

Abbey International Baptist Church, Reading
Worship Service
10:30AM 29th June 2025
Selina Chan leading & Chris Mbukwa Preaching
www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk
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THEME: Hearing and Obeying the Word (James 1:19-27)

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Come, dear brothers and sisters, come with your busy minds and your burdened hearts.
Come with your joys, your worries, your doubts, and your hopes.

We come to listen—to one another and to God.

We come to worship, not just with our lips, but with our lives.

In this place, may we slow down, breathe deeply,
and make room for the Spirit to speak.

We come to hear God's Word and to let it shape us.

We come to be renewed in heart and mind.

Let us worship God, as He not only speaks but listens,
who not only calls us to obedience but walks with us in grace.

Let us worship in spirit and in truth. Amen.

HYMN MP 110:

Darkness like a shroud covers the earth;
Evil like a cloud covers the people.
But the Lord will rise upon you,
And His glory will appear on you—
Nations will come to your light.

*Arise, shine, your light has come,
The glory of the Lord has risen on you!
Arise, shine, your light has come,
Jesus the Light of the world has come.*

Children of the light, be clean and pure.
Rise, you sleepers, Christ will shine on you.
Take the Spirit's flashing two-edged sword
And with faith declare God's mighty word;
Stand up and in His strength be strong.

Here among us now, Christ the light
Kindles brighter flames in our trembling hearts.
Living Word, our lamp, come guide our feet
As we walk as one in light and peace,

Till justice and truth shine like the sun.
Like a city bright so let us blaze;
Lights in every street turning night today.
And the darkness shall not overcome
Till the fulness of Christ's kingdom comes,
Dawning to God's eternal day.

GRAHAM KENDRICK © 1985 KINGSWAY'S THANKYOU MUSIC.

FAMILY TIME: Listening To One Another

*(*An offering will be taken during the following song, after which teenagers and children will leave for their groups)*

HYMN MP 1008:

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters,
His goodness restores my soul.

*And I will trust in You alone.
And I will trust in You alone,
For Your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.*

He guides my ways in righteousness,
And He anoints my head with oil,
And my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on His pure delights.

And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
For You are with me, and Your rod and staff
Are the comfort I need to know.

STUART TOWNEND © 1996 KINGSWAY'S THANKYOU MUSIC.

A PRAYER OF PRAISE:

Dear Father, You are our Lord who speaks and listens.
From the beginning, You spoke creation into being.
You breathed life into humanity,
and You continue to breathe life into our souls today.

Thank you Lord for listening to our prayers.

For knowing the unspoken thoughts of our hearts.

We praise You for Your patience, for Your mercy and for Your Spirit –
Who helps us not only to hear, but to live out Your truth.

With all that we are, we offer You our praise and thanks. Amen.

A PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

You have spoken clearly through Your Word,
yet we admit that we sometimes treat it lightly.
We hear it on Sundays and forget it by Monday.

**Forgive us, Lord, when we have looked into the mirror of Your Word
and walked away unchanged.**

**Forgive us, too, for the ways we fail to listen to others—
when we interrupt, ignore, or speak harshly instead of with love.**

Lord, Renew our minds. Soften our hearts.

Teach us to be listeners who hear Your truth and

live it out in grace. Amen.

*(*Let us take a moment in silence to confess personally before the Lord.)*

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.**

BIBLE READING 1: James 1: 19-27

BIBLE READING 2: Matthew 7:24-29

HYMN MP 302:

I want to walk with Jesus Christ,
All the days I live of this life on earth;
To give to Him complete control
Of body and of soul.

*Follow Him, follow Him, yield your life to Him,
He has conquered death, He is King of kings;
Accept the joy which He gives to those
Who yield their lives to Him.*

I want to learn to speak to Him,
To pray to Him, confess my sin;
To open my life and let Him in,
For joy will then be mine:

I want to learn to speak of Him,
My life must show that He lives in me;
My deeds, my thoughts, my words must speak
All of His love for me:

I want to learn to read His word,
For this is how I know the way
To live my life as pleases Him,
In holiness and joy:

O Holy Spirit of the Lord,
Enter now into this heart of mine;
Take full control of my selfish will,
And make me wholly Thine:

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SERMON (James 1:19-27)

Receiving and Obeying the Word

James writes to encourage Jewish Christians scattered beyond Jerusalem and worldwide to lead holistic lives and urges them to put their Christian faith into action. Their faith is being tested through persecution, trials, and temptations, but James writes this letter to strengthen their faith and show how it should be reflected in their deeds.

