

**Blackburn Baptist Church welcomes you to our service of worship here at Bethesda Chapel on Sunday September 6<sup>th</sup> 2020 at 10:45**

If you are not able to join us in person you may wish to use this outline as a way of continuing to feel part of the fellowship, with the bonus of being able to lift your voice in singing if you so desire, something we are unable to share in physically at Bethesda at the moment.

**Alec, our Pastor**, is leading the service this morning, and begins by sharing a **Welcome and opening prayer** followed by any notices for the week.

**The Hymn “Forever Jesus”** will be shown on the screen at Bethesda, here are the words for you to read (or sing) at home.

My hymn of praise shall be forever Jesus,  
my firm foundation in shifting sands;  
my strength and hope through many fears and failures,  
the disappointments of the past –  
His constant love has held me fast.  
*So for all my days I will sing my praise  
to the King forever Jesus.  
Though the storms may rage He is strong to save,  
He’s the King forever Jesus!*

My song of joy shall be forever Jesus  
who bore the suffering, who made a way;  
His life a gift, His death a precious ransom  
that wipes the sinner’s guilt away,  
and turns our night to glorious day!  
*So for all my days...*

My final breath shall be forever Jesus  
when shadows lengthen before my eyes;  
My Lord and Friend, companion through the valley  
when dearest ones are left behind,  
His hand will lead me to the light.  
*So for all my days...*

*When I meet His gaze  
I will sing my praise  
to the King forever Jesus.  
All my sorrows past, I am home at last  
with my King forever Jesus!*

Matt Papa, Stuart Townend.

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This is the link if you have access to the internet and wish to listen to the live recording:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5kXMx1kkY8>

## **Alec now shares a “Thought for the day”:** We are God`s Masterpiece

In January Sibylle and I were invited to attend the church Art class at East Lancs Cricket Club. Painting is not for everyone and I am not a painter of pictures. But I enjoy looking at paintings, especially impressionist art.

The painting techniques that impressionists used to achieve their ideas were fairly consistent:

- they strongly emphasised the effects of light in their paintings.
- they used short, thick strokes of paint to capture the essence of the object rather than the subject`s details.
- they used quickly applied brush strokes to give the illusion of movement and spontaneity.
- they used a thick impasto application of paint so that even reflections on the surface of water appear as substantial as any object in a scene.
- the impressionists lightened their palettes to include pure, intense colours.
- complementary colours were used for their vibrant contrasts and mutual enhancement when used in combination.
- impressionists avoided hard edges by working wet into wet.
- the surface of an impressionist painting is opaque. Impressionists did not use the thin paint films and glazes that were popularised by renaissance artists.
- impressionists often painted at a time of day when there were long shadows. This technique of painting outdoors helped impressionists better depict the effects of light and emphasise the vibrancy of colours.
- they used optical mixing rather than mixing on the palette.
- they used broken colour referring to the effect of blending colours optically rather than on the palette, eliminating perfect coverage and smoothly-blended transitions.
- the impressionist painters used layers of colours, leaving gaps in the top layers to reveal the colours underneath. This technique is carried out through hatching, cross-hatching, stippling, dry brushing, and sgraffito, (scratching into the paint).
- mixing of brighter colours is done directly on the canvas to aid in creating the broken colour effect and only darker colours are mixed on the palette.

As I said, impressionist painters used layers of colours, leaving gaps in the top layers to reveal the colours underneath. We cannot see exactly what God is doing in our lives in the picture He is creating. But sometimes, just occasionally He leaves a gap in the top layer so we can see a little of what is going on underneath. We are servants of the Master. He is the Master Painter. We are in the Master`s Hand. He is the Master Craftsman. We are His painting. We are His masterpiece.

**Barbara Riding** has asked to speak to you all, to say thank you for her 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday wishes.

## **Jane leads us in our prayers this morning.**

Heavenly Father, you are our faithful and loving God. You provide for us above and beyond our basic needs. You have given us a beautiful world to live in, and families and friends to share our lives with. And yet, Lord, we so often take these things for granted and forget to be thankful for your graciousness towards us and so we say thank you now. We are sorry for all the times we forget you, or ignore your promptings, or doubt that you are still with us. Please forgive us for being self-centred instead of looking outwards to see how you want to use us in this your broken world. Thank you that we can know your forgiveness because Jesus took all our punishment in his death on the cross; we praise

you too that he also came to life again, enabling us also to have new life in knowing you, our loving Father, through him.

Lord, these are difficult times, for each one of us and for the whole world. We don't know when or how this coronavirus will come to an end, but, Lord, we know that you do. Help us to really trust in you. When the storms of life threaten to overwhelm us, help us to remember that you, Jesus, are there alongside us – just as when your disciples were caught in the storm on the lake, you came to them and got into the boat with them and calmed the storm, so you are always with us and can calm the storms in our hearts and minds.

