

## Abbey Baptist Church, Reading

Worship Service: 10:30 A.M.- 23rd March 2025

**Christopher Mbukwa leading with Pauline Mbukwa Preaching**

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

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PSALM 27:4

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. “

Faithful God, we come into your presence with thanksgiving, deeply grateful for the unfailing love and faithfulness you have shown toward us, your people.

When we cry out, you answer. When we are exhausted, you give us the strength to go on. When we find ourselves in trouble, we find you there, standing beside us.

**And so we come before you with thanks and praise, offering you the worship of our hearts and lives. Open our eyes to see and know you here among us; open our ears to recognize your voice. Amen**

### **SONG: I LOVE YOU, LORD**

I love You, Lord Oh 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.

Cause 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  
And in 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.

BETHEL MUSIC © 2019

### **A Prayer of Praise and Confession:**

Loving God, we seek you, we long for you, we bring you our praise and worship and acknowledge you as our God. You are the Lord of heaven and earth, of space and time, of this world and of all the universe, of life and death.

**We recognise your greatness and power. We marvel at your love and compassion.**

**We come before you with awe and wonder.**

**Loving God, draw near to us and help us to draw near to you.**

**Come to us through your Holy Spirit and help us to open our hearts to the risen Christ.**

We praise you that there is so much that speaks to us of your love and purpose – in our lives, in our daily experience, in the world around us, the vastness of the universe, the fellowship we share with one another, and in the relationship we enjoy with you.

Lord, forgive our foolish ways.

**Forgive us that we so often do not seek you with any real longing, that we don't really want to draw nearer to you, that we don't want to hear what you have to say and, in the busyness of our lives, refuse to listen for your still small voice of calm.**

**Open our eyes so that we may glimpse your purposes more fully.**

**Open our ears so that we may hear your voice more clearly.**

**Open our minds to receive your truth more completely**

**that we might worship and serve you more wholeheartedly. 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: PRAYERS OF JESUS 3: THE POWER OF PRAYING CONSISTENTLY**

The offering will be taken during the following song, and then the children will leave for their own groups.

God you're so good, God you're so good, God you're so good, you're so good to me

You care for me, you care for me, you care me, you're so good to me

You hear my prayer, you hear my prayer, you hear my prayer, you're so good to me

I love you so, I love you so, I love you so, you're so good to me

**First Bible Reading:** Luke 5:15-16

**Second Bible Reading:** Luke 6:12-16

**SONG: AS THE DEER PANTETH FOR THE WATER**

As the deer panteth for the water  
So my soul longeth after Thee  
You alone are my heart's desire  
And I long to worship Thee  
You alone are my Strength, my Shield  
To You alone may my spirit yield  
You alone are my heart's desire  
And I long to worship Thee.

You're my Friend and You are my Brother  
Even though You are a King  
I love You more than any other  
So much more than anything  
You alone are my Strength, my Shield  
To You alone may my spirit yield  
You alone are my heart's desire  
And I long to worship Thee.

I want You more than gold or silver  
Only You can satisfy  
You alone are the real joy-giver  
And the apple of my eye  
You alone are my Strength, my Shield  
To You alone may my spirit yield  
You alone are my heart's desire  
And I long to worship Thee.

Martin Nystrom, 1984 Based on Psalm 42

**SERMON: PRAYERS OF JESUS 3: THE POWER OF PRAYING CONSISTENTLY**

Do you believe in the power of prayer? In 1873 farmers in Minnesota in the USA saw what looked like a snowstorm coming towards their fields from the west, these were grasshoppers. For five years, grasshoppers destroyed all the crops in Minnesota and surrounding states. Minnesota farmers did their best to destroy the grasshopper eggs, but their efforts failed. Governor John Pillsbury proclaimed April 26, 1877, a day of prayer and fasting. The grasshoppers left just as quickly as they had arrived. An April snowstorm damaged many of their eggs. Imagine a five-year plague ended with one day of prayer and fasting!

