



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on March 3rd 2024 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 Communion service today is being led by Alec. especially those here for the first time, and again said how grateful we were to be in this building, thanks to the gracious God who had given it to us, and had come to worship the living God, who is Lord of the church. What an honour and privilege it is to be here, and led by the musicians (following some laughter as Alec introduced them) we joined in our **Opening hymn**, sung to the Londonderry Air.

Lord of the church we pray for our renewing, Christ over all our undivided aim.  
Fire of the Spirit, burn for our enduing, wind of the Spirit, fan the living flame.  
We turn to Christ amid our fear and failing, the will that lacks the courage to be free,  
the weary labours all but unavailing to bring us nearer what a church should be.

Lord of the church we seek a Father's blessing, a true repentance and a faith restored,  
a swift obedience and a new possessing filled with the Holy Spirit of the Lord.  
We turn to Christ from all our restless striving, unnumbered voices with a single prayer-  
the living water for our souls' reviving in Christ to live and love and serve and care.

Lord of the church we long for our uniting, true to one calling, by one vision stirred;  
one cross proclaiming and one creed reciting, one in the truth of Jesus and His word.  
So lead us on till toil and trouble ended one church triumphant one new song shall sing -  
to praise His glory, risen and ascended Christ over all the everlasting King.

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**Notices were shared by Tony**, reminding us of the Special Church Meeting today. Next Sunday is Mothering Sunday. The following weekend we have the opportunity to hear Alec report on his visit to India on Saturday 16th, before a Church members Meeting the next day, after the service, during which Andrei, From the New Life International Church, will share his message.

**Alec then led Communion, assisted by Tony and Jane.**

**The apostle Paul tells us of the institution of the Lord's Supper:**

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you,  
that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread,  
and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,  
'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**Tony shared a prayer of thanksgiving for the bread and wine, before the elements were distributed, during which time Graham played a guitar solo.**

Behold the Lamb who bears our sins away, slain for us: and we remember:  
The promise made that all who come in faith find forgiveness at the cross.

**So we share in this Bread of life, and we drink of His sacrifice,  
as a sign of our bonds of peace around the table of the King.**

The body of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, torn for you: eat and remember  
the wounds that heal, the death that brings us life, paid the price to make us one.

**So we share in this Bread of Life....**

The blood that cleanses every stain of sin, shed for you: drink and remember  
he drained death's cup that all may enter in to receive the life of God.

**So we share in this Bread of Life...**

And so with thankfulness and faith we rise to respond: and to remember  
our call to follow in the steps of Christ as His body here on earth.

**As we share in His suffering, we proclaim: Christ will come again!**

**And we'll join in the feast of heaven around the table of the King.**

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**Our Prayers were led by Brenda:**

Before we join in prayer together, I thought we would look at a few photos to focus our minds on of some of the things we might mention as we pray. Some we will want to thank God for but others are things of concern to bring before him.

**Slide 1** friends holding hands, a television. books, food in a supermarket, spring flowers and grass, hills and sky.

**Slide 2** broken down buildings, names of hostages, a Ukrainian tank, a ship on fire, a persecuted Christian, Leprosy Mission and BMS logos, the world watch list of threat to Christians.

**Slide 3** Blackburn Town Hall to remind us of our town, the King and Queen, the Prime Minister, the House of Commons, neighbours together, inside and outside our church here.

**Slide 4** a large forest fire or could be any fire, a family problem, a mental trauma, money worries, NHS and our hospital, here floods

Please join with me now as we pray thoughtfully and reverently together in a Responsive Prayer which is on the screen. I will read the words in black and then all respond together in reading the bold words.

Heavenly Father, following our Communion Service, we continue to bring our praise and thanks to You and to ask for your help as we bring our intercessions before You.

**We give You praise and thank You that we can rely on You for the firm guidance and**

strength You give, and for Your comfort and peace as we go through life. Most of all, we thank You for Jesus and the way He died on the cross for our forgiveness.

Another week has gone by and many good things have happened to us and there have been times of rejoicing and smiling.

**Thank you for good news, for meetings and other contacts with friends and family and for our food and home comforts. Thank you for books to read, interesting TV programmes and other hobbies and interests that we enjoy. Thank you for the rain and sunshine and the beauty of the world around and the amazing design of each living thing.**

However there have been times when we have not worshipped You as we should, when we have made omissions and done or said the wrong things.

