



**Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on March 5th 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 Communion service today is being led by Paul C, who began by welcoming everyone:**

"Good morning!! Welcome to our communion service this morning and a particular welcome to our music group!! (Trevor - piano, Kate - violin, Paul - double bass and Judith - flute)

'Come and be joyful in the Lord, serve the Lord with gladness and come before his presence with songs of praise.

Be assured that the Lord is God, it is he that has made us and not we ourselves, we are his people.

Come this day with Thanksgiving and with praise, be thankful to him and speak good of his name.

For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting and his truth endures from generation to generation.'

**Let's pray:**

Dear Lord God, as we come together this morning we lift our eyes to see your glory.

We open our hearts to receive your love.

We engage our minds to understand your truths.

We offer our songs to praise your name.

Come fill our lives with your Holy Spirit

Redeem, refresh, renew us this morning, That we may be empowered to live lives worthy of your name, that the world may, by your power and presence, see and hear the good news of the gospel in and through us.

Amen"

**Paul introduced our first Hymn :**

Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb upon his throne;

Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own!

Awake, my soul, and sing of him who died to be

Your Saviour and your matchless king through all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of life who triumphed o'er the grave,  
and rose victorious in the strife for those he came to save:  
his glories now we sing who died and reigns on high;  
He died eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.

Crown him the Lord of peace his kingdom is at hand;  
from pole to pole let warfare cease and Christ rule every land!  
A city stands on high, his glory it displays,  
and there the nations 'Holy' cry in joyful hymns of praise.

Crown him the Lord of years, the potentate of time,  
creator of the rolling spheres in majesty sublime:  
all hail, Redeemer, hail, for you have died for me;  
Thy praise shall never, never fail through all eternity!

Authors: Godfrey Thring, Matthew Bridges CCLI Song # 23938 Words and Music Public Domain CCL No 5664

### **Paul invited the congregation to remain standing as he read from Ephesians 2**

"- it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household," - and as we stand in the heavenly places, the audience chamber of the King of Kings - **we sing:**

I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene,  
and wonder how he could love me, a sinner, condemned, unclean.

**How marvellous! How wonderful! And my song shall ever be:  
How marvellous! How wonderful is my Saviour's love for me!**

For me he prayed in the garden and bowed to the will divine;  
he had no tears for his own griefs, but sweat drops of blood for mine.

**How marvellous! How wonderful!...**

He took my sins and my sorrows, he made them his very own;  
he bore the burden to Calvary, and suffered and died alone.

**How marvellous! How wonderful!...**

When with the ransomed in glory his face I at last shall see,  
'twill be my joy through the ages to sing of his love for me.

**How marvellous! How wonderful!...**

Author: Charles Hutchinson Gabriel CCLI Song #25297 Words and Music Public Domain CCL No 5664

**Paul introduced his theme for today as he showed a photo on the screen of**



Tom Woolford- who some recognised as he has led worship for us in the past whilst training for ministry with the North West Partnership. He is now an anglican vicar, married with five daughters!! This last week he posted, on Facebook, a picture from his second daughter, Jessica. The picture, currently displayed on a kitchen cupboard, showed rainbows, a hedgehog, 'what (wat) makes me happy' - (Mum and Dad) and "I have a dream"- to make everybody to not break the commandments!!!

Paul reminded us of the 10 commandments, using his fingers as action signs.

### **The joys of theology from a 7 year old!**

Jessica's kitchen cupboard montage features her 'dream' (presumably from a MLK topic at school) 'to make everybody not to break the commandments.'

Jessica's father continued: One of the most wonderful things I read in a Christian book was about a new convert from an unchurched background stumbling

into a church where they had the Ten Commandments displayed (as is very common in Anglican churches), but who didn't have even the basic biblical literacy to know what he was reading. Coming from a life of serious and repeated crime into the Christian faith, he thought he was reading promises about what God would do in his life rather than commands about what God forbade. He broke down in joyful tears to read the wonderful 8th promise, 'You shall not steal.'

He wasn't wrong. The commandments are indeed (as well as commandments) promises, and Jessica's dream is beautifully conformed to God's own for his people.



