

ABBEY BAPTIST CHURCH READING  
**10.30 am Worship and communion 6<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

**Angel Yu leading and Jill Bird preaching**

[www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk](http://www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk) Facebook @ Abbey Baptist Church, Reading



**JAMES Becoming like Jesus 3 Don't show favouritism**

**A Call to Worship – let's stand** Let's take a moment to quieten our hearts before God.

**Lord we are in your presence, we stop and still our hearts. Thank you for who you are, our amazing, almighty, Father God. Thank you for loving and caring for us. Thank you that you have both us and the whole world in your hands. In Jesus name AMEN**

We have been learning from James, a letter that challenges us to live more like Jesus, not just in belief, but in action. Today in James 2, we are told: Don't show favouritism.

It's easy to judge by appearance or status, but God calls us to love everybody else as much as ourselves

As we sing our first hymn "Be Still, for the presence of the LORD is here " let it be a prayer, inviting God to search our hearts and prepare us to listen, receive, and be changed.

**Song:**

Be Still, For The Presence Of The Lord, The Holy One, Is Here  
Come Bow Before Him Now With Reverence And Fear  
In Him No Sin Is Found We Stand On Holy Ground  
Be Still, For The Presence Of The Lord, The Holy One, Is Here

Be Still, For The Glory Of The Lord Is Shining All Around  
He Burns With Holy Fire, With Splendour He Is Crowned  
How Awesome Is The Sight Our Radiant King Of Light  
Be Still, For The Glory Of The Lord Is Shining All Around

Be Still, For The Power Of The Lord Is Moving In This Place  
He Comes To Cleanse And Heal, To Minister His Grace  
No Work Too Hard For Him, In Faith Receive From Him

# Be Still, For The Power Of The Lord Is Moving In This Place

Mission Praise 50

**Family Time** : We are one family, and Jesus loves each of us equally.

We just saw how different we all are—boys, girls, tall, short, from Hong Kong or not, football fans or not. But when we said, we are family, we are one, it felt true, didn't it?  
Jesus gives us his love that makes us truly one: He said, 'Love one another as I have loved you.'  
That's how people will know we follow Him—by our love."

**Song** *During the singing of this hymn, our offering will be taken*

A new commandment I give unto you  
That you love one another As I have loved you,  
That you love one another As I have loved you.

By this shall all men know you are My disciples  
If you have love one to another.  
By this shall all men know you are My disciples  
If you have love one to another.

Mission praise 1                      Young people leave for their groups

**1<sup>st</sup> Bible Reading**                      James 2. 1-13

**2<sup>nd</sup> Bible Reading:**                      Math 7.1-5 and Luke 10. 25 – 37

**Sermon**      **The Royal Law of LOVE – don't show favouritism**

**James is all about becoming more and more like Jesus** – are you changing?

We are two big steps into the book of James – he is so good at 'startling statements' and there will be another one today.

**STEP 1**      **Count it all joy when you have many difficulties** – it is so good for growing faith!

**STEP 2**      **When you read the bible don't treat it like a mirror and go away** -do what it says

Then we finished last week with **James 1. 26 -27** which is a summary of the rest of his letter. He considers that the outworking of faith in our glorious LORD JESUS CHRIST is in three areas - how we control our tongue, how we treat each other and how we live a holy life. These are all ways of becoming more and more like JESUS. Were these areas particularly important to speak into for James' church ? Do we have the same areas? YES we do.

We have two parts to the sermon – what we shouldn't do and what we should do!

**1. What we shouldn't do - don't show favouritism v 1-7** – preferring some people over others, treating people differently according to their outward appearance or what we think we know about them.

Start thinking who do you prefer? or who do you naturally find difficult?

