


BEING CHURCH



Living the New Spirit-filled Life



7 JUNE, 2020

Please click on text in **RED** to listen to music or sing along.
When finished, close and return to this page.

Welcome Church! Welcome to Worship!

We are living in a time of increasing turmoil, when virus' and emotions are spreading like wild fire and anger is bubbling under the surface of human emotions. Where do we begin our worship this morning? Perhaps by remembering the first and most important instruction: worship the Lord our God with all your heart, soul and mind. It is our Church's tradition to celebrate the life of Christ in broken bread and poured out wine, on the first and third Sundays of each month. As we participate in this sacred celebration, we shall use two laments published this week by the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

*Place a slice of bread/biscuit/cracker on a plate, beside a glass of juice/water/wine
in preparation of celebrating the purpose of Christ in death,
and in exuberant expectation for His return!*

In reverence and awe....

We gather as the hand-made of the Creator, who creates galaxies, stars and planets and who created this time we call '**now**', in this space we call '**here**', we gather to worship you.

Let Your voice O God be heard in all creation, and let it respond with joy to the voice of its Creator, Sustainer and Renewer.

Let Your voice O God and King be heard as blessing, echoing its Majestic power over all creation.

We celebrate the Mystery and Reality that is Your everlasting glory.

We celebrate Your power and generosity towards all creation and all peoples.

We celebrate the way You welcome us into Your glorious presence. **AMEN.**

Come! Lets us bow down in worship!

FIRST PRAYER of LAMENT - I WOKE UP

A new day
I was aware of my breath
And then it hit me
Sheets soaked with sweat
Snotty nose
Twisted tissues
Sticky eyes
I had been mourning in my sleep
I wanted to get up
I was aware of my emotions
Unspeakable anger
All the D words:
 Depressed
 Defeated
 Down
I tried to get up
I was aware of my body
Limp legs
Wobbly bowel
Sick to the stomach
Compressed chest
And then
I remembered his name
Ever so slowly:
George Floyd
The one whose breath was not respected
I couldn't say his name out loud
Instead I stayed in bed
Cushioned in my comfort blanket
And wept for a very long time

A lament written by Jane Day

SING

Here we Are!

READ **Psalm 10 - A Lament for Victims of Injustice**

Lord, why are you standing aloof and far away? Why do you hide when I need you the most?

Come and deal with all these proud and wicked people who viciously persecute the poor. Pour upon these people the evil they planned for others! For these people brag of all their evil lusts; they revile God and congratulate those the Lord abhors, whose only goal in life is money.

These wicked people, so proud and haughty, seem to think that God is dead. They wouldn't think of looking for him! Yet there is success in everything they do, and their enemies fall before them. They do not see your punishment awaiting them. They boast that neither God nor men can ever keep them down—somehow they'll find a way!

Their mouths are full of profanity and lies and fraud. They are always boasting of their evil plans. They lurk in dark alleys of the city and murder passersby. Like lions they crouch silently, waiting to pounce upon the poor. Like hunters they catch their victims in their traps. The unfortunate are overwhelmed by their superior strength and fall beneath their blows. "God isn't watching," they say to themselves; "he'll never know!"

O Lord, arise! O God, crush them! Don't forget the poor or anyone else in need. Why do you let the wicked get away with this contempt for God? For they think that God will never call them to account. Lord, you see what they are doing. You have noted each evil act. You know what trouble and grief they have caused. Now punish them. O Lord, the poor man trusts himself to you; you are known as the helper of the helpless. Break the arms of these wicked men. Go after them until the last of them is destroyed.

The Lord is King forever and forever. Those who follow other gods shall be swept from his land.

Lord, you know the hopes of humble people. Surely you will hear their cries and comfort their hearts by helping them. You will be with the orphans and all who are oppressed, so that mere earthly man will terrify them no longer.

LISTEN **Purify my heart**

LET'S CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF CHRIST

To celebrate the life of Christ is to honour God for keeping His promise of Redemption and Salvation. We enter this time and space to consecrate ourselves, that everything we think and everything we speak, will be a blessing, in the same way that we enjoy God's blessing. Wherever you are, your kitchen, bedroom, living room, balcony or garden, surely the presence of God is in that place!

