

## Blackburn Baptist Church Virtual Service, 3 May 2020



### Welcome

Hello, and a very warm welcome to you all as you join with us at Blackburn Baptist Church for our Sunday act of worship. Today we will again be sharing together in Holy Communion, so please pause to gather bread and wine, or juice. Then we will begin by singing 'Lift High the Name of Jesus'.

### Song: *Lift High the Name of Jesus*

(If you're online, click [here](#) to listen, or just read the words)

Lift high the name of Jesus,  
Of Jesus our King.  
Make known the power of his grace,  
The beauty of his peace.  
Remember how his mercy reached  
And we cried out to him.  
He lifted us to solid ground,  
To freedom from our sin.

#### *Chorus:*

Oh sing my soul,  
And tell all he's done,  
Till the earth and heavens  
Are filled with his glory!

Lift high the name of Jesus,  
Of Jesus our Lord.  
His power in us is greater than,  
Is greater than this world.

To share the reason for our hope,  
To serve with love and grace,  
That all who see him shine through us  
Might bring the Father praise.

#### *Chorus*

Lift high the name of Jesus,  
Of Jesus our Light.  
No other name on earth can save,  
Can raise a soul to life.  
He opens up our eyes to see  
The harvest he has grown.  
We labour in his fields of grace  
As he leads sinners home.

#### *Chorus*

"Lift High the Name of Jesus" words & music by Ed Cash, Fionán De Barra, Keith Getty and Kristyn Getty  
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### Opening Prayer

Lord God our Father, although our families and households are separated bodily by the corona virus lockdown regulations, we join as scattered families and individuals thankful that, through technology, we can share in mind, word and spirit the joy of celebration as we meet with you in worship today. Be with us, Lord Jesus, as we recall and sing of your amazing love and mercy, as we read again from your inspired, God-breathed, Spirit-filled, life-giving words of truth in scripture. Open our eyes and hearts to understand your plans and purpose for us. Make us more aware of our sinful nature and constant need for your forgiveness and mercy. We thank you for the hope in your promises, and for the invitation to lay down the burden of sin we carry at the foot of the cross. Knowing that you came to redeem, revive, and renew us, to declare your kingdom and build your church today, bless us and inspire us in our time together as we focus on your will and your way. Amen.

## Birthdays

It's Tony's birthday this week. Let's join in with our birthday song to wish him well.

1. Happy birthday to you,  
Happy birthday to you,  
Happy birthday dear Tony,  
Happy birthday to you.
2. Happy birthday to you,  
Only one will not do,

- Give your heart to the saviour,  
And then you'll have two.
3. Happy birthday to you,  
From old friend and new,  
May God bless you and keep you,  
Happy birthday to you.

## Meditation

Beryl Fish would like to share with us once more from her reading, 'Jesus Calling' as several people have found it helpful to them.

"Come to me with empty hands and an open heart, ready to receive abundant blessings. I know the depth and breadth of your neediness; your life-path has been difficult, draining you of strength. Come to me for nurture. Let me fill you up with my presence, I in you and you in me. My power flows most freely into weak ones aware of their need for me. Faltering steps of dependence are not lack of faith, they are links to my presence.

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:20-23)

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:29-31)

## Bible Reading: *Mark 2:1-12*

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralysed man, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralysed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Immediately, Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you

thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to this paralysed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

### **Song: Praise You Lord**

*(If you're online, click [here](#) to listen, or just read the words)*

Praise You, Lord  
For the wonder of your healing  
Praise you, Lord  
For your love so freely given  
Outpouring, anointing  
Flowing in to heal our wounds  
Praise you, Lord, for your love for me

Praise You, Lord  
For your gift of liberation  
Praise you, Lord  
You have set the captives free  
The chains that bind are broken  
By the sharpness of your sword  
Praise you, Lord, you gave your life for me

Praise you, Lord  
You have borne the depths of sorrow  
Praise you, Lord  
For your anguish on the tree  
The nails that tore your body  
And the pain that tore your soul  
Praise you, Lord, your tears they fell for me

Praise you, Lord  
You have turned our thorns to roses  
Glory, Lord  
As they bloom upon your brow  
The path of pain is hallowed  
For your love has made it sweet  
Praise you, Lord, and may I love you now

“Praise You Lord” words & music by Nettie Rose  
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### **Sermon**

I don't know how many of you have ever watched the Antiques Roadshow on television. The programme is about individuals who bring their ‘unusual’, ‘interesting’ or prized objects to have them assessed by experts, who value them as either genuine, valuable antiques or imitations/replicas of the real thing. There are specialists on various categories to give their expert advice, such as:

- Christopher Payne – Furniture and fine art
- Eric Knowles – Ceramics and glass (from Nelson, Lancashire)
- Hilary Kay – Fine art and mechanical antiques
- Arthur Negus – 1979, who was one of the original experts

In making their assessments the experts point out the signs, features and characteristics that determine the genuine item from the fake. As you know, identifying the real genuine antique from a copy can have significant financial implications. Today we are going to consider the significance of identifying one man; the conclusions we come to will have far greater implications than any conclusions about an antique.

The Jewish nation had been waiting for about 2000 years for this special person to appear, and you would think over such a long period of time it might be a bit challenging to recognise this one individual. However, there are not just five or

six signs and characteristics to look out for but over 300 given concerning the true identity of this individual. We are of course talking about God's promised Messiah. God is so explicit about the identity of his promised Messiah, because he does not want to leave any reasonable doubt about the genuine article. Even just looking at five or six signs we should be left in little doubt:

1. He would be born of a virgin – Isaiah 7:14
2. He would come from the line of Abraham – Genesis 22:18
3. He would be born in Bethlehem – Micah 5:2
4. He would be called out of Egypt – Hosea 11:1
5. He would be called a Nazarene – Isaiah 11:1

Significantly, in addition, there were those who believed that when the Messiah came you would be able to identify him by his miracles. One of those prophecies - Isaiah 35:4-6 - said, 'Behold the Messiah will come and save you, then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.' The Dead Sea scrolls, written in the first century before Christ through to about 68AD, were found in 1947 near Qumran. In cave 4, one particular document (number 521) says: 'The heavens and the earth will obey the Messiah, the anointed one, he will restore sight to the blind, heal the wounded, revive the dead and bring good news to the poor.'

Depending on how you count, there are 40 individual miracles recorded in the Gospels. In addition, towards the end of John's gospel (chapter 20:30,31), it says 'Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book, but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.'

So, let's be clear what a real miracle is. Some people may say the birth of a baby is a miracle – I was there when our children were born, and that was amazing, but approximately 130,000 babies are born every year. So, the birth of a baby is not a miracle. Technically, a real miracle is an extraordinary and welcome event that is not understandable by normal natural or scientific laws, a supernatural event that is naturally impossible. This message is the second in a short series of five about the miracles of Jesus. Today we are looking at physical healing.

In the four Gospels, again depending on how you count them, we have a list of 20 physical healing miraculous events performed by Jesus:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Royal official's son                                      | 11. All who were sick in Gennesaret (fringe of his garment) |
| 2. Peter's mother in law                                     | 12. Deaf man with speech impediment                         |
| 3. In the evening he healed many brought to him at the house | 13. Blind man   |
| 4. Healing a leper   | 14. Man, blind from birth                                   |
| 5. Centurion's servant                                       | 15. Blind and mute  |
| 6. Paralysed man   | 16. Woman with 18 year infirmity (straightened)             |
| 7. Withered hand   | 17. A man with dropsy                                       |
| 8. Woman with internal bleeding                              | 18. 10 lepers   |
| 9. Two blind men   | 19. Blind Bartimaeus  |
| 10. 38 year-old invalid                                      | 20. Restoring a severed ear                                 |

## ***The first question I want to ask is: 'Why do we see Jesus healing people?'***

We know that the Son of God who created the Heavens and the Earth from nothing is more than capable of changing and being in control of wind, waves, water and wine or even a picnic for 5000 plus people. But why do we see him bothering to heal people? We hear Jesus saying:

- “I came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10)?
- “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many”. (Matthew 20:28)
- “I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. For I did not come to judge the world but to save the world” (John 12:46,47)
- And Paul also, in writing to Timothy, says ‘Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost’.

