



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on June 20th 2021 at 10:45, meeting once more at Bethesda Chapel.

The lifting of lockdown restrictions has resulted in the decision to meet in person at Bethesda Chapel once again. We still plan to use our YouTube channel to broadcast the services, and will continue to provide this written service sheet for those unable to attend Bethesda. We hope and pray that you will find this outline of our service helpful, as we all seek to worship God as a Church family, wherever we are.

We continue our series entitled "Encouragement in Hard Times." and our worship today is led by Alec.

At 10:40, after listening to Alec playing the piano, we watch a Pre-service music song: Du bist mein Zufluchtsort (You are my hiding place). Sung by the Hipke Family and recorded in Gummersbach, Germany, last year, we will hear it in English as we close our service. If you wish to watch this and have internet access, this is the link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mw1L7KYHFkc>

Its now 10:45, and **Alec welcomes us all, wherever we are.** He talks about the Hipke family, who live in northern Germany, and are a family of 11 children aged between 14 and 33 yrs!! (Only 7 of them were singing for us today.) Alec shares that he loves seeing the trees, on the video, which reminds him of his German home, but we also have lovely trees here!!

"A very very warm welcome, and I'm beginning with the notices this week. Next week, after the service, if it's not quite so damp as it's been in the night, we might if you're interested ,go through to the garden and sing for five or 10 minutes, maybe two or three hymns for those who would like to share in that. We have enough space in the back garden to be able to do that and we are allowed to. Of course if it is raining or windy or snows we wouldn't be able to do that!" (People indicated they would like to try this., and Alec hopes that it will not be too long before we are able to sing inside as well)

He continues as he reminds us that the funeral service for Frank Thomas will be taking place at Bethesda on Friday at 12.15. We continue to remember Anne in prayer, that God will comfort her and the family in this difficult time.

As there are no more notices we move on.

Alec says: "We are moving in an international world today, the pandemic is for the whole world, and I've tried to choose songs that reflect different areas of the world, recorded in different areas, and written by people of differing nations and different countries, and my first prayer after this next song will reflect that as well. I've chosen a song, the words of which are many hundreds of years old, based on the creed, recorded by Hillsong and with the background of Kiev, the Ukraine capital city."

Alec asks us to remain seated as we watch and listen - or read the words to- our opening song, and at Bethesda to sing in our hearts (though at home we may sing aloud), the words of This I Believe (The Creed).

**Our Father everlasting, the all creating One, God Almighty
through Your Holy Spirit conceiving Christ the Son, Jesus our Saviour.**

I believe in God our Father,
I believe in Christ the Son,
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
Our God is three in One.
I believe in the resurrection,
that we will rise again,
for I believe in the Name of Jesus,

**Our judge and our defender, suffered and crucified, forgiveness is in You;
descended into darkness, you rose in glorious life, forever seated high.**
I believe in God our Father,....

I believe in You
I believe You rose again
I believe that Jesus Christ is Lord

I believe in God our Father....

I believe in life eternal,
I believe in the virgin birth,
I believe in the saints' communion,
and in Your holy Church.
I believe in the resurrection,
when Jesus comes again
for I believe in the Name of Jesus.
I believe in God our Father....

CCLI Song Number 7018338

Author(s): Ben Fielding Matt Crocker Copyright: © 2014 Hillsong Music Publishing (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing)

CCL no 5664

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfekXAY66RI>

Alec reminds us that God in Jesus Christ forgives us our sins by his spirit, and wherever we are, he is with us, wherever we go he is there, we've been to Germany and the Ukraine in song, and we will continue to travel the world during the service.
Now we come to God in prayer:

"Our Father in heaven, maker of heaven and earth you rule over all the nations. As we think of your unfailing eternal enduring love, we look forward to the day when we will worship you in eternity. Your throne will be surrounded by people from every tribe, every tongue and every nation, all testifying that you have remained faithful. We will all each one of us see that you have kept every single promise you have ever made. We will all say your goodness and your grace. We will all be transformed by your glory. We ask that we will glimpse that glorious future gathering today. We pray to Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen"