**Paul then invited Tony to share the Notices:** Alec is on holiday this week, next Sunday is our church lunch to which all are invited, and the following week is the Church Members Meeting. The Ladies Bible Study will take place this coming Tuesday morning, and as usual after today's service you are invited to stay for refreshments, and may wish to join in a 5 minute time of prayer immediately following worship.

**Paul then introduced our reading for today: Ephesians Ch 2 v 1 - 22, read by Jane, entitled 'Made alive in Christ'**

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called 'uncircumcised' by those who call themselves 'the circumcision' (which is done in the body by human hands) - remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier,

the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit."

'Thanks be to God'

**As we prepared for communion, Paul invited us to join in song, a hymn which the group played through before all were invited to sing:**

Come, thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;  
streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.  
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above.  
Praise the mount I'm fixed upon it mount of God's redeeming love.

Paul then moved to the Here I find my greatest treasure; hither by thy help I've come;  
and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home.  
Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God;  
he, to rescue me from danger, bought me with his precious blood.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let thy goodness, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee:  
prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;  
here's my heart, O take and seal it; seal it for thy courts above.

Authors: John Wyeth, Robert Robinson, CCLI Song #108389 Words and Music Public Domain CCL No 5664

**Paul then moved to the Communion table saying:**

"Here is the table of the Lord, we are gathered to his supper, a foretaste of things eternal.

Come, when you are fearful, to be made new in love. Come, when you are doubtful, to be made strong in faith. Come, when you are regretful, and be made whole. Come, old and young, there is room for all .

Lord God, our father we set aside our wisdom, our will, and our words. We empty our hearts and bring nothing in our hands, because we long for your healing, your holding us and accepting us and forgiving us, which Christ alone can offer. So we come knowing that when we come, you forgive us, and set us right and enable us to be the sort of people that we would otherwise not have been. Jesus said 'Come all you who are weary and carry burdens and I will give you rest' and for that we desire. So we come to this table, not because we must, but

because we may, not because we are strong, but because we are weak, we come not because of the goodness of our own gives us a right to come, but because we need mercy and help. So come because you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more, come because he loved you and gave himself for you, come and meet the risen Christ for we are his body.

Father God, we come first of all to confess for the way we have been this past week. We come here Sunday by Sunday and we want to hear your word and take it to our hearts and put it into practice in our lives, but we know that we often fail. We say things that we regret and we regret not saying things that we know we should. We think, and do, things which if we considered it first, we would not. Where we are called upon to help others we are reluctant, and yet we know that there is no reluctance in you. So as we come and take this bread and wine as symbols of your broken body and poured out blood today, we asked that you would renew our lives in the way that food and drink revives and renews our body, that we would know the power of your Holy Spirit working in us, just as food and drink works in us, that we would leave this time together being refreshed and renewed, because we have the hope that is given to us simply through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and this is what we come to celebrate as we have been asked to. So -

The tradition which I hand on to you comes from the Lord himself.

For on the night of his arrest, Jesus took bread, gave God thanks and then broke it, saying,

'This is my body that is for you. Do this and remember me.'

In the same way,

Jesus took the cup after supper and said,

'This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

So if you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more, if you know him as your Saviour there is no barrier to accept this bread and this wine. "

**As Judith and Janet distributed the bread and wine Trevor played "God sent his son". We were invited to eat the bread as we received it, as a sign of our individual faith, and retain the cup to drink together as a sign of our commitment to each other, in his blood.**

**Paul continued in prayer:** "Father God, we thank you that you have nourished us at this table. We pray for those who hunger and thirst that they may be filled, and may we with them feast at the table of your eternal kingdom. This we ask through Jesus Christ, who was, and is, and is to come, and lives and reigns with you in unity of the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen"

**Let's sing our next song:**

Thank you for the cross, Lord. Thank you for the price you paid.

Bearing all my sin and shame, in love you came and gave Amazing Grace.

Thank you for this love, Lord. Thank you for the nail-pierced hands.

Wash me in Your cleansing flow, now all I know Your forgiveness and embrace.