If seeking and saving the lost is Jesus’ main priority, where does healing fit in? We need to go back to the beginning of Genesis to understand that we were created in God’s own image and it was good. Without sin, sorrow, sickness or suffering, human life was sacred. However, as you know, after disobedience towards God, Adam and Eve were banished and separated from everlasting life, resulting in a life of pain and death outside of God’s direct care.

In Job we read God says to Satan, “He (Job) is in your hands” and Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with sickness. Here we see Satan using sickness to deform and harm God’s creation, bringing pain and suffering to distance man from God.

Also, in the New Testament, Peter tells Cornelius (Acts 10:38) how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how Jesus then went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

From these three passages and others we can see that sickness came through Satan, and it is God’s will to bring us back to everlasting life without sin, sorrow, sickness or suffering, with no more death or mourning or crying or pain. (Rev 21:3,4). Sickness was never God’s design in the beginning and will not be any part of his new Kingdom to come.

So, returning to the question of why we see Jesus healing people, Jesus is showing that a redeemed life is more than the removal of death alone; miraculous healing is a sign of his power, compassion and desire for a fully restored, fully formed life, fitted for a perfect kingdom in every way possible. A complete restoration of the way things were in the garden before the fall, a sign of how things will be in heaven.

## ***We also see Jesus healing people as a sign of his authenticity as the promised Messiah***

The identity of the Messiah was foretold by the Old Testament prophets with so much clarity and detail, so why did many of the religious leaders fail to acknowledge Jesus as the promised Messiah? Did they doubt or were they

blinkered and blinded by preconceived ideas? Were they not the experts? They clearly knew Jesus performed Miracles. The Jewish Talmud includes mention of Jesus (Yeshu) the sorcerer who was executed by the royal government.

John the Baptist was the man who prepared the way for Jesus. He first recognised and proclaimed Jesus was the Messiah, but later when in prison began to struggle with doubt. He sent his followers to ask Jesus to confirm if he was the Messiah. Jesus sends them back saying, "Go and tell John what you hear and see." John knew Isaiah's prophecies as he quoted from them (Isaiah 35 and 61) but his doubt had begun to build based on an unfulfilled expectation. He had anticipated the Messiah building a great earthly kingdom, that he would come and set the captive Jews free and bring liberty to those who were bound. But here John was a captive still in prison, with seemingly no sight or sound of Jesus building a kingdom or being able to set him free. So, what does Jesus say to help him? Not a straight 'yes' to the question, but he asks him to consider the personal experience of his messengers and also the truth of God's word seen in practice.

You know it should be the same for us. We have a personal testimony of how we can see God working in our lives and in the world around us. And although we may not understand many things in scripture there are things we can now know with certainty. Therefore, we should never let the doubt of the things we don't know invalidate the things we do know. And we can never have anyone take away our personal experience of meeting and journeying with him. This is what John the Baptist needed to know, the man of whom Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, among those born of women there is none greater than John the Baptist". (Matthew 11:11).

### ***Our reading - the paralysed man (Mark 2:1-12)***

Jesus has returned to Capernaum, is staying at Peter's house (where he had previously healed Peter's mother-in-law) and is teaching to a packed house, as word has got out and everyone has turned up. Four guys arrive with a paralysed friend on a bed but can't even get near the door. They are not prepared to take a chance queueing and not getting to see Jesus, so they go onto the roof, remove some of the roof covering and, between the beams, lower the paralysed man down in front of Jesus. You can just imagine how pleased Peter's wife is, probably not only struggling to provide food and drink for so many but now having the crowd wreck the place (almost reminds me of when we had packed youth nights at our house!).

