



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, meeting here at Bethesda Chapel on Sunday September 20th 2020 at 10:45.

If you are not able to meet with us in person at present, we hope and pray that you will find this outline of our service helpful, as we all seek to worship God as a Church family, wherever we are today.

Whilst Alec is visiting his family in Germany at present, he has recorded the message which will be shown on the screen at Bethesda.

Our worship today will be led by Paul Carter, who begins with:

“A very warm Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church this morning, not just for those who are physically with us in our chapel, or those of our fellowship who are sharing on line, but to everyone world wide who is able to share worship with us by live stream or through the recording of this service. A particular welcome to our pastor Alec Johnston and his wife Sybille who are presently spending a little holiday time together in Germany. Nevertheless Alec will be sharing the second part of his message “Living Hope” later in our time together today. It is a privilege to physically meet together for times like this, and I know for many they are longing for freedom from our present Covid-19 restrictions to return to our church buildings to worship. This last week I was reminded of Jesus meeting with the Samaritan women at Jacob’s well, where he said to her: ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth’.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies.

Let us do this as we share together in this act of worship, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind.

Prayer

Psalm 95 (v3-8a)

The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.

The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.

For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,

Harden not your heart,

Let us pray –

This is the place and this is the time; here and now, God waits to break into our experience: to change our minds, to change our lives, to change our ways; to make

us see the world and the whole of life in a new light: to fill us with hope, joy and certainty for the future. This is the place, as are all places; this is the time, as are all times. Here and now let us praise God.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

We now join in song, with a new Hymn : “May the peoples praise you” which will be shown on the screen at Bethesda. It has a very strong beat so you may want to tap your feet!

(Whilst those meeting in person are not able to lift their voices in song, if you are at home you can sing as loudly as you wish, or read the words either aloud or silently:)

You have called us out of darkest night into Your glorious light that we may sing the wonders of the risen Christ.

May our every breath retell the grace that broke into our strife with boundless love and deepest joy with endless life.

*May the peoples praise You, let the nations be glad,
all Your blessing comes that we may praise,
may praise the name of Jesus.*

All the earth is Yours and all within, each harvest is Your own and from Your hand we give to You to make Christ known.

May the seeds of mercy grow in us for those who have not heard; may songs of praise build lives of grace to spread Your Word.

May the peoples praise You.....

This our holy privilege to declare Your praises and Your name to every nation, tribe and tongue, Your church proclaims.

May the peoples praise You....

Holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, Worthy, worthy is the Lamb who was slain.

Holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, all creation praise Your glorious Name.

May the peoples praise You....

Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty, David Zimmer, Stuart Townend, Ed Cash.

Copyright © 2016 Getty Music Publishing (BMI) , Alletrop Music (BMI) and Townend Songs (PRS) (admin by Song Solutions www.songsolutions.org)

Used by permission, CCL no 5664.

Here is the link if you would like, and are able, to access the internet.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?V=ltw0epxqjdc>

Paul then shares any Notices and leads in prayer, before our

Bible Reading 2. Corinthians 3: 7-18, read by Barbara Riding.

The greater glory of the new covenant

Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Jean Williams then leads our Prayers for others.

Let's bow our heads in prayer

Heavenly Father

We thank you for our night's rest and the chance to be with you today, both here or at home. Today is another day that you have made and we will rejoice and be glad in it. We thank you for your amazing power and work in our lives and we thank you for your goodness and blessings over us, for your great love and care and for your sacrifice that we might have freedom and life.

We are sorry Lord for the things we have thought and done that do not honour your name and realise how blessed we are that your love and forgiveness allows us to keep trying to follow the right path and be more Christ like in our attitudes.

Father God we ask for your care and love to those who are caught up in conflicts round the world. These are turbulent times please guide the leaders of these countries to be mindful of their people and to consider the effect that their actions will have and to allow the people to once again start to have hope and are able to plan for a future for themselves and their families.

Lord many families are still affected by Coronovirus, by the restrictions we have been asked to abide by to try and stem the spread and second wave. It can be frustrating to follow the rules only to see others ignoring them. Grant us the grace to do what we know to be right and to pray that the rule breakers develop a conscience and start following the restrictions laid down by the government. Many are feeling lonely and isolated please let them feel your peace and comfort and prompt us into phoning our neighbours to have a chat, something we can all do easily but don't always think about in our busy lives.

With all the negative press many people are struggling to integrate again into society, anxiety and panic is making lives miserable Father please place your arms around them and let them feel your love and peace and allow them to deal with their problems to try and manage their everyday lives.