We do pray for all those medics and scientists who are working to try and find better treatments and a vaccine that will be effective against the virus, that you would guide them to success. We pray especially for those in countries where medical supplies are limited and poverty and overcrowding make the situation even worse. Father, we ask that you would undertake for them in miraculous ways. We remember our link missionaries, Brain and Jackie Chilvers, preparing to go out to work in the hospital in Chad. Help them to be patient as they now aren't expecting to go out until 2021. We pray especially for Jackie's mother who is very unwell, but we thank you that they have been able to visit her and see their children and other relatives. Please bless them in their continuing time in France.

We continue to pray for the city of Beirut and thank you for the work that Christians are doing there to help the rebuilding and provide food and shelter. We pray for the new government that they would quickly start to restore stability with integrity and justice and bring a new hope to the people.

We pray for our government, that you would grant them wisdom as they deal with the ongoing health crisis, the economic situation and trying to get people back to work and Brexit talks, for which time is running out. In all things, may your will be done, Lord God. We also pray for our local council and the people of Blackburn, that there would be a significant decrease in the Covid cases here. Help us all to be vigilant and responsible in our actions.

Finally we bring before you our friends and family members who have particular needs at this time, remembering particularly John, Becky's husband, unwell with a fever thought to be caused by an ear infection, and Alec, due to fly to Germany this week to spend time with his family. Grant all those in our thoughts, patience, healing, and above all, your peace in their hearts though the knowledge of your loving presence with them at all times.

We ask our prayers in the precious name of Jesus.

Amen.

**Alec shares the Message** which includes the bible reading: 1 Thessalonians 4, 13-18  
**"LIVING HOPE PART ONE"**

The way I compose a sermon has been described by one expert as like throwing an egg into an electric fan.

Well I am neither an excellent cook, nor a brilliant technician.

But I actually feel this comment is a great encouragement.

Because it challenges me not to be complacent.

Because it makes me think about what I am doing and why, so I am encouraged.

Encouragement.

“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.” (Hebrews 3:13)

Even if rather unusual this was I hope a very appropriate short introduction to our theme for this week and for my next sermon in two weeks’ time because you probably won’t forget it. We are talking about encouragement and not being or becoming complacent, in particular about the living hope that we have IF we have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is where I actually finished in my last message from Galatians 5:5, so it all hangs together. I am sure you can recall that too. “But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.”

Continuing with our quiz questions, on the theme “Living Hope” which bible passages would you expect me to preach from in these two sermons?

Maybe you have guessed right? Here is the first one! I am reading from 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

That`s really powerful isn`t it! That`s really challenging! But above all it is a massive encouragement to the people of God, to those who love the Lord, to those in whom His Spirit lives.

We are not talking about religion. We are not even really talking in one sense about church, certainly not about church buildings. But about life. And about Jesus Christ, the Author of Life.

Let`s get some things clear. Ignorance is not bliss. We need to know the truth. We should not grieve like the rest of men who have no hope.

As I said in my last sermon here we need to grieve. Not to do so is to suppress the truth and to numb the emotions. We are allowed to grieve, we should grieve. If we have lost someone of course we should grieve. If we have lost something, our home, our job, our planned future career, our college place, our hoped for relationship. Our place in the operations queue, our opportunity to move into a better care home, the ability to use one or more of our faculties. Whoever or whatever we have lost we should grieve.

Then we will also be able to rejoice in what is truly glorious. For we do not grieve like the rest of men who have no hope.

The rest of men are as Paul says in Ephesians 2:12 “without hope and without God.”

they have nothing to look forward to

they have no God to whom they can turn

they live in hopelessness

they live in emptiness and alienation

they have no basis of true belief

They are online with themselves and with everyone else, but out of line, offline with God.

We are believers. And what do we believe?

Our belief is not a kind of esoteric Christianity which says "I'll trust Jesus", "I'll give my life to Jesus" and then anything goes just like before. Our belief is not like that.

Our belief is more solid. A belief that transforms our hearts and lives.

That Jesus died and rose again.

The formerly impetuous, probably proud and very self-assured "I can do it, whatever it is, just get out of my way," Peter, is completely transformed after being filled with the Spirit at Pentecost and preaches in front of a massive crowd, with God so blessing the message he gave, that around 3,000 people came to know the Lord in one day and were baptised. What had he said? Acts 2:22-24

"Listen to these words, fellow-Israelites! Jesus of Nazareth was a man whose divine authority was clearly proven to you by all the miracles and wonders which God performed through him. You yourselves know this, for it happened here among you. In accordance with his own plan God had already decided that Jesus would be handed over to you; and you killed him by letting sinful men crucify him. But God raised him from death, setting him free from its power, because it was impossible that death should hold him prisoner.

Basically Peter said that Jesus died and rose again.

But he didn't just say it once: he said it over and over again!

In Acts 3:15 we read that Peter said. "You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this."

In the power of the Spirit we have hope. In our life in the Spirit we have hope.

This is what Paul wrote in Romans 15:13, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." You don't need to call a plumber out to sort this overflow.