You can imagine the anticipation of the four friends on the roof, but then what does Jesus say? "Son, your sins are forgiven". "What!? That might sound good, but we have brought him to be healed, so why are you talking about forgiveness?" The Scribes that were present were also indignant about this, which they thought was blasphemy, but said nothing. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, tells them, "so that you may know I have (God's) authority as the Son of Man to forgive sin, I will show you, by that same authority, I can make this

young man whole again.” So immediately when Jesus instructs him to get up, go home and take his bed with him, he does just that to everyone’s amazement.

You should know that when Jesus use of the term ‘Son of Man’ this refers back to the prophecies in Daniel 7:13,14 where the Son of Man would have all authority over a glorious kingdom and over all people that will last for ever and ever. In other words, he was claiming to be the Messiah, come to redeem and restore everything.

Why does Jesus say, “Son, your sins are forgiven”? If we go back to Job and his so-called ‘friends’, we see, like the scribes of Jesus’ day, that they believed sickness and deformity was a direct result of disobedience to God; therefore, if you have these illnesses, they must be a direct result of your sin or your parents’ sins. Jesus refutes this when he heals the man born blind, saying, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him”. And here, with the paralysed man, Jesus prioritises forgiveness of sin above everything (even physical restoration): this is the heart of the gospel. This message is as true for us all today as it was in this meeting between Jesus and this paralysed man.

In conclusion, what can we say about Jesus miraculous healings? They were:

1. The genuine proof of his identity.
2. The proof of his authority, compassion, love and care to restore mankind.
3. A sign of the restoration of his people and the fulfilment of his kingdom.

When people rightly responded to Jesus’ ministry of healing, it left them hungering for more of God, not just seeking him the next time they needed a miracle. Think about the man healed by Peter and John at the Temple gate in Acts 3 - he went walking, leaping and praising God into the temple court, a place he had never been allowed before because of his infirmity.

As God is the same yesterday, today and forever, until Jesus returns, our message as his ambassadors should be the same as his first followers, who, while Jesus was with them, were sent out to declare the kingdom of God and heal the sick, and after Jesus’ resurrection were commissioned to do the same, to make disciples, baptise them in the name of Father Son and Holy Spirit and teach them to observe all that he had commanded. We have been promised all authority in heaven and earth will be with us. For the early church, this authority and power was seen through the Holy Spirit’s work of bringing many people to acknowledge Jesus as the genuine Messiah and seeing the same physical evidence as given to the man who was paralysed.

To be sure there are numerous false messages and bogus signs of healing around. We need to separate the trash from the real treasure. But the message we have to share today is about the genuine article. You know we all need a healing miracle in our lives, for some who are physically sick our need may seem obvious, just as it seemed with the paralysed man, but we all like him need to be redeemed, restored and renewed to an everlasting life, before our genuine saviour looks to renewing the physical. It’s just as any surgeon at a hospital who

first looks to save the life of a patient before dealing with other physical issues. Jesus still works in the same way today as he did then, while he does not need to prove through physical healing that he can save forgive and restore us for an everlasting life, he can still heal our bodies today and will finally transform them to perfection in preparation for a glorious life everlasting. This is the Miracle Jesus brings.

## **Communion**

Let us share in Communion together. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry; whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls."

Come to this table not because you must, but because you may; not because you are strong, but because you are weak; come, not because any goodness of your own gives us a right to come, but because you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more. Come, because he loved you and gave himself for you. Come because you need his mercy and help. Come and meet the risen Christ for we are his body.

So let us eat and drink the bread and the wine together in remembrance of him.

## **Prayers for Others**

Dear Heavenly Father, your love reaches out to us each and every day of our lives, and around us the world is full of your glory, even in these unusual times, but sometimes we are blind, sometimes we are deaf and sometimes you feel very far away. Help us to trust you, especially when times are difficult, as some are finding at present. Help us to see more clearly the signs of your activity round about us. Help us to hear more clearly when your voice speaks deep in our hearts. Help us, so that, with our brothers and sisters around the world, we may indeed worship you with heart and soul and mind and strength. Grant that this day we may look to you as Father and trust in you as Saviour, that your spirit may live in us and work through us to your praise and glory.

