

# Abbey Baptist Church, Reading

WORSHIP SERVICE FOR 10.30 A.M. WITH COMMUNION 18<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2025

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Let's first stand and be aware of the greatness of our God – we stand silently in his presence. He is mighty, he is awesome, he is all knowing but all loving. God we still our hearts and worship you.

Over the past few weeks in our Holy Spirit series, we've seen how the Spirit walks with us, lives within us, and teaches us. Today, we're focusing on how the Holy Spirit transforms us—continually shaping us to become more like Jesus each day.

In **John 15**, Jesus says, "*I am the vine, you are the branches.*" When we stay close to Him, the Spirit helps us grow good fruit, love, joy, peace, and shine His character into the world. As we begin, let's open our hearts to the Spirit's work in us—and let's sing together, asking Jesus to shine through our lives and fill this place with His glory. Let's stand and sing "**Shine, Jesus, Shine.**"

Lord, the light of Your love is shining  
In the midst of the darkness, shining  
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us  
Set us free by the truth You now bring us    Shine on me, shine on me

**Chorus** Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory  
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire  
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy  
Send forth Your word, Lord, and let there be light

Lord, I come to Your awesome presence  
From the shadows into Your radiance  
By the blood, I may enter Your brightness  
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness Shine on me, shine on me

As we gaze on Your kingly brightness  
So our faces display Your likeness  
Ever-changing from glory to glory

Mirrored here, may our lives tell Your story Shine on me, shine on me

Graham Kendrick. 1987@Make way music

### **Family time: Fruit of The Spirit (Jill)**

Today we are thinking about the Fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, and more. These aren't just nice qualities to aim for; they are evidence that Jesus is alive and at work in us through His Spirit. And the good news is, we don't have to grow alone. The King—Jesus Himself—is here among us, shaping our lives from the inside out. So let's respond with faith and joy as we sing: *The King Is Among Us*.

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

### **Hymn: The King is among us**

The King is among us, His Spirit is here  
Let's draw near and worship Let songs fill the air  
He looks down upon us, Delight in His face  
Enjoying His children's love Enthralled by our praise  
And now He is giving His gifts to us all  
For no one is worthless And each one is called  
The Spirit's anointing, On all flesh comes down  
And we shall be channels For works like His own  
We come now believing Your promise of power  
For we are Your people And this is Your hour

Graham Kendrick Copyright © 1981 Thankyou Music

Last week we learnt how the Spirit teaches and convicts us of our sin. So in the presence of our holy God, we ask you Holy Spirit this morning to show us again where we have grieved you this last week. Let's pause in God's presence

**Father we are so sorry for the ways we have sinned against you and against people this last week in thought and word and deed. Please forgive us and Holy Spirit please be with us to do better in the week to come 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.**

As we reflect on the Spirit's work in us—shaping us to be more like Jesus—we come with open hearts, knowing we need His strength and love to change us. Let's respond now with this song: *Lord, I Come to You*, asking Him to renew us by the power of His love.

### **Song: Lord I came 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.

Bullock 1992@word music

**First Bible Reading:** John 15:1-17 (Anne)

**First Bible Reading:** Galatians 5:16-18, 22-25 (Nigel)

### **Sermon: Transformation – the Holy Spirit making us more and more like Jesus**

We are on week 4 of our series on understanding the Holy Spirit. We have learnt so much – who he is, how he walks with us, to help and guide and then last week, how he comes gently to point out our sin and change our ways. This week we are looking further at the daily work of the Holy Spirit to transform us to be like Jesus, so we can shine the life of Jesus into the world.

We are looking through the chapters in John 13 – 17 – known as Jesus' farewell sermon – all taught on his very last evening here on earth, before his death the following day. I hope you will find time to read slowly right through this passage.

It starts with the big lesson of humility – Jesus washed his very dirty disciples' feet; a job the lowest servant would do whenever folk arrived in a home after walking in sandals through dusty dirty roads. He said now you must do the same. It has to be where it all starts, especially for today's teaching. Let's take in a big breath of humility saying God I am willing to change to be more like Jesus

So today we come to John 15 – the very well-known passage on the VINE. Jesus say I am the vine; you are the branches. This great picture shows how we must live constantly close and intimate, joined to Jesus if we want to be Jesus to the world .

But let's look first at what the fruit is that the vine is to bear– fruit that the Holy Spirit helps grow in our lives. We have already discovered it in our family time. Our reading in Galatians 5 told us to learn to live by the Holy Spirit, walk with the Spirit, keep in step with the Spirit. Then the lovely fruit of the Spirit will be seen growing in our lives. **Do you long to be like Jesus filled with his, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control?** Is it possible that the loveliness of Jesus can be seen in me as I allow the Spirit to grow these fruits. **What's your response? What's your fruit like?**

But we are not doing this on our own- we can't change ourselves! The Spirit is at work but also our loving Father God and Jesus himself. Remember humility!

We return to John 15. Jesus says he is the vine, the root of the plant, we are the branches. Father God is the expert gardener. He watches over his plants daily; is a frost coming, is there danger of insects coming to destroy or disease on the leaves . He loves his plants so much. Have you ever been to a vineyard – there are now many in the UK you can visit and it is great for understanding this teaching. The vines are beautifully trained on wire supports, pruned and ready for bearing grapes – the soil is clean, the whole plant is healthy.

So what does the gardener do. He prunes or cleans. We are the branches, but often we have grown in the wrong direction, or too fast and are trailing on the ground or grown with disease in us. We need cutting back and given the chance to grow more healthily. These cut off parts will be put on the bonfire!

