

Welcome and Introduction - Andrea Moises

Hello and welcome! Hope this service will find you all doing well. Today is Mother's Day so we would like to wish all mothers a very happy and blessed day! In **Isaiah 49:13-15** we read: **"Shout for joy, you heavens; rejoice, you earth; burst into song, you mountains! For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones. But Zion said, 'The Lord has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me.' 'Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!"** In this passage of scripture God is speaking about His promises of restoration to His people who had gone to exile. He said that He wouldn't forget them and would comfort them. I would like to encourage you with this word. You who may be facing health problems, who may be battling against Covid in your house or in a hospital bed, you who may be having financial issues due to business being closed or because you have lost your job, or you who may be facing conflict in your marriage and in family relationships or you have been mourning the loss of loved ones. God is for you and He promises to comfort you and He won't forget you. I've been so blessed with the gift of having children. Here God affirms His compassion and love for us saying that even if a mother forgets her children, He won't forget. His love for us is unconditional and immeasurable. **"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."** John 16:33 **"Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning."** Psalm 30