As we meet together, though not as we would generally understand being together, we bring our concerns to you in prayer, knowing that you always hear. Whilst we have shared a meal around your table, once again we have not been able to share around the same table. We may be adjusting to the current situation, but we continue to face many challenges, and we need to rely on your loving care to sustain us in this our hour – or days and weeks – of need.

We bring our prayers for this, your troubled world, to you this morning. It seems that all we hear is news of the pandemic, that there is nothing else of any importance, but we know this is far from the case. The world still has areas of strife, of conflict, of wars and famines, and although these may not be brought to our attention, they are still in your heart, Lord, because you care for all.

We remember those in this country whose homes were so recently devastated by floods, who even now are still awaiting building and repair work, further delayed by the coronavirus. May they be given the courage they need as they rebuild their lives and homes.

We do, however, pray particularly for those whose loved ones have been affected by Covid 19. Even when lives have been lost not as a direct result of the virus, still the effects are deep as grieving through our usual ways, of funerals and physical support from friends and family is no longer possible. We remember the families of Muriel Addison, and of Craig Hope, husband of Lorraine, Bernard and Marjorie's daughter, Lynette's sister, so recently bereaved, and ask that they may know your love and peace in their hearts at this difficult time.

From the end of life, we also think of those celebrating the birth of babies, for whom adjusting to a new way of life is more complicated, as grandparents are unable to visit and cuddle the new arrivals, nor give much needed support and reassurance. Help us to embrace technology when and where we can, but to remember the perhaps old-fashioned methods, letter writing, telephone calls, chats over garden fences, as we seek to help and comfort all those in need.

We all too often complain that we have no time, or not enough time, to do the things we would wish to do, or need to do, or know we ought to do. That is something we cannot say at present! May we use the time that you have given to us wisely and well, not as a vacuum to be filled but as an opportunity to share your love with this needy world in fresh and exciting ways.

These things we ask in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **Song: *He Will Hold Me Fast***

*(If you're online, click [here](#) to listen, or just read the words)*

When I fear my faith will fail  
Christ will hold me fast  
When the tempter would prevail  
He will hold me fast.

He'll not let my soul be lost  
His promises shall last  
Bought by him at such a cost  
He will hold me fast.

I could never keep my hold  
Through life's fearful path  
For my love is often cold  
He must hold me fast

*Chorus*  
For my life he bled and died  
Christ will hold me fast  
Justice has been satisfied  
He will hold me fast.

*Chorus:*

He will hold me fast  
He will hold me fast  
For my Saviour loves me so  
He will hold me fast

Raised with him to endless life  
He will hold me fast  
Till our faith is turned to sight  
When he comes at last!

Those he saves are his delight  
Christ will hold me fast  
Precious in his holy sight  
He will hold me fast

*Chorus*

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## **Song: *Wonderful Grace***

(If you're online, click [here](#) to listen, or just read the words)

Wonderful grace  
That gives what I don't deserve  
Pays me what Christ has earned  
Then lets me go free  
Wonderful grace  
That gives me the time to change  
Washes away the stain  
That once covered me

### *Chorus:*

And all that I am  
I lay at the feet  
Of the wonderful Saviour  
Who loves me

Wonderful love  
That held in the face of death  
Breathed in its final breath  
Forgiveness for me  
Wonderful love  
Whose power can break every chain  
Giving us life again  
Setting us free

### *Chorus*

"Wonderful Grace" words & music by John Pantry  
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## **Benediction**

May the Lord bless you and keep you, may the Lord make his face 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.

And so, he sends us out into the world, in the power of his Holy Spirit, to live and work to his praise and glory. Go therefore, as Jesus says, and "make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you, and I will be with you always to the end of the age." Make it so, Father God. Amen.