



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on Sunday March 7th 2021 at 10:45.

The current lockdown restrictions have resulted in the decision to not meet in person at Bethesda Chapel at present. We plan to use our YouTube channel to broadcast the services, but will still continue to provide this written service sheet. 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.

Paul C welcomes us.

'Good morning and Welcome to our Communion Service and Blackburn Baptist Church

We practice what we call an 'open table' at communion, where we invite and welcome all Christian men and women who profess a faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and saviour, to join us in this symbolic meal, celebrating Jesus death and resurrection for our salvation.

This is not just our welcome, but Jesus himself said "Do this in remembrance of me", and this remembrance is the cornerstone of our faith which all true followers of him revere and celebrate.

So please, pause this video and gather together some bread and wine (or juice,) to join us in this communion service.

Our Service Begins with a song sung by Fernando Ortega, the words were written by a 22yr old Robert Robinson based on 1 Samuel 7:22 and tell of God's divine grace. There is an instrumental section within the piece and, as enjoyable as the music is to listen to, can I encourage us all to use this time to reflect on the words of this song in prayer.

So let us sing together "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" '

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.

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.

<https://youtu.be/FU1u6Lmz27A>
Public domain, words Robert Robinson
CCL No 5664

Judith leads us in prayer:

This is the place and this is the time; here and now, God waits to break into our experience: to change our minds, to change our lives, to change our ways; to make us see the world and the whole of life in a new light: to fill us with hope, joy and certainty for the future.

So Lord God our Father we have come together today, to acknowledge you as creator and sustainer of all that is, for everything in heaven and on earth is yours. We worship and give you thanks, we praise you for your glory and your grace to us.

Lord Jesus Christ, the only son of the father, Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father, receive our prayer.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name.

We thank you for your promise to all who confess their sins and are resolved to lead a new life, you say 'your sins are forgiven'

Amen

Judith invites us to listen to a song as we prepare our hearts for communion: Remembrance

Oh how could it be
that my God would welcome me
into this mystery?
Say take this bread, take this wine,
now the simple made divine,
for any to receive.

By your mercy we come to your table;
by your grace you are making us faithful.
Lord we remember you,
and remembrance leads us to worship;
and as we worship You
our worship leads to communion.
We respond to your invitation,
we remember you.

See his body, his blood,
know that he has overcome
every trial we will face.
None too lost to be saved,
none too broken or ashamed,
all are welcome in this place.

By your mercy we come to your table.....

(Bridge)

Dying you destroyed our death,
rising you restored our life,
Lord Jesus come in glory,
Lord Jesus come in glory.

Lord Jesus come in glory
Jesus come

By your mercy we come to your table....

We respond to your invitation,
We remember you.

<https://youtu.be/XNgsO53aITs>

Matt Redman
Copyright@
CCL No 5664

Paul now leads us into a time of Communion.

Words of Approach

We gather at this table to celebrate Life:
the life of God in the world,
made flesh and blood in Jesus,
embodied in us.

We come to re-member
the body that was broken:
the hands that touched the untouchable,
healed the hurting and did no violence;
the feet that got dusty along city streets
and at the lake's shore;
the arms that welcomed the stranger
and embraced the outcast;
the legs that entered homes and synagogues
and danced at celebrations;
the eyes that blazed against injustice,
knew how to cry
and saw the potential in everyone;
the belly that shared table with unexpected people
and shook with laughter;
the lips that wove stories and painted pictures
of a new community and a better world.

This blessed body
that was broken, abused and rejected,
we come to re-member,
for we are called to be the body of Christ.
And not only at this table,
but in our life together
may we embody your kingdom
and re-member your life in the world.

We share Words of Thanksgiving:

O God,

we give thanks for this bread and wine:

A timeless reminder

of the flesh-and-blood life of Jesus:

broken,

rejected,

yet unstoppable.

In Christ we see

- a life that could not be ended by death

- a purpose that could not be silenced by the forces of violence

- a desire deep within you for the transformation of the world.

