

**Abbey International Baptist Church, Reading**

**Worship Service with Baptism**

**10:30AM 17<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

**Jill Bird leading & Rev Dr Julia Binney Preaching**

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

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**THEME: The sure and  
KINGDOM of GOD**

The full glory of God's  
when Jesus comes back.  
our final Sunday looking at  
of God in Mark's gospel  
In the Old Testament the  
Jerusalem each year at

were special Psalms to sing as they went, known as the Psalms of Ascent Psalms 120 – 134.

These Psalms now take us on the journey of life together towards that great day when Jesus returns and the coming of the full glory of God's kingdom.

We will use these in our worship today as we come into God's presence and express our love and trust.



**certain HOPE of the**

Kingdom on earth will be  
This is the teaching today on  
the subject of the Kingdom

Jewish men had to go up to  
Festival times and there

**Psalm 121**

I lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from?

My help comes from the LORD the maker of heaven and earth

He will not let your foot slip. He who watches over you will never sleep.

He will watch over your life both now and forever more.

**Thank you LORD we believe and trust you**

**Psalm 123 and 130**

As the eyes of a slave look to the hand of his master

As the eyes of a maid look to the hand of her mistress

So we wait for the LORD and in his word we put our trust

Our eyes look to the LORD our God. O Lord have mercy on us

**Yes LORD our eyes look to you – you are our one sure hope.**

My hope is built on nothing less

Than Jesus' blood and righteousness

I dare not trust the sweetest frame

But wholly trust in Jesus' Name

Christ alone, cornerstone Weak made strong in the Saviour's love

Through the storm He is Lord, Lord of all

When darkness seems to hide His face

I rest on His unchanging grace

In every high and stormy gale

My anchor holds within the veil

When He shall come with trumpet sound

Oh may I then in Him be found

Dressed in His righteousness alone

Faultless stand before the throne

**Prayers of confession Psalm 127 and 130**

Unless the LORD build the house the builders work in vain  
In vain you rise early and stay up late working hard for food to eat  
If you O Lord kept a record of wrong who could stand . But with you there is forgiveness

We pause and bring the past week before the Lord asking him to show us our failings.  
**We have not loved you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. We are sorry.**  
**We have tried yet again to run our lives without you – please forgive us.**

### **Psalm 133**

How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity  
There the Lord bestows his blessing, even life for evermore

**We have not loved our neighbour as ourself. We are sorry when we have not loved each other or lived well together. Please forgive us and help us do better this week by the power of your Spirit.**

### **Psalm 134**

Praise the LORD all you servants of the LORD  
Lift up your hands in the holy place and praise the LORD  
May the LORD the maker of heaven and earth bless you from his place of glory **AMEN**

**THE LORD'S PRAYER: YOU ARE INVITED TO PRAY IN YOUR OWN 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     Hope or HOPE**

*An offering will be taken during the following song...If you would prefer to contribute electronically, please either use the card machine at the entrance of the sanctuary or scan the QR code on this sheet.*

### **MP 151**

For I'm building a people of power  
For I'm making a people of praise  
That will move through this land by My Spirit  
And will glorify My precious Name  
Build Your church Lord Make us strong Lord  
Join our hearts Lord Through Your Son  
Make us one Lord In Your body  
In the kingdom of Your Son

**GOSPEL READING:** Mark 14:22-26

**NEW TESTAMENT READING:** Revelation 19:5-9

Our confidence is in the Lord, the source of our salvation.  
Rest is found in him alone, the author of creation.  
We will not fear the evil day, because we have a refuge;  
in every circumstance we say, 'Our hope is built on Jesus.'

He is our fortress, we will never be shaken;  
he is our fortress, we will never be shaken.

He is our fortress, we will never be shaken;  
he is our fortress, we will never be shaken.  
We will put our trust in God. We will put our trust in God.

