

**ABBAY INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH, READING**

**GIFT DAY WORSHIP SERVICE WITH COMMUNION**

**10.30 AM 3<sup>RD</sup> NOVEMBER 2024**

**Rev Dr Julia Binney leading & Simon Bird preaching**

[www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk](http://www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk).

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**Theme:** The Kingdom of God in the Gospel of Mark - Riches and the Kingdom (Mark 10:23-25)

**CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Come to worship,  
not out of habit,  
not out of duty,  
not because your name is on a rota.

Come to worship  
because you love God,  
because you love God's people,  
because you love God's world.

**We come to celebrate our living and loving God.**

**We come to worship our good and faithful God.**

**SONG:**

I love You, Lord for Your mercy never fails me.  
All my days,  
I've been held in Your hands.  
From the moment that I wake up,  
until I lay my head  
Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God.

*All my life You have been faithful,  
And all my life You have been so, so good.  
With every breath that I am able,  
Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God.*

I love Your voice, you have led me through the fire.  
In the darkest night,  
you are close like no other.  
I've known You as a Father,  
I've known You as a Friend  
And I have lived in the goodness of God.

BENJAMIN DAVID FIELDING, BRIAN JOHNSON, JASON DAVID INGRAM, JENN JOHNSON, EDMOND MARTIN CASH © 2019 BETHEL MUSIC

**PRAYER OF PRAISE AND CONFESSION:**

Lord, we come to you as we are to praise and worship you...

Holy Spirit, source of heavenly wisdom pure, peaceful, gentle and compassionate.

**We praise and worship you.**

Living Lord Jesus, who came as a servant, humble and obedient to the Father's will.

**We praise and worship you.**

Gracious heavenly Father, all goodness and loving kindness, draw near to us.

**As we draw near to you in praise and worship.**

Forgive us, Lord, for the way we try and hide from you, ignoring your love and turning away from the life you offer. Forgive us for the way we grasp things to ourselves, fearful of letting go, and refusing to share your blessings with others.

**Help us Lord to be generous, open, kind and loving like you.**

**Please cleanse and renew us and fill us with your love and power to serve you in this world. In the name of Jesus, who gave his all for us. Amen.**

**The Lord's Prayer:** *You are invited to pray in your own heart language*

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours  
now and for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Family Time:** Give Till it Tickles

*(After the song the children will leave us for their own groups)*

**ACTION SONG: YOUTUBE CLIP**

*God loves a cheerful giver – ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha (repeat)*

Those who sow sparingly will also reap sparingly

**PRAYER**

**BIBLE READING 1: MARK 10:17-30**

**BIBLE READING 2: 2 Corinthians 9:6-11**

**Hymn BP&W 529:**

From heaven you came,  
Helpless babe,

Entered our world,  
Your glory veiled;  
Not to be served  
But to serve,  
And give Your life  
That we might live.

*This is our God,  
The Servant King,  
He calls us now  
To follow Him,  
To bring our lives  
As a daily offering  
Of worship to  
The Servant King.*  
There in the garden of tears,  
My heavy load  
He chose to bear;  
His heart with sorrow  
Was torn,  
'Yet not My will  
But Yours,' He said.

Come see His hands  
And His feet,  
The scars that speak  
Of sacrifice;  
Hands that flung stars  
Into space  
To cruel nails  
Surrendered.

So let us learn  
How to serve,  
And in our lives  
Enthroned Him;  
Each other's needs  
To prefer,  
For it is Christ  
We're serving.

GRAHAM KENDRICK © 1983 KINGSWAY'S THANKYOU MUSIC.

**SERMON: Riches and the Kingdom of God (Mark 10:23-25)**

As this is our gift day, I could preach a straight forward sermon from our first reading. This is about Paul's collection for the saints in Jerusalem. He uses the example of the Macedonian church and encourages the Corinthian Christians to get ready with their offering, and be generous (1 Cor 16:2, 2 Cor 8:2;9:6). He reminds them they are contributing to the Lord's work. A key thought is they gave themselves to the Lord first(8:5), so giving is part of our heart response to God, putting God first before anything else. One

of the duties of church membership is to, 'give financially to the church on a regular basis as we are able.' But there is no compulsion or manipulation. We should not think of this as a burden, like a tax or a church membership subscription. God wants our giving to flow from a cheerful heart (9:7). And there is a promise that we shall be blessed when we do this (9:10). It may not come back as tangible wealth, but God, who is the greatest giver, will repay handsomely.

As you know, we are following a series on the Kingdom of God in Mark, and today we have a text on wealth that is far more challenging than that in Corinthians. It penetrates to our motivation. It exposes our insecurities. Are you ready to go there with me?

The first chapters of Mark follow Jesus' dramatic ministry in Galilee, with miracles and crowds following. Then in Chapter 8 comes Jesus' question to his disciples, 'Who do you say I am?' Peter answers, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God' (8:29). This is one of the key points in the Gospel – how have we answered that question? Then the story changes direction as Jesus heads towards Jerusalem (Chapters 8 to 10).

