



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on May 22nd 2022 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, as we continue our series on Spiritual Warfare.

Trevor plays the piano as we assemble for worship ("An army of ordinary people"), before Alec welcomes everyone to Bethesda Chapel, saying

"Good morning everybody. A very warm welcome to Blackburn Baptist church here in Galligreaves this morning. We are going to begin by listening to a song: "I will wait for you", let's listen and reflect on what we hear."

This is a quieter reflective song from the Getty Collection, and begins and ends ("Intro and Outro") with words being sung to the tune to which we generally sing the words "I'm not ashamed to own my Lord"

(INTRO

Lord, from the depths I call to You,
Lord, hear me from on high
and give attention to my voice
when I for mercy cry.)

Out of the depths I cry to You,
in darkest places I will call;
incline Your ear to me anew
and hear my cry for mercy, Lord

Were You to count my sinful ways
How could I come before Your throne?
Yet full forgiveness meets my gaze
I stand redeemed by grace alone.

**I will wait for You,
I will wait for You,
on Your word, I will rely.
I will wait for You,
surely wait for You,
till my soul is satisfied.**

So put your hope in God alone,
take courage in His power to save
completely and forever won
by Christ emerging from the grave

I will wait for You...

Now He has come to make a way
and God Himself has paid the price
that all who trust in Him today
find healing in His sacrifice

**I will wait for You,
I will wait for You
through the storm and through the night.
I will wait for You,
surely wait for You,
for Your love is my delight.**

(OUTRO

I pray my soul waits for the Lord,
my hope is in His word.
More than the watchman waits for dawn
my soul waits for the Lord.)

Authors: Jordan Kauflin, Keith Getty, Matthew Merker, Stuart Townend

CCLI SONG # 7118914

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www.songsolutions.org)Matthew Merker Music (Admin. by Song Solutions www.songsolutions.org)Townend Songs (Admin. by Song
Solutions www.songsolutions.org)

Interpreted by Keith & Kristyn Getty

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJUqY_6tqo

(Unfortunately we had problems with the sound at Bethesda , so were not able to play
all the song)

Alec continued as he read Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;
Lord, hear my voice.
Let your ears be attentive
to my cry for mercy.
If you, Lord, kept a record of sins,
Lord, who could stand?
But with you there is forgiveness,
so that we can, with reverence, serve you.
I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.

I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.
Israel, put your hope in the Lord,
for with the Lord is unfailing love
and with him is full redemption.
He himself will redeem Israel
from all their sins.

Alec invited us to join in an Opening hymn "Great is Thy faithfulness,"

"Great is Thy faithfulness," O God my Father,
there is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
as Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
great is Thy faithfulness," Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"....

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"...

Authors: Thomas Obediah Chisholm, William Marion Runyan
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Brenda was invited to lead our Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession

Heavenly Father, once more we come before You, and bring our thanks and praise to You for all You have given us, and for Your guidance and comfort in our lives. Thank you that You sent Jesus into the world to be our Saviour and example, and thank you for the Bible where we can read all that He said and did. We marvel again as the spring turns into summer and when we look around we can see the beauty and design of each living thing You have made. Thank You for this wonder. We are guilty though

of getting things wrong many times and we come to You and ask for forgiveness in the name of Jesus.

Lord, we all have many concerns to bring to You today.

First, we pray for our country where many people are struggling. Every time we see or read the news there are more and more difficulties. Rising prices make life a real challenge, increasing mental health problems and unhappiness. People are in pain, are suffering and needing care. We thank You for our NHS and all that it does, though are aware that much improvement is needed to make things better for all. Lord, we ask for You to guide those in authority, especially responsible government members, so that they may find the best way to change many things for the better. We remember our Queen as, with us, she celebrates her Jubilee and we thank You for her faith in You. We pray for our town and its inhabitants, asking that all may live in harmony together and that Christians can take any opportunity to share their faith.

