



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on April 21st, 2024 at 10:45, meeting 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 being led by Alec, with Kate, Paul W and Judith playing the music.

Nigel plays a video of the new version of The Lords my Shepherd before the service begins, then:

Welcome from Alec, reading from Psalm 133, verses 1 and 3.

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!
It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion.
For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

before we join in singing our Opening hymn "Great is your faithfulness"

"Great is Thy faithfulness," O God my Father,
there is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
as Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

**"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
great is Thy faithfulness," Lord, unto me!**

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"....

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"...

Authors: Thomas Obediah Chisholm, William Marion Runyan CCLI Song # 18723 Copurights © Words and music: 1923. Renewed 1951 Hope Publishing Company CCL no 5664

Notices were shared by Jane, in Tony's absence - his mother is in hospital having had a stroke, so please remember the family in prayer.

Jane drew attention to the Special Church Members Meeting to be held after the service next Sunday, when there will be vote on the future ministry of the church. She also shared that it is Alecs birthday today (he is now 70) and invited all to share in celebration cake after the service.

Alec then spoke:

SPACE 1 "A time for thanks and praise", sharing about his birthday, and how ill he had been many years ago, when he had done what he never suggests to others, and bargained with God! His first daughter was a newborn, and he told God that if he saw her 20th birthday (the age of majority where they lived at the time) he would spent his time sharing the gospel, which he has done and has been the reason for his life he believes.

Song "Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah, Praise ye the Lord" , which we sang together initially and then as a round, standing up and sitting down accordingly!

Hallelu, hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah
Praise ye the Lord.
Hallelu, hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah
Praise ye the Lord.

Praise ye the Lord, hallelujah,
Praise ye the Lord, hallelujah,
Praise ye the Lord, hallelujah,
Praise ye the Lord.

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Song: "Our God is an awesome God"

Our God is an awesome God, He reigns from heaven above
with wisdom pow'r and love, our God is an awesome God.

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Our Bible reading Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, was said as a Responsive reading, with Alec reading the words in darker type.

A Time for Everything

There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:

a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
time to tear down and a time to build,

a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,

a

a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,

a time to search and a time to give up,
time to keep and a time to throw away,

a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,

a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

Alec spoke again: SPACE 2 "A time..

a) to look forward

There is a time to look forward.

Let's compare our lives with a bucket.(pictures of different buckets were shown on the screen)
Buckets are made out of metal, plastic, and other materials, have different colours, different sizes, different weights, different functions, they are located and used in different places. Buckets do not last forever. The colours of plastic buckets fade, their form becomes changed, they become warped and squashed. They may get severely crushed and develop cracks. Metal buckets may rust. Buckets do not last forever. In this way too are we not like buckets? Do we have a limited lifespan? We certainly do! In fact as someone expressed it we will all some time or other end up by kicking the bucket.

So from the expression kicking the bucket we have more recently developed the expression "bucket list".

What's the origin of the phrase 'bucket list'? The expression came into wide use following the release of the film Bucket List, in December 2007. Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman star in 'The Bucket List', about two cancer patients. The two terminally ill men make a wish list of things they want to do before they kick the bucket - called the bucket list - then take a road trip.

At first only people who feared their imminent death compiled a bucket list. More recently, since the expression has become more widely used, it just means 'a list of things that I would like to do someday'. Such a list typically includes things like:

- Seeing the Northern Lights
- Visiting the Grand Canyon, the Taj Mahal, the Great Wall of China and similar places
- Swimming with dolphins
- Learning to play chess
- Running a marathon
- Setting a new Guinness world record
- Going sky diving
- Visiting all seven continents

Looking forward what is on your bucket list? What do you want to do, aim to do, intend to do before your earthly life comes to an end?

There are many bucket list apps - <https://www.betterup.com/blog/bucket-list-ideas> has a list of 220 bucket list ideas to change your life.

There are pros and cons of having a bucket list:

Pros of having a bucket list include

- 1) It's a measurable form of progress
- 2) It gives you things to look forward to
- 3) It makes life more meaningful
- 4) It helps you avoid feeling unmotivated

Cons of having a bucket list

- 1) The fulfilment is only temporary
- 2) It only works for those who find meaning in reaching goals and targets
- 3) You may feel like you're failing
- 4) It can be superficial and performative

Paradoxically for some people making a bucket list has become a lifelong hobby! Your list might be very long if you try to put everything down at once and you might become overwhelmed by all you want to do and have a heart attack or a nervous breakdown! To avoid these you could compartmentalise your bucket into groups of similar things like skills or hobbies you would like to learn, foods you want to try and so on.