**We ask, sincerely, that You will forgive us, Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus, Your Son, and help us to do better in the future, as we trust in You.**

We think of the nations of the world today and all that is happening in the cities, towns, villages and the countryside. There are good things, but much loss and grief, as wars and persecution continue in many places. Fires rage, floods overwhelm and there is strife and pain in families and among neighbours and no way to pay the bills.

**Lord God, we pray for those who are suffering at this time in so many ways. We ask for ceasefire leading to peaceful settlement, release of hostages and comfort and help for those in distress and pain of all kinds. May solutions for climate change continue to help improve conditions.**

We bring before You our government and leaders at this time and our MPs, some under terrible threat. But our thoughts also go to the leaders and governments of all nations, some who try to be upright and true, but some who are corrupt and cruel and self seeking.

**We give thanks to You for the good and faithful ones and ask for a real change in heart and a much better vision for those who seek violence, persecution and destruction and are full of their own importance.**

There are many leaders in other places, in towns, churches, schools, businesses and all sorts of groups.

**Heavenly Father, may wisdom and kindness be shown by all those who have responsibility for the welfare of others.**

We pray for our town of Blackburn, the leaders and all the people who live in the area.

**May we live together in peace and harmony, seeking to help our neighbours.**

There are continued challenges and disruption in our Health Service as there are so many seeking help and needing ambulances and care. The staff are tired and overworked and there are many workers in other fields as well asking for more pay and better conditions.

**May there be guidance from You, Lord, to those trying to answer the problems and a way found to improve things and deal fairly with all these issues.**

Heavenly Father there are many people, who we are all thankful for, who give their time, their knowledge and financial support to all kinds of Christian and other charities.

**We thank You for all those involved and especially pray for the ongoing work of the Baptist Missionary Society, The Leprosy Mission and other charities supported by us together as a church group.**

Many we know, some here today, are in special need at this time. Some are not well and have long term problems whilst also waiting for treatment, others are coping with bereavement

and family problems. There are difficult decisions to make sometimes and problems to solve.

**We ask for Your presence with those in particular need at this time and who have challenges in all sorts of ways. Almighty God, give comfort to the suffering, guidance where needed and confidence to rely on You while reaching out into the unknown.**

We think of our church here. There are many involved in the smooth running of our worship, outreach and activities and much goes on behind the scenes, planning and arranging.

**Lord, we thank You for our Leadership Team and all who help in whatever way they are able - managing the property and finance, in the kitchen, making music, caring for others and in many other ways. May all feel encouraged, appreciated and upheld and may we all help in doing this.**

We pray especially for our fellowship today, as we gather afterwards for lunch and chat.

**Lord, may we have an enjoyable and productive time as we discuss how we can best go on into the future, under Your guidance. Please be close to us all and show us the way You want us to go.**

We pray that Your presence will be with us and we will feel Your comfort and inspiration as we continue in worship together. May we listen to and understand your message for us today.

**Lord, please inspire us to go into the coming week ready to serve You and do Your will. We ask all these prayers in the name of Jesus, Your Son and our Saviour. Amen.**

We have just spoken to God in prayer and now we are going to ask Him to speak to us, as the **music group lead us in singing 'Speak O Lord as we come to You to receive the food of Your Holy Word':**

Speak, O Lord, as we come to you to receive the food of your holy word.  
Take your truth, plant it deep in us; shape and fashion us in your likeness,  
that the light of Christ might be seen today in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.  
Speak, O Lord, and fulfil in us all your purposes, for your glory.

Teach us Lord full obedience, holy reverence, true humility.  
Test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity.  
Cause our faith to rise cause our eyes to see, your majestic love and authority.  
Words of power that can never fail; let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds; help us grasp the heights of your plans for us.  
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time, that will echo down through eternity.  
And by grace we'll stand on your promises; and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.  
Speak, O Lord, 'til your church is built and the earth is filled with your glory.

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Alec divided his message into 3 this week, and shared the first:

### **SLOT 1 " The humble leader"**

You might miss it. You might not see it.

The words are written in brackets in v. 3

But you may say, just a minute, wasn't Moses a murderer?

Yes he was, (Exodus 2:11-12). But he fled to a place called Midian where he met with God or more accurately God revealed Himself to Moses.