Alec reads from Isaiah 41:1-13 (Good News Translation)

God's Assurance to Israel

God says,
"Be silent and listen to me, you distant lands!
Get ready to present your case in court;
you will have your chance to speak.
Let us come together to decide who is right.
"Who was it that brought the conqueror from the east
and makes him triumphant wherever he goes?
Who gives him victory over kings and nations?
His sword strikes them down as if they were dust.
His arrows scatter them like straw before the wind.
He follows in pursuit and marches safely on,
so fast that he hardly touches the ground!
Who was it that made this happen?
Who has determined the course of history?
I, the Lord, was there at the beginning,
and I, the Lord, will be there at the end.
"The people of distant lands have seen what I have done;
they are frightened and tremble with fear,
so they all assemble and come.
The skilled workers help and encourage each other.
The carpenter says to the goldsmith, 'Well done!'
The one who beats the idol smooth
encourages the one who nails it together.
They say, 'The soldering is good'—
and they fasten the idol in place with nails.
"But you, Israel my servant,
you are the people that I have chosen,

the descendants of Abraham, my friend.
I brought you from the ends of the earth;
I called you from its farthest corners
and said to you, 'You are my servant.'
I did not reject you, but chose you.
Do not be afraid—I am with you!
I am your God—let nothing terrify you!
I will make you strong and help you;
I will protect you and save you.
"Those who are angry with you
will know the shame of defeat.
Those who fight against you will die
and will disappear from the earth.
I am the Lord your God;
I strengthen you and tell you,
'Do not be afraid; I will help you.'" Amen.

Our next song is called All my ways are known to you , which is a real encouragement for us; as we saw in the previous song in Kiev with the people going round doing their shopping and all the day-to-day activities, God knows all our ways. The song was written in 2016, quite an oldie this morning! It is played and sung by CityAlight from Adelaide, Australia. It has a strong beat, and a toe tapping rhythm with perhaps an Irish feel, and we are invited to stand and perhaps clap along to the words (even jump around if you're feeling energetic)- or else sit and listen, or read:

In days of peace and days of rest,
in times of loss and loneliness,
though rich or poor, Your word is true,
that all my ways are known to You.

No trial has come beyond Your hand,
no step I walk beyond Your plan,
the path is dark outside my view
still all my ways are known to You.
And oh what peace that I have found
wherever I may be,
for all my ways are known to You,
Hallelujah, they are known to You!

I do not fear the final night
for death will be the door to life,
You take my hand and lead me through
for all my ways are known to You.
And oh what peace that I have found....

Open up my eyes so I may see
that You have made these ways for me.
Open up my eyes so I may see
that You my God, will walk with me.
And oh what peace that I have found....

Jonny Robinson, Rich Thompson, Michael Farren, Dustin Smith
CCLI 7073327
CCL No 5664
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44mVzqGeS-Q>

Alec shares his Message "TRUST AND FEAR GOD"

"In 1869 Charles Dickens made his second visit to Blackburn and gave a reading of his classic A Christmas Carol at the Exchange Hall on April 19. He was staying in Preston and doing preparatory work on his book "Hard Times". That is a kind of link-in to our theme series on "Encouragement in Hard Times" a proposed 7 week series which Paul began for us helpfully last week by introducing us to who God is, a God of peace, a God of hope and a God of love. This week's theme is, „Do not fear, for I am with you". The way ahead for each of us is to trust and fear God.

WHAT DO YOU SEE? Have you ever walked down the street and thought you saw one thing but looked twice and realised it was actually a completely different thing? You're not alone! Look at these pictures. All of these are optical illusions. These are photos of things we all recognise, or maybe we don't.

1) These look like planets but are actually bottoms of old frying pans



2) This looks a bit like a view of the earth from space but it is frost on a car roof



3) This looks like a rather expensive apartment but it is the inside of a guitar

These are all things that look like other things.

The same applies to situations where we may look at a situation and see it, perceive it as a particular kind of situation and we can react with fear or with serenity, with worry and concern or with a peaceful heart depending on how we see what we see and what we think it is.