What do we learn in the old testament about the **Father heart of God**? Right from the start he speaks of his heart for the poor and needy. In **Deuteronomy** it says 'Our great GOD mighty and awesome, shows no favouritism. He defends the cause of the orphan and widow and loves the foreigner. And in Acts God shows no favouritism and accepts men from every nation. His character is unfailing love for all with no partiality

Then we look at the **character of Jesus**. Thou he was rich in heaven he became poor on earth and he mixed with the poor, the outcast, the unloved, the rejected, the foreigner. Even on the cross he turned and loved the two criminals. He taught us not to be judgemental. Stop judging by appearances. He says no favouritism.

Then we look at the **specific example James gives** – the poor man and the rich man coming new into church and how easy to give more honour to the rich man and less to the poor! Who got the best seat? The most attention?

**Why does God say he has chosen the poor to be rich in faith??** Is it easier for the poor to grow in faith and trust in God. In Thailand we worked among the poor and saw their joy, week by week, as God provided miraculously for their needs. There was always a queue of people each Sunday who wanted to tell of this week's miracles.

Jesus taught it was really hard for the rich to come to faith – they were so used to relying on themselves – easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle!!

We live in a very judgemental age which divides people by money, status, nationality, religion and many other groupings. Do we also so naturally want to belong to a particular group? Which group do you belong to in Abbey?

**What would Jesus say if he came into Abbey?** – where are your groupings? The Hong Konger, the African, the Iranian, the old, the young, the rich, the poor, the well-educated, the successful, the home owner/the renter Where is your prejudice – where do we judge? The passage says we have become a judge with evil thoughts!

Have we realised that showing favouritism is particularly displeasing to God? Despising the one God loves. I will share my honest prejudice – it is towards Americans and I need God's help. What about you?

So that is what not to do – but now **what should we do?**

**It's all about the ROYAL LAW OF LOVE - the KING of all laws v 8-11**

God gave the 10 special laws on mount Sinai after bringing the Israelites out of slavery into freedom. Laws to show them how to live in this freedom in harmony with him.

And then In the Old Testament, we get a wonderful summary of these.

**Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength and your neighbour as yourself**

Jesus several times quoted this summary. I would say this is James' Royal law of love.

We of course then get the challenge we heard in our gospel reading this morning. Jesus was asked '**BUT who is my neighbour?** For us it just means the person who lives next door!! But Jesus' answer was the Samaritan man, who all Jews hated and despised and how he overcame his prejudice and helped a Jew. He loved and cared for him. How would Jesus tell that story in Abbey? Who would we not want to help?

**Jesus then added in John 13 an even deeper challenge. ' You are to love each other as I have loved you'** He does this after washing his friend's dirty feet, a job the lowest servant would do. Whose feet in here would you not want to wash? Don't show favouritism!

**How can we ever keep this royal law of love? Jesus it is so hard?**

What Jesus did on the cross is described in Ephesians as breaking down the walls of hostility between us – enabling the two to be one. This was God's heart – the good news about Jesus isn't just to restore us to relationship with God but also to each other. Our oneness, our love and total acceptance of each other is only possible as we are loved by God and filled to overflowing with that love.

The end of our passage v12,13 comes back to judgement. Will we look to Jesus for his love and mercy so we can truly show no favouritism. Else we will be judged by the Royal law without mercy! It really matters to God.

But he says mercy triumphs over judgement – with Jesus living in us we can do it.

As we come to our response, we need to be honest. Can we say sorry that there are some people we just don't love, who we judge and don't want in our lives?

To whom do you show favouritism? Who do you judge? We can respond in the following two songs and then into our communion time together.

Let mercy triumph over judgement and keep the royal law of love.

### **Song 1**

*Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,  
All His wondrous compassion and purity,*

*May his Spirit divine, all my nature refine,  
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.*

Mission Praise 410

## **Song 2**

Jesus, You Are Changing Me  
By Your Spirit, You're Making Me Like You  
Jesus, You're Transforming Me  
That Your Loveliness May Be Seen In All I Do  
You Are The Potter And I Am The Clay  
Help Me To Be Willing To Let You Have Your Way  
Jesus, You Are Changing Me  
As I Let You Reign Supreme Within My Heart

Mission Praise 389

## **Communion**

We are coming together to share a special time of fellowship with Jesus and with each other. We come to remember, we come to celebrate, we come to proclaim what Jesus has done for us. Today we particularly remember we are one family, brothers and sisters together.

