



**Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on Sunday, May 29th 2022 at 10:45,
meeting once more 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 complete our series of studies entitled "Spiritual Warfare". Tim plays the piano for us today as we gather, and it is good to have Esther back leading our singing!

Alec welcomes everyone, as we share an Opening reading together: Psalm 32 (NIV)

Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.
Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them
and in whose spirit is no deceit.
When I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
For day and night your hand was heavy on me;
my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.
Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord."
And you forgave the guilt of my sin.
Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found;
surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them.
You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.
I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.
Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding
but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.
Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love
surrounds the one who trusts in him.
Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous;
sing, all you who are upright in heart!

We rejoice as we sing (or read) our Opening hymn which Tim plays for us, and Esther leads us in song:

O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemers praise.

Oh for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of His grace. (The triumphs of his grace x3.)

Jesus! the name that charms our fears
that bids our sorrows cease,
that bids our sorrows cease;
'tis music in the sinner's ears
'tis life and health and peace...

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
he sets the prisoner free,
he sets the prisoner free,
his blood can make the foulest clean
his blood availed for me.....

He speaks, and listening to his voice
new life the dead receive,
new life the dead receive.
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
the humble poor believe....

Hear him, ye deaf; his praise, ye dumb
your loosened tongues employ,
your loosened tongues employ;
ye blind, behold your Saviour come,
and leap, ye lame, for joy....

My gracious Master and my God
assist me to proclaim,
assist me to proclaim;
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honours of Thy name.....

Words by Charles Wesley; music T Jarman. CCLI SONG # 863569
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Shirley moves to the pulpit to lead our Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession:

"Lord Jesus Christ, risen and ascended, the Word made flesh, before all, in all, and beyond all, for the lives you have given us, and the gift of eternal life, we praise you. For all the beauty, the complexity, the variety and the wonder of life that surrounds us, we praise you.

For all the opportunities, the challenges, the experiences, and the achievements life off of us, we praise you.

For all the things we can think and do, see and touch, hear and feel, smell and taste,

we praise you.

Lord Jesus Christ, lamb of the world, suffering servant, heavenly king, for the love that surrounds us each day, through family and friends, the fellowship of the church and the inner presence of your holy spirit, we praise you.

Yes dear Lord, we have so much to praise and thank you for, but we are not oblivious to the fact that so much of our lives is not as you intended it to be. We think of the horrific murder of children and two adults in the Texan school. We pray for the comfort that only you can give to their loved ones and we pray too for wisdom for those dealing with gun control. A quote comes to mind which says: 'The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.'

We continue to lift Ukraine before you Lord and pray especially for the young women who have been raped by Russian soldiers. Heal them, Lord, in mind and body, and give them the courage to see justice done. There are so many countries where evil flourishes - have mercy on us Lord. Give courage and protection to all your servants who willingly, like Brian and Jackie Chilvers in Chad, go about your call to love and serve those in need in so many different ways.

We pray now for our government with so much to consider regarding the desperate needs of those especially on low incomes, as the cost of living rises every day. Maybe for the first time in their desire to do what they think is right, they might turn to you and say 'What would Jesus do.'

We thank you Father for your sacrifice of your son, Jesus, and your Holy Spirit who dwells in every willing heart. We pray that those in our families and our friends may come to know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. We thank you especially for the Kingdom Come movement from this time, Ascension to the day of Pentecost, as we pray daily for five people. We pray that our prayers will be answered and that they will come to faith in you.

We remember too our own dear families, and thank you for them, and all who need a special touch from you.

Now to our precious church family. How lovely it was, although especially sad for their families, to celebrate the lives of Janet's brother Tom and Beryl's husband Brian. God of all comfort, comfort those who mourn. We are happy that Don, after a fall and a short stay in hospital, is now back home. We pray too for Brenda, back with us today as she recovers from a short time in hospital. We remember others who are recovering from surgery and those waiting patiently for appointments. As we look to the future after all the hindrance of COVID-19, we pray for wisdom and strength for our leadership as they and we, as a fellowship, look to the future and seek to know what we should do to bring your kingdom to the streets of Galligraives and Blackburn.

