

Abbey International Baptist Church, Reading
Worship Service with visiting missionary speaker 10:30AM 10th Aug 2025
Jill Bird leading & Ray Lam preaching
www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk
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Suppose someone has enough to live and sees someone in need, but does not help, then God's love is not living in that person 1 John 3.17

Lord, we look around our world and see chaos and so many people suffering. Sudan, which is described as the largest humanitarian crisis on record, doesn't even make it to the news. How do we respond?



James warns us of being double minded

Are we an ostrich with our head in the sand?

Or in fear and dread of what is to come?

Or are we living with our eyes fixed on JESUS – our loving and powerful LORD and SAVIOUR

LORD I BELIEVE, HELP MY UNBELIEF

We want to start today by looking to JESUS, lifting his name high in worship and love

Jesus Shall Take The Highest Honour
Jesus Shall Take The Highest Praise
Let All Earth Join Heaven In Exalting
The Name Which Is Above All Other Names
Let's Bow The Knee In Humble Adoration
For At His Name Every Knee Must Bow
Let Every Tongue Confess He Is Christ, God's Only Son
Sovereign Lord, We Give You Glory Now

For All Honour And Blessing And Power, Belongs To You, Belongs To You
All Honour And Blessing And Power, Belongs To You, Belongs To You
Lord Jesus Christ, Son Of The Living God

Jesus We Enthroned You
We Proclaim You Are King
Standing Here In The Midst Of Us
We Raise You Up With Our Praise
And As We Worship Build A Throne (3)
Come Lord Jesus And Take Your Place.{2}

FAMILY TIME: The sheep and the goats

(An offering will be taken during the following song, then the young people will leave for their groups)

You Are The King Of Glory You Are The Prince Of Peace
You Are The Lord Of Heaven And Earth
You Are The Son Of Righteousness

Angels Bow Down Before You They Worship And Adore You
For You Have The Words Of Eternal Life
You Are Jesus Christ The Lord
Hosanna To The Son Of David, Hosanna To The King Of Kings
Glory In The Highest Heavens, Jesus The Messiah Reigns

Confession

Lord we humbly bring our lives before you. We want to be more and more like Jesus and we know we have failed in this last week. We quietly remember the two lessons from last Sunday

First not to speak badly of other people but to only speak out love and encouragement and not to gossip. We are sorry when last week we spoke critically or judgementally of others. **Please forgive us.** Then not to make plans or decisions without prayer to find your will for our lives. We are sorry Lord when we just wanted to do it our way to make life easy for us. **Please forgive us.**

God you have promised that when we confess our sin you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and make us clean again. **Please Lord forgive us and give us again your Holy Spirit to be strong and different in this coming week.**

So we turn in our service to start thinking about the rich and the poor in our world – those whose lives are easy and those whose lives are really difficult. Let us particularly remember Simon's teaching that faith must be shown through good deeds. Don't be an armchair Christians – get up and do something!! James has some very strong words to say to the rich in this world.

BIBLE READING 1: James 1.9-11 and 5.1-6

BIBLE READING 2: Isaiah 58. 1-11

Soften My Heart, Lord Soften My Heart
From All Indifference Set Me Apart
To Feel Your Compassion To Weep With Your Tears
Come Soften My Heart, Oh Lord Soften My Heart

SERMON Ray Lam Working in Hong Kong amongst the poor

It's great to be here with you today. My family used to live in Reading, and we moved to Hong Kong in 2019. In the first 4 years we worked for a charity called St Stephen's Society. We lived with and looked after people with addictions. Some were poor, some were rich. Almost everyone had stolen from their family, broken their hearts. Then they would meet Jesus and their lives would start to change. Many of the helpers were themselves drug addicts. Actually I also used to take drugs when I was younger. But Jesus came to save all who are lost.

I will describe the situation of human need we faced through a series of slides

Humanitarian funding cuts – This is a recently published graph of government fundings for humanitarian aid. While we see more disasters, we see resources are being cut.

