

Abbey Baptist Church, Reading

WORSHIP SERVICE 10.30 A.M. WITH BAPTISMS 25TH MAY 2025

Leading: Jill Bird Preaching: Simon Bird

www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk. Facebook @ Abbey Baptist Church, Reading



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 and all glorious
God we still our hearts and worship you.

But Father God you are also so near to each one of us, you love us, you protect us, you understand us and give us your counsel and wisdom.
Father God we thank you for your faithful love and care

Song

I love You, Lord For 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

And 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
In the 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

Your goodness is running after, it's running after me
Your goodness is running after, it's running after me
With my life laid down, I'm surrendered now
I give You everything
Because Your goodness is running after, it's running after me

Family time:

Rooted and established in love

Love so wide and long and high and deep

Song God's love is very wonderful

God's love is very wonderful x3 Oh wonderful love
So high you can't get over it, so low you can't get under it
So wide you can't get round it , Oh wonderful love

Jesus' love is very wonderful x3 Oh wonderful love
So deep you can't go through it, So long you can't see the end of it,
So strong you can't resist it, Oh, wonderful love!

I'm loved and I'm very wonderful x3 Oh wonderful love
So bright you have to see it, So loud you have to hear it,
So sweet you have to taste it, Oh, wonderful love!

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Young people leave for their groups

BAPTISMS

So we come to our time of great celebration and we get ready to join with our four dear friends who have asked to be baptised today. We will first hear their stories of how God has brought them to this day, from four different distant countries.

Jesus said there is great joy in heaven when even one person comes to know him. So let's start by giving God a cheer and clap.

Four testimonies Sajjad Yusef Abdul and Saya

Song: Good Good Father

Oh, I've heard a thousand stories of what they think You're like
But I've heard the tender whisper of love in the dead of night
And You tell me that You're pleased and that I'm never alone

You're a good, good Father
It's who You are, it's who You are, it's who You are
And I'm loved by You It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am

I've seen many searching for answers far and wide
But I know we're all searching for answers only You provide
Because You know just what we need before we say a word

You're a good, good Father
It's who You are, it's who You are, it's who You are
And I'm loved by You It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am

Because You are perfect in all of Your ways
You are perfect in all of Your ways ,You are perfect in all of Your ways to us
You are perfect in all of Your ways, Oh, You're perfect in all of Your ways
You are perfect in all of Your ways to us
Anthony Brown, Pat Barrett © 2014 Capitol CMG Paragon

Baptisms

Have you accepted Jesus as your saviour and LORD? Come and be baptised.
On your confession of faith, we baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit AMEN

Jesus, name above all names Beautiful Savior, glorious Lord.
Emmanuel, God is with us. Blessed Redeemer, Living word.
1974@scripture in song

O happy day, O happy day. When Jesus washed my sins away!
He taught me how to watch and pray, And live rejoicing every day.
Hallelujah happy day when Jesus washed my sins away
Music@Ron Jones

First Bible Reading: Acts 2:36-41 Acts 8:14-17

Second Bible Reading: Eph 5:15-20

Sermon: The fact that we are born into this world is remarkable. Our third grandchild has just arrived, which reminds us of this basic fact of life. I do not need to spell out for us the amazing process, miracle even, of birth. We start as a few cells, grow in our mother's womb, then comes the time for us to come out into the world. Jesus used this as an illustration of what becoming a Christian means. You must be born again to see the Kingdom of God (John 3:3-7).

Becoming a Christian, a follower of Jesus, a little Christ as Jill told us last week, is not like joining a club, changing your philosophy of life, dressing differently or changing behaviour. It is entering another world. Jesus called this the Kingdom of God. It is entering into a new (and amazingly different and exciting) life.

We do not remember what it was like to in the womb - we had no idea of life outside. Think of a door from one room to another. You are not quite sure what is on the other

side. Will it be better? Should we go through? Naturally we have questions. But you have a choice. You can look at the door and wonder, but you must go through to experience what is on the other side.

How do we go through the door of becoming a Christian? How do we enter the Kingdom of God? How are we born again?

A natural birth has stages, as mothers here will remember only too well. Looking back, you can say it happened on such-and-such date, but the process was spread over many hours.

It is the same with our spiritual birth. If you look at the Acts of the Apostles – which is our only biblical record of people actually becoming Christians - we discern there are four elements: repent, believe in the Lord Jesus, be baptised, receive or be baptised in the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38; 16:30-34). It is wonderful that this morning we have heard testimony of people on this process and who have come to baptism.

Repent. The idea is we change our mind, or change direction, make a 'U' turn. Like in the parable of the lost son, the turning point was when 'he came to his senses,' (Luke 15:17). He realised there was a way out of his situation and he could go back to his father.

Believe. This is to accept our situation, that we have sinned against God, that he is there as a loving heavenly Father, waiting to accept us back as his children. Because of what Jesus did for us on the cross we can be forgiven and be reconciled with God. We receive a new life, but this means we follow a new lifestyle. We follow Jesus as the new Lord and Master of our lives.

Be baptised. Once we have faith in God, one of the ways we respond, and indeed obey, is to be baptised. This is an action that God gives us in the physical world, as an illustration of what has happened in the spiritual world. It is full of meaning, for those being baptised, and those watching, and I mention a few.

It is making a step of obedience and a public declaration that we believe. It shows to the world, ourselves and the Devil that we mean business with God. It is like walking through that door. We put our faith into action, as true faith can only be shown by action.

Being dipped in the water cleanses our outside, which symbolises the cleansing that God has done inside (Acts 22:16).

When we are baptised, we are united with Jesus in his death and resurrection. Going down into the water is a picture of us being buried with Jesus. Coming up is being raised to life with Jesus.

Receive or be baptised with the Holy Spirit. We have been following a series on the Holy Spirit. The Spirit has been at work and alongside everyone who has come to faith. No one can come to faith in Jesus without the work of the Holy Spirit.

But the bible teaches there is more. Words used are receiving (Acts 2:38), drinking (1 Cor 12:13), asking (Luke 11:13), and thirsting (John 7:37). These are active verbs. The

Holy Spirit is received for power to live the Christian life. We must respond, even if it is just to open our mouths and drink. We need to seek the baptism of the Spirit and **then** we seek the ongoing filling of the Holy Spirit every day in our Christian lives (Eph 5:18).

Jill last week spoke of her experience of receiving the Spirit. I too became a Christian while a student. The speaker at church encouraged us to ask for the Spirit. I remember praying and having a sense of peace overwhelming me as I was filled with the Spirit. I have gone on through the years seeking daily filling with the Spirit. Important to me has been powerfully praying for others, particularly for healing using the gifts of the Spirit.

It is right to know you have been filled with the Spirit. At Pentecost and in our reading, being filled with the Spirit is compared with being drunk - not the negative effects - rather this shows it is meant to be a discernible and overwhelming experience, and it is for good.

Like at Jesus' baptism, the result of being filled with the Spirit is also to hear the words, 'This is my son/daughter whom I love and with whom I am well pleased' (Luke 4: It is God's way of showing he loves us.

So, I conclude by repeating the challenges this morning.

Have you been born again as a Christian?

If so, have you been baptised?

And have you received the Spirit?

There is an open door before you. You may be unsure, you may be frightened, but you need to walk up to it and step through, if you want to enter into a new good life, Jesus said, he does not just come to give us life, but to give us life to the full, abundant life (John 10:10).

Time of prayer

We are going to pray for our friends that have been baptised in water that they will be filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said he would baptise us with the Holy Spirit and fire – anyone else this morning like to be prayed over to receive the Spirit in this way

Song

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

Intercessory Prayer

Loving Father, as we come to you in prayer for the world and ourselves, we lift to you the people of Gaza asking for justice and mercy, that the charities who are waiting to

bring food and medical supplies are able to bring in all that is needed to get through the blockade.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Father God, we bring to you the Ukraine, and the many other Countries where there is warfare and strife, people living in fear, please give wisdom to the leaders of the world to work together bringing peace to their lands and hope for the future.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Lord Jesus, as we look at your creation, we see all the damage done through humanities greed. Grant us the ability to listen, share responsibility, and collaborate to allow the world to heal.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Finally, Lord, we lift ourselves and the town of Reading into your care and that all may know of your rich blessings we receive each day. **AMEN**

Song:

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

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' notices

Tuesday 27th 8.00 pm church prayer meeting Zoom
 9.00 pm Prayer meeting for START course

Wednesday 28th 10.30 Renew Wellbeing
 12.15 Bible Study
 2.00 Start 6 Introduction to Christianity

Thursday 29th 10.30am Toddlers
 10.30am Bible Study
 7.30pm Men's bible study

Friday 30th 5.00pm Table Tennis Club
 6.30pm Iranian Meal and Bible Study

Sunday June 8th Pentecost Sunday Jim Thomas Church
lunch

QR Code for offering