Some of us have been growing good grapes but at the end of every season the vine needs a good prune so the next season there will be even more grapes – I used to love pruning my roses, cutting them back to the next shoot where I could see buds forming, cutting out the dead branches and then the joy of seeing even more flowers forming!

Several times in these chapters 13-17, Jesus talks about how non-Christians will know who he is. **This is to my Father's glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples' John 15** It is as they look at the lives of those who say they are Christians and see lives so transformed by the power of the Spirit, that they want to know more. People without Jesus are looking for a real love, real joy, real peace, how to be patient and all the other fruits. Jesus is no longer in the world but we are and our task is to now show the world what Jesus is like.

We have such emphasis on **telling** the world about Jesus – but I think the weight of this teaching is you **showing** the world what he is like. JESUS says to us, show the world how I can so change lives, In the Galatians passage we read that there is no law you can keep that enables you to change. It is not keeping rules and religious practices or by our own good resolutions. Jesus came to set us free from this and open the way for life in all its fullness, walking with the Holy Spirit and knowing true transformation that only the power of the Spirit can bring.

### **Where are you in this? Do you have a story of how Jesus is changing you?**

When I was first filled with the Holy Spirit at university, I was living with a group of friends. I didn't tell them what had happened to me, but about three months later, one of them asked 'Jill what happened to you, you are so much easier to live with, you are much more loving.' **Are you easier to live with !!**

**What is Jesus asking of us today?** How does the transformation happen? JESUS gave the simple picture of the vine; stay attached, very close to me, abide or dwell with you,

and allow the gardener the Father, by the work of the Spirit to prune and clean you. We have been chosen to bear fruit, fruit that will last.

**Are you tired of the way you are?** Do your reactions, emotions, actions get in the way of the beauty of Jesus being seen in you. I know I am.– My big mouth keeps saying things I regret and I am crying out to God for help and pruning. Are you ready to admit your need of pruning and willing for the Holy Spirit to be at work? Let's come before God now and ask.

'If you remain in me, ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you. John 15.

### **Song - Jesus you are changing me**

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

Marilyn Baker 1981 Authentic publishing

### **Song - spirit of the living God fall afresh on me**

Spirit of the Living God Fall afresh on me  
Spirit of the Living God Fall afresh on me  
Melt me, mould me, fill me, use me  
Spirit of the Living God Fall afresh on me  
1935@ Birdwing music

### **Communion**

We continue our commitment to stay joined to Jesus as a branch to the trunk. Jesus we come to remember again your death and resurrection for us through this special time of communion. You opened up the way for us to be forever in your presence, dwelling in you and you dwelling in us.

**Jesus, we draw very near to you, as we eat this bread and drink this juice may it be to us your body and blood. We recommit ourselves to be joined to your fruitful vine. Prune us and clean us we pray.**

'The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

In the same way after supper he took the cup saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

This is the body of Christ, broken for you. *(we eat together when all are served)*

This is the blood of Christ, shed for you. *(we drink together once all have been served)*

**Post Communion Prayer: Thank you, Lord Jesus, for coming close and feeding us with yourself. May we stay close to you and bear fruit to your glory AMEN**

### Intercession Prayer Stephen

#### **Dear Heavenly Father,**

Thank You for being the True Vine who gives us life. Help us, Your Church, to stay close to You every day. Teach us to rely on You for everything we need. Remove anything in us that does not honour You. Help us grow in love, kindness, and all the good things that come from Your Spirit.

Make us strong and fruitful so that others may see You in us. Help us love one another as You love us. Keep us united as one Church, even in our differences. Let our love be genuine and reveal who You are to the world.

When life becomes difficult or when others do not understand our faith, give us courage. Remind us that You have chosen us and that You are always with us. Help us live for You and bring glory to God. Fill us with Your joy and Your Spirit. Let the Church shine with Your light and grow in Your love.

May we long for peace and harmony in our world. May conflicts find peaceful resolutions, and may leaders and communities across the globe seek wisdom to resolve disputes without resorting to violence. Heal the divisions caused by oppression. Help us dismantle systemic biases based on race, gender, or economic status in our polarized societies.

We need fairness, trust, and the protection of freedoms. Every person, in every corner of the world, deserves to live with dignity, safety, and equal opportunity. May compassion guide our actions so that we may unite and heal. **In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.**

The Holy Spirit grows His fruit in us, it's not just for our own transformation, but so that we can reflect Jesus to the world around us. God builds His kingdom through Spirit-filled, fruitful lives. So let's sing with passion and purpose our last song

#### **Song: Build your kingdom here**

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 And we need Your power In us

**Chorus** 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

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 And we pray revive This earth

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 Oh, and we are the hope on earth  
Rend Collective

### **The Blessing:**

May you go out empowered knowing that the Holy Spirit dwells within you, and that He is always there to guide you every day. May God strengthen you to serve him and bless you with joy, hope and peace, today and every day.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and 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.**

### **This weeks' notice**

<b>Today</b>	<b>Sunday 18th</b>	<b>12.15-2.00</b>	<b>Discipleship - First Step (Brookside Room)</b>
Tuesday	20 <sup>th</sup>	8.00 pm	Zoom prayer meeting
Wednesday	21 <sup>st</sup>	10.30	Renew Wellbeing
		12.15	Bible Study
		2.00	Start 5 Introduction to Christianity
Thursday	22 <sup>nd</sup>	10.30	Toddlers
		10.30	Bible Study
		7.30	Men's bible study
Friday	23 <sup>rd</sup>	5.00	Table Tennis Club
		6.30	Iranians Meal and Bible Study
Sunday	25 <sup>th</sup>	10.30	Baptism service