HAS GOD REVEALED HIMSELF TO YOU? ARE YOU TRYING TO HIDE THE MESS YOU HAVE MADE OF YOUR LIFE FROM HIM? CALL ON GOD TODAY TO HEAR YOU AND FORGIVE YOU. HE CALLS YOU TO FOLLOW HIM.

God said to Moses, "Go; I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." (Exodus 3:10)

Moses didn't believe he was worthy of God using him for such a mission. In response to God's request, He asked Him, "Who am I? Why would you send me to go before Pharaoh? And what makes you think I could bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? No, God. You've got the wrong guy!" (See Exodus 3:11).

God told Moses that He would be with him, but Moses remained unconvinced that he was the right man for the job, even after God provided him with miracles to confirm to the people that God had sent him. Moses wanted God to send someone else, but God refused, allowing only Aaron, Moses' brother, to go with him. Eventually, Moses complied and prepared to leave Midian to go to Egypt. (See Exodus 3:1-21)

WHEN GOD CALLS US TO DO SOMETHING DO WE SAY HERE I AM; SEND SOMEBODY ELSE?

DO WE FEEL UNWORTHY AND UNSUITABLE, UNSURE AND WEAK? OR DO WE FIX OUR EYES ON GOD AND OBEY?

Moses obeyed God and led Israel out of Egypt through the Red Sea and into the wilderness. He had a really great job!

2.5 million complaining people for 40 years in a scorching hot desert. Few leaders would cope with that, but Moses did; in God's strength alone.

Moses leadership qualities included humility, empathy and heroism, but also patience, self-reflection, charisma, wisdom and others. Although few have all of these traits, humility is one that stands out.

Despite Moses' success as a leader, he also had human imperfections such as a temper, a speech impediment, fear and self-doubt. Yet, rather than representing weaknesses, these human flaws ultimately contributed to his leadership ability because he had to struggle with them and, in many cases, transcend them.

As God buried Moses in the final chapters of Deuteronomy 34, there's a great statement that sums up Moses' life:

"Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, who did all those signs and wonders the LORD sent him to do in Egypt—to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land. For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel" (Deuteronomy 34:10-12).

Despite his position of leadership, Moses was known for his humility. God showed Moses how to lead his people to the promised land. God will always make a way. Don Moen wrote:

"God will make a way where there seems to be no way  
He works in ways we cannot see, He will make a way for me.  
He will be my guide, hold me closely to his side  
with love & strength for each new day, He will make a way"

God is a way maker

God is our Waymaker. God is working behind the scenes in our lives and He has a good plan and a purpose for each of us in His church, the Body of Christ on earth.

“This is what the Lord says, He who makes a way through the sea and a path through the mighty waters” (Isaiah 43:16)

You might not see Him at work yet but just trust that God is making a way through the wilderness and He promises to make rivers in your desert to refresh you and sustain you. God promises to make a way through the storms of your life and to pave a pathway through the mighty waters that threaten to overwhelm you. God say once again:

"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." Isaiah 43:19

Moses, a towering figure in the Bible and a leader of the Israelites during their Exodus from Egypt, is a perfect example of humility.

From the burning bush encounter, where he questioned his worthiness to lead, to his intercession for the rebellious Israelites even when they provoked his anger, Moses consistently placed his trust in God's guidance and wisdom above his own. His unwavering commitment to serving God and his people without seeking personal glory is an enduring testament to the transformative power of humility.

Moses was a man of questions. ...

Moses was sensitive to the needs of others. ...

Moses stuck to a task he knew he wouldn't complete. ...

Moses prayed like his ministry depended on it...

Moses was the humblest of all. ...

**We joined together singing:**

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,

And we pray that all unity may one day be restored:

**and they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,  
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.**

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,  
we will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,  
and together we'll spread the news that God is in our land:

**and they'll know we are Christians...**

We will work with each other, we will work side by side,  
we will work with each other, we will work side by side,  
and we'll guard each man's dignity and save each man's pride:

**and they'll know we are Christians...**

All praise to the Father, from whom all things come;  
and all praise to Christ Jesus, His only Son.  
and all praise to the Spirit who makes us one.

**And they'll know we are Christians by our love,**

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**Alec continued: SLOT 2 "The humble preacher"**

John recognised his role as a forerunner to Jesus and humbly acknowledged his unworthiness. John's role was to preach the good news that salvation through the name of Jesus was on the way.