Worthy is the Lamb, seated on the throne.  
We crown You now with many crowns You reign victorious!  
High and lifted up, Jesus, Son of God;  
the treasure of Heaven, crucified...  
Worthy is the Lamb.  
Worthy is the Lamb.

Thank you for the cross, Lord. and thank you for the price you paid.  
Bearing all my sin and shame, in love you came and gave Amazing Grace.  
Thank you for this love, Lord. and thank you for the nail-pierced hands.  
Wash me in Your cleansing flow, now all I know...Your forgiveness and embrace.

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Author:Darlene Zschech CCLI Song # 3217555 Copyrights© 2000 Wondrous Worship (Admin. by Song Solutions www.songsolutions.org)  
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Paul continued with his message: **Dividing walls broken, built into a Holy Temple.**

"Lord God, as I speak and we all listen, myself included, we pray that you will speak to us through the word between the lines into our heart and into our lives make things clear to us. We pray. Amen."

Most of you know we have a daughter, Rachel, and a couple of weeks ago she gave us a gift - (which he held up). She'd been to Berlin, working, and brought back from the Mauer Museum, at Checkpoint Charlie, a portion of the Berlin Wall, certified on the back! The wall stood from 1961 - 1989, for 28 years, separating East / West Berlin.

Today (2022) 74 Border walls exist across the globe, most erected over the last two decades, with at least 15 others in some stage of planning. Some are:

Poland & Belarus  
Texas & Mexico  
Turkey & Iran  
Greece 25 mile steel wall separating itself from Turkey  
Israel underground iron wall with sensors bordering Gaza

No continent has been spared from the reinforcement and fortification of borders .  
The 21st Century in which we live is a divided society.

And our churches are no different. In Jesus' day the Jewish community was built on a division between God's chosen people (Jews) and the rest of the world (Gentiles). But even within the Jewish community there were divisions.

If you were attending a Jewish Synagogue, the Jewish men would be on one side with their wives on the other side.

If you were not born a Jew but came to worship as a convert you would be segregated in a specific room.

If you came to the Temple / Tabernacle / Tent in the desert, before it was built in Jerusalem, the focus would be on a raised platform -

At the centre would be a Court - with the **priests** around the central temple, who were from the tribe of Levi, the family of Aaron. Only the High Priest was allowed access to the central Holy of Holies, and then only once a year.

The next outer Court of Israel was for male Jews

Then came another outer Court - for Jewish women

You would then descend several steps down, and there would be a four and a half ft wall outside of which was the Court of the Gentiles.

On that wall was a sign,

**"No foreigner may enter within the barricade which surrounds the Sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death." - welcome to worship!**

This is the background to our message from Paul in Ephesians Chapter 2, its what he wants to teach the church at Ephesus- and us.

No matter who you are, whether a High Priest or a gentile, through Jesus Christ you have direct access to God, as it says in v18 "For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit".

We are all Citizens and members of the household of God, and Chapter 2 spells out how this is possible.

V1-3 spells out what we are all like -what sort of people we are.

V4 BUT GOD.....saved us, made us alive, raised us up to be seated with Christ - through his mercy and grace. Then when we get to:

V13 BUT now in Christ Jesus..... He made us one, he broke down the dividing walls of hostility, v14, 15 - He abolished the law of commandments ( as we remember Jessica had drawn and spoken about in her picture) and made them promises. He reconciled both Jew and Gentile, killing hostility as both are reconciled to God - however far or near we were in Christ we all are no longer strangers.

However this chapter is not all about 'Breaking down Barriers' - but also about 'Building on a sure foundation' as it says in v20 .

(At this point Paul showed 2 slides - one of the temple and its very large Cornerstones, all aligned and facing the right direction, setting the parameters for the building, forming the keystone, as Christ does as a cornerstone for our lives so that we can be built in the right way and right direction.

The next slide reminded Paul of Psalm 118, v 22, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone".....a picture of an archway, with the capstone at the centre,

supporting everything on top of it, holding everything together,' 'in him you are being built together into a dwelling place for God by his Spirit'. The whole church is built on Christ and supported by Christ - as a place now for God to live.)