He uses this time to give lessons to the disciples, rather than the crowds. Several themes come up. Three times Jesus tells them he will suffer, die and rise again. He warns them, they too must take up their cross and follow him - the cost of discipleship. I encourage you to look back at Julia's sermon 2 weeks ago – she listed several costs of following Jesus but reminded us the gain is incomparable. How did we respond? Have we counted the cost, yet decided to follow Him? Twice (can you believe it!) the disciples argued about who is greatest. Twice Jesus teaches the first shall be last and the last first, and twice he talks about being a servant. Twice, as Jill preached last week, Jesus pointed to children as an object lesson in humility and simple trust – the kind of response Jesus wants. How did we respond? Are we prepared to follow him in simple trust?

There is one incident in this section that draws these lessons together. It is Jesus' challenge to the rich young ruler. As it follows Jesus' teaching on children, I think we are meant to contrast the man's response with the child-like trust Jesus looks for.

The man starts well. He runs up to Jesus, falls on his knees (10:17). He is a sincere seeker and recognises more about who Jesus is than many we have met so far in Mark's Gospel. He asks the right question, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Are we asking God the right questions?

Jesus answers by listing commandments 5 to 9 of the ten commandments. This is curious. Why these? For me this is key to understanding what is going on. These are commands about human relationships. The man answers, he has kept these since he was a boy. Jesus did not mention the other commandments, which are about relationship with God. Jesus must have discerned something about the man.

Notice now a very important point. Before Jesus brings a hard word, it says Jesus looked at him and loved him. We should know that God always deals with us in love.

Jesus continues, 'One thing you lack. Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me (10:21).'

Now I can imagine this young man. He was sincere and kind to all – he has kept the human related commands. Still, maybe life was easy for him as a rich man - money can be a cushion against difficulties in life. And being a ruler, he was used to fixing problems. So, full of optimism, he asks Jesus for the key, the one thing, the fix-it, to get eternal life.

Jesus goes along with this. Ah yes, there is one thing. We can imagine the man smiling, thinking, yes, this is it, this is the answer. Then Jesus stuns him. Your wealth - you need to give it away! Earlier, Jesus omitted commandments 1 to 3 and 10, which speak about relationship with God: 'You shall have no gods but me, do not worship idols and do not covet wealth (Exodus 20). Has Jesus put his finger on what was gripping the man? The man was good in his relationship with people (horizontal) but was missing a loving relationship with God (vertical). Maybe his wealth had become his security and he was not living in a child-like trust of God. Jesus was showing his wealth was a stumbling block.

Only radical action could cure this. He needed to lose his wealth, have a child-like trust and faith, and then he could receive the Kingdom of God. It is the same for all of us in our different ways – we can only come to God in humility, knowing our need, in child-like trust.

As a good pastor, I want to say here that Jesus does not always call us to give up our wealth. Some sensitive soul may pressure themselves into doing this. Remember the saying, 'If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out' (9:47), is not to be taken literally but is making a point. But equally there will be a cost

to following Jesus, we will have to give up things, but God will make those clear, as he made clear to this young man. He won't pressurise or panic us. If you are unsure of what God may be calling you to, do pray about it and talk with a wise Christian.

But Jesus did look for a response from this man. And we need to respond. And if we do, there will be a reward. For this man, it would have been treasure in heaven. Later in the chapter, Peter sees that the disciples have given up everything, and Jesus assures them they will be rewarded.

Devastatingly the man refused and went away sad. I think this is the only instance of someone who approached Jesus in faith but was not blessed in some way. The man could not let go of his wealth. It had too strong a grip on him. It came between him and God. It was his idol. Jesus uses the memorable illustration, 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.' (10:25)

The story is an illustration of the words Jesus used in his first call to discipleship, 'What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet lose their soul?' (8:36) Is anything holding you back this morning? I just want to add another point here. We may be shocked at Jesus' directness and the high cost of what he was calling the young man too. But this rich young ruler came to Jesus, who too was young, rich and a ruler in his way. He had given up his position at the Father's side, humbled himself, and counted the cost of giving up his life. Jesus had every right to make this demand of the young man. And he has the right to make any demand of us.

We have talked about something much deeper than giving our money. Jesus is not interested in a percentage of our wealth. He wants you, all of you. He loves you, but this is a love that wants to touch your deepest ambitions and insecurities. He wants you to surrender these, to know he is Lord and God, come in child-like trust, and follow him. When this happens, actually, you may find your attitude to money is changed. You will discover, like Paul told the Corinthian Christians, generosity is a gift, you will release gifts with joy. There is no pressure here, no need to impress yourself or others. You are not under any obligation.

