Jesus solely because of who he is - his beloved Son. And he does the same for us as we become his son's and daughter's.

There is a ceremony in the Jewish tradition - on the first child's 31st day, the child is brought to the Rabbi in the presence of family and guests. When the father approaches the alter with the child, he is asked if he desires to leave the child or redeem him. If the father chooses to redeem the child, he hands five shekels (or a special coin) to the Rabbi and the

Rabbi then pronounces three times "your son is redeemed" after which the child is returned to the Father.

The implications of this ceremony are - the father accepts full responsibility for his son before everyone, secondly the son grows up knowing that his dad had a choice to leave him or redeem him to live with him.

In an age where many children do not even have a father's name on their birth certificate, we like Jesus can know God our Fathers acceptance as he redeems us and calls us his Son's and Daughters.

Our second reading - from Matthew Ch 6 is probably the most well-known by Christians and non-Christians alike, The Lords Prayer. I guess we will all be able to recite it from memory. But as with so many familiar words what do we understand and think as we say or pray them."

We were invited to share together saying The Lord's Prayer -

Our Father.

who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Our service drew to a close with a final song - the well known hymn:

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us Thy humble dwelling, all Thy faithful mercies crown.

Jesus, Thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love Thou art;
visit us with Thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe, Thy loving spirit into every troubled breast,
let us all in Thee inherit, let us find that perfect rest.

Take away the love of sinning, Alpha and Omega be,
end of faith, as its beginning sets our hearts at liberty.

Come almighty to deliver, let us all Thy life receive,
suddenly return and never, never more Thy temples leave.

Thee we would be always blessing, serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
pray, and praise Thee without ceasing, glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish then Thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be,
let us see Thy great salvation perfectly restored in Thee.

Changed from glory into glory, 'til in Heaven we take our place,
'til we cast our crowns before Thee lost in wonder, love and praise.

Authors: Charles Wesley, William P. Rowlands CCLI SONG # 1461324 Copyrights: words and music Public domain CCL No 5664

As we remained standing, Paul spoke a Benediction over all:

"And so Father God send us out into the world in the strength and power of your Holy Spirit, to live and work to your praise and your glory."

And finally, we were invited to sit and watch a Video:

"The Father's song" (from Prom Praise played by All Souls Orchestra)

I have heard so many songs
listened to a thousand tongues
but there is one that sounds above them all:
The Father's song, the Father's love
You sung it over me
and for eternity it's written on my heart.

Heaven's perfect melody,
the Creator's symphony,
You are singing over me
the Father's song.
Heaven's perfect mystery,
the King of Love has sent for me,
now You're singing over me
the Father's song.

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