

Blackburn Baptist Church Virtual Service, 24 May 2020



Welcome

Good morning and welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church. Would you like tea or coffee, with or without sugar?! May God bless you richly as you share with us in fellowship together.

Song: *Praise to the Lord, The Almighty, the King of Creation*

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

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
The King of creation!
O my soul, praise him
For he is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear,
Now to his temple draw near;
Sing now in glad adoration!

Praise to the Lord who o'er all things
So wondrously reigneth
Shelters thee under his wings
Yea, so gently sustaineth
Hast thou not seen
How thy desires have been
Granted in what he ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper
Thy work and defend thee,
Surely his goodness and mercy
Here daily attend thee
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do
Who with his love doth befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord!
Oh, let all that is in me adore him!
All that hath life and breath
Come now with praises before him!
Let the 'amen' sound from his people again
Gladly for aye we adore him

Opening Prayer

Use the words of the opening hymn to guide your praise to the Lord.

Birthday Song: We've 2 special birthdays to celebrate this week. Barbara and Brian were both born in 1930, so are 90 years old this year! Let's celebrate!

Happy birthday to you!
Happy birthday to you!
Happy birthday dear Brian and Barbara.
Happy birthday to you!

Happy birthday to you,
From old friends and new,
May God bless you and keep you:~
Happy birthday to you!

Happy birthday to you;
Only one will not do;
Give your heart to the Saviour,
And then you'll have two!

Song: *What Love My God*

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

What love, my God
Would bring you down to earth?
What king would take
A low and lonely birth?
Yet to this dark

And broken place you came
To sleep beneath
The stars that you had made

What love, my God
Would send the Way of Life
To walk the road, rejected and despised
That you might know
The weakness I possess
And be my rock of strength
And righteousness?

Chorus:

O your love, my God, like a flood
As heaven opened up, pouring out on us
O praise the King who came to the world
In his love like a mighty flood

What love, my God
Could hold you to the tree
To bear that overwhelming debt for me?

The Son of heaven leaves the Father's side
The Healer bleeds, the Life was made to die

Chorus

What love, my God
So gracious and extreme
Was strong enough
To come and fight for me
To go through hell and down into the grave
And raise me up to see you face to face?
You raise me up to see you face to face

Chorus

"What Love My God" words & music by Jonny Robinson, Michael
Farren & Rich Thompson
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Bible Reading: *John 11:1-16*

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light." After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Song: *Low in the Grave He Lay*

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

Low in the grave he lay
Jesus my saviour!
Waiting the coming day
Jesus my Lord!

Chorus:

Up from the grave he arose
With a mighty triumph o'er his foes
He arose a victor

From the dark domain
And he lives forever
With his saints to reign
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Vainly they watch his bed
Jesus, my saviour!
Vainly they seal the dead
Jesus my Lord!

Chorus

Death cannot keep his prey
Jesus, my saviour!
He tore the bars away
Jesus my Lord!

Chorus

Message: *Don't be Afraid, Just Believe*

If you were with us last week you will have shared in the remarkable story of the son of the widow of Nain. On the way to his being buried, right at the centre of his own funeral procession, he met Jesus and was brought back to life! We saw how compassionate our Lord is, what a heart he has for those whom he has made. This week we continue the theme of resurrection miracles. Let's look at what happened to Jairus' daughter in Luke 8.

First of all, let me tell you what I'm sure you know already, that Jairus means 'God enlightens'. Well Jairus was indeed an exceptional person, because he was an enlightened ruler of the synagogue and there weren't that many of those around. They were the kind that would readily be invited to take part in chat shows. Wow! A religious leader who actually believes in Jesus. That was something special.

This Jairus had a massive challenge on his hands. He and his wife had a 12-year-old daughter. That, in itself, may have been a real challenge. I'm sure it was. But I'm thinking of something more specific and more complicated than that. She was their only daughter and she was dying. Do we understand what that must mean? Do you know what that feels like? Can we imagine it? Your only daughter dying at 12 years of age. But Jairus has heard about Jesus. He knows where Jesus is at. He knows he won't mess him around. He would take him seriously. Because that's what Jesus does when he meets us, when he confronts us, when he speaks with us, when he lives with us. He doesn't mess us around. He waits for us. He listens to us. He takes the affairs of our hearts seriously. They matter to him, because we matter to him.

You know the best way to learn to be patient is to be placed in a situation where we would naturally be impatient. And this is as we see what happens here. Look at verses 42b to 48. The woman we meet here has been suffering since Jairus' daughter was born. 12 long years. Maybe Jairus thinks at first, "That's OK. She obviously needs help too. It's just going to be a short interruption." But wait a minute. How long is he going to take? "Hey there, don't stop Jesus now.