What do we see? What do we feel? What do we experience? What do we think?

In situations where we can trust or fear we may potentially have some kind of behavioural block. We may be blocked in fear and unable or unwilling to become unblocked. And that is really OK. There may be a very good reason, a very justifiable, very understandable reason to be fearful. It may be necessary to fear because there is a genuine danger, a real threat to something or someone that is important to us or to others.

Of course some people are always fearful, whatever is happening or not happening. That's probably OK too. But maybe it's not always so wonderfully understandable or helpful, especially to those people themselves.

We might suffer from some kind of cognitive disorder or have perception problems or whatever. Wahrnehmungsstörungen.

But let's get more concrete. EDSA Manila is an outer ring road multi-lane dual-carriageway. I would be rightly scared of trying to walk across it; it's really a challenge driving down it. Or try the Brussels ring motorway and face the same problem. Singapore discourages jay-walking. Defined as crossing the road within 50 metres of a crossing zone, it can cost you a \$20 fine. But offenders can also be charged and fined up to \$1,000 or jailed for a maximum of three months. Maybe then the fear of being caught is a greater problem than the fear of being run over. Whichever might be the case, fear is fear. (Alec tells of a friend he escorted to see Buckingham Palace,, using an illustration to the Victoria Memorial)



How did John get across there? How did he tackle this obstacle successfully?

Because he worked out the speed of the traffic flow and individual vehicles?

Because he shouted loudly enough so that everyone got out of his way?

Because he was superhuman and jumped over?

Because he thought he could do it?

NO!

Because he trusted me, watched me and followed me. Exactly.

Do not fear says God, for I am with you.

You see we have a choice. We can look at the pandemic, watch non-stop emotionally-loaded TV reports and discussions, look at diagrams and charts until we may be literally blue in the face and say that`s really scary. We may listen to the politicians giving answers to the difficult questions they are being forced to tackle and to medical and maybe occasionally economic advisors expressing their concerns and we may be frightened. We may get into our beds at night scared stiff or maybe “just” simply worried about what isolation has done and is doing to our society, its health and its life. Yes there are many good reasons to fear.

BUT

Let me tell you the story of two elderly ladies, both believers. I have changed the names. Miss H. was a single lady sharing accommodation with Mrs. T., a widow. Mrs. T. was always worried, never peaceful, probably rarely relaxed. Miss H. had a simple solution to this. She said you know I think the reason why Mrs. T. is so fearful is that she does not read the Word regularly and trust God.

Maybe she was right. In any event if we look at what God`s Word says about fear and about trust we have a big project in front of us.

Do we see who God is, do we see what He is doing and has done in our lives? Do we recognise that there is no need to fear? No need at all. Not today, not now, not ever.

People all over the place are right now scared, fearful of the present, fearful of the future. They are almost without exception fearful about what is happening and might happen. They are thinking what about their health, what about their schooling, their studies, their job, work and career prospects, their families, their children, their as yet unfulfilled hopes and expectations.

Of what are you frightened? Frightened of being misunderstood, of not being listened to, of not being accepted, of not being wanted, of not being considered useful and helpful to and by anybody, frightened of being considered a second-class citizen? I don`t know what it is that we are frightened of this morning. If we are taking on new responsibilities, if we are undertaking things that we have not tried before, we may have fear of failure or even fear of success.

But we have no need to fear. Absolutely none at all, because God, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, the loving, caring, merciful, all-knowing, all-powerful God, says, “Fear not, for I am with you.”

Fear and faith are mutually exclusive. Either we believe or we don't. Yes of course there is the story in Mark 9:23-25 where we read of Jesus saying to the father of a child who was possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.” Whereupon immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” But he wanted to believe, he wanted to trust God. Do we want to trust God and fear God or do we want to continue being fearful and fear man?

We can remain afraid of failure, afraid of the future, afraid of the present, afraid of the past; we can be afraid of achieving success, of rejection, of intimacy, of conflict, of meaninglessness in life, of sickness, death, loneliness and a whole collection of real or imagined possibilities.

Or we can fear God and live. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Follow Him and live. Fear no more.