**Time of Response & Gift Day Offering** (*during which we will sing the following song*)

**Hymn MP 990:**

I will offer up my life  
In spirit and truth,  
Pouring out the oil of love  
As my worship to You.  
In surrender I must give my every part;  
Lord, receive the sacrifice of a broken heart.

*Jesus, what can I give, what can I bring  
To so faithful a friend, to so loving a King?  
Saviour, what can be said, what can be sung  
As a praise of Your name  
For the things You have done?  
Oh, my words could not tell, not even in part,  
Of the debt of love that is owed by this thankful heart.*

You deserve my every breath  
For You've paid the great cost;  
Giving up Your life to death,  
Even death on a cross.  
You took all my shame away,  
There defeated my sin,  
Opened up the gates of heaven,  
And have beckoned me in.

## COMMUNION

### WORDS OF INVITATION:

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 you a right to come,  
but because you need mercy and help.  
Come, 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 and meet the risen Christ, for we are his Body.

### PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

#### INSTITUTION:

The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way after supper he took the cup saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**Jesus, you are the bread of life. Whoever comes to you will never hunger, and whoever believes in you will never thirst... Whoever eats of this bread will live forever, and the bread that you give for the life of the world is your flesh.** *(from John 6:35, 51)*

This is the body of Christ, broken for you.

**Jesus, you are the fountain of life. This cup is the new covenant in your blood poured out for us for the forgiveness of sins. We rejoice that through your death we may enter now into your new and eternal Kingdom.**

This is the blood of Christ, shed for you.

#### POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

**May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;  
we who drink his cup bring life to others;  
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.  
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,  
so we and all your children shall be free,  
and the whole earth live to praise your name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

#### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION: Polly and Thomas

Our Creator, you are the King of kings and the Lord of lords. We praise you and worship you. All we have is from you as we have brought nothing to this world by ourselves.

**We present ourselves and everything we have to you.**

Autumn is a season for harvest. Today is a Gift Day and it is good for us to say thank you to you. According to your blessings, we have our daily bread, and we believe that you will provide us with what we need in the future. You are our heavenly father. You promised to give the best gift to your children. We are safe in your hands. We thank you for all the talents you give us and all the spiritual blessings too. We want to dedicate our lives to you and serve you faithfully in your church and in our daily life.

**We present ourselves and everything we have to you.**

We have entered God's kingdom since we are born again in Christ. We know we are facing spiritual warfare today. Please equip us with your spiritual armour so that we can stand firm until we see the face of our Lord, Christ Jesus. The Bible says that there are wars and difficult times before the coming of the new Heaven and the new Earth. So, please give us patience and a prayerful heart. Grant us spiritual discernment and alertness to face the challenges of this time. Just as the book of Amos says, "Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" We would like to obey you and follow in the footsteps of our Lord.

**We present ourselves and everything we have to you.**

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Hymn BP&W 559:**

Love divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of heaven to earth come down,  
Fix in us your humble dwelling,  
All your faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, you are all compassion,  
boundless love that makes us whole;  
Visit us with your salvation,  
Enter every trembling soul.

Come, almighty to deliver,  
Let us all your grace receive;  
Suddenly return, and never,  
Never more your temples leave.  
You we would be always blessing,  
Serve you as your hosts above,  
Pray, and praise you without ceasing,  
Glory in your perfect love.

Finish then your new creation,  
Pure and sinless let us be;  
Let us see your great salvation  
Perfect in eternity:  
Changed from glory into glory,  
Till in heaven we take our place;  
Till we cast our crowns before you,  
Lost in wonder, love and praise.

CHARLES WESLEY (1707-88)

**Blessing**

Go from this place, not to be served but to serve:  
in the name of Christ, who has gone before you;

**in the love of God, our heavenly Father;  
in the power of the Spirit, source of humility.**

Go with assurance, go with confidence,  
And receive God's blessing and peace.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**THE GRACE:**

**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.**

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**For next week:**

**The Leadership Course starts this week:**

- Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November – 2.30 pm in person in the Brookside room – Session 1.
- Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November – 7.30 pm on Zoom (ID: 828 7805 Passcode: 41165) - Session 1.

**Church Prayer Meeting:** Every Tuesday evening 8-  
pm Zoom – see church Whats App group for link or  
Meeting ID: 862 1518 8882 Passcode: 657161

**Upcoming Church Meetings:**

- There will be a short meeting after the Remembrance Service next Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> November.
- There is a full Church Meeting after the service on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November.
- There will be an extra meeting after the service on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December.



1505

8.30

**Baptismal Service:** the next one is on 17<sup>th</sup> November. If you would like to be baptised and/or become a Church Member please speak to the Minister or one of the Deacons.

**Worship and Prayer Event:** on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November at the Globe starting at 7.00 pm. This is a Transform Reading Celebration with the theme, 'To us Child is Born,' as a lead up to the Christmas season.

If you would like to contribute financially to Abbey International Baptist Church electronically, please use the card reader at the back of the church or scan the following QR code below to pay:

**QR Code for Offering:**