SING **Surely the Presence of the Lord is in this place**

Jesus gathered the Twelve He had chosen for what He knew would be the last Passover meal they would share together. It was time they realised the meaning of "Passover" was going to be fulfilled very shortly. But these Twelve would offer a new story of salvation to those who were not part of God's mighty act of saving His chosen people from slavery in Egypt; the new story was for **anyone** who believed God's Word and trusted in His promise of being saved **for** eternal life, would enjoy that privilege.

IN BROKEN BREAD

As Jesus reached out and lifted the loaf of bread, He said to the Twelve at the Table, *In future, whenever you reach out and take bread, and you break it, pause for a moment and remember, my body, as you see it today, was broken for you; It will remain a mystery to you until you become a part of it, that in and through brokenness you are made whole.*

Take the bread, break it saying, *Thank you Father for this broken bread a reminder of Jesus' broken body, through whom I am restored to perfection to be with You for eternity in Your Kingdom.*

Relish the moment!

IN POURED OUT WINE

Jesus then reached out to the cup at the centre of the table saying, *This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you. I will not drink of it until I come again in My Father's Glory, but when you drink of it, rejoice! Your future is secured by My death.*

LISTEN **What a Faithful God Have I**

PRAYER

Father! You have called us through the life of Christ, and made us Your sons and daughters. We may be scattered each in our homes, but we are Living Stones, being built as Christ's Church and made wholly presentable to God our Father. We **are** Your chosen people, we **are** your Royal Priesthood, we **are** a Holy nation, for You have called us out of darkness into your marvellous light! Thank you for making us so special. **AMEN**

SING **Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart**

READING

SING **In Moments like these, I lift up my hands**

MESSAGE

Two thousand-plus years ago a man, innocent of the crimes for which He was charged, was put to death on a cross, the most painful and cruel death ever devised, watched by a large crowd, none of whom spoke up in support of the man on the cross, nor against the authorities who brutally killed Him.

In 80 AD the Colosseum in Rome was opened for the spectator sport of "death by torture", always filled to capacity (50-80,000) by cheering and jeering crowds, and no one spoke up for the innocent gored to death.

Until 1868, hangings in England were conducted in the public square, watched by crowds who accepted the victim must have done something to deserve it. Until recently, several countries practiced flogging, often to death, in the public square, watched by people who dare not raise their voice.

On Monday 25 May, an old pandemic re-surfaced and spread like wildfire. Against the backdrop of medical warfare battling a virus causing innumerable deaths and undisclosed grief, the cruel death of one man played out in public in front of several onlookers, ignited a reaction which demands a response, not only in terms of justice, but a response which demands a heart-felt change of personal attitude and social outlook.

Has the human race finally found its voice to protest against atrocities that go against the very nature of what it means to be made in the image of God?

We have just entered the season of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit confers His power that we may live as God made us. But this season begins with lament; we should be passionately sorrowful of two things:

First, as individuals we worship a god who is not God Almighty and Eternal! We do not make the effort to understand the person and the purpose of God. We try to mould God into our own likeness, instead of being shaped into His likeness. We summon the eternal, infinite God to reason with us. We want to bend His wisdom to suit our finite minds. We demonstrate a lack conviction whether God is able to do something about the state of the world. We blame Him for broken relationships, we question His understanding of human nature, we dispute His authority, we challenge His laws and distort them, we suspect His motives, we argue with Him over His plans often suggesting ours are closer to reality than His. We have created and worship an idol of a god who is not God. Sparked by ignorance and fuelled by pride-of-being and achievement, we must lament our foolishness, that we worship an idol called god who is not the God of the Bible!

This is what happened when Peter ended his message with, *the whole nation of Israel must know beyond the shadow of a doubt that this Jesus, whom you crucified, God has declared to be both Lord and Christ (the Messiah and Saviour of all).*¹

When faced with the foolishness of our arguments, and the realisation we are not all we make ourselves out to be, we then lament as Christ's Church, mourning the fallen state of the human heart and arrive at the question of surrender, *What then must we do?*², the same question people asked John the Baptist when he warned them not to presume, God will accept them just because they are the "descendants of Abraham": *What then should we do?*³

Peter's message on the first Pentecost was to narrate the story of God and show the gathered international crowd, what they witnessed was the promise of God coming true before their very eyes: God pouring the power of the

¹ Acts 2:36

² Acts 2:37

³ Luke 3:10

Holy Spirit on all people, without discrimination or distinctions of gender, age, class, or race. Anyone and everyone who repents of the idol of god they created and believed in, and of the pride of human effort that seeks independence from God in order to make a name for themselves, everyone can be protected and empowered by the Holy Spirit, to live the life God made us for. Three thousand God-fearing Jews from every nation under the sun⁴, accepted Peter's message and were baptised.