### **Sermon: Kingdom of God 9: The Hope of the Kingdom (Mark 14:25)**

Hope is a major theme in both the Old and New Testaments. Hope is always an important message but particularly for today as we look at an uncertain future of wars, discontent, climate disasters and the possible disruption to global trade and the potential for world wide financial collapse. However, no matter what we are going through, when we put our hope, faith and trust in God, it changes everything because it changes our perspective. We start to see our situation, ourselves, our world in a different light; in the light of God's love, presence and provision and in the light of the future God has for all in Christ.

Biblical hope is not a hope against hope kind of hope, a vague possibility or wishful thinking. Biblical hope is an absolute, cast iron certainty because of the character of the One in whom we put our hope. Paul refers to the 'God of hope' (Romans 15:13), which can be understood as the 'God of the guarantee.' This is the basis of faith: 'faith is being sure of what we **hope** for and certain of what we do not see' (Hebrews 11:1). We live by faith not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). Paul writes, 'who hopes for what they already have?' (Romans 8:24). Hope is always a future thing with a forward-looking emphasis. We lean into the future God has for us and his purposes for his world: we press on towards the goal, where God is beckoning us onwards to himself (Philippians 3:14 Msg). Nothing can disappoint us in this life when the hope of meeting with Jesus Christ burns brightly in our hearts. One day we will see Jesus face to face! What a wonderful hope we have, what a wonderful future awaits us!

Today is the last in our series on **The Kingdom of God**, looking at Mark's interpretation of Jesus' new order. As we have already seen throughout this series, the Kingdom of God is the central theme of Jesus' teaching and ministry. It is the very core of what he came to tell us: 'time's up! God's Kingdom is here. Change your life. Believe the good news' (1:15 Msg). The Kingdom is wherever the King rules. It equates to the lordship of Christ. Ultimately we will all be judged on whether or not Jesus Christ is King and Lord of our lives. There are many aspects to the Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus. Each occasion he speaks on the subject he highlights a slightly different one. Here in Mark 14:25, Jesus is speaking about the **Hope of the Kingdom**.

The context of this reference to the Kingdom is the Last Supper (vs 12-26). This is where Jesus inaugurates the Communion/the Lord's Supper/the Eucharist that we celebrate here at Abbey twice a month. Jesus takes some bread, breaks it and gives it to his disciples; he pours out some wine and gives it to his disciples to drink. These actions symbolise his broken body and his poured out life blood for the salvation of the world. Jesus then refers to one of the great events linked to his Kingdom and one of the great doctrines of the Christian faith. That is the second coming of Christ which ushers in the culmination of the Kingdom of God. This is the Christian's great hope: the return of Jesus Christ! It is what we look forward to: 'truly I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day I drink it with anew in the Kingdom of God' (v.25). This is a reference to the Wedding Supper of the Lamb from Revelation 19:9, also called the heavenly Messianic Banquet.

The pages of history are littered with accounts of kingdoms and empires that have come and gone. The Kingdom of God however is not like the kingdoms of this world. Ultimately all earthly kingdoms decline but the Kingdom of God will culminate in triumph! This is the hope that Jesus is speaking of and is the forward-looking emphasis of the Lord's Supper. At the end of their meal, they went out to the Mount of Olives (v.26) where we know Jesus faced arrest, torture and crucifixion. At the table, Jesus knew what awaited him but his perspective is bigger. He sees a future of full of hope and victory. 'For the joy set before him, [Jesus] endured the cross' (Hebrews 12:2).

When Jesus returns he will not be born in a manger or die on a cross but he will come as King of Kings to judge the living and the dead and to take those who believe in him home to glory: 'Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; And he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him' (Hebrews 9:28). Jesus will appear a second time. It is

certain. Remember that biblical hope is not a vague possibility or wishful thinking but an absolute cast iron certainty. Jesus is coming back again and we need to be ready!