God came in human form to show us how to be part of the Kingdom of God. John is one of the great examples of humility the Bible gives us. John lived his life to the glory of God. His humility shines through as he recognizes his role in preparing the way for the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

When questioned about his identity and whether he is the long-awaited Christ, John responds with utmost humility, declaring that he is not the Christ but rather "a voice crying out in the wilderness" to make straight the way of the Lord.

John's deep heartfelt recognition and acceptance of his position, plus his willingness to decrease so that Christ may increase shine out as an example of the essence of humility.

He directs all attention to the One who is to come, emphasizing the importance of selflessness and surrender to God's divine plan. John the Baptist's humility is a timeless lesson, reminding us to humbly embrace our roles in God's grand design and point others to the true source of salvation.

John the Baptist was humble because he used his life as a ministry to others.

John the Baptist was humble because he closed his mouth to complaining.

John the Baptist was humble because he closed his heart to self-seeking.

John the Baptist was humble because he opened his will to God's.

John the Baptist was humble because he opened his eyes to Christ.

John the Baptist was humble because he opened his heart to spend much time in prayer.

John the Baptist was humble because he opened his mouth to praise.

### **We sang again:**

Lord, the light of your love is shining, in the midst of the darkness, shining -  
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us, set us free by the truth you now bring us,  
shine on me, shine on me

**Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory.**

**Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.**

**Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy,**

**send forth your word, Lord, and let there be light.**

Lord, I come to your awesome presence, from the shadows into your radiance,  
by the blood I may enter your brightness, search me, try me, consume all my darkness,  
shine on me, shine on me.

**Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory....**

As we gaze on your kingly brightness so our faces display your likeness,  
ever changing from glory to glory, mirrored here may our lives tell your story,  
shine on me, shine on me.

**Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory....**

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**The Bible reading, Luke 18:9-14 was shared by Graham:**

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

### **Alec spoke again: SLOT 3 "The humble worker"**

Jesus taught about humility through this parable, emphasizing the tax collector's humble and honest prayer.

The parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, found in the book of Luke in the New Testament, stands as one of the greatest examples of humility in the Bible. It vividly illustrates what the Bible says about humility.

In this story, the Pharisee, a devout and self-righteous man, proudly boasts of his righteous deeds in prayer, while the tax collector, a despised sinner, humbly beats his chest and pleads for God's mercy.

Jesus uses this powerful narrative to emphasise that the tax collector, not the Pharisee, leaves justified before God.

This parable teaches us that true humility involves recognising our faults and inadequacies, approaching God with a contrite heart, and relying on His mercy rather than our own perceived righteousness. It reminds us that humility is the gateway to divine grace and acceptance.

So in closing let us ask ourselves the questions:

-do we know where we are in relation to God? Are we allowing God to show us our faults and inadequacies?

-do we then come to God openly with a broken heart seeking forgiveness?

-do we rely on His grace and mercy instead of thinking that we are right on our own without Him?

-do we realise that humility is the gateway to God's grace and acceptance?

The Lord Jesus said: "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture."

Have you given your life back to Him? Is He your Lord? And let us remember this. If He is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all.

Let us be quiet for a few moments.

### **And finally we joined in our Closing (offertory) hymn:**

**Bind us together, Lord, bind us together with cords that cannot be broken .  
Bind us together, Lord, bind us together, bind us together with Love**



There is only one God, there is only one King,  
There is only one Body, that is why we sing.

**Bind us together, Lord....**

Made for the glory of God, purchased by His precious Son  
born with the right to be clean for Jesus the victory has won.

**Bind us together, Lord....**

You are the family of God, you are the promise divine;  
you are God's chosen desire, you are the glorious new wine.

**Bind us together, Lord....**

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**Alec closed in prayer:**

"Heavenly Father we thank you for all the good gifts that you give to us, have given to us, are giving to us and will continue to give to us as your beloved children. Thank you that you gave your son to die on a cross, a horrific death, that we might have forgiveness of sins, thank you that you raised him from the dead; that you have given us new life in Jesus Christ. Please take these gifts, these token gifts, that we give to you now, with our thanks, with our gratitude, with our appreciation, for your love and mercy for us and multiply them we pray for the extension of your kingdom in this place where you are Lord, and where you remain the Lord and you will be showing your power and your glory and your blessing as you build your church and the gates of hell will not prevail. In Jesus name we pray. Amen."

And we joined together saying:

**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.**