Today, we continue our series on **Prayer**. Simon shared how when Jesus prayed at his baptism, the heavens were opened, which means that when we pray, heaven opens

to us, and God hears our prayers. Last week, Graeme also shared how prayer changes us and that God's glory was shown during the transfiguration. Today, we are looking at the the power of praying consistently. Honestly, I never knew how I should pray and what to say in prayer until I studied the life of Jesus. I was also challenged to believe that Jesus, even though being the son of God, prayed at all times. He did not take it for granted being the son. So why did Jesus pray? In today's passage, we learn why and how Jesus prayed. Prayer is important; Jesus wanted to set an example of how we should live a life of total dependence on God.

Our central message today is that we should pray always, at all times, in all situations. Our passage Luke 5:15-16 says Jesus often withdrew to a lonely place. The word **often** indicates he was consistent, he did this regularly; so we too are challenged to pray consistently. The apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says "Pray without ceasing". Jesus prayed often, no wonder one of the disciples asked him teach us how to pray, it seems the disciples had observed that Jesus' source of power and greatness came from a life of prayer. So today we would like to draw some key lessons from Jesus's prayers

### **Lesson 1: Jesus made lonely prayers**

Have you ever wondered why Jesus often prayed alone in a lonely place instead of in public? As much as Jesus understood the value of praying with and for others, he also understood the need to pray alone. Psalm 46:10 reads, "Be still, and know that I am God." Sometimes, it's important for us to "be still" before God, quiet, alone.

- To avoid distractions and focus on God - to get intimate with his father

Be like Jesus. Pray among the crowds, but also find those quiet, one-on-one spaces where we can sit, talk, and listen to God. But we can also pray at any place, at any moment, as long as you open communication with him. I read a book by EM Bounds on prayer, and I quote, "Public prayers are of little worth unless they are founded on or followed up by private praying." Let's develop a habit of praying in the quiet place.

### **Lesson 2: Jesus prayed to find God's will**

It appears Jesus was praying for wisdom to know whom to select as his twelve apostles. We read that Jesus sought God through prayer the whole night, and the following morning, he chose the 12 disciples. As Christians, we can pray and even fast to ask God's guidance when we want to make big decisions that could impact our lives.

- Jesus prayed before he started his ministry; he spent 40 days in the wilderness
- When moving to a new place, before taking up a job, before getting married.
- Do you pray before you make decisions?

### **Lesson 3: Jesus prayed regularly**

- Jesus always prayed; he didn't stop praying when he became famous and so busy. In Luke 5:15 news spread of all he was doing and crowds came to him. Some men are so busy, that they can find no time to pray. The busier Christ's life was, the more he prayed.
- Jesus prayed early in the morning Mark 1:35; Jesus Christ prayed in the night in some instances continuing all night in prayer. Luke 6:12

- Prayer should be like oxygen in our life, we cannot live without oxygen and as Christians we ought to take prayer as our oxygen.
- Quality time with God: Jesus spent the night with his Father. Our God enjoys our company, he always looks forward to the time we spend with him face to face. Do we give him time in our busy schedule, God gives us 24 hours every day and out of this how many hours do we dedicate for prayer?

#### **Lesson 4: Jesus was obedient as he prayed**

We cannot talk about the prayers of Jesus without talking about the importance of obedience. Jesus was obedient. If we are not obedient prayer is an empty performance. Sometimes we wonder why our prayers are not being answered and yet we are not obedient to God's word. In the old testament, in **2 Chronicles 7:14** **God says if my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land** Jesus Christ taught us how we should pray in the Lord's prayer "forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us" We should ask for God's forgiveness everyday and be obedient in forgiving others.

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion Jesus Christ the son of God prayed often. Jesus prayed regularly, he prayed at all times. He never excused himself from praying because he was busy. Jesus consulted with his Father for the selection of disciples.