We have much to look forward to this week as we celebrate our dearly loved Queen's Platinum Jubilee. We pray that we will feel your presence with us and that all that we do with our Christian brothers and sisters from other fellowships will be successful and honouring to you.

Finally as we learn to trust you more, dear Father, and keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, I am reminded of the story of Jehoshaphat who prayed: 'Lord, the God of our ancestors, are you not the God who is in heaven, you rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hands and no one can withstand you.' Then later on your spirit came upon Jahaziel who said: 'Listen King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem. This is what the Lord says to you: do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours but God's.' May we, who live today, trust and pray that the battles we face, although we are sometimes called to do our part, are not ours but yours dear Lord. Amen"

Alec announces our Offering hymn "In Christ alone my hope is found" , which Tim plays on the piano and Esther leads:

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
this Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones He came to save:
till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied -
for every sin on Him was laid; here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay, light of the world by darkness slain:
then bursting forth in glorious day up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
for I am His and He is mine - bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand:
till He returns or calls me home, here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

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As Alec receives our offerings from Janet, he prays:

Loving heavenly father, we thank you for all the good gifts that you give us, that we are your children through the death and resurrection of your son Jesus Christ for us. What a marvellous, wonderful, unbelievable everlasting gift you have given us. So what we are giving you now we give in thanks to you, for who you are, for what you've done, and what you continue to do in our lives until we are with you, soon, in your presence. In Jesus' name. Amen

Brenda came forward to read John 17:6-19, reading from the Good News Bible at Alec's request. Brenda introduced it saying we've already had a reading and a prayer today, this reading is a prayer, so both combined! It's a prayer Jesus prayed for his disciples.

"I have made you known to those you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me. They have obeyed your word, and now they know that everything you gave me comes from you. I gave them the message that you gave me, and they received it; they know that it is true that I came from you, and they believe that you sent me.

"I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those you gave me, for they belong to you. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine; and my glory is shown through them. And now I am coming to you; I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world. Holy Father! Keep them safe by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one just as you and I are one. While I was with them, I kept them safe by the power of your name, the name you gave me. I protected them, and not one of them was lost, except the man who was bound to be lost—so that the scripture might come true. And now I am coming to you, and I say these things in the world so that they might have my joy in their hearts in all its fullness. I gave them your message, and the world hated them, because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but I do ask you to keep them safe from the Evil One. Just as I do not belong to the world, they do not belong to the world. Dedicate them to yourself by means of the truth, your word is the truth. I sent them into the world just as you sent me into the world, and for their sake I dedicate myself to you, in order that they too may be truly dedicated to you. Amen."

Alec invites all to join together in singing or reading the Message hymn "Lord be my vision supreme in my heart" - slightly updated words to "Be thou my vision"

Lord, be my vision, supreme in my heart,
bid every rival give way and depart:
you my best thought in the day or the night,
waking or sleeping, your presence my light.

Lord, be my wisdom and be my true word,
I ever with you and you with me, Lord:
you my great father and I your true child,
once far away, but by love reconciled.

Lord, be my breastplate, my sword for the fight:
be my strong armour, for you are my might;
you are my shelter, and you my high tower
raise me to heaven, O Power of my power.

I need no riches, nor earth's empty praise:
you my inheritance through all my days;
all of your treasure to me you impart.
high King of heaven, the first in my heart

High King of heaven, when battle is done,
grant heaven's joy to me, bright heaven's sun;
Christ of my own heart, whatever befall
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Authors: Eleanor Henrietta Hull, Mary Elizabeth Byrne CCLI SONG # 1028365 Copyrights ©1982 The Jubilate Group
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Alec now shared his Message "New life church discipleship"

He begins by thanking all those who've helped with the service, and sends warm greetings from his wife Sibyl, who is working a night shift and so cannot listen directly from his mobile today.

"I am sure we are looking forward to the platinum jubilee celebrations on the coming weekend. God willing on Friday here at BBC from 4 pm we will be hosting St. Luke`s, St. Aidan`s and the Russian-speaking New Life International Church. We have had some challenges putting together the risk assessment for that but Rebecca has almost sorted that now.