So not only are barriers being broken down, as Alec intimated last week, but the stones are being built together into one house for God's family, and I trust that the unity, the security, the building that this passage speaks about will be something we will hold dear as we seek to be his people, built in his likeness, on his truths and on the truths of those apostles who have gone before us. Amen.

### **Our Prayers of Intercession were then led by Jean**

"Heavenly Father, thank you for this new day and the chance to start afresh. We thank you that you forgive our sins so readily and it is so good that we are able to meet together and we are able to worship You freely and openly.

We ask that You would open our ears so that we may hear your voice. Open our minds so that we may receive Your wisdom, and open our hearts so that we may receive Your wonderful love.

Your world is an amazing place and it is a joy to see how it is coming awake again after the winter. Seeing the snowdrops and crocus's starting to bloom, the hedges beginning to bud, the sheep beginning to lamb, all such hopeful signs Lord.

Amazing as your world is, at times there are some dreadful disasters like the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. It is now nearly 2 weeks since this terrible event. Please be with the people of these two countries. Be with those who have lost family members and their homes and all their possessions. Let them feel Your love and the peace that only you Lord can give. Guide those who have been helping the rescue effort and we give thanks for the men, women and children who were found even when hope for any survivors had passed. May all the aid that has been sent get to the people in a timely manner and be with the aid workers still looking through all the rubble of the destroyed homes.

Be with the people around the world caught up in the different conflicts and as always, we think of the Ukraine who have now endured 1 whole year of dreadful conflict. Please give the soldiers courage to continue fighting to defend their country. So many soldiers and civilians have died on both sides and it all seems so needless. Please work in the heart of the Russian leader help him to see how senseless his actions are.

Our government at times seems to be in chaos. Please be with the leaders, help them to always keep in their mind that they are 'serving the people' and not themselves. That they behave with integrity and honesty. Help them to make wise decisions that will benefit the people.

Father be with the leaders of our town of Blackburn, again may they act with honesty and equity for the people that have elected them. Help the residents of Blackburn who are from many different countries and backgrounds to continue to live together and be respectful of each other's cultures.



Heavenly Father please keep your loving presence over our church family. These days we are small in number but our hearts are full of love for you. Please be with us all as we try our best to live lives that honour You. We ask for your blessings on those who for various reasons are not able to be with us today and have not returned since Covid, be with those who are sad, hurting or disillusioned. Some of our church family are in hospital or have recently been discharged. You know who they are Lord and we ask that you are with them in their recovery and let them feel your love and encouragement. We thank you for the Music group Lord, for the energy that it brings to the service, and we are grateful for their time and effort.

Lord we ask so much of you but we do so as we know you always listen and are able to do such great things.

Help us to keep Your word in our hearts - In Jesus' name - Amen".

**Paul invited us to join in our closing Hymn, and, as we had somehow missed it earlier, having intended to take it after the Notices, we were also invited to bring our gifts offerings and tithes as we sang:**

I will sing the wondrous story of the Christ who died for me.  
How He left the realms of glory for the cross of Calvary.

**Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story of the Christ who died for me,  
sing it with the saints in glory gathered by the crystal sea.**

I was lost, but Jesus found me, found the sheep that went astray;  
raised me up and gently led me back into the narrow way.

**Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story....**

He will keep me 'til the river rolls its waters at my feet;  
then at last He'll bring me over, where the loved ones I shall meet.

**Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story...**

Authors: Francis Harold Rawley, Rowland Hugh Prichard CCLI Song # 2328610 Copyrights© Words: 1937 HarperCollins Religious (Admin. by Song Solutions [www.songsolutions.org](http://www.songsolutions.org)) Music: Public Domain, CCL No 5664

**Paul shared a prayer of thanksgiving:**

Lord God, our Father, we thank you for the good gifts you give to us, and we thank you for these tithes and offerings that we bring to you, a token of our dedication to you; and we pray that you will use this money for your service and it will be multiplied in its effect, as the loaves and the fish were multiplied in the story of Jesus dealing with the people by the lake. We pray Father God, that as we go out from this time together, you will go with us by the strength and the power of your Holy Spirit to likewise do things that seem impossible, but are made possible through you. Amen.

**We joined together in saying, as our Benediction:**

**"The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace."**