We bring our church family to you. Please give your healing to those with health problems and those waiting for operations, procedures and tests. You know their names Lord please grant them patience and peace to cope with all before them and the knowledge that they will soon start to feel better as a result of their treatments. We ask you to give your love to those who are struggling with other everyday problems that are making their lives difficult, give them courage to reach out and that whoever they reach out to will be kind and gracious with their care.

We ask that you continue to bless and guide our leaders who do so much work on our behalf to help the church run the best way. We ask that Alec our pastor has a good visit home to Germany and is able to come back refreshed and renewed and ready for the challenges ahead.

Lord thank you for revealing your unconditional love to us through your word. As we go through the rest of today and into the week open our eyes that we may see your wonderful world help us to continue living and walking according to your word help us to turn our eyes away from worthless things and to focus on you Lord.

We pray this trusting and believing in You Amen.

We can join in singing another Hymn, more reflective this time, one which we have sung before: "The Lord is my salvation"

The grace of God has reached for me and pulled me from the raging sea
and I am safe on this solid ground:
The Lord is my salvation.

I will not fear when darkness falls, His strength will help me scale these walls,
I'll see the dawn of the rising sun:
The Lord is my salvation.
*Who is like the Lord our God?
Strong to save, faithful in love,
my debt is paid and the vict'ry won:
The Lord is my salvation.*

My hope is hidden in the Lord, He flow'rs each promise of His Word,
when winter fades I know spring will come:
The Lord is my salvation.

In times of waiting, times of need when I know loss, when I am weak,
I know His grace will renew these days:
The Lord is my salvation.
Who is like the Lord our God.....

And when I reach my final day He will not leave me in the grave
but I will rise, He will call me home:
The Lord is my salvation.
Who is like the Lord our God.....

Glory be to God the Father, glory be to God the Son, glory be to God the Spirit:
The Lord is our salvation.
Who is like the Lord our God.....

Words and music by Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty, Nathan Nockels and Jonas Myrin
Used by permission, CCL no 5664.

Again, here is the internet link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?V=kylI04p0ms8>

Alec now shares his Message, entitled "LIVING HOPE PART TWO"

When you look at a painting what do you see?

One of the greatest painters of all time was Vincent Van Gogh. In particular his paintings of sunflowers are well known. You can see these pictures in Amsterdam, Munich, Philadelphia, Tokyo and London. Van Gogh painted sunflowers using just three shades of yellow. To find out how these pictures were painted art experts rather than removing the paintings from the galleries for physical analysis, or taking invasive paint samples, brought researchers with mobile digital scanning devices into the museums to map paint layers, brushwork and pigments.

Our lives are like a painting. How are they being painted?

What can God see when He looks at our lives? What do our lives reveal? What do we learn from God's brushwork, from the pigments he is using?

What do we see in the painting that is our life?

Maybe many of us can only see what we are losing? We look at our lives and say:

My time is running out

My gifts are no longer needed

My strength is failing

My abilities are no longer being recognised

I have missed so many chances and opportunities

My contribution is not really being appreciated any more

I cannot relate to millennials and anyway I don't understand what makes Generation Y and Generation Z tick

I feel very discouraged

My real hopes are not being fulfilled

Do you think a bit like that, even a little bit?

Wait a minute. There is that word again. Did you hear it? Hope. My real hopes are not being fulfilled.

What is happening there? Where is our real hope?

Where are we looking? What are we looking for? What do we have in our mind's eye? What are we thinking about? What are we contemplating?

What is going on in the painting that is our lives?

Listen to this:

“And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” 2. Cor. 3:18

That's what is going on in our lives.

But you say, “you know I don't really agree with you. You see what is happening in my life is that I am waiting yet again for a hospital appointment, I was looking forward to my planned holiday which didn't happen, I am really not over the moon at having to continue with home office every day which is not only increasing my workload but driving my wife and my kids crazy and I am kind of screaming inwardly because I actually want to be able to socialise normally again, to be able to share with my brothers and sisters over a cup of coffee in the community room and at home and so on and so forth. And I am sure that I am not the exception.”

But Paul says, “And we all, (without exception), who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” 2. Cor. 3:18

That is the truth.

That is our living hope.

It is not pie in the sky when we die and no purpose on the earth before that. What we are going through in our time on the earth is helping to prepare us for our life together with the Lord and with all the saints when we change our address and move into our heavenly home.

The Impressionist painters used layers of colours, leaving gaps in the top layers to reveal the colours underneath. They used optical mixing rather than mixing on the palette. They created broken colour referring to the effect of blending colours optically rather than on the palette, eliminating perfect coverage and smoothly-blended transitions.

