



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on May 14th 2023 at 10:45, meeting at Bethesda Chapel.

Whilst some are able to meet in person, others we know are still at home. We hope and pray that you will find this outline of our service helpful, as we seek to worship God as a Church family, wherever we are.

Our service today is led by Alec, continuing our studies on James, Faith in Action.

As the service was not recorded, this is the basic bones!

Welcome and opening prayer was shared by Alec, leading into our:

Opening hymn "Crown Him with many crowns" played by Kate and Paul W.

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 for thee
and hail him as your chosen 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 love, who shows his hands and side
those wounds yet visible above in beauty glorified.
No angel in the sky can fully bear that sight,
but downward bends his burning eye at mysteries so bright.

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

Notices were read by Tony, followed by a time of Praise and worship, 3 songs:

firstly

What love my God would bring you down to earth?
What king would take a low and lonely birth?
Yet to this dark and broken place you came
to sleep beneath the stars that you had made.

What love my God would send the Way of Life
to walk the road, rejected and despised
that you might know the weakness I possess
and be my rock of strength and righteousness.

**O Your love my God like a flood
as heaven opened up pouring out on us.
O praise the King who came to the world
in his love like a mighty flood.**

What love my God could hold you to the tree
to bear that overwhelming debt for me?
The Son of heaven leaves the Father's side,
The Healer bleeds, the Life was made to die.

O Your love my God like a flood...

What love my God, so gracious and extreme
was strong enough to come and fight for me,
to go through hell and down into the grave
and raise me up to see you face to face?
You raise me up to see you face to face.

O Your love my God like a flood...

Authors: Jonny Robinson, Michael Farren, Rich Thompson CCLI Song # 7073335 Copyrights©2016 CityAlight Music (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd)Farren Love And War Publishing (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd)Integrity's Alleluia! Music (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd) CCL No 5664

Followed by:

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

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

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

Author: Stuart Townend CCLI SONG # 1558110 Copyright © 1995 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

And finally:

From heaven you came helpless babe, enter'd our world Your Glory veil'd;
not to be served but to serve and give Your life that we might live:

**This is our God, the Servant King - He calls us now to follow Him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering of worship to the Servant King**

There in the garden of tears my heavy load He chose to bear,
His heart with sorrow was torn yet 'Not my will but Yours', He said.

This is our God, the Servant King...

Come see His hands and His feet - the scars that speak of sacrifice,
hands that flung stars into space to cruel nails surrendered.

This is our God, the Servant King...

So let us learn how to serve and in our lives enthrone Him;
each other's needs to prefer for it is Christ we're serving.

This is our God, the Servant King...

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Bible Reading James 2: 1-13 Jean

My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favouritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, 'Here's a good seat for you,' but say to the poor man, 'You stand there' or 'Sit on the floor by my feet,' have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have dishonoured the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbour as yourself,' you are doing right. But if you show favouritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as law-breakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, 'You shall not commit adultery,' also said, 'You shall not

murder.' If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a law-breaker.

Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Alec gave his Message "A COMPASSIONATE HEART"

If we look around this morning what do we see? What are we looking at or for when we look at the people around us in this room? When somebody comes in for the first time what are we thinking as they come through the door? What do we think about the way they move, the way they are dressed, the way they behave, the way they speak? What do we feel like when they sit down next to us; or when they sit down on somebody else's chair, in somebody else's usual place?

What do we look at? What is our mindset dictating to us how we should respond and react? Are we just religious worshippers or does the Holy Spirit of God live in our hearts and mould our minds, our thinking, our behaviour, our actions and responses?

A church had gathered to welcome its newly-appointed pastor. The time came for the meeting to begin but there was no sign of him in the building or anywhere near it. Rather disconsolate the church secretary stood up apologising for the non-appearance of the pastor and announced to the congregation that in view of the importance of the occasion they would wait for the pastor, who was probably stuck somewhere in a traffic jam, to arrive before formally beginning the meeting. A steward was alarmed by a strange figure at the back of the hall; a badly-dressed, hardly visible figure with a very strong and even more uncomfortable odour. He tried to direct him out of the meeting room and out of the building. The Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Officer exchanged unguarded looks as the figure struggled to stand up and almost in a kneeling position waddled so to speak towards the front of the room where he was then seen grasping at a microphone stand and introducing himself as the new pastor.