In the context of our series on spiritual warfare I have been wondering what kind of risk assessment our adversary Satan might have made for our worship service and gathering this morning. I don`t mean with the entrances, exits, chairs und such paraphernalia. I am not even making for me a relatively indirect hint at the challenges that we have been having with the sound system, though I do take the opportunity once again to thank all those involved in identifying and helping with solving the problems.

But what does Satan`s risk assessment for the content of this worship service look like? Maybe it reads something like this?

- 1) The living God, the Lord Almighty, will speak to everybody present. HIGH RISK
- 2) The likelihood that some people will close their hearts and minds to what God says. MEDIUM TO HIGH
- 3) The chance that many people will hear direct from God for the first time RISK LEVEL UNCERTAIN
- 4) The expectation that the hearers will come in and go out as different people VERY HIGH
- 5) The gathering could result not only in lives being transformed inside the church but also outside of it HIGH RISK
- 6) The gathering could lead to changes in thought and behaviour patterns MEDIUM TO HIGH

May our God, the living God, open our hearts and minds to hear what He wants to say to each of us today! Amen.

About the time the building began on the new homes opposite our church I arrived early on a Sunday morning and saw the new signs the contractors had put up opposite our main entrance saying KEEP OUT: DANGER TO LIFE.

So I wrote straightaway a mail to the deacons that we needed to place signs in front of our entrances saying something like, "Please come in. Welcome. Build your life on the rock: Jesus gives new life."

When some time ago I sent the diaconate an e-mail with a list of proposed titles for this series on spiritual warfare the final message was to be titled NEW LIFE CHURCH DISCIPLESHIP which led Paul to think that I was maybe talking about the Russian-speaking church which meets here on Fridays and Saturdays; but I wasn't. The title was a reference to our need as a church to lead a new life of discipleship together as servants of Christ, as disciples of Christ, as members of His body here on earth in Blackburn and Darwin which is what I hope, think and pray we are all aiming at from our hearts to do. But we all know from experience that this is very often not a comfortable journey.

At our Thursday evening fellowship meetings last year we looked in alternate weeks in our bible studies at Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus. We saw then that in Ephesians we have 3 chapters of doctrine and then 3 chapters about walking with the Lord. In the last three weeks on Sundays we have been looking at the second half of chapter 6 and we are almost at the end of the letter and of the series on spiritual warfare.

So you would probably anticipate, probably expect arriving at the end of the letter and of this sermon series with all this teaching in our heads and hopefully in our hearts and all this life experience of walking with the Lord at our disposal to be in a really good place; to be able to rest with this on some kind of comfortable cushion of assurance that we now know everything and can do everything; to have reached a point of heavenly beauty, harmony and peace; to have arrived in a kind of spiritual nirvana where there is neither suffering, desire nor sense of self.

How many people preach a gospel which says or which emphasises in one way or another that things will always be better with Jesus at the helm interpreting this to mean that problems will melt or disappear at the press of a button? They maybe preach a prosperity gospel that financial blessing and physical well-being are always the will of God for them, and that faith, positive speech, and donations to religious causes will increase one's material wealth.

But you see we have been looking in the last two weeks at the end of the letter that Paul wrote to the Ephesian church and we now realise that we are in a war zone.

I think that is really not what we would have expected or even wanted, to be in a war zone.

Haven't we been able to make some sort of peaceful compromise in our religion and in our thinking so we can get on with the world as it is and maybe even improve it or touch it up a little ? Couldn't we water down so to speak some of our clear biblical teachings so we fit in

better with the communities in which we live and work and have our being? Do we always have to talk as if Jesus is the only Son of the true living God and that other gods are really no gods? It would be much easier if we didn't continue to do that wouldn't it? That looks really attractive at first glance.

You see we have really come full circle from what Tim described to us five weeks ago about the reality of spiritual warfare. In all humility we need to recognise that without the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's only Son, that we would remain without hope and without peace in this world and in the world that is soon to come.

The depth and breadth of the sadness that was being felt and expressed prior to and during the two funeral services of thanksgiving last week here at BBC; and which from now on will continue being felt by life partners, family members, close friends and indeed the whole family of the church is a reality that is only eventually balanced out, on the earth possibly after many years if at all, by the knowledge that our brothers Tom and Brian are in the presence of our loving Lord and that those of us who live in Jesus will be with them again one day very soon.