As we eat the bread and drink the wine:

we thank you

for the acceptance and tenderness

with which you have transformed our shame into dignity

and loved us into life;

we thank you

for cherishing the potential in us

and for calling us to be partners

in your vision for this world.

As we eat the bread and drink the wine:

we call on your Spirit

to come alongside us, so that

together, in the company of your spirit

we may give ourselves afresh

to the task of re-membering you,

of being the body of Christ,

of living your life in this world. Amen

We Share together:

(Paul lifts, and breaks, the bread as he says:)

This broken bread we share

is the body of Christ.

It is a sign

of all that we live and risk together

as the community of Christ.

Let all who seek Christ take and eat.

(We eat the bread)

(Paul lifts the cup as these words are said)

This cup we drink together is the wine of the kingdom of God,

the sign of God's undertaking for the Life of the world.

Let all who seek Christ take and drink.

(We drink together)

Paul shares a Prayer after Communion

We have taken bread and wine into our bodies.

Now may these hands be the hands of Christ in the world,

may they do no violence.

May these eyes see those who are overlooked,

may these ears listen to those who are unheard,

may these voices be raised for the voiceless,

lest our songs of praise be empty.

May these feet take us where Christ leads,

and may these hearts and minds be open to your Spirit.

Christ has re-membered us,

may we re-member Christ in all we do.

Amen.

Judith now leads our Prayers

"Let us join in our prayers of intercession. Let us pray together:

Lord our God in these uncertain and peculiar times, we pray for the peoples of the world of all nations and races, languages and cultures. We pray for them young and old, rich and poor. We remember that today we ourselves live in a multi-cultural society; Grant us understanding and tolerance; help us truly to love those whose way of looking at things is vastly different from our own.

We pray for our children and our children's children. Teach us who live now so to use what you have given that we do not leave behind us a devastated planet, that we do not leave stones instead of bread.

We pray for the men and women amongst whom we live, for those who share our home, for our neighbours and friends, and for those we meet as we go about our day-to-day business and walks.

We thank you for those we love who make the world meaningful to us, who bear with us in our follies and who share our hopes and fears, our joys and sorrows.

Help us, Lord, to see with your eyes those for whom we feel little sympathy, those we think we cannot love; that we may also come to pray for them in all sincerity.

We pray for those who are in doubt or despair, for those who are lonely and for those who are sad, for those who are sick, for those who are dying and for those who watch with them. Lord, may they know your peace, that peace which passes human understanding.

You are a God of life: enable us to know the life which flows from you in all its richness; renew our sense of commitment to one another; break through the barriers we build which could shut you out of our lives and in your mercy bring us at the last to your kingdom for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen

We join together in the prayer that Jesus himself taught his disciples:

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.

And now we can join together with Kristyn Getty as we sing: Speak, O Lord."

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.

https://youtu.be/my90e3a_nlM

Stuart Townend & Keith Getty

Copyright © 2005 Thankyou Music (Adm. by CapitolCMGPublishing.com excl. UK & Europe, adm. by Integrity Music, part of the David C Cook family, songs@integritymusic.com)

CCL No 5664

Morag brings us our Bible Reading for today, Luke 5: 12-26

Jesus Heals a Man With Leprosy

While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” And immediately the leprosy left him.

Then Jesus ordered him, “Don’t tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.”

Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man

One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today."

Paul now shares his message for today.

"In the year 1527 the Bubonic plague was rife across Europe.

The wealthy's answer was to flee to the countryside for their own safety.

During that period, in Wittenberg, Martin Luther writes a letter to his friend, the Rev. Dr. John Hess. What follows is a short extract of that letter: -

"I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If my neighbour needs me however, I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above. See this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God."

Today in Blackburn, England, we are still living within the Governments "stay at home lockdown rule" during our Covid-19 pandemic. We are wearing masks when allowed out for essential purposes, where we are told to keep away from others by at least 2mtrs. In addition, as a church fellowship we, like Martin Luther, when people are in need, will go to their aid.