He's coming with me, my daughter is dying." He must have been thinking, "He's helping her, why doesn't he help me?"

And now he's healed her, he's looking rather belatedly for the risk assessment form, he's writing a doctor's report on who was been healed and where and why and what and he's going to get it all printed and signed and uploaded and copied and distributed and what is he doing? "What is happening to my daughter?" And then of course he finds out what has happened to his daughter. Read verse 49. "Jesus, why? Why did you wait? Why didn't you keep walking home with me to my wife and my daughter? You know I believe in you. Don't you? I trusted you Jesus!"

But Jesus says, "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed." Jesus gives an assurance that only he is capable of giving; in a way that only he is competent to demonstrate; in an uncomplicated way, with a heartfelt simplicity; with genuine love and compassion and with a healing heart. Jesus communicates warmth, open-heartedness, availability, confidence, trust, faith, credence and conviction. In one word, assurance. 'I know whom I have believed and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.' (2 Timothy 1:12) Do you have this assurance? That he is looking after you and yours? Are you confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ? Jesus gave Jairus the assurance that he needed (verses 50b to 55a).

Let's move on to the story of Lazarus in John 11. Maybe our very familiarity with this story restricts our ability to relate consciously to the situation in which Jesus found himself. John writes, 'Now a man named Lazarus was sick.' He was from Bethany and had at least two sisters, Mary and Martha. With a precision of detail which we might rather expect from Luke, John gives us the background and sets the scene for a miraculous intervention. 'Lazarus' means God has helped or God will help. That's what Mary and Martha sought. God's help was what they needed as Lazarus was having a particularly bad experience. He was really ill. So you'd expect Jesus to show deep concern and empathise with the sisters. Particularly as they described Lazarus as the one whom Jesus loved.

Jesus says quite clearly, straightforwardly and convincingly, that he knows what is going on here. Whereas with Jairus' daughter, Jesus' words indicate authoritatively that from his, from God's perspective, the girl is not dead, but is sleeping, with Lazarus he takes a different line. Explaining Lazarus' condition to the disciples, he says at first, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going to wake him up." However the cloth-eared disciples once again don't get it. So Jesus clearly says, in their terms, Lazarus is dead. These three simple words convey such a finality, a sadness, a hopelessness that perhaps only the

words 'Jesus wept' in verse 35, recording Jesus' response to seeing Lazarus' body, can match them for their pathos and aptness.

But right at the beginning of this historical episode, as soon as Jesus hears about Lazarus' sickness, he knows what it is about. He knows why it has happened. He knows what is going on. Just as he knows exactly what is going on in your life and why. When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." God did not create us so that someday, somebody could stand in a nicely landscaped graveyard and stand in front of a gravestone and read the inscription, 'Here lies...' and then our name and the dates of our brief time on the earth and maybe what our profession was. Doing that might well be fine. But God's purposes go further than that, however right and helpful that may be. He made us to live to his glory on the earth and to sing his praises and glorify his name forever with him and with the redeemed in Heaven. Glory be to God on high. To God be the glory.

Jesus shows compassion to the widow of Nain, he gives assurance to Jairus and he receives glory with the death and resurrection of Lazarus. It's all about Jesus and who he is. It's about Jesus and why he came. And it is about Jesus and your relationship to him, that Jesus is glorified in your life as well as in mine. We so easily become pre-occupied with our own thoughts, our own ideas, our own interests. Our preferences demonstrate clearly where our hearts lie. Our decisions reveal what really matters to us.

Jesus speaking to his disciples says, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." I am sure Jesus has nothing against vehicle headlights, rear lights, brake lights, side lights or wherever they may be affixed. It is important that we can be seen when we are driving. Maybe we want our car lights to shine and shine and shine and shine, so that everyone says, "Wow. Look at him, look at her. He or she has a fantastic BMW, a first-class Audi, a magnificent Mercedes, a very special Volkswagen." But then Jesus says, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." You see, that is the crucial point. That is ultimately the aim. That is Jesus' goal. Not that anybody and everybody can see what wonderful things we do and the wondering stops there. No! That those who see our good deeds will glorify our Father who is in heaven! That's why Jesus waited too. Waited although he knew that Lazarus, the one he loved, was sick. He wanted his disciples to see the glory of God. So he waited.

There is a simple message for us here. Our significance, our part, our role in this life on earth is in relation to God's purposes for me and for you. God wants to be glorified in my life, in your lives, in our lives, in our church and in our town.

So let us not stand in the way with our wishes and preferences. Let us let him get on with it. In his time, in his way, to his glory.