Jesus says: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” “Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

OK, so each one of us is different. We are frightened of different things and of different situations, at different times and in different settings. But God says to us each and every one, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Let us seek the Lord together. For as David says: I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.

Psalm 118:6

6 The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?

Psalm 115:11

11 You who fear him, trust in the LORD— he is their help and shield.

Psalm 56:3-4

3 When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. 4 In God, whose word I praise— in God I trust and am not afraid.

Matthew 10:28

28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Romans 8:15

2 Kings 6: 8-23 please listen carefully.

8 Now the king of Aram was at war with Israel. After conferring with his officers, he said, "I will set up my camp in such and such a place."

9 The man of God sent word to the king of Israel: "Beware of passing that place, because the Arameans are going down there." **10** So the king of Israel checked on the place indicated by the man of God. Time and again Elisha warned the king, so that he was on his guard in such places.

11 This enraged the king of Aram. He summoned his officers and demanded of them, "Tell me! Which of us is on the side of the king of Israel?"

12 "None of us, my lord the king," said one of his officers, "but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom."

13 "Go, find out where he is," the king ordered, "so I can send men and capture him." The report came back: "He is in Dothan." **14** Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city.

15 When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?" the servant asked.

16 "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

17 And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

18 As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, "Strike this army with blindness." So he struck them with blindness, as Elisha had asked.

19 Elisha told them, "This is not the road and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you are looking for." And he led them to Samaria.

20 After they entered the city, Elisha said, "Lord, open the eyes of these men so they can see." Then the Lord opened their eyes and they looked, and there they were, inside Samaria.

Maybe you are thinking, what has this do to do with me and with my life situation?

Do you say or think or feel like this? Elisha's life, his existence, his role, his prophetic ministry, his servant's life was threatened. Are you maybe thinking I am fearful because my existence, my safety, my health and/or that of my family, my friendships, my home, my financial resources, my position, my role, my power is threatened or endangered.

Can you see what God did?

Can you see what God is capable of doing?

Can you see what God can do here?

Terrified as he was, Elisha's servant's eyes were opened to see what God was doing and had done. Instead of fear it led to faith and trust in God and a genuine fear of God. A love of, a respect for and obedience to God.

When something or everything in our life is threatened or endangered God may take something or even everything away. But there is one thing we will never lose.

Our relationship with God in Jesus Christ through the Spirit of God may be threatened but I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let's look at Jesus; let's live with Jesus; let's live in Jesus and let Him live out His life and love in us. Together. Perfect love drives out fear."

We can lift our voices in song again - not literally if we are in the chapel but in our hearts as we listen and watch: I will fear no more -written and sung by The Afters (Dallas, USA) in 2018.

Every anxious thought that steals my breath
it's a heavy weight upon my chest,
as I lie awake and wonder what the future will hold
help me to remember that You're in control.

You're my courage when I worry in the dead of night,
You're my strength 'cause I'm not strong enough to win this fight,
You are greater than the battle raging in my mind.
I will trust You, Lord,
I will fear no more,

I will lift my eyes, I will lift my cares,
Lay them in Your hands, I'll leave them there.
When the wind and waves are coming You shelter me,
Even though I'm in the storm, the storm is not in me.

You're my courage when I worry in the dead of night...

No power can come against me 'cause You have overcome.
No darkness can overwhelm me 'cause You've already won.
No power can come against me 'Cause You have overcome
No darkness can overwhelm me 'Cause You've already won
You're my courage when I worry in the dead of night....

Songwriters: Jason Ingram / Joshua Havens / Matt Fuqua / Jordan Mohilowski / Dan Ostebo
I Will Fear No More lyrics © So Essential Tunes, All Essential Music, Be Essential Songs.
CCL No 5664
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMmbJlWhtk>

Alec shares this Testimony, written and shared on the internet:

“My mum had a massive stroke a week ago... I was forced to leave her the next day, completely catatonic, at the hospital (because of Covid-19 CDC guidelines). I turned on the radio and said "God, speak to me," and this song came on. It's my anthem now. It's like it was written for me, for this moment. It's getting me through this horrendous time, and she is making miraculous improvements that defy any odds.