But however many bucket lists we have, regardless of how well we have put these lists together, we will always have one problem.

Let's look at and listen to a short video clip.

We watched a video of the song - There's a hole in my bucket - some of us probably remember when we used to hear it on the radio many years ago sung by Harry Belafonte!! This was a children's cartoon version.

There's a hole in the bucket, dear Liza, dear Liza,
There's a hole in the bucket, dear Liza, there's a hole.
Then fix it dear Henry, dear Henry, dear Henry,
Then fix it dear Henry, dear Henry, fix it.

With what should I fix it, dear Liza, dear Liza,
With what should I fix it, dear Liza, with what?
With a straw, dear Henry, dear Henry, dear Henry,
With a straw, dear Henry, dear Henry, with a straw.

But the straw is too long, dear Liza, dear Liza,
The straw is too long, dear Liza, too long.

Then cut it dear Henry, dear Henry, dear Henry,
Then cut it dear Henry, dear Henry, cut it!

With what shall I cut it, dear Liza, dear Liza,
With what shall I cut it, dear Liza, with what?
With an axe, dear Henry, dear Henry, dear Henry,
With an axe, dear Henry, an ax.

But the axe is too dull, dear Liza, dear Liza,
The axe is too dull, dear Liza, too dull.
Then, sharpen it, dear Henry, dear Henry, dear Henry,
Then sharpen it dear Henry, dear Henry, sharpen it!

With what should I sharpen it, dear Liza, dear Liza,
With what should I sharpen, dear Liza, with what?
With a stone, dear Henry, dear Henry, dear Henry,
With a stone, dear Henry, dear Henry, a stone.

But the stone is too dry, dear Liza, dear Liza,
The stone is too dry, dear Liza, too dry.
Then wet it, dear Henry, dear Henry, dear Henry,
Then wet it dear Henry, dear Henry, wet it.

With what should I wet it, dear Liza, dear Liza,
With what should I wet it, dear Liza, with what?
With water, dear Henry, dear Henry, dear Henry,
With water, dear Henry, dear Henry, with water.

But how shall I get it?, dear Liza, dear Liza,
But how shall I get it?, dear Liza, with what?
In the bucket, dear Henry, dear Henry, dear Henry,
In the bucket, dear Henry, dear Henry, in the bucket!

But there's a hole in the bucket, dear Liza, dear Liza,
There's a hole in the bucket, dear Liza, a hole. there's a hole.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmhzLEOi3Q>

We have been given only one life on this earth, so we are told to make sure we live it to the fullest.

We try and fill the bucket and fulfil everything on the list.

And what better way is there to organize your life goals than with a bucket list app you'll see every day on your smartphone?

But whatever we have on our bucket list and however much we have completed it one basic problem remains. There is a hole in the bucket, a lethal weakness in our thinking and understanding; and it is this-the final enemy to be destroyed is death.

We try in all kinds of ways to repair, renew, replace, duplicate, repaint, re-form, refashion and possibly redevelop our "bucket".

1) We may play being escapists, in our thinking and behaving denying the existence and growth of the hole in the bucket: denying our age and declining faculties.

I remember living at Swansea University taking part in a study week sharing the student accommodation and facilities with a group of ladies who never wanted to look old.

We deny reality: we may think we are going to live on the earth forever.

2) We may see filling the bucket as a “solution”

As we get older people may say things like:

“You have a full life”

“You have had a full life”

Or at the end of life on earth, ‘He/she had a full life.’”

But it is not in looking hopefully forward that we come to fullness of joy, to peace with ourselves and with our Maker. We need to go forward with God. Without Him the hole in the bucket will become bigger, the bucket will become empty and we will finally have “kicked the bucket” so to speak.

Birthdays can serve as a reminder of God’s goodness in our lives. On our birthdays we might take time to reflect on specific ways God has blessed or helped us over the past years and use such reflection to offer heart-felt praise for his faithfulness. It is fitting to reflect often on God’s mercy, and birthdays can be a special time of remembrance and thanksgiving.