Peter experiences another outpouring of the Holy Spirit when he was called to the home Cornelius, a devout, God-fearing Centurion in the elite Italian Regiment of the Roman army. Following a mid afternoon divine vision⁵, Cornelius sends for Peter, who himself was trying to understand a vision repeated three times, of a voice telling him to eat from a selection of clean and unclean animals which he refused, only to hear a voice say, *Do not call anything impure that which God has made clean.* As Peter enters Cornelius' home and sees the gathered crowd of family and close friends, and Cornelius explains how he came to invite him, Peter opens with the words, *I now realise how true it is that God does not show favouritism, but accepts people from every nation to fear him and do what is right.* Peter is bowled over by their attentive reception and says, *They have received the Holy Spirit, just as we have!*, a phrase he repeated when questioned why he entered the house of a gentile (uncircumcised) person and ate with them - *As I began to speak to them, the Holy Spirit came on them, as he had come on us at the beginning!*⁶

In God's Kingdom, difference is to be celebrated! People who look different, speak different, eat different foods, dress differently, all are made in the image of God. The Apostle James, using the analogy of welcoming a well-dressed person while talking down to a person in shabby clothes reminds us, *Don't ever attempt, my brothers, to combine snobbery with faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ! ... If you obey the royal law, expressed by the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', all is well.* Then he cautions, *Once you allow any invidious distinctions to creep in, you are sinning, you have broken God's Law.*⁷

⁴ Acts 2:5

⁵ Acts 10

⁶ Acts 11:15

⁷ James 2:1 and 8

There are times when we are so busy trying to be a “good” Christian, we forget to “love our God with all our heart, soul and mind”, and forget our duty to “love your neighbour as yourself”.

Then there are times when we love our neighbour because it feels good, and because others are doing it and it is the Christian thing to do, and forget to worship our God with all our heart, soul and mind.

The Holy Spirit is tasked to remind us to live a balanced life, because His duty is to protect for God, that which belongs to God, until the day Christ comes in glory to our eternal home with the Father! **AMEN**

LISTEN **This is My Prayer for You**

SECOND PRAYER of LAMENT

Responding to the death of George Floyd with Prayers of Lament

Lord, how long?
From the depths of our soul we cry,
How long?
From generation to generation your children have suffered.
How long?
Our pain is great.
How long, Lord?
 Day and night we cry out to you,
 How long do we see our loved ones crushed
 under the yoke of hate and injustice?
 Weighed down by societies institutional bias.
God, you are the God of all,
From before the beginning of time you are sovereign God.
Your mercy endures from everlasting to everlasting.
Show us your hand of mercy at this time, in this generation.
 Let your power be manifest throughout your earth,
 Heal your lands,
 Heal all minds,
 Heal all hearts.
For it is only you, our God,
who can create a new heart
and a spirit of love and compassion
in those hearts that are as stone.

Lord, order our steps,
May we all march in one accord.
Move through us by your might,
For you are the power and the glory.
So, in our struggle,
We will still praise you,
We will still lift our hands in prayer towards you,
We will do your will,
Whilst we wait on you.
For we know you are with us in the storm
And that healing, peace and joy
Will come in the morning. **AMEN.**

A prayer written by the Hudson sisters

SING

God's Spirit is in My Heart ...

BENEDICTION

I am the obedient child of God where I live, work and have my being. He has called me to love my neighbour as myself, by living with compassion, soothing suffering and demonstrating God's love.

So I leave this place of worship, to share the gifts I have been given, and build the Body of Christ, unified in love. I go into my world with the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, In the Name and for the glory of Jesus my Christ. **AMEN.**

As a member of Botley Baptist Church, please do not forget to remit your tithe and offering, either directly into the bank or drop-off your envelope at Church.

If you are not attending this Church and would like to contribute to its ministry, please click "EMAIL US" at the top of the home page. Thank you