In chapter 1, James presents three main lessons: the joy of persevering through trials, enduring temptation, and the blessing of listening to and reading God's word. Over the past two weeks, we have explored the first two lessons. Today, we will consider receiving and obeying God's word (James 1: 19-27).

James described God's Word as "the word planted in you" (James 1:21). Drawing on our Lord's parable of the sower (Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23), where he compared God's Word to a seed and the human heart to soil, Jesus outlined four types of hearts in his parable: the hard heart (path), which did not understand or accept the Word and thus bore no fruit; the shallow heart (rocky path with little soil), which was very emotional but lacked depth and consequently bore no fruit; the crowded heart (weeds), which lacked repentance and allowed sin to push out the Word; and the fruitful heart (good soil), which received the Word, allowed it to take root, and produced a harvest of fruit.

The ultimate proof of salvation is fruit. This shows a transformed life, Christian character and conduct, and service to others for the glory of God. This fruit might be winning souls to Christ (Rom. 1:16), growing in holy living (Rom. 6:22), sharing our material possessions (Rom. 15:28), spiritual character (Gal. 5:22-23), good works (Col. 1:10), and even praising the Lord (Heb. 13:15). Religious works lack life and don't bring glory to God. Genuine fruit contains the seed for more fruit, so the harvest keeps producing more fruit, even more fruit (John 15:1-5).

For the seed of the Word to be planted and grow within us, we need to (1) receive the Word of God with humility and (2) put it into practice.

1. Receive the Word of God (1:19 - 21)

God is like a gardener. He wants to plant His word in your soul so that life and fruit can grow from your relationship with Him. He also wants to sustain our relationship with Him and others, to receive the word James encouraged believers to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, so that they might demonstrate genuine faith and produce righteousness that aligns with God's will. In James's view, these three imperatives demonstrate the fruits of humility, patience, and love in our interactions with others and God.

- a) **Swift to hear (humility).** Just as the servant is swift to respond to his master's voice, and the mother to hear her baby's faintest cry, the believer should be swift to listen. Swift to hear means paying attention to what others and God are saying to us.
- b) **Slow to speak (patience).** James encourages believers to be slow to speak. We have two ears and one mouth, which should remind us to listen more than we talk. All too often, we argue with God's Word, even if it's not out loud, but in our hearts and minds. We are urged to be thoughtful in our communications.
- c) **Slow to Wrath (love).** Do not get angry at God or His Word. "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly" (Prov. 14:29). But man's anger does not produce God's righteousness (James 1:20). In fact, anger is just the opposite of the patience God wants to produce in our lives as we mature in Christ (James 1:3-4).

After laying down the three imperatives, James urges Christians to put aside all forms of sinful activities and embrace God's word with humility (James 1:21). Similar Paul's exhortation to the Colossians about putting off the sinful clothes, James links setting aside wickedness with receiving the word of God, highlighting the necessity of a humble and submissive disposition.

How do we prepare our hearts for God's Word? **First**, by confessing our sins and asking the Father to forgive us (1 John 1:9). **Second**, by meditating on God's love and grace, and asking Him to "plough up" any hardness in our hearts: "Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns" (Jer. 4:3). **Finally**, we must adopt a humble attitude (James 1:21). Humility is the opposite of "anger" in James 1:19-20. When you receive the Word with humility, you accept it, do not argue with it, and honour it as the Word of God. You do not try to twist it to fit your thinking. If we do not receive the implanted Word, we are deceiving ourselves. Christians who enjoy arguing different "points of view" may be only fooling themselves. They believe their "discussions" promote spiritual growth when they may only be cultivating weeds.

2. Practise the Word (James 1:22 - 25)

Hearing the Word is not enough; we must act on it. Many mistakenly believe listening to a good sermon or Bible study leads to spiritual growth and God's blessing. It is not just hearing but doing that brings blessings. Too many Christians mark their Bibles, but their Bibles never leave their mark on them! If you think you are spiritual because you listen to the Word, then you are only deceiving yourself. In the previous paragraph, James compared the Word to a seed, but in this paragraph, he compared it to a mirror. The primary purpose of owning a mirror is to see yourself and make yourself look as clean and neat as possible.

As we gaze into the mirror of God's Word, we see ourselves as we truly are. James mentions forgetting how one looks, a mistake people make when they look into the mirror, which means being unable to do the word of God.

James says those who carefully examine the perfect law that grants freedom and continue in it, remembering what they have heard and applied it, will be blessed in all they do. This is similar to Jesus' words: everyone who hears and acts on God's word is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Both James and Jesus affirm that God's Word is the Solid Rock of Truth (the perfect law of liberty), offers stability in life's storms, and leads to success when we submit to it. Both the wise and the foolish men listen to the Word of God. But the wise man listens and OBEYS, hence experiences the results that come with words.