But birthdays also remind us that life is marching in one direction. The death-rate among humans is 1 per person, 100 percent.

b) and to go forward”

What might our bucket list for eternity look like?

1)Being filled with the joy of the Lord, that our joy will be full.

John 16:24 “Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete”.

2)Be being continually filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18“Don’t be drunk with wine, which will ruin your life, but be filled with the Spirit.”

3)Making a creative approach to the challenges through which God is aiming to transform our hearts, our minds and our whole lives

Romans 12:1-2 in view of God’s mercy, offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is our true and proper worship. We are not to conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then we will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

4)Accepting who we are

Mark 12:30-31 “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

5)Growing in grace, growing in our knowledge of the Word, growing in our knowledge of the Lord

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”.

6) Getting ready for going where we know we are going to go

7) Practicing the presence of God now in preparation for being with him

8) Fulfilling HIS PLANS for us on the earth as long as we are here

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

God has a plan. He always has a plan. He always had a plan.

Song/hymn “Yet not I but through Christ in me”

What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer; there is no more for heaven now to give;
He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom,
my steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace.

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus, for my life is wholly bound to His;
Oh how strange and divine, I can sing: all is mine, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

The night is dark but I am not forsaken, for by my side, the Saviour He will stay;
I labour on in weakness and rejoicing, for in my need, His power is displayed.

To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me, through the deepest valley He will lead;
oh the night has been won, and I shall overcome, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven, the future sure, the price it has been paid,
for Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon, and He was raised to overthrow the grave.

To this I hold, my sin has been defeated, Jesus now and ever is my plea;
oh the chains are released, I can sing: I am free, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

With every breath I long to follow Jesus for He has said that He will bring me home,
and day by day I know He will renew me until I stand with joy before the throne.

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus, all the glory evermore to Him;
when the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat yet not I, but through Christ in me.

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Alec then spoke again:

SPACE 3 “A time to be real”

The same Jeremiah who wrote Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” also wrote these words in Jeremiah 20:13-14 NIV “Sing to the Lord! Give praise to the Lord! He rescues the life of the needy from the hands of the wicked. Cursed be the day I was born! May the day my mother bore me not be blessed!”

How is it possible to say first “Sing to the Lord! Give praise to the Lord! He rescues the life of the needy from the hands of the wicked.” And then to say, “Cursed be the day I was born! May the day my mother bore me not be blessed!”?

This is written in God’s Word for a purpose.

It’s not morbid to be real!

Why do we feel things like this? Why do we say things like this? Why do we express things like this? "Sing to the Lord! Give praise to the Lord! Cursed be the day I was born!"

Jeremiah the prophet probably wrote these things because of the sufferings he had experienced in his work for the Lord, because of the pain and hurt he had gone through in his ministry which included:

Rejection by his own family and relatives.

False accusations against him.

Threats of death for speaking for God.

A lonely and solitary life, with no marriage or social gatherings.

Rejection of his message by the Israelites.

Spiritual struggle witnessing evil prosper while the righteous suffered.

Additionally he mourned his existence and questioned his role as a prophet.

"Sing to the Lord! Give praise to the Lord! Cursed be the day I was born!"

Why do we say these words? Why do we feel like this and think like this ?

Because we live in a fallen world, a world that has left behind its maker and almost totally ignores, or rewrites and destroys the truth and reality of the maker's instructions in the guidebook.

Because we stand up for the truth and find it difficult to comprehend and cope with when it seems to us that we may be almost the only one still doing that.

Because we use our gifts, our time and our money for the King of Kings and worship Jesus as Lord of our lives and our senses tell us that others are living for themselves and doing really well thank you.

For all these and probably many other reasons we are eating the soup and feeling like we are drowning in it. We are in the world but not of it says Jesus.

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble says the Lord Jesus. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

What we are talking about is in all probability not of itself part of a package of symptoms of a potential mental health condition, but it is definitely very challenging. In the labyrinth of thought, where contradictions intertwine, we find ourselves caught between the ebb and flow of opposing currents.

Let's learn to live in the complementarity and the growth potential of tension. Being dragged in two different directions, simultaneously, should only create tension and stress. Yet these conflicts can often work in our favour. It is like a paradox mindset. It may be often not either/or but both/and.