So we come at last to Ephesians 6:18-20:

18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. 19 Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Luther said once I have so many things of importance to do today that I am going to spend longer in prayer at the beginning than ever before. I tried that on one occasion too when my workload for the day looked like an attempt to climb the Matterhorn in one go and I was finished with everything at 11 o'clock-in the morning.

Is that kind of approach to prayer and to work helpful? Is it really necessary? Is it practical; isn't that crazy? Isn't that senseless? Is that showing a mentally-unbalanced disposition? I can see you lining up so-to-speak and saying:

"We need to be practical, we need to do something, we need to know more in order to achieve something, and we need to be actively moving on with things or the day and the week and the month and the year will be over before we have reached any of our goals."

But hold on a minute: who sets the goals? Who decides on the targets? Isn't that God and not us? Not one of us; not any one of us but God; the one and only living God; and what does He say to us, "Be still and know that I am God."

Do you say well I honestly haven't got time to do that.

But let us be among those who listen to the voice of God in prayer.

Not just this morning; not just today. Every morning, every evening, every day.

He knows. He cares. Trust Him to show us the way ahead. We will let God rule the roost.

God says: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you." (Psalm 32:8)

You know something about God? He has better than 20/20 vision. His eyesight is better even than 20/15 vision which is sharper than average. He can see everything, everywhere and in everybody all the time. He is the One to whom we should turn for guidance, for understanding, for discernment and for wisdom. He is the One who reveals to us the truth and shows us the Way that we should go and when and how.

And another thing: look closely at the context of this verse.

Psalm 32 (NIV)

Read verses 3 and 4. Do you feel like this?

Then come to the Lord; admit your wrongdoing to Him and He will forgive the guilt of your sin.

Look at verse 5.

Do you know what that means in your experience and in your life? If it is, then you are one of the faithful.

Verse 6

You are safe!

Verse 7

You are protected from harm and danger.

Then we come to God leading us in verse 8.

We see that the context of God leading us, is that first we are made aware of our sin; then we admit our wrongs, then He forgives us; then we know we are safe; that His arms are all around us, that we are protected and in safety and then we read in verse 8: God says: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you." (Psalm 32:8)

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life." (Psalm 139:23-24)

We see that asking God to help us and lead us is only effectively possible when we have first been shown that we are sinners in need of a Saviour, when we have second admitted our wrongs and decided to make a 180 degree turn away from them and third when God has forgiven us and Jesus has entered into our hearts.

Which way round is it? In which order come the recognition that we are sinners in need of a Saviour and our asking God to lead us on?

Supposing you are invited by a friend to a restaurant and you decide to order the dessert first, then the cheese and biscuits followed by the fish course, then the main course then finally the hot soup. Is that the right way to do things?

Or like yesterday there I am eating my lunch and I say to Sibylle what would you have thought if I had eaten the dessert first and then the main course. Very wisely she said well I might have thought, that that is more to your taste or that that is simply what you yourself had decided to do.

But in our life of faith it doesn't work like that; it is not a question of what we would like to do, how we ourselves would like to get on with things, how we want to order our lives because we need to realise that before God is going to tell us what we should be doing we need to come to Him, admit we have made a mess of things and give all the power of decision in our lives back to Him.

Is that too direct? God is not blind. He knows where we are at. He is saying first sort out the sin and then I will tell you where to go.

Jesus said: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Paul the Apostle wrote:

18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

We will be looking in a new short series beginning in two weeks' time at prayer so I don't want to overstep the mark at take-off so to speak. But we are to pray in the Spirit. That is the first phrase in this verse. Pray in the Spirit. What that means we can look at God willing at a date in the immediate future. But I want us to notice these expressions of thoroughness and all-inclusiveness:

-all occasions

-all kinds of prayers and requests

-always keep on praying (for)

-all the Lord's people

In the war zone where we are now we need to be alert; we need to have these things in mind.

As I said we will be looking at prayer after Pentecost when we will be celebrating the coming of the Holy Spirit and will perhaps be able to grasp this more clearly then.

Finally I want us to look very briefly at Ephesians 6:24 which reads very simply and straightforwardly, "Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love." Is that what we do?

Have you ever been to Ephesus? If you have did you find the church?