Now, Lord God, we remember many other countries in the world where the situation is much worse than here. We bring Ukraine before You again and ask that the aggressor may cease the hostilities which are causing terrible suffering. Thank you, Lord, that many people have been brought out of the steel works but we pray for their safety now. Lord, may there be help and comfort for the many grieving, traumatised, injured and hurting people there. We also bring before You other countries suffering because of war and its repercussions. Not only is there fighting but there's homelessness, refugees travelling, and lack of medical help, food and money. Heavenly Father, some are trying to work in great heat and their crops have lack of water and some are in living with the aftermath of floods and fires and other disasters which destroyed everything. We hear of terrible floods in India and Bangladesh this weekend. There is persecution, abuse of rights and horror beyond belief. Almighty God, we put all these things into Your hands, as we feel helpless. We do thank You, however, that we were able to give nearly a thousand pounds to the Leprosy Mission from this church recently.

As we continue in prayer, we remember Brian and Jackie Chilvers, our Link Missionaries, in their return to England where they will visit various churches here. We pray for safety for them on the roads when they are travelling around to the places that are planned. We thank You for the amazing work that they are doing and ask that the projects they are leaving behind in Chad may continue well until they return.

Almighty God, our thoughts now turn to ourselves and those we know who have problems at this time. Young and old are confronted with challenges of different types. We ask for comfort for those in our fellowship who have recently been bereaved, peace in the hearts of those mentally distressed, help for those with domestic issues and healing for the ones with health problems. In a quiet moment we mention our concerns before You now.----

Lord, please hear our prayers for those for whom we have prayed.

We thank You for our church here at Blackburn Baptist and our fellowship with one another. We ask for Your guidance as we plan to improve the building and need

workers for this and we are also worried about membership matters. Most of all we continue to put our future ministry in Your hands and pray for our ability to reach out to the community. We ask that You will be close to our pastor Alec and his wife, Sibylle, as with us, they consider the future of ministry here. Lord lead us and them to know Your will for this. We pray for the many things that happen in this building and may all coming here be shown love and find out more about You in the different approaches that we have.

Once more we thank You for all You give us and ask for Your continued presence with us this morning. May we be inspired to serve You in whatever way You lead us in the coming days, as we put our trust in You. We offer all our prayers to You in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**Alec continued by announcing our Offering hymn , to be played by Trevor:
"Before the throne of God above"**

Before the throne of God above, I have a strong and perfect plea,
A great High Priest whose name is love who ever lives and pleads for me.
My name is graven on his hands, my name is written on his heart,
I know that while in heav'n he stands no tongue can bid me thence depart,
no tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within,
upward I look and see him there who made an end of all my sin.
Because the sinless Saviour died my sinful soul is counted free,
for God the Just is satisfied to look on him and pardon me,
to look on him and pardon me.

Behold him there, the risen Lamb, my perfect, spotless Righteousness,
the great unchangeable I AM, the King of glory and of grace.
One with himself, I cannot die ,my soul is purchased by his blood,
my life is hid with Christ on high, with Christ my Saviour and my God,
with Christ my Saviour and my God.

Author: Charitie Lees Bancroft CCLI SONG # 990391 Public Domain
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Alec received our offering gifts and prayed:

"Father we thank you for all the many good things that you give to us each day of our earthly lives, and we especially thank you for the hope that you have given us that one day soon we will see you face-to-face, be changed into your likeness and be together with you in the home that you are preparing, have prepared for all of us who believe in you, and we give back to you just a small part of what you've given to us, asking

that you will use it and bless it and multiply it for the extension of your kingdom in this place and throughout the world. In Jesus name we pray. Amen'

Alec asked Victor to come forward and add some colour to our proceedings whilst reading **Hebrews 11:1-3 and 23-29**, from The Message (NB, Victor was wearing a brightly patterned orange outfit hence the reference to adding colour!)

The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see. The act of faith is what distinguished our ancestors, set them above the crowd.