Apartments overlooking a park - Rich / Poor – a picture of newly built expensive apartments, but overlooking a park famous for homeless drug addicts.

In this world full of brokenness, what can we do? What should we do? What is our role? I have many stories I can share, but I don't have the answers for every person in this room. Some have more, some have less, but we all have something. So Holy Spirit will you inspire each of us and show us how we can be Jesus in our own context.

Crossroads– In 2023 my family started working with a charity called Crossroads, which has a motto of “Connecting people in a world of need”.

Kenya visit – With the organisation, I visited Kenya in March, a village with 20,000 beautiful people but no running water, very high teenage pregnancy rates, high unemployment rate, 50% of marriages end in divorce, 30% of the population take drugs.

The photos on the left are from Kenya, the ones on the right are from our NGO in Hong Kong. You will see some similarities. We do a lot of work to inspire and empower schools, families and companies to care for the poor.

Goats – animals are essential for many rural families. We educate people in HK about global poverty.

Water shortages – How many taps do you have at home? Kitchen sink / Bathroom sink / Toilet / Washing Machine / Garden / Dishwasher etc. Many people, infact millions of people have to travel hours each day to fetch water. One of my Nigerian colleagues, from the age of 3, had to wake up at 4am and walk for 2 hours everyday, to help her mother with fetching water. Recently with the help of many friends in HK, she raised enough money to build the first well in the village.

Christian Football Academy - A group of Christian started investing their skills, time and money to start a Christian football academy and do discipleship in this village. They are investing their own money in free tutoring classes, feeding programmes, IT and photography classes, employment opportunities, football training, Bible studies and mentoring sessions. Many hundreds of people's lives are being transformed.

How much food to you eat in a week? In December a friend, Jael, visited the world's biggest refugee camp. People there have fled their country due to war and have no rights in the new country. They can't do any work or earn any money.

Their food portions have gradually got smaller and smaller. This picture is what a refugee had to eat for a whole week, 3 years ago. Portions now are significantly smaller. She taught a lady to use the computer. Learning to type a capital letter took her 5 minutes. Jael helped this lady set up a Gmail account. The password the lady chose was 'Life can Change'.

Young interns - This is the 2nd year we have young men from Kenya coming to Hong Kong for our internship programme with many others from around the world. We see these guys as future leaders for their countries.

Logistics - Other work we do in Crossroads as we connect people in a world of need. We turn excess and waste from companies, families, schools into resources for those in need. We can equip an entire village school with furniture, toys, bikes, musical instruments, computers and clothing.

But do you need to be rich and powerful to change the world?

Christmas party - On a church level, we focus on serving with the poor and marginalised. This photo is from a Christmas party for asylum seeker families. It was held at our friends' house. Their landlord, a very rich man, found out and asked to come and join.

And in the **worship** time children were invited to go and pray for the adults. This rich man was poor in spirit, he opened his hands to respond. A child went to pray for this man and he was greatly blessed. No one is too small to share God's riches. It was a beautiful picture of the kingdom of God. The old and young, the rich and poor, different nationalities worshipping together.

Chess - A friend and I recently played chess. At the end, he said it's interesting how in chess and in the world, the powerful would sacrifice the weak. But in the God's way, it's the powerful who sacrifice themselves for the weak, to give them life. What a mystery.

Children are often the biggest heroes. Whenever we walk past someone begging, the kids will always stop us, and ask to buy them some food. No one is too small to share God's riches. Who can you bless?

My son's **baptism** - This is my eldest son Micah's baptism. He has seen Jesus' love firsthand and he decided himself he wanted to follow Jesus and get baptised. He has blessed many of his friends. No one is too small to share God's riches.

Does it mean everything is always easy and happy? Of course not. There are tears and struggles on the way. But our Father is a very generous father, and we are called to be generous children of God. He has given us his Holy Spirit, He lives in us, no one is too small to share God's riches. In this world full of brokenness, what is our role?

Let's pray. Holy Spirit will you fill us, help us see as you see, show us the Father's heart. There is so much poverty, injustice, hunger, oppression in this world. Inspire and empower us, and give us faith to bring life and renewal to this world. In Jesus' name. Amen

Newsletter - if you are interested, you may sign up here: <http://eepurl.com/dE-pL9>

Soften My Heart, Lord Soften My Heart
From All Indifference Set Me Apart
To Feel Your Compassion To Weep With Your Tears
Come Soften My Heart, Oh Lord Soften My Heart

HYMN

Beauty for brokenness Hope for despair
Lord, in the suffering This is our prayer
Bread for the children Justice, joy, peace
Sunrise to sunset Your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives Cures for their ills
Work for the craftsman Trade for their skills
Land for the dispossessed Rights for the weak
Voices to plead the cause Of those who can't speak

Chorus *God of the poor Friend of the weak*
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love From a spark to a flame

Refuge from cruel wars Havens from fear
Cities for sanctuary Freedoms to share
Peace to the killing-fields Scorched earth to green
Christ for the bitterness His cross for the pain

Rest for the ravaged earth Oceans and streams
Plundered and poisoned Our future, our dreams
Lord, end our madness Carelessness, greed
Make us content with The things that we need **chorus**

Lighten our darkness Breathe on this flame
Until your justice Burns brightly again
Until the nations Learn of your ways
Seek your salvation And bring you their praise **chorus**

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PRAYER OF INTERCESSION Maureen

Father God, we come into your presence in prayer for the lives which have been uprooted through war, injustice and the greed of those around them who though they have much, want still more and deny the poor the basic needs for life itself. Show those in need your mercy and bring food, medical supplies and justice through the aid agencies and governments around the world.

Loving Father, we know there are many who have lost hope and are full of despair, living in tents with no real protection against the elements or disasters which seem to come at them from all directions. We pray for peace and justice for those living in Gaza and in Ukraine. Lord Jesus, there are many in our own country who live in poverty, struggling to feed their children and themselves. We bring before you all those who are still striving to come here, refugees looking for a better life free from persecution and injustice. May we as a country show compassion and bring help to all.

Loving Spirit, we thank you for the message brought to us today from our visiting speaker Ray and pray that you will bless him and Emily as they continue their work in Hong Kong. We also thank you for our new Minister Zoltan and his family for his safe arrival in Reading and his new home in the Manse and pray that we as a church will support him in his ministry to us.

We lift these prayers to you Lord in Jesus name. **Amen.**

HYMN

1 Go forth and tell! O church of God, awake!
God's saving news to all the nations take;
proclaim Christ Jesus, saviour, Lord, and king,
that all the world his worthy praise may sing.

2 Go forth and tell! God's love embraces all;
he will in grace respond to all who call:
how shall they call if they have never heard
the gracious invitation of his word?

3 Go forth and tell where still the darkness lies;
in wealth or want, the sinner surely dies:
give us, O Lord, concern of heart and mind,
a love like yours which cares for all mankind.

4 Go forth and tell! The doors are open wide:
share God's good gifts let no one be denied;
live out your life as Christ your Lord shall choose,
your ransomed powers for his sole glory use.

5 Go forth and tell! O church of God, arise!
go in the strength which Christ your Lord supplies;
go till all nations his great name adore
and serve him, Lord and king for evermore

Blessing

God of the poor, Friend of the weak. Give us compassion we pray

Melt our cold hearts. Let tears fall like rain

Come, change our love From a spark to a flame

Hear our prayer O LORD and pour out your love on us to go and serve.

In the name of Jesus Christ our LORD 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.



Special events coming up

Church lunch Sunday August 10th

Lunch time outreach Outside St Laurence church Thursday August 14th at 12.00 to 1.15

August Church walk On Bank holiday Monday August 25th

Zoltan's induction service 2.30 Saturday September 6th

No Wednesday afternoon English teaching cafe until September 24th 2pm