Today's reading begins with Jesus meeting a man, who, according to Luke the physician, was 'covered' with Leprosy. At that time Leprosy was seen very much like the bubonic plague or our Covid pandemic today.

The process of dying by leprosy was worse than dying itself. In most cases at that time, the leper became covered and disfigured by sores, the body of the person just rotted to pieces while the person continued to live. In addition, they had to live in complete separation and isolation from others, also being excluded/

excommunicated from the worshipping community, and no longer classed as one of Gods people. living outside of the city, they couldn't even have an animal for a companion. If they patted the head of a dog, the dog had to be killed so that it did not carry the disease back into the community. They had to warn others who approached them with cries of "Unclean" Unclean" or ring a bell. According to Jewish law, (in Lev. 13) they were to wear rags for clothes, their hair was to be uncovered and dishevelled, and their face covered with a cloth. This is the man Jesus meets in this passage.

This man has undoubtedly heard about Jesus. In chapter 4;14 we read of Jesus returning from the wilderness "in the power of the Spirit" with a report of him going through all of the surrounding country, and how he was glorified by all. And how at Simons house many came with various disease and all were healed. And how some were saying this Jesus was the son of God.

Luke tells how this man was prepared to come into the city, where he was neither expected or wanted, to meet this Jesus. Can you imagine the reaction of everyone trying to stay clear of him and wanting to get rid of him? He must have been bold to come, but he is also humble; he bows down and begs knowing/saying Jesus can make him clean, **if he will**. Verse 13 then is remarkable, amazing and special!!!! Jesus could have just said a word and he would have been healed, but no, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him. While everyone else backs away, Jesus shows his compassion to meet his need for acceptance as well as intimate and immediate healing from Leprosy. Jesus does not stop there, but wants him to know that he is able to be officially restored into the kingdom of Gods people by following Moses commands for cleansing given in Lev. 14: -

The instructions are comprehensive, time consuming and significant: -

Before giving the gift that Moses commanded, something else had to occur about a week in advance, beginning outside the camp/city. First, the leper had to be inspected by the priest, who would confirm that he had been healed. Then the priest takes command, to take for him two living and clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. The priest commands that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water. As for the living bird, he takes it, with the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dips them all in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. He sprinkles the blood seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and pronounces him clean, then lets the living bird loose in the open field. He who is to be cleansed shall then wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, in order that he may be clean. After that he shall come into the camp, and shall stay outside his tent seven days.

The ceremony of the two birds pictures the change in a healed leper's life: death to the old way that leads to death, and released to life and freedom to live a new way. In Romans 6:4-13 and throughout the New Testament, we see this concept of our dying to our old self to living life anew in Christ.

On the seventh day, the man was to wash and shave a second time before going to the Tabernacle or Temple the following day, again a sign of leaving behind everything of the old life. Finally, then, on the eighth day, the former leper and the priest offer the regime of offerings ordained in Leviticus 14. An unusual thing was done with the blood of the trespass offering and the log of oil. [Leviticus \(14:14-17\)](#) records that blood from the trespass offering and then oil were to be placed on the tips of the right ear, right thumb, and right big toe. Interestingly, a similar procedure was done only when priests were consecrated (Leviticus 8).

This represented cleansing and anointing of key areas of a person's life, working together so as to function effectively.

Without hearing, a person cannot discern the truth / organ of balance.

Without thumbs it was difficult to perform works of service.

Without Big toes= a person walks clumsily and haltingly and finds it more difficult to remain upright.

The cleansing and anointing of these symbolise being restored to wholeness that will lead to an abundant life.

It is interesting to note that the Bible records no examples of the gift that Moses commanded ever being offered before this encounter with Jesus.

The leper could have just gone on his way healed, and carried on with his life as it was. However, Jesus instructs him to acknowledge and carry out God's word so that he can be spiritually cleansed and anointed to an abundant life with God. The same is true for us today, we need to obey God's word to live abundant lives.