Joys and sorrows

Losses and gains (births and deaths)

Rejection and acceptance

Hopes fulfilled and hopes destroyed

Pain and comfort

Anxiety and security

Job lost his sheep, his oxen, his camels, his servants, and all of his sons and daughters. He also lost his entire wealth and livelihood. Additionally, Job suffered the loss of seven sons and three daughters. He lost his possessions, his family, his health, and even his will to live. However, he did not lose his faith in God.

Job did not sin all he said; he did not charge God with wrongdoing. But no-one said a word to him because they saw how great his suffering was. Then Job spoke: Job 3:1-26

After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. **2** He said:

"May the day of my birth perish, and the night that said, 'A boy is conceived!' That day—may it turn to darkness; may God above not care about it; may no light shine on it.

May gloom and utter darkness claim it once more; may a cloud settle over it; may blackness overwhelm it.

That night—may thick darkness seize it; may it not be included among the days of the year nor be entered in any of the months.

May that night be barren; may no shout of joy be heard in it.

May those who curse days curse that day, those who are ready to rouse Leviathan.

May its morning stars become dark; may it wait for daylight in vain and not see the first rays of dawn,

for it did not shut the doors of the womb on me to hide trouble from my eyes.

"Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb?

Why were there knees to receive me and breasts that I might be nursed?

For now I would be lying down in peace, I would be asleep and at rest

with kings and rulers of the earth, who built for themselves places now lying in ruins, with princes who had gold, who filled their houses with silver.

Or why was I not hidden away in the ground like a stillborn child, like an infant who never saw the light of day?

There the wicked cease from turmoil, and there the weary are at rest.

Captives also enjoy their ease; they no longer hear the slave driver's shout.

The small and the great are there, and the slaves are freed from their owners.

"Why is light given to those in misery, and life to the bitter of soul, to those who long for death that does not come,

who search for it more than for hidden treasure, who are filled with gladness and rejoice when they reach the grave?

Why is life given to a man whose way is hidden, whom God has hedged in?

For sighing has become my daily food; my groans pour out like water.

What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me.

I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil."

Matthew Henry says: "Let the people of God open their cause before Him, and he will enable them to see deliverance".

Let us cry to God for help. He alone is able to deliver us. He is coming soon.

Brian McCormack wrote that, 'This morning we awoke one day closer to him wiping away every tear from our eyes.'

We live in the darkness; we fight with the darkness and we long for light. But we may still remain in the darkness of the valley of death. But as Psalm 23 reads: "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." "Even if I go through the deepest darkness, I will not be afraid, LORD, for you are with me. Your shepherd's rod and staff protect me." "Even when walking through the dark valley of death I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me, guarding, guiding all the way."

"In the darkness we have a calling" (Jeannie Kendall)

Let us be light in the darkness.

Song "All my ways are known to you"

In days of peace and days of rest, in times of loss and loneliness,
though rich or poor, Your word is true, that all my ways are known to You.

No trial has come beyond Your hand, no step I walk beyond Your plan,
the path is dark outside my view still all my ways are known to You.

**And oh what peace that I have found wherever I may be,
for all my ways are known to You, Hallelujah, they are known to You!**

I do not fear the final night for death will be the door to life,
You take my hand and lead me through for all my ways are known to You.

And oh what peace that I have found....

Open up my eyes so I may see that You have made these ways for me.
Open up my eyes so I may see that You my God, will walk with me.

And oh what peace that I have found....

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Prayers were led by Carol, before we sang our closing, offertory hymn:

Come, people of the risen King, who delight to bring Him praise.
Come, all and tune your hearts to sing to the Morning Star of grace.
From the shifting shadows of the earth we will lift our eyes to Him,
where steady arms of mercy reach to gather children in.

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice, O Church of Christ, rejoice!**

Come, those whose joy is morning sun and those weeping through the night.
Come, those who tell of battles won, and those struggling in the fight.
For His perfect love will never change, and His mercies never cease,
but follow us through all our days with the certain hope of peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!.....

Come, young and old from every land, men and women of the faith.
Come, those with full or empty hands, find the riches of His grace.
Over all the world, His people sing, shore to shore we hear them call
the Truth that cries through every age; 'Our God is all in all'.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!

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Alec led in Closing prayers followed by everyone saying:

**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.**