Ephesus is located near the western shores of modern-day Turkey, where the Aegean Sea meets the former estuary of the River Kaystros, about 80 kilometres or 50 miles south of Izmir in Turkey.

It is an archaeological site now, but that is beside the point. The point is that although there is no longer a city of Ephesus, the church in Ephesus used to be the strongest church in Asia Minor, and now there are hardly even any Christians to be found in all of Asia Minor, let alone a church of any strength or size.

Does the Church of Ephesus exist today? No.

The church in Ephesus had some of the best teaching, and the best blessings, and the best leaders that a church could ever have or hope for. Paul not only founded and taught the church for three years, but then they had Timothy as their teaching elder, and even the Apostle John. But even though they had the best teaching from the best teachers, it appears that they never heeded the warning advice of Paul to hold on to what they were taught and stay away from false teachers. They lost their first love.

We know this because of the final time the church in Ephesus is mentioned in the Bible. In Revelation 2:1-7, the Apostle John writes a warning to the church in Ephesus. He begins by praising them for the things they were doing well (Rev 2:1-3), but then tells them in Revelation 2:4 that they have left their first love.

What was their first love? Well, according to the closing remarks of Paul in Ephesians 6:24, their love was for Jesus Christ. But now, apparently, they had left behind their love for Jesus Christ. They were now listening to false teachers. They were being seduced by the lies and deceptions of the devil.

I had the privilege in March of attending the NWBA ministers` conference at Frodsham in Cheshire. I remain truly grateful for that opportunity. Frodsham is a nice village; near the hotel were sandstone-clad paths and often clear views of the Mersey, the Manchester Ship Canal, Liverpool Cathedral and the petrochemical monoliths of Runcorn.

I was very encouraged by the meetings and discussions and met many ministers for the first time because of the pandemic. They didn`t really know Blackburn Baptist Church but they knew Leamington Road and spoke about it being the largest church in the north-west.

God led Leamington Road to Galligreaves. As Blackburn Baptist Church this is our new home. Many, many people are praying that when people hear the name Galligreaves that they will say: "That is the place where the residents love Jesus; that is the place where the living God is worshipped."

That is what prayer is all about. Let us love our Lord Jesus with an undying love and be a living witness to the people around us. Every day. That is new life church discipleship."

Our service drew to a close with a final hymn "Who is on the Lord's side." Tim once again played the piano as Esther led us:

Who is on the Lord's side? Who will serve the King?
Who will be His helpers, other lives to bring?
Who will leave the world's side? Who will face the foe?
Who is on the Lord's side? Who for Him will go?
By Thy call of mercy, by Thy grace divine,
we are on the Lord's side—Saviour, we are Thine!

Not for weight of glory, nor for crown and palm,
enter we the army, raise the warrior psalm;
but for love that claimeth lives for whom He died:
He whom Jesus saveth marches on His side.
by Thy love constraining, by Thy grace divine,
we are on the Lord's side—Saviour, we are Thine!

Jesus, Thou hast bought us, not with gold or gem,
but with Thine own lifeblood, for Thy diadem;
with Thy blessing filling each who comes to Thee,
Thou hast made us willing, Thou hast made us free.
by Thy grand redemption, by Thy grace divine,
we are on the Lord's side—Saviour, we are Thine!

Fierce may be the conflict, strong may be the foe,
but the King's own army none can overthrow;
round His standard ranging, vict'ry is secure,
for His truth unchanging makes the triumph sure.
Joyfully enlisting, by Thy grace divine,
we are on the Lord's side—Saviour, we are Thine!

Chosen to be soldiers, in an alien land,
chosen, called, and faithful, for our Captain's band;
in the service royal, let us not grow cold,
let us be right loyal, noble, true and bold.
Master, wilt Thou keep us, by Thy grace divine,
always on the Lord's side—Saviour, always Thine!

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**We brought our time together saying 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.**

**The Notices for the week were displayed on the screen - of particular importance
were the invitation to join in celebrating the Queen's Jubilee with St Lukes, St
Aidans and The New Life International Church this coming Friday, from 4-6pm, an
invitation for those interested in Messy Church and Building Matters to meet on June
7th, at 7.30 pm and for Church Members to meet on June 12th, following the
service, for a Special Church Members Meeting.**