In Acts 16 we read about a woman called Lydia, a prosperous businesswoman taking part in a prayer meeting down by the river. That sounds really good doesn't it? And Luke writes in Acts 16:14 that she was a worshipper of God, this lady who gathered with others at the prayer meeting. But then God spoke to her through the Apostle Paul: God opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. She became a believer; she and all her household were baptised and became the basis of a church in Philippi; they became like an anchor in the work of God in that place. After God had opened the heart of the woman who went to the prayer meeting she became a strategic figure in the growth and development of the church of God in the place where she lived, even in her own house.

You see it is not about being a prosperous businesswoman or a prosperous anything. It is not about the clothes we wear or our education or anything external like that. It is about

whether God has opened our hearts to see who He is and who we are; that we are sinners in need of a Saviour.

Many people looking at James chapter 2 think it is about favouritism because in verses 1 and 9 James says we are not to show favouritism and that it is wrong to do so and of course he is right. But we don't truly understand that unless we are believers; and our ability not to show favouritism comes principally not from a religious upbringing or from meeting together with religious people but from having our hearts opened by the living God to see who He really is and who we really are; through faith and repentance and through believing in God.

What does God look at? How does God think?

God looks at the heart.

Where is your heart? What are the desires of our hearts; to love God and to give glory to Him?

In 1 Samuel 16 the prophet Samuel is called by God to go to the person He had chosen to be king over His people as a replacement for Saul. God says to Samuel that He is sending him to Jesse of Bethlehem as He has chosen one of Jesse's sons to be king. So off goes Samuel to Bethlehem scared stiff that the previous king Saul will kill him if he were to find out about it but God provides a way, tells Samuel about it and Samuel does what the Lord said he should do.

He invites Jesse and his sons to a sacrifice and when they arrive Samuel looks at Jesse's eldest son Eliab and at once thinks, yes he is the one the Lord has chosen.

But then the Lord speaks to Samuel and says, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

The Lord spoke directly to Samuel like He does to us today, right now here in BBC. He says don't look at the externals. Look at the heart. The heart of God looks at the heart of man.

The man God chose to be king was David of whom God Himself later said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.' (Acts 13:22 NLT).

So if we are believers this morning, if we are children of God, if we have turned back from our sins believing in God, receiving the Spirit of God in our hearts and being baptised where are we now in our relationship to God and to His Word. As James says in 2:1 we are brothers and sisters in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.

Knowing that to be true, do we behave like that?

Christ lives in us! Hallelujah! He who is glorious is our hope of glory, (Col. 1:27).

We have been sealed with the Holy Spirit the firstfruits, the promise of our inheritance of being always with Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in Him and with Him and through God's resurrection of His only Son from the dead we have eternal life. We will never die. We will be with Him for ever.

So we share the message with all those with whom we come into contact wherever and whenever, whoever they may be. We don't say, we don't even think or feel, I don't really think that sort of person will fit our church. Jesus said, "I have not come to appeal to the righteous, but to sinners." (Mark 2:17)

Matthew 9: 9-13 describes this scene more closely.

"As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

MATTHEW HEARD JESUS SPEAKING TO HIM AND HE GOT UP AND FOLLOWED HIM; HE BECAME A DISCIPLE OF JESUS. HE ACTUALLY BECAME VERY ACTIVE STRAIGHTAWAY.

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the (religious people called the) Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" Why does he eat with drug dealers and speak with the women in the red light district and with the beggars on the street.

On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice' for I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Do you know what I am going to say now? I am going to say exactly what the Apostle Paul said because these words apply to me personally. What Paul wrote to Timothy I say to you, "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst."

My brothers and sisters, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favouritism. Love your neighbour as yourself. For if we manage to keep the whole of the law of God and fail in one point we are guilty of breaking it all.

That is why Jesus came! To set us free from sin, from the mess that we have made of our lives. The glorious Lord Jesus Christ came; but in order to do that He gave up His glory.