Jesus faced many challenges in his response to Martha's news that Lazarus whom Jesus loved was sick:

- from the disciples who feared for their own safety if Jesus returned to Judea where the Jews had tried to stone Jesus the last time he was there
- from Martha and from Mary who made it blatantly clear on two separate occasions that they felt that, if he had been there, their brother would not have died
- from some who commented that they would really have expected from someone who had healed a blind man that he should have been able to have prevented Lazarus from dying

Then Jesus sees Mary weeping, sees the Jews weeping and is deeply moved in spirit and troubled, asking where they have laid Lazarus. They point out to him where the tomb is. Jesus weeps. They have not grasped who he is or what he does. He is crying with them. He is genuinely moved, really affected. But what is the main reason for his sadness, his grief and his anger? He knows he is about to raise Lazarus, that is not the problem. No. He is sad and angry because, as creator of the universe, he is distraught at the sin of mankind. Everything he had made, he had seen, and it was very good (Genesis 1:31). But sin came into the world and, through that, death. He knows that the last enemy to be destroyed is death (1 Corinthians 15:26). And he knows what he is going to have to do to see that through. That is why he came into the world that he himself had made.

The Jews believed that following death, for three days afterwards, the soul stayed near the grave. For this reason, mourning in a Jewish context reached its height on the fourth day, when they felt there was no more hope, because the soul had now gone. And then Jesus comes four days after Lazarus' death, once more deeply moved, and reaches the tomb. What comes next is what we need to know, what we need to realise, what we need to grasp. For death is not the end for those who believe in Jesus Christ. For as he himself said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26) This is what Jesus asks you where you are now.

"Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance." He must most probably have thought, "This is going to be me next time." "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odour, for he has been there four days." In verse 24 Martha has already said that she knows that Lazarus will rise again in the resurrection at the last day. But she doesn't think that he will be raised immediately. Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see

the glory of God?” Jesus is saying that, even in the face of death, he should be trusted, for he will do nothing other than that which displays the glory of God. The miracle is going to take place. Lazarus will be raised. But only the believers will see that God is going to be glorified through all this.

‘So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”’ Jesus is not playing to the gallery. He is not speaking to masses of interviewers in front of row upon row of TV cameras. His prayer seeks to bring, seeks to draw his hearers into the intimacy of his own relationship with the Father. The prayer demonstrates that Jesus does nothing by himself but is totally dependent on and obedient to the will of his Father. The Son asks, the Son requests; the Father may allow, may permit what he is asking. What Jesus is hoping is that some of his hearers will comprehend, will understand, will realise, will believe that he has been sent by God himself. He is not looking to draw attention to himself but wants to glorify the name of God his Father.

‘When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”’ Why did he call out in a loud voice? So that God would hear? No! So that Lazarus would hear? No. So that everyone in the crowd would hear and never forget what God in Jesus Christ had done. ‘The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”’ Don’t let us ever forget what Jesus has done. He is the Resurrection and the Life.

‘Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out - those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.’ (John 5:25-29)

Don’t let us ever forget who Jesus is. He is the Resurrection and the Life. Do you believe this? Only believe and you will see. Only believe and you will live. Only believe and you will know that all the glory belongs to God.

(Maybe on another occasion we can consider in detail together the accounts of the saints in Jerusalem in Matthew 27:50-54, of Tabitha or Dorcas in Acts 9: 36-42 and of Eutychus in Acts 20:7-12).

Prayers for Others

Bring to God the things on your heart today.

Song: Christ is Risen

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

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
For I once was lost but now I'm found
Was blind but now I see

Chorus:

Hallelujah
Christ is risen from the grave
Hallelujah
Christ is risen from the grave

The prodigal is welcomed home
The sinner now a saint
For the God who died came back to life
And everything is changed

Chorus

Oh death, where is your sting?
Oh fear, where is your power?
For the mighty King of kings
Has disarmed you

Song: Go Peaceful

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

Go peaceful in gentleness
Through the violence of these days
Give freely, show tenderness
In all your ways

Through darkness, in troubled times
Let holiness be your aim
Seek wisdom, let faithfulness
Burn like a flame

God speed you, God lead you
And keep you wrapped
Around his heart
May you be known by love

The Grace

'May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all and forever more. Amen.'

Delivered and redeemed
Eternal life resounds
Oh praise his name forever

Chorus

And all throughout eternity
Our song will be the same
Hallelujah, Christ is risen from the grave

And on the day you call me in
To Heaven's sweet embrace
I'll see your scars, your open arms
And the beauty of your face
Through tears of joy, I'll lift my voice
In everlasting praise

Chorus

Jesus is alive

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Be righteous, speak truthfully
In a world that's full of greed and lies
Show kindness, see everyone
Through heaven's eyes

God hold you, enfold you
And keep you wrapped
Around his heart
May you be known by love
May you be known by love

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