Sometimes we cannot see clearly what is going on. We walk by faith not by sight.

“For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” (1 Cor. 13:12)

Through a glass darkly; like a reflection in a mirror.

The painting that is our life has many different layers. Not everything is precise and clear. Sometimes God leaves a gap in the top layer so we can see what is going on deep down.

We can see the glory of the Lord (and what He is doing in our lives) for the veil has been removed.

It is exactly what it says. As each one of us turns to faith in Christ the veil is lifted once and for all. We see Christ, the image of God, the image of the invisible God, the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being. We all reflect the glory of the Lord with uncovered faces.

"We would see Jesus" said the foreigners to the disciples. That is what really matters isn't it. Seeing Jesus as the centre of each of our lives and the life of our fellowship. He meets all the needs of our hearts. We must look no further than His face to see God and know Him as He really is. He is our hope. Continuously looking at Him we are transformed into the same image, that is into the likeness of Christ-and increasingly so, from one degree of glory to another.

Is that what we really want? What is our present mind-set?

I am going to ask ourselves 3 questions. But let me say before that what I think we already all know. Jesus Christ, God's Son is the Word of God, the Word of Life.

This Word of God, (showing Bible), is your and my Bread of Life, Water of Life, Light of Life.

We need bread, water and light to live.

So that is what I am going to read from. If you want to follow up on this you will be able to read the text of this message with all the references to Scripture passages sometime next week on the church homepage. This is our food and drink, our light and life.

And here are the questions!

- 1) What is our attitude towards the world in which we live?
- 2) What is our attitude towards the experiences we are facing?
- 3) What is our understanding of the new home that awaits us?

From here on it is going to sound like a John Wesley sermon. You know bible verses tied together with conjunctions. But I am not ashamed of that.

1)What is our attitude to the world in which we live?

*1 John 2:15-17 "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world.....comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever."

Why love things that don't last? Let's do the will of God and live forever!

*John 17:14-15 "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

You see we do not belong here to the world system, to the world's thinking. We belong to Jesus, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the Maker and Sustainer of the universe.

*Ephesians 2:6 "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus." That is where we are now. Physically of course we are here. But we are new creatures.

* Colossians 3:3 "Our lives are hid with Christ in God." That is how secure we are.

Summary of point 1.

We do not love the world or anything in it. We do the will of God.

We are in the world not of it.

We are secure in and with Christ.

2) What is our attitude towards the experiences we are facing?

*2 Corinthians 5:1-9

"For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it."

*"When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:4). Yes, we will be with him in glory in the future — but even now, Christ is our life. We should live in a way that is appropriate for those who live and move and have their being in him.

3) What is our understanding of the new home that awaits us?

"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body." (Phil. 3:20-21)

*How we think about the future matters: what we think about the future determines how we live in the present

*What is our perception of the future?

* Colossians 3: 1-11 is a great read to give us a mind for the future in our life in the present

But I will finish today with the following verse

* "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." 1 John 3:2

Amen.

As we bring our time together to a close we once again join in singing a new Hymn
"Christ our hope in life and death"

This again is a more reflective song from Keith Getty and others, but with a joyful chorus of Hallelujahs, and those at home can once more read the words aloud or say them in their hearts.

What is our hope in life and death? Christ alone, Christ alone.

What is our only confidence? That our souls to Him belong.

Who holds our days within His hand? What comes, apart from His command?

And what will keep us to the end? The love of Christ, in which we stand.

O sing Hallelujah! Our hope springs eternal.

O sing Hallelujah!

Now and ever we confess Christ our hope in life and death.

What truth can calm the troubled soul? God is good, God is good.

Where is His grace and goodness known? In our great Redeemer's blood.

Who holds our faith when fears arise? Who stands above the stormy trial?

Who sends the waves that bring us nigh unto the shore, the rock of Christ?

O sing Hallelujah! Our hope springs eternal.

O sing Hallelujah!

Now and ever we confess Christ our hope in life and death.

Unto the grave, what shall we sing? "Christ, He lives; Christ, He lives!"

And what reward will heaven bring? Everlasting life with Him.

There we will rise to meet the Lord, then sin and death will be destroyed

and we will feast in endless joy when Christ is ours forevermore.

O sing Hallelujah! Our hope springs eternal.

O sing Hallelujah!

Now and ever we confess Christ our hope in life and death.

Writers: Matt Boswell, Matt Merker, Keith Getty, Jordan Kauflin, and Matt Papa
Used by permission, CCL no 5664

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?V=oibii1rz7mw>

Benediction

Go forth into the world in peace: be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good, render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the faint-hearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour all people; love and serve the Lord rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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