Today we also read about 4 men who were on a mission.

Their friend was paralyzed and these men were convinced that Jesus could heal him.

Now this is the 1st year of Jesus' ministry.

He's been out preaching, teaching, and healing, and it seems that every time people know He's in the area, they surround Him. They literally mob Him.

They have GOT to get into see Jesus. They don't want to wait. They won't be put off. Because if they wait, they might miss Him....

There's no room in the house.

They can't get close to the door.

They can't even get close to the windows because of the crowd.

(Pause)

So perhaps they sit down together and they begin to talk.

"How are we going to get in there?" they wonder.

(Pause)

Then one of them looks over at the house and says "well, there's nobody up on the roof!!!" And everybody looks at him in surprise, because they all know what he's thinking.

"I wonder... if we could dig a hole in the roof, then, we could let him down in front of Jesus."

Another friend scoffs "... but we can't just drop him thru the hole! How are we going to lower him safely to the floor?" the third man says "If we had ropes... maybe we could lower him down through the roof. Yeah, ropes would do it!"

And off one goes in search of ropes to use for their friend.

Now I am sure you realize this is a bold move on their part.

* They are going to destroy the roof of someone else's home.

* They are going to disrupt a session being taught by Jesus himself.

* IN FACT they're going to be barging into a meeting of some very important people who have come from every village of Galilee, Judea and even Jerusalem.

We know the story, they follow through their plan regardless, and among all of the mess and disruption their paralysed friend is eventually in front of Jesus. And in v20 -Jesus seeing **their** faith says –well what does he say---“man, your sins are forgiven you”.

The scribes and Pharisees and teachers of the law who were sat at the front around Jesus, yes, despite the pressing crowds, teachers were seated and students and listeners were always standing, they had not come just to listen but to share their judgment as teachers. No doubt they were displeased at being covered in roof debris, but now have become even more irate, claiming this Jesus is speaking Blasphemies, ‘Only God alone can forgive sin’. Also the men on the roof who brought the man for physical healing, were wondering why Jesus was talking about sin rather than healing him?

Jesus gives the answer –v24 but that you may know that ‘the Son of Man’ has authority on earth to forgive sins. - I will show you what authority I have – and following Jesus command, the paralysed man immediately got up healed, picked up what he had been lying on and went home giving glory to God.

They had all seen extraordinary things that day and were filled with awe. But we know that many of the religious leadership would not accept Jesus authority or teaching and many would plot against him. “Who does this man think he is?” – No more importantly who do we think he is?

Both of these two events show men with desperately acute physical maladies, but in both cases Jesus highlights the unseen but more significant need to be brought back into Gods redeemed everlasting family.

You may see Jesus as an extraordinary person, and may even be in awe of who he was, just like those who were at these two incidents, but we all need to know him for the redeeming Lord and Saviour he is; the one who has ultimate authority; the one who calls us to be obedient to his written word that points to sacrifice for forgiveness of sin and fullness of divine, not just physical, life.

We all need cleansing, because we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23) and we all need that out-stretched hand of Jesus to touch our lives and take his authority over us. If you have not done so before, will you come to him no matter how desperate and helpless your situation is, and will you let him touch and restore your life. And for those who already have this faith in him, will you get together with others and, defying all obstacles, bring, or even carry, those in need to him? For that is our call and commission!

Amen.”

Our service draws to a close as we sing, listen or read: Tell out my soul

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same;
his holy name, the Lord, the mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;
proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and forever more!

<https://youtu.be/vz-FkqobgXY>

Words Timothy Dudley-Smith, Music Michael Baughen
CCL No 5664

Paul shares a blessing:

May the Lord bless you and keep you, may the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you, may the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you his peace. Amen

Judith and Paul then lead us all as we say 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.

Wednesdays at 2.30pm Meeting ID: 954 0425 3654, Passcode: 064246.and the

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 the ID and password as above.

AS YET YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO JOIN US FOR THE SERVICE ITSELF!!