And that is what Paul also writes to the church in Thessalonica. In Acts 17 we read of the beginnings of the church in Thessalonica where Paul as was his custom went into the synagogue and reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead.

The church that he built was strong. His letters to the Thessalonian church are full of encouragement. In 1 Thess. 1 he wants to encourage the believers and let them know that they became a model to all the believers in Achaia and Macedonia; would he be able to say that about you and me? That we have become a model to all believers in East Lancashire? That is a real challenge isn't it.

In 2 Thess. 2 from v. 13 he writes that they should not doubt that God called them to be saved, that God called them through the Gospel, that they should stand firm and hold to the teachings of the Gospel and that they should rest in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

And so it is with us. We should not doubt that God called us to be saved, that God called us through the Gospel. We should stand firm and hold to the teachings of the Gospel and we should rest in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

Paul did not dismiss the questions that the believers had and neither do I. Paul encourages them to be neither deceived nor unsettled.

For the Lord Himself will come again. Paul wrote to encourage the church with the certain hope that those who are in Christ will be with him forever. This hope is based on nothing

less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. Because Jesus died and rose again we have hope; now! We know He is coming again.

Personally, in power, visibly. The coming again of Jesus is a central, unequivocal, foundational, biblical truth. In Revelation 1:7 John writes "every eye will see Him."

33% of those living in our town are Muslims. In the Quran's view, a benevolent and righteous person is one with hope for God's favour and who believes in His promises. Therefore, whoever hopes for divine mercy should be, (Quran, A'räf: Ayat56), charitable, altruistic, humane, humanitarian, neighbourly, public-spirited, philanthropic, generous, magnanimous, kind-hearted, big-hearted, full of goodness, goodwill, compassion, consideration, thoughtfulness and decency.

I remember at the beginning of the lockdown in March seeing Muslim people visiting people in my street and thinking they won't come to me. I'm not a Muslim.

But they did! They rang my doorbell, took several steps back and when I opened the door and introduced myself as the Pastor of BBC that did not hinder them from greeting me and giving me food, tasty noodles and other things and a card with a telephone number I could contact in case I needed help.

That was a wonderful thing to have done and I was and still am truly grateful. It was more than I had been able to offer and I haven't forgotten it.

But having and showing these qualities, even in abundance, I am sorry, but it does not make you righteous.

Without Jesus Christ we are not righteous before God. Not one of us living here in Blackburn with Darwen. Without dying with Jesus Christ, without being resurrected with Jesus Christ, without living in Jesus Christ, we cannot be righteous. Without the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we have no hope. Without the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ no human being who has or ever will live anywhere on God's earth has hope.

Let us share this with our Muslim friends and neighbours.

For we do not have this hope unless we are righteous and we do not have this righteousness unless we are in Christ.

The basis of our hope is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And what a hope this is!

In 1 Peter 1: 3-6 above which the NIV inserts the heading "Praise to God for a Living Hope" Peter writes:

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials."

Paul encourages the believers in the church he founded in Thessalonica. Peter reassures the disciples of Jesus scattered throughout the world. Jesus comforts his disciples. He says:

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."

Soon and very soon we are going to see the King,

We will not be abandoned by God. We are in Christ! Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Paul writes, (Romans 8:31-39), "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We endure inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Thess. 1:3).

He is our living hope.

We bring our time together to a close as, at Bethesda, we watch and listen to Kristyn Getty singing a **hymn** based on Psalm 91, which we can read or sing at home)

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvQGzTqoOV0>)

My dwelling place is God Most High,  
my refuge and my fortress.  
When plague and pestilence draw nigh  
I'm hidden in His presence.  
When terrors fall and arrows fly  
His shield will be my safety;  
when stones across my pathway lie  
on angels' wings I'm carried.

My dwelling place is God Most High  
A present help in danger;  
I rest secure in Love's pure light,  
beneath my Master's favour.  
He freed me from the fowler's snare  
where sin and shame had bound me,  
deceived I made my refuge there,  
till fearless He came for me.

*Wonderful, powerful, my hope and my defender,  
Mighty God, Emmanuel, my dwelling place forever.*

My dwelling place is God Most High,  
I'll never seek another,  
for I am His and He is mine  
my heart He'll keep forever.  
I know the name on whom I call,  
He promises to answer;  
with life He satisfies my soul  
and crowns me with his pleasure.

*Wonderful, powerful, my hope and my defender,  
Mighty God, Emmanuel, my dwelling place forever.*

*Wonderful, powerful, my hope and my defender,  
Mighty God, Emmanuel, my dwelling place forever.*

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We bring our time of worship to a close as we say the Grace together:

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen**

We hope you have all been aware of God's love and peace with you today, and pray that he will continue to support you over the coming week.

May God bless you, and Shalom.

[I hope this is easy to see and read, please tell me if it isn't and I can alter the print and size.

Thank you,

Judith, 01254 665717]