Remember Lydia becoming a believer in Philippi; remember Lydia opening up her house for the disciples of Jesus; remember Lydia at whose house Paul and Silas met with the brothers and encouraged them after they themselves came out of prison; the prisoners who had been set free encouraged the others. Remember this church at Philippi? Paul wrote the following words to that church:

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God.” Phil. 2: 5-11

It is no problem for us to behave without showing favouritism when we know that we were chosen sinners as we were, by God in Jesus Christ who gave His life, who gave away His glory, for us. He was not ashamed to become a servant, to be a servant King; the One who accepts repentant sinners who completely turn away from their wrongdoing.

We are to speak and act as those who are to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgement without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. We need to be compassionate and merciful. Our actions are not to be a pretence, not a staged performance but genuine as part of an authentic lifestyle. We don't need to dress up for the stage.

In one sense the shape, size and appearance of renewed humanity may not look very different from the old, but what comes out of God living in us is remarkable. If we define a human being as someone with the following characteristics: good towards others, peaceable, humble, kind, loving, free and not a slave to any self-satisfying desires where do we get the strength, the means, to become like that?

How do we demonstrate that mercy triumphs over judgement? It is through the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit living in us. We are to be continuously filled with the Spirit demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Only then, but definitely then, will we have compassionate hearts. Mercy triumphs over judgement. Amen.

Our Prayers were led by Jane

Our Heavenly Father, we come before you today with grateful hearts for all the blessings you lavish upon us day by day. We thank you for the beautiful world you have given us to enjoy, for friends and families, for our daily food and so much more. Most of all, we thank you for sending Jesus to be our Lord and Saviour, so that we can receive forgiveness for all the times we let you down in the way we behave, in our words and our actions, because He died on the cross to take our punishment leaving us free to be the people You want us to be, in the strength you give us by the power of Your Holy Spirit. We are truly sorry for the times we have not shown your love to the people we meet. Father, forgive us when we pick and choose who we want to speak to, when we avoid those we find difficult or who are just

different from us. Fill our hearts with Your all-embracing love, so we think more of others than we do of ourselves.

Lord, today we think of those around the world who don't have all the blessings that we enjoy, suffering extreme poverty and lack of basic necessities due to drought, floods, earthquakes, or due to war and conflict. In Your mercy, Lord, please bring relief to stricken areas and send out your servants to bring them the comfort of knowing Your love for them whoever and wherever they are.

We also remember those in our own nation who are struggling due to the effects of high inflation, who can't afford to heat their homes or feed their children. Lord, so often it seems like we are going backwards! In Your Word we read, 'Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be given to you.' We pray You would turn the hearts of our nation to You, from the greatest to the least, that all may enjoy the everyday blessings that You can provide.

We pray too for our own families, near and far: parents, brothers and sisters, children and grandchildren. Although we may not be with them, we thank you for modern technology that allows us to see them and speak to them regularly. We pray for your protection to surround them and that they may know the love that is theirs in Jesus. We thank You for our church family here at Blackburn Baptist Church, thinking especially of those we haven't seen for some time due to frailty and ill-health. May they feel your love through those who care for them and be aware of your presence with them. Please be close to those who grieve the loss of a loved one and help them to seek Your way forward.

Father, we continue to pray for Your leading for our church fellowship as we seek Your vision and direction. Open our hearts and minds that we may know Your true, good and perfect will.

We ask all these things in the precious name of Jesus, Amen

The Closing (offertory) hymn:

Who else commands all the hosts of heaven?
Who else could make every king bow down?
Who else can whisper and darkness trembles?
Only a Holy God.

What other beauty demands such praises?
What other splendour outshines the sun?
What other majesty rules with justice?
Only a Holy God.

**Come and behold Him, The One and the Only;
Cry out, sing holy, forever a Holy God;
Come and worship the Holy God.**

What other glory consumes like fire?
What other power can raise the dead?
What other name remains undefeated?
Only a Holy God.

Come and behold Him...

Who else could rescue me from my failing?
Who else would offer His only Son?
Who else invites me to call Him Father?
Only a Holy God.
Only my Holy God.

Come and behold Him....

Songwriters: Michael Farren / Rich Thompson / Dustin Smith / Jonny Robinson CCLI SONG # 7073332 Copyrights © 2016 CityAlight Music (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd) Farren Love And War Publishing (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd) Integrity's Alleluia! Music (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd) Integrity's Praise! Music (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd) CCL No 5664
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWsZov9KJ_U

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.