In Revelation 19:9, the Angel instructs the Apostle John to write invitations to Jesus' heavenly banquet: 'Write: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb.' Who is to get this invitation? As far as Jesus' feast goes, everyone is invited. No-one is excluded except those who exclude themselves. There is a song that goes, *'Come along the feast is ready, Jesus calls. Come along the table's all set, God invites.'* The Lord's Supper, Communion, the feast we share in on earth now is a foretaste of this heavenly banquet. God's invitation to this table must also, therefore, similarly include everyone. God excludes no-one, all are invited. We must not let our churchy, institutional rules bar anyone who wants to share in the feast to be excluded. The only way we are excluded is if we exclude ourselves.

The hope of the kingdom is the return of Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This is the culmination of God's plan for the world. It will usher in God's kingdom rule, the kingdom of God in all its fulness. The present world with all its confusion, turbulence, trouble, and chaos will give way to the world that is to come, a world in which Jesus will have completed his kingly work of defeating all the hostile powers, including death itself. What is known in part will be fully known. What we see by faith we will see face to face at the end of the age. What a wonderful hope we have, what a wonderful future awaits us!

However, as we have repeated week after week, for Mark the Kingdom (or reign) of God is not purely something that awaits us sometime in the future but something of the here and now, of the present to be lived out practically, earthed and grounded in our ordinary everyday lives. Eschatology is the study of the end times. What is known as a 'realised eschatology' is about God's rule and reign on earth now, the overturning of the present evil order and the regeneration of the earth. This is what we hope, work and pray for – for God's kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven, as we pray every week (Matthew 6:10). The job of the church is to point to the eschatological hope for the future **and** to live it out in the present - as if it were here, not only in part, but in full. This is the church's prophetic witness: 'Churches are committed communities of discipleship and mission, places of friendship, mutual accountability, and multi-voiced worship... living out the vision of eschatological hope' (Murray). So we pray for peace, we work for justice and we live out God's rule and reign in our lives here and now. One day we will see Jesus face to face. Now we live by faith. We wait patiently, as all of creation waits, in hope and eager expectation of what is to come and the guarantee that all God's promises will be fulfilled (Romans 8:20,21).

As Christian people, we live in a place of tension, a battleground, between ways of living that affirm the current political and economic world order and the ways of living that announce a different kingdom order, with a new reign and a new leader - Jesus. The church stands in that contested place between how things are and how they should be. The Lord's Supper, as the foretaste of the heavenly banquet of God's kingdom, is therefore the focus of this battle, as is baptism. The presence of God's holy, praying people transforms a violent world and brings true liberation in Christ. In whatever way the hostile powers are understood, as objectively real supernatural beings or interior structures and institutions, they are overcome by Christ and the church of baptised believers exists to proclaim and live out his victory. Baptism is therefore a political act because a gathering of those who lay claim to this victory and live under the Lordship of Christ has political consequences. Due to the overcoming of the hostile powers, the symbol of the water of baptism 'evokes a sense of conflict' (Fiddes). The Baptist tradition of full immersion baptism most vividly portrays death and resurrection but not only in an individualistic sense of dying to self and living for Christ, but in terms of the wider communal aspects when the Christian believer is made part of Christ's covenant community. This is one of the reasons we link baptism with church membership in this church.

The church as a company of disciples is a symbol of hope in the present and the future, and a prophetic sign of the Kingdom of God. What a wonderful hope we have, what a wonderful future awaits us here, now, TODAY!

**TESTIMONIES & BAPTISMS:**

How great the chasm that lay between us, how high the mountain I could not climb  
In desperation, I turned to heaven and spoke Your name into the night  
Then through the darkness Your loving kindness, tore through the shadows of my soul  
The work is finished, the end is written Jesus Christ, my living hope

Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free. Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me  
You have broken every chain, there's salvation in Your name  
Jesus Christ, my living hope

Who could imagine so great a mercy? What heart could fathom such boundless grace?  
The God of ages stepped down from glory, to wear my sin and bear my shame  
The cross has spoken, I am forgiven the king of kings calls me His own  
Beautiful saviour, I'm Yours forever Jesus Christ, my living hope

Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free. Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me  
You have broken every chain, there's salvation in Your name  
Jesus Christ, my living hope

Then came the morning that sealed the promise, your buried body began to breathe  
Out of the silence, the roaring lion, declared the grave has no claim on me  
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#### **PRAYER OF INTERCESSION: Gwen**

Loving God, Lord of heaven and earth, this earth that is our home belongs to you. Give us grace to love it as you do. Give us courage to give ourselves for the good of all people and all of your creation. Strengthen us to stand with the vulnerable and poor.

We acknowledge your power and often forget that you are not absent from the world but part of it. We pray for people suffering from the effects of conflict, terrorism and persecution in all parts of your world. We think of those who feel undervalued, ignored, forgotten in their work or life. For the many who are still seeking employment, who do not have enough basic needs, food, clothing or shelter. Father we pray for our leaders, both worldwide and locally, especially those in positions of power. May they use that power for the good of all.

We pray for your church here at Abbey. May we bond together as one family as we witness to those around us of your great love for us. We ask for your blessing today especially on the people being baptised that they may know your presence in a very real way, not only today but in the days to come. May your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as in heaven. Our hope is in you O God. Renew our spirits and cleanse our hearts, renew our minds and transform our lives.

We bring these prayers in the name of Jesus. Amen

Come set Your rule and reign In our hearts again  
Increase in us, we pray unveil why we're made  
Come set our hearts ablaze with hope  
Like wildfire in our very souls, Holy Spirit, come invade us now  
We are Your church. We need Your power in us

We seek Your kingdom first, we hunger and we thirst  
Refuse to waste our lives for You're our joy and prize  
To see the captive hearts released  
The hurt, the sick, the poor at peace  
We lay down our lives for Heaven's cause  
We are Your church We pray revive this Earth

Build Your kingdom here Let the darkness fear  
Show Your mighty hand Heal our streets and land

Set Your church on fire win this nation back  
Change the atmosphere, build Your kingdom here we pray

Unleash Your kingdom's power reaching the near and far  
No force of Hell can stop your beauty changing hearts  
You made us for much more than this ,awake the kingdom seed in us  
Fill us with the strength and love of Christ  
We are Your church We are the hope on Earth

Build Your kingdom here Let the darkness fear  
Show Your mighty hand Heal our streets and land  
Set Your church on fire win this nation back  
Change the atmosphere, build Your kingdom here we pray

**THE BLESSING**

Now may the God of all hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power 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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**Events to highlight:**

**Today:**

- Church meeting after the service – all welcome to attend but only members can vote
- Tonight at the Globe church Portman Rd at 7.30 churches across Reading meet for worship and prayer for all the outreach events happening across the town over Christmas

**This week:**

- Tuesday evening prayer open to all on Zoom. 8:00 – 8:30 pm (Meeting ID: 862 1518 8882 PW: 657161)  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86215188882?pwd=0Ln8HnRMbvmYrwCPJbsGDrE0TokDmB.1>
- The leadership course meets this week – either Tuesday afternoon in church at 2.30 or Friday evening 7.30 on Zoom (Meeting ID: 828 1505 7805 Passcode: 461165) - Session 2.

**Dates for your diary:**

Next **Sunday Nov 24<sup>th</sup>** we have a visiting preacher. He is a possible new pastor to follow on after Julia retires next February. Church members are invited to stay afterwards to share lunch and the opportunity to hear more of his life story and ask questions. There will be an extra church meeting the following **Sunday Dec 1<sup>st</sup>** after the morning service for members to discuss the possibility of this pastor being asked to ‘preach with a view’ to being appointed as the next Minister of Abbey Baptist Church.

**Dec 8<sup>th</sup>** – gift service for giving to Asylum seekers. We will bring our contributions of new warm clothes wrapped and labelled.

If you would like to contribute financially to Abbey International Baptist Church electronically, please scan the QR code to pay:

**QR Code for Offering:**