He first shared with them the bread. He had taught them that he was the very bread of life. Eat this bread, my life, and you will have all you need to be like me. So as we eat this bread, a symbol of Jesus' broken body for us, we receive afresh his life giving presence, filling us with his love, his grace and his strength as we live together here at Abbey Church.

**Jesus took the bread, gave thanks and broke it saying 'This is my body given for you, do this in remembrance of me' Let us share the bread together**

He then shared the cup of wine representing his blood poured out for us, As he died Jesus opened the way into God's presence through his death – his blood represents the ultimate sacrifice of his life on our behalf. He took our sins for us to the cross, that we might go free of punishment. As we drink, we rejoice in that forgiveness and cleansing. We particularly say sorry today for all the ways we show favouritism and ask for mercy and grace to be like Jesus.

**Jesus said 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. So we do this whenever we drink it in remembrance of him. Let us take the cup together.**

**Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the power of the Lord's death until he comes back.**

## **Song**

1. God forgave my sin in Jesus' name,  
I've been born again in Jesus' name,  
and in Jesus' name I come to you

to share his love as he told me to.

He said: 'Freely, freely you have received; freely, freely give.  
Go in my name and because you believe, others will know that I live.'

2. All power is given in Jesus' name,  
in earth and heaven in Jesus' name,  
and in Jesus' name I come to you  
to share his power as he told me to.

Mission Praise 181

### **Prayers of Intercession – Peggy**

Our Heavenly Father, Thank You for speaking to our hearts today.  
Thank You for the reminder that in Your eyes, every person matters—equally, deeply, fully.

**Help us, Lord, to reflect Your love in how we treat others. Cleanse us of favouritism, pride, or judgment. Instead, fill us with compassion, humility, and grace.**

We thank you that the fighting between Iran and Israel quickly stopped. Help the people of those two nations to recover, particularly remembering our own dear Iranian friends and their families. **AMEN**

It seems the fighting between Russia and Ukraine has almost been forgotten in the news, but Father we pray again for these two countries to be able to find a peaceful and just way to finish the hostilities. Father help those whose loved ones have been killed even in this last week. **AMEN**

In the UK we pray for compassion and wisdom as the Government passes the Welfare Bill and that those whose lives will be affected can find the help they need. If we can help please use us. Thank you that so many of us can help at CIRDIC. **AMEN**

As we go from here, may the beauty of Jesus truly be seen in us—in our words, our actions, our kindness, and our love.

**Holy Spirit, continue to change us from the inside out. Shape us to be more like Christ—so the world may see You in us. AMEN**

### **Song:**

To God be the glory, great things He hath done,  
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,  
Who yielded His life our redemption to win,  
And opened the life-gate that all may go in.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His voice;  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the people rejoice;

Oh, come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,  
And give Him the glory; great things He hath done.<sup>2</sup>

Oh, perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,  
To every believer the promise of God;  
The vilest offender who truly believes,  
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done,  
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;  
But purer, and higher, and greater will be  
Our wonder, our transport when Jesus we see.

Mission praise 708

### **The Blessing**

And now may the Lord bless you and keep you, may His face shine upon you and be gracious to you, and may His love flow through you as you love others with the love of Jesus. AMEN

### **The Grace**

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

### **This week's notices Today after church we have our connect group coffee times**

Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> July	8pm Zoom prayer meeting
Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> July	10.30am Renew Wellbeing 12.15 Bible study 2pm Want to know more about Jesus?
Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am Toddlers 10.30am Bible study 12.00am – 1.15pm Outreach outside St Lawrence 7.30pm Men's Bible study
Friday 11 <sup>th</sup>	5.00pm Table Tennis Club 6.30 Iranian get together and Bible study
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> July	10.30 am Worship service followed by church members meeting
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> July	10.30 am Baptism service