We are encouraged to pray in all situations; when things are good pray, when things are bad pray. We should live a life of obedience, Jesus Christ is our role model who was obedient even unto death. He often prayed and enjoyed friendship with God. What excuse do we have for not praying? God is waiting for us, he wants us to enjoy his presence in a quiet place, but where we can worship, adore him, even express our feelings to him cry and laugh. So this week lets pray AMEN

#### **SONG: LORD, I COME TO YOU**

Lord I come to You Let my heart be changed, renewed  
Flowing from the grace That I found in You.  
And Lord I've come to know  
The weaknesses I see in me  
Will be stripped away By the power of Your love.

Hold me close Let Your love surround me  
Bring me near Draw me to Your side.  
And as I wait I'll rise up like the eagle  
And I will soar with You  
Your Spirit leads me on In the power of Your love.

Lord unveil my eyes Let me see You face to face  
The knowledge of Your love As You live in me.  
Lord renew my mind As Your will unfolds in my life  
In living every day by the power of Your love.

**Prayer of Intercession for the World: John Chilvers**

Father God, we come to You to pray for the world.

We pray for peace in the many places torn by war, violence, and unrest. We bring to you the places mentioned in the news this week: Ukraine, Gaza, Syria, Congo.

**Lord, bring healing where there is conflict, comfort where there is suffering, and justice where there is oppression.**

We pray for the poor, the hungry, and the homeless - those who are struggling each day to survive. We bring to you our friends who are looking for accommodation here in Reading.

**Lord, provide shelter, sustenance, and dignity, and stir our hearts to be generous and compassionate.**

We pray for our leaders. We bring to you our Prime Minister and his government.

**Lord, grant them wisdom and integrity. May their decisions promote peace and equity.**

We pray for the sick and the suffering. We bring to you the decisions being made by the government to reform welfare and the NHS.

**Lord, bring Your healing touch, Your hope, and Your comfort.**

We pray for the lonely, the bereaved and the forgotten. We bring to you Gwen and the family as Peter's funeral takes place next Wednesday.

**Lord, let them know they are not alone, that they are seen, known, and loved by You.**

We pray for our church as we move forward together and prepare for the coming of our new minister.

**Lord, may we be instruments of Your peace and Your grace.**

**Lord Jesus, in Your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen.**

**HYMN: WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS**

What a friend we have in Jesus  
All our sins and griefs to bear  
What a privilege to carry  
Everything to God in prayer

O what peace we often forfeit  
O what needless pain we bear  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer

Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged  
Take it to the Lord in prayer

Can we find a friend so faithful  
Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness  
Take it to the Lord in prayer  
What a Friend We Have in Jesus lyrics © Edeejay Music,

### **THE BLESSING: 1 THESSALONIANS 5**

<sup>1</sup> Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

**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.**

### **This week's notices**

This Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> – **Reading half marathon** – remember Abbey church road shut 9.30 to 12.40 – our service will be available on zoom Topic:

Abbey Baptist Church Sunday Service Time: Mar 23, 2025 10:30 AM London

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89829448398?pwd=v3uahbRhGNna2XcoGb7r7vpRArdms6.1>

Meeting ID: 898 2944 8398 Passcode: Abbey

Next week March 23<sup>rd</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> Baptist Union together **week of prayer**.

Theme '**Everyone, everywhere' hearing the good news of Jesus**

We will hold daily prayer meetings as follows

Monday, Wednesday, Friday mornings 15 minutes at 8am

Tuesday evening 8pm in Cantonese led by Celia 30 minutes

Thursday evening 8pm in English led by Simon 30 minutes

All will be on zoom Topic: Abbey prayer meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86215188882?pwd=6ywOduiS4wePr1NaNRPKaXvuCPau98.1>

Meeting ID: 862 1518 8882 Passcode: Abbey

**Peter Davis memorial service** 2pm at Abbey 26<sup>th</sup> March – all very welcome  
Please note no bible studies or ICaf on this Wednesday