They said she may not understand language again, and she was laughing at sarcasm in 3 days.

They said she may never speak, and she spoke in 4 days.

They said she may never move her right side, and she's moved both her right arm and leg, just a tiny bit.

It's going to be a long terrifying road, but I will trust you Lord, I will fear no more.”

Our Prayers are led by Victor, our newest church member who begins by inviting us first to join in a Responsive reading of Psalm 91, reading alternate verses.

- 1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High**
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.[a]
- 2 I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress,**
my God, in whom I trust.”
- 3 Surely he will save you**
from the fowler’s snare
and from the deadly pestilence.
- 4 He will cover you with his feathers,**
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.
- 5 You will not fear the terror of night,**
nor the arrow that flies by day,
- 6 nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,**
nor the plague that destroys at midday.
- 7 A thousand may fall at your side,**

ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.

8 You will only observe with your eyes

and see the punishment of the wicked.

9 If you say, "The Lord is my refuge,"

and you make the Most High your dwelling,

10 no harm will overtake you,

no disaster will come near your tent.

11 For he will command his angels concerning you

to guard you in all your ways;

12 they will lift you up in their hands,

so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

13 You will tread on the lion and the cobra;

you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

14 "Because he [b] loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him;

I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.

15 He will call on me, and I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble,

I will deliver him and honour him.

16 With long life I will satisfy him

and show him my salvation."

"O God, our Father, We come to you today, interceding for our world, acknowledging that all is not as it should be, but we are most grateful, that through it all your mercies endure forever.

In a moment of serenity, we present unto you today everything that bows down our hearts, all the worrisome news and complicated situations in our own lives, those of our families, our church and our community.

Lord, you know all the hurts we silently carry with us in our hearts.

And Jesus, you know the tribulation of a world that is far from flawless.

You know the tears of the aggrieved, the righteous fury in the fights against poverty, injustice, corruption and human greed, the uncertainty of a pandemic.

This crisis has brought us up short, Lord, overturning our way of life, shattering our security, leaving us feeling vulnerable, scared, alone – concerned for our welfare, wary of the future.

Let us remember, Lord, that for many in our world, this is not the exception but the norm, millions have grown used to living with the constant threat of life-threatening diseases— malaria, typhoid, HIV, cholera and so on.

Lord come to our aid, through all we are wrestling with now, to understand and empathise with what too many wrestle with day-by-day, to realise how privileged we are and to resolve to help build a fairer, more caring world for all.

See us through this difficult time, we ask you, and also through the time beyond, and the challenges it will surely bring.

Although it is expedient that we remember the needs of the wider world, we also have concerns within our own church family. We remember everyone who is ill, and the ones who have any planned hospital appointments, that it shall go well and you shall stretch your healing power unto all so that they shall experience your divine power.

Whether our prayers are audibly uttered or silently mumbled from our hearts, we bring them to you, however less-eloquent we feel they are; we commit ourselves, our loved ones, and the world beyond, into your safe hands, in Christ Jesus name, Amen".

We bring our service to a close as we watch and listen to our final song today, a repeat of the first song we heard but as promised, in English!, although as this version has been recorded by Selah, so we will get Brazilian pronunciations. We've been all over the world and we come back to the same point, that *God* is the one whom we can trust.

You are my hiding place,
you always fill my heart with songs of deliverance
whenever I am afraid, I will trust in you,
I will trust in you,
let the weak say I am strong in the strength of the Lord.

Songwriters: Michael James Ledner
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CCLi song No 21442
CCL No 5664
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISW5xMKRdSU>

Alec leads us as we share The Grace together:

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 hope you'll be able to join us for virtual fellowship: Sundays at 11.45, Meeting ID: 962 5576 8258, Passcode: 491306. Prayer meeting on Thursdays at 7.30pm. Meeting ID: 923 9680 7071, Passcode: 411034 Its very easy to join on the phone, and it would be lovely to hear your voices again! **Just ring 02034 815237, then use the ID and password as above when you are prompted.**