Finally, James illustrates practical ways of showing the act of receiving and obeying the word. He uses the word "religion," which means "the outward practice, the service of God."

- a) **Speech.** A controlled tongue signifies a controlled body.
- b) **Service.** Words are no substitute for acts of love (James 2:14–18; 1 John 3:11–18).
- c) **Separation from the world.** We are sent into the world to win others to Christ (John 17:18). Only by maintaining our separation from the world can we serve others.

As I conclude, I would like to ask three questions for our reflections;

- Have you been born again by the Word?
- Have you humbly accepted the Word?
- Are you doing the Word of Truth?

HYMN MP 1350:

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
To receive the food of Your holy Word.
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us
Shape and fashion us in Your likeness,
That the light of Christ might be seen today
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith
Speak, O Lord, and fulfil in us
All Your purposes for Your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience,
Holy reverence, true humility.
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
In the radiance of Your purity.
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see
Your majestic love and authority.
Words of power that can never fail;
Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;
Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us.
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time
That will echo down through eternity.
And by grace, we'll stand on Your promises,
And by faith, we'll walk as You walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built
And the earth is filled with Your glory.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION: Lam and Selina

Dear Father God,

Thank You for the gift of summer. We feel Your love through the warmth of the sun, the beauty of the trees and flowers, the blue skies, the soft clouds, and the gentle breezes. **All of these remind us that You are here and that You care for each one of us. Thank You, Lord.**

But God, we look around and see a world in pain. Wars and violence continue, especially in countries like Ukraine, Gaza and Iran in the Middle East. So many lives are broken, so much suffering. Lord, You are powerful and righteous —we ask You to bring peace where there is none. **Please stop the fighting. Bring comfort to those who grieve, food to those who are hungry, and healing to those who are hurting. We can only rely on You.**

We're also worried about what's happening at home. The economy isn't doing well—prices are high, jobs are uncertain, and more people are struggling with crime, mental health, and addiction. **Lord, please help us. Give wisdom to our leaders to make good decisions. Take care of the poor, the sick, the lonely, and the homeless. Bring hope to those who feel forgotten. Have mercy on us, Lord.**

We can't ignore the damage being done to our planet either. Climate change is obvious and the weather is getting more extreme, we see the signs everywhere: wildfires, floods, earthquakes, melting ice. **Please help us to take responsibility. Wake us up, Lord. Help us to protect this world You gave us before it's too late.**

And finally, Lord, we ask for Your guidance in this rapidly changing world. With artificial intelligence and new technologies advancing so fast, it sometimes feels like we're losing our way. **Please help us stay grounded in our faith. Help us to hold on to our humanity, to live by Your Word, and to act with love and truth in all we do. Don't let us destroy what You've made. Lead us back to You.**

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

****At this moment, please group into two or three, let's take a few minutes to pray for the needs of one another. Thank you.*

HYMN MP 760

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will, He abides with us still
And with all who will trust and obey

Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies
But His smile quickly drives it away
Not a doubt or a fear, not a sigh or a tear
Can abide while we trust and obey

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet
Or we'll walk by His side on the way
What He says we will do, where He sends we will go
Never fear, only trust and obey

JOHN H. SAMMIS & DANEIL BANK TOWNER 1887

BENEDICTION:

Now, let's go into the world with open ears and open hearts.
Let us listen deeply—to God, to our neighbours, and to our own soul.
Let our lives be marked by mercy, our speech seasoned with grace,
and our actions shaped by Christ's love.

And may our God who listens to every whisper of prayer,
Jesus who lived the Word in perfect obedience,
and Holy Spirit who empowers and transforms
go with us, within us, and ahead of us, this day and always.
Amen.

THE GRACE:

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore, Amen.**

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Events to highlight next week:

Wednesday 2nd July 10.30 Renew Wellbeing

for Financial Offering

- 12.15 Bible Study
- 2.00 Who is Jesus? 3 of 6

Thursday 3rd

- 10.30 Bible Study
- 10.30 Toddlers
- 7.30 Men's Bible Study

Friday 4th

- 10.30 Prayer Meeting
- 5.00 Table Tennis Club
- 7.00 Iranians Meal and Bible Study



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QR Code

Sunday 6 th	10.30	Worship with Communion Looking at the Book of James 3 James 2: 1 - 13 Not showing favouritism or being judgemental of others - keeping the Royal Law of love Connect Groups after the service
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