By faith, we see the world called into existence by God's word, what we see created by what we don't see.

By an act of faith, Moses' parents hid him away for three months after his birth. They saw the child's beauty, and they braved the king's decree.

By faith, Moses, when grown, refused the privileges of the Egyptian royal house. He chose a hard life with God's people rather than an opportunistic soft life of sin with the oppressors. He valued suffering in the Messiah's camp far greater than Egyptian wealth because he was looking ahead, anticipating the payoff.

By an act of faith, he turned his heel on Egypt, indifferent to the king's blind rage. He had his eye on the One no eye can see, and kept right on going.

By an act of faith, he kept the Passover Feast and sprinkled Passover blood on each house so that the destroyer of the firstborn wouldn't touch them.

By an act of faith, Israel walked through the Red Sea on dry ground. The Egyptians tried it and drowned.

Alec announced a well known hymn to be sung prior to the sharing of his message: "To God be the glory"

To God be the glory, great things he hath done:
so loved he the world that he gave us his son,
who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
and opened the lifegate that all may go in.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice!

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice!

O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory, great things he hath done.

Oh, perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
to ev'ry believer the promise of God.

The vilest offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice!...

Great things he hath taught us, great things he hath done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son,

but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice!.....

Authors: Fanny Jane Crosby, William Howard Doane CCLI SONG 23426
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At this point, Alec shared his Message Resources for the battle (2)

It has been written: "In heaven we shall appear not in armour but in robes of glory; but here they are to be worn night and day; we must walk, work and sleep in them, or else we are not true soldiers of Christ."

This was written in the year 1655 and it is still true today that in this armour we are to stand and watch. But we are not so to speak to dress ourselves up in this armour in order to take pictures of ourselves in the armour, to take selfies and send them through as many social media as possible in the shortest time to see how many clicks we can collect and see how attractive or how fascinating, how well-equipped, how well set-up, how impregnable, maybe even how proud and arrogant we are. No. A hundred times no; a thousand times no. The purpose of the armour is not to draw attention to ourselves.

We are to look at and to the Lord; to seek His face; to learn how He thinks and what He wants from us; to learn and to go His ways with Him as He leads and guides us as His servants. It would be a sad irony and a desperate paradox if we came to the Lord asking Him to show us the way ahead, to lead us on, to guide us forwards but at the same time ignore or not see what He has already made more than perfectly plain to us in His word. What a challenge that is to us all as a church and as individual members of it. What a challenge that is to every local body of God's people on earth.

The title of the message today might have been advertised as "Knowing and using the resources at our disposal" but it is WHO HE IS that counts!

I am sure you will well remember the sermon series on the character of God from Exodus 34:6-7. God who is rich in mercy, our gracious, kind and compassionate God, our righteous and holy God, the God who overflows with love and faithfulness, keeping and maintaining love to thousands and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. This is our God.

It is not who God might be but who God is.

It is not what we would like God to be like but who God is.

It is not who we are but who God is. We look to Him.

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ, (2 Corinthians 10: 3-5).

It is not the weapons but God Himself who has the power and the might and the authority.

That is the really great news about this battle. We're not fighting it in our own strength but in God's strength. May He be merciful to us if we think we can do it on our own without Him.

That's why the Lord gave me David's fight against Goliath as our main reading last week. In that true historical episode we saw the arrogance of a man who 9 feet tall with a bronze helmet and wearing a coat of scale armour of bronze weighing 57 kgs. and all the trappings defied the armies of the living God and lost to a simple shepherd boy who had been trained in obedience and simple faith by the same living God. 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty' (Zechariah 4:6).

Remember our spiritual fitness sermon series?

We are like runners in a race too says Paul so we need to be clad very lightly. Laying aside every weight that hinders us. The writer to the Hebrews says:

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

David knew what counted. He had got to know His God. He knew His ways. He sought His glory. He allowed no-one to disgrace the people of God. He would not allow Goliath to defy the armies of the living God. But let's move on!

In Ephesians 6:10 we read the word FINALLY but this is better translated from now on or for the time remaining so that what Paul is really saying here in Ephesians is that the whole of the interim period between the first and the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is going to be characterised by conflict. Because of this the peace which God has made through the Cross of Christ is to be experienced only in the middle of a relentless struggle against evil for which the strength of the Lord and the armour of God are indispensable. We cannot do without Him, we cannot cope without Him, and we cannot survive without Him and the weapons that He has placed at our disposal.

Let's look at Ephesians 6:16 where we read: "In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one."

First of all what is this shield of faith and what is it for?

Let's notice that this weapon is not exactly just the "icing on the cake" but it is not the one and only weapon or the most important one. Paul writes "in addition to all this" showing that whilst the shield of faith is not the be all and end all of our resources it is nevertheless an important part of our armoury.

The shield that Paul is talking about is not the small round shield which left most of the body unprotected but the long oblong one measuring 1,2 metres by 0,75 metres which covered the whole person, (3 feet 11 inches by 2 feet 5 inches). This is known as a scutum. It consisted of two layers of wood glued together and covered first above and below. It was specially designed to put out the dangerous incendiary missiles in use at that time,

particularly arrows dipped in pitch which were then lit and fired. But where do these arrows come from?

The source of this hostility is not abstract evil. It's not abstract evil. If you look at the verse it does not say "all the flaming darts of evil" it says "all the flaming darts of the evil one".

The flaming darts of the Evil One are subtle. They are probably doing at least one of three things:

1) trying to get us to doubt God's Word

Have you ever read Jeremiah 15:16? It is a wonderful verse. It says: "When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, Lord God Almighty. "

Do we have an appetite for God's Word? Satan tries to stop us reading it, listening to it, sharing it and obeying it. He tries to make us doubt God's Word.

2) trying to get us to question God's love

Maybe Satan speaks to you like this. God is robbing you of some good times. He is out of touch with your needs. He missed that disaster you just went through completely. He messed up on how He made you. God probably means well, but since He doesn't quite have everything under control, that makes Him not good.

Satan's fiery darts of lies are reserved for our most vulnerable moments. For instance, when a baby is born who is apparently not fully functioning in some way or another, or a young person's life is cut off in what seems to be a tragic and untimely death, a normal reaction is to cry out, "Why, Lord?" That's really fine for that's how we most probably think and feel and God knows that and understands that. But things like this simply make no sense to our finite minds, so we may be tempted to doubt God's goodness.

Sometimes Satan tries to get us to doubt God's goodness with fiery darts like these:

Why did God make me this way? Why do I look like this? Why do I always seem to get ill? Why did God take my life partner away? Why have my friends deserted me? Is God really in control? Why is He letting this happen to me? Where is He? Is He really good?

When the storms of life are at their fiercest, don't give in to thoughts like this that challenge your faith. Let's wear the shield of faith at all times and guard all access points to our minds and our thinking.

3) trying to get us to resist God's Will

Satan loves it when he gets us to doubt God and His plan! The devil's scheme is to plant thoughts that God's way is too restrictive, but his way allows freedom to pursue whatever lusts will bring the greatest pleasure. In fact, if Satan were to summarise his plan for us it would probably read something like this: do what you want; you only live once; do what everybody else does; enjoy your life it is so short anyway.

The pictures here are not of thoughts that are self-generated or cultivated from within us; the pictures show that which is by way of accusation or insinuation that comes out of nowhere! The attacks and the arrival of the arrows of the Evil One come unexpectedly, but they're not strange. In fact, what would be strange would be the absence of the attack. For this reason, Peter, when he writes to his readers in his first letter chapter 4, says, "Do not regard it as strange, this fiery trial through which you're going." Don't regard it "as though something strange were happening to you."

Flaming darts, whether mischievous imaginations, desires, passions, jealousies, temptations; unsought thoughts of doubt and disobedience, rebellion, malice or fear; the Evil One will employ everything and anything that seeks to undermine our identity in Jesus Christ and our unity in the Lord Jesus. Remember, he's writing to the church. He's already written to them and encouraged them to "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." That is not just or not even a nice pleasantly expressed wish, neither is it a vain hope. And Paul recognizes that one of the ways in which the Evil One would score a great victory in Ephesus would be if he could get them first to doubt their identity in Jesus, and then, secondly, to disrupt their unity in Jesus. How I thank God for the unity that He continues to give the leadership team of this church even in times that are sometimes blessed with a little turbulence.

Victor read very kindly for us about the faith of Moses as seen in Hebrews 11. How did Moses think and what did he do and why?

- 1) He chose to be ill-treated along with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time;
- 2) He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of this world because he was looking ahead to his reward;
- 3) He left where he was by faith, not fearing the anger of the authorities;
- 4) He persevered because he saw Him who is invisible;
- 5) By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

OK Moses lived on the earth a very long time ago and he was really no angel. But his faith in the living God was remarkable. Is that the kind of faith we have?

God Himself is a shield to those who take refuge in Him, (Proverbs 30:5).

In times of doubt and depression, our faith takes hold of the promises of God, it clings to them; in times of temptation, our faith takes hold of the power of God.

In Ephesians 6:17 we read: "Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Now the helmet is the fifth part of the armoury and the last piece that has a predominantly protective function which is why I am going to finish at this point today. Last week I

referred to Isaiah 59:17 where we read "He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head".

In the Old Testament God is shown to be a warrior. In Isaiah 59 he appears when men are looking for salvation and looking for victory and then wears the helmet of salvation as the one who plans and delivers this salvation.

The warrior who brings salvation is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Of all the reasons that are given as to why Jesus came, one is in 1 John 3:8, where John says, "And the reason Jesus came was to destroy the works of the devil." At the cross the battle was fought and won for all who believe in Jesus.

All of the resources that we have talked about are provided for us in Christ, and any potential victory that we have over the Evil One is on account of our being held up, enclosed in and supported by these things.

We are not fighting against flesh and blood. We need understanding and discernment in our everyday lives to see what is going on and to respond accordingly. To God be the glory.

(Alec concluded his message by reading the words of our opening song, which we intended to sing to close: **"I will wait for you", taken from Psalm 130**

Out of the depths I cry to You, in darkest places I will call;
incline Your ear to me anew and hear my cry for mercy, Lord

Were You to count my sinful ways how could I come before Your throne?
Yet full forgiveness meets my gaze I stand redeemed by grace alone.

**I will wait for You, I will wait for You, on Your word, I will rely.
I will wait for You, surely wait for You, till my soul is satisfied.**

So put your hope in God alone, take courage in His power to save
completely and forever won by Christ emerging from the grave
I will wait for You....

Now He has come to make a way and God Himself has paid the price
that all who trust in Him today find healing in His sacrifice

**I will wait for You, I will wait for You
through the storm and through the night.
I will wait for You, surely wait for You, for Your love is my delight.**

(Unfortunately the recording didn't want to co-operate at Bethesda Chapel, and the sound was very low, but the congregation persevered and sang as best they could)

We shared together in the words of the Grace

**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 concluded as Alec shared the Notices:

Our usual weekly activities will take place, including Ladies Fellowship on Tuesday afternoon, at 2.15pm when Jamila Hounslow is speaking.

We will continue our Church Members meeting on Tuesday evening at 7.30pm, as we consider Future Ministry and the extension of Alec's contract, meeting in the sanctuary whilst the informal Music evening will be held in the hall.

We will be hosting Jubilee Celebrations together with St Lukes and St Aidans on Friday June 3rd - further details to follow, and were reminded of:

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement from May 26th till June 5th that invites Christians around the world to pray from Ascension to Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus.

Everyone is encouraged to pray for 5 people during that time.