

ABBAY INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH, READING

WORSHIP SERVICE WITH COMMUNION 10.30 AM 16TH MARCH 2025

Jill Bird leading with Graeme Fairbairn preaching

www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk.

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THEME: The Prayers of JESUS 2 – as Jesus prayed he was changed by the glory of GOD

As we come to worship let's stop and think on the phrase 'the GLORY of GOD' The felt heavy but shining presence of our glorious Father.

We will remember times when Moses saw this glory. Let's imagine we were there.

We start with Moses at the burning bush; the Lord appears to him in flames of fire from within a bush. In the desert. God calls to Moses, 'Do not come any closer. Take off your shoes for the place where you are standing is holy ground'. We look on in awe.

Then at Mount Sinai. Imagine you are one of the Israelites watching the fire and thunder of God's presence on the mountain and then when Moses comes down his appearance is so changed, his face is radiant – he has been in the Lord's glory. You are so scared you ask him to cover his face.

Then a while later, you have finished building the tabernacle where God is to be worshipped. Look as the glory of the Lord's presence comes down in such power that no one could go near. Then Moses pleads with God that this glorious presence would go with them. The Lord replies ' My presence will go with you. Then Moses says ' Now show me your glory' and God hides Moses in a rock and his glory passes by.

LORD GOD we are sorry when we don't care that much about being in your holy presence or seeking your glory. We come to worship in such a lazy way that doesn't honour your great, mighty and awesome name. **PAUSE**

But thank you, that you still love us, welcome us and come near to us as we turn to seek your face again today. Amen

**We stand before the presence of the Lord God of host
Children of our Father and heirs of his grace
For Jesus paid the price for us, the veil was torn in two
And the holy of holies has become our dwelling place**

1 Speak, Lord, in the stillness while I wait on thee;
hush my heart to listen, in expectancy.

2 Speak, O blessed Master, in this quiet hour,
let me see thy face, Lord, feel thy touch of power.

3 For the words you speak Lord, they are life indeed;
living bread from heaven, now my spirit feed!

4 Fill me with the knowledge of thy glorious will;
all thine own good pleasure in my life fulfil

5 All to thee is yielded, I am not my own;
blissful, glad surrender, I am thine alone.

Mission Praise 608 words and music at SIM

Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Lord, we lift up your name, with hearts full of praise.
Be exalted, O Lord my God; hosanna in the highest.

Glory, glory, glory to the King of kings.
Glory, glory, glory to the King of kings.
Lord, we lift up your name, with hearts full of praise.
Be exalted, O Lord my God; glory to the King of kings.

1985 Shadow Spring Music Song solutions copy care

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

Our Father in heaven, we honour your holy name. We ask that your peaceful glorious kingdom come on earth . May your will be done, just as it is in heaven. Give us all we need for today, ¹² and forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. ¹³ Don't bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One. For the kingdom the power and the glory are yours now and for ever and ever Amen.'

FAMILY TIME: Moving mountains

The offering will be taken during the following song and then the children will leave for their own groups

Father, we love You, we worship and adore You,
Glorify Thy name in all the earth.
Glorify Thy name, glorify Thy name,
Glorify Thy name in all the earth.

Jesus we love you ... Spirit we love you –

Donna Adkins ©1976, 1982 Maranatha! Music.

BIBLE READING Exodus 33. 12.23

BIBLE READING: LUKE 9. 28-36

Sermon

Good morning! It's my pleasure to be with you this morning. My name is Graeme, and I'm from Wycliffe Baptist Church, just a mile down the road. Wycliffe was started by people from this church in 1881, so we are very appreciative of Abbey Baptist Church!

This morning we continue the series on Jesus in prayer. Today we will focus on Jesus going up a mountain with three of His disciples. We read:

About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. ²⁹ As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. (Luke 9:28-29)

I wonder if there are special days in your life which you remember. Maybe the day you started school. Or the day you got married. Or the day your first child was born. Or maybe a special holiday in some beautiful place.

Or maybe some special days in your spiritual journey. The day you first believed in Jesus. Or the day you were baptised. Or the day when you had an amazing answer to prayer.

The day we have read about this morning was a very special day. It was an important day for Jesus. It certainly was an amazing day for His three disciples. One of them, Peter, wrote about it much later, and explained what a deep impression it had made on him:

For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ He received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." ¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. (1 Peter 1:16-18)

It was one of the things that had confirmed and strengthened his faith in Jesus.

And all of this happened when Jesus and His disciples went up into a mountain to pray! Amazing things can happen when we pray!

Jesus often went to pray, and I'm sure His disciples did too. What happened on this day was special:

- Jesus was "transfigured" - His appearance changed, His face shone with light. (We might say that this was the true nature of the glory of Jesus being revealed)
- Moses and Elijah appeared. They also were "in glorious splendour". They were two of the most important people in the Bible
- God the Father spoke from heaven

We'll look at those three things a bit more in a moment. Before that, let's note again that amazing things can happen when we pray.

Firstly, prayer changes things – the things we pray about. To pray is to bring the problems of our lives to Jesus. We bring our worries and difficulties to Him. We don't always get exactly what we ask for, but we find situations change.

What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer!

But secondly, prayer changes us. The purpose of prayer is that we are transformed to be like Jesus, and to draw alongside God's will.

“When you pray, don't give God instructions, just report for duty”

When Jesus taught us to pray, He told us we should say, “YOUR kingdom come, YOUR will be done”. In prayer I shouldn't be persuading God to do my will, but I should be submitting to God's will, which is “good, perfect and pleasing” (Romans 12:2).

So we should pray. And Jesus sets the pattern for our prayer. If he were the Son of God, yet need to spend time with His Father in prayer, how much more do we have to! If we're at all serious about being a Christian we need to pray;

“If we're not praying, then we're playing!”

Let's look at what happened at the transfiguration.

Firstly, the true glory of Jesus was revealed. Just before this happened Jesus had been telling His disciples that He would come again in His glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. (v26). And maybe people think, “Oh! When I die and go to heaven I will see the glory of God!” But Jesus went on to say some people would see the kingdom of God before they died. (v27). I think He was referring to Peter and James and John who were about to see Jesus' glory revealed.

Luke records that the Transfiguration happened “about 8 days later”. Why 8? Numbers in the Bible do have significance, and 8 seems to be symbolic of the new creation. And so the three disciples were going to have a glimpse into the true glory of Jesus and the new creation that Jesus will bring in when He comes again.

I wonder if you've ever had a glimpse of the glory of God? Something that takes you beyond the humdrum of life and the bleakness of an empty universe. We had a reading from Exodus 33, where Moses begs God, “Now show me Your glory!” (Ex 33:18)

Secondly, Jesus spoke with Moses and Elijah. Moses represented the Old Testament law; Elijah represented the Old Testament prophets. Jesus was the fulfilment of both.

Did you notice what they spoke about? They spoke about Jesus' “departure” – His forthcoming death on the cross. Because Jesus and His death for us on the cross is the central message of the whole Bible.

Thirdly, God the Father spoke from heaven. Peter suggested building three shelters – he thought it was wonderful that Jesus was equal to Moses and Elijah, who were two of the most important people in the Bible. Peter thought he was honouring Jesus to include Him alongside Moses and Elijah.

But God said "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." Jesus stands far above Moses and Elijah. They were only messengers that pointed to Jesus, the true Messiah.

When the disciples looked around, Moses and Elijah had gone – only Jesus was left

So what are the lessons for us?

Number 1: prayer changes us. Do you pray! Maybe you need to be like the disciples and say, "Teach us (me) to pray!"

- For some, it needs to be a prayer of commitment, where we come to Jesus as Saviour and Lord for the first time
- Then let me encourage all of us to get into a habit, a routine, of praying regularly each day
- And pray with others. Do you pray with Christian friends? There's something very special about praying with other people
- Pray that God will be changing you and making you more like Jesus. This is God's will for us, that we may be conformed to the image of His son (Romans 8:29). I wonder what your ambition is. Is it to be rich? To be powerful? To reach the top of your career? To be happy? To travel to exotic places on holiday? God's ambition for you is to see you changed to be like Jesus

Number 2: Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, the Lord of glory. The Gospels show us who Jesus is. And if He is truly the Son of God we cannot, we must not ignore Him! There is no other way. There is no other saviour. There is no other lasting and certain hope.

Is He your Lord and Saviour?

Number 3: Moses and Elijah spoke about Jesus' death. The reason Jesus came was to give His life as a ransom for many. To die, so that we might have eternal life! Have you confessed your sin and brought it to the cross of Jesus! We started by talking about "Special Days". This could be a special day for you if you come to Jesus.

To be in your presence, to sit at your feet
where your love surrounds me
and makes me complete

This is my desire, o Lord, this is my desire
This is my desire, o Lord, this is my desire

To rest in your presence, not rushing away
to cherish each moment
here I would stay

This is my desire, o Lord, this is my desire
this is my desire, o Lord, this is my desire

Words and music 1991 Thank you Music Noel Richards

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.

He first shared with them the bread – just ordinary bread they would eat with every meal. He had taught them that he was the very bread of life. He said, I am the living bread. If anyone eats of this bread he will never die, but live for ever. This bread is my flesh that I will give for the life of the world . He who comes to me will never go spiritually hungry.

So as we eat this bread, a symbol of Jesus' broken sacrificed body for us, we receive afresh his life giving presence, filling us with his love, his grace and his strength.

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 from all that would separate us from God as we repent and confess our sinfulness, both personal and corporate as a body of God's people here at Abbey church

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.

Time of prayer

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.

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.

THE BLESSING John 17

Jesus said in his last great prayer to his Father 'I have brought you glory by completing the work you gave me to do. And now Father, glorify me with the glory I had with you before the world began, Father I want these you have given me to see my glory, the glory you have given me. And I have also given them the glory that you gave me.

Jesus may we receive and see glimpses of your glory this week. 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.**

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY After church today Cantonese bible study downstairs

This week's prayer meetings - all very welcome and to pray in any language

March 18th Tuesday evening 20.00 to 20.30 on line zoom church prayer meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86215188882?pwd=0Ln8HnRMbvmYrwCPJbsGDrE0TokDmB.1>

March 21st Friday morning in person at Abbey church 10.30 – 11.30

Remember the Reading half marathon next Sunday – Abbey roads shut 9.30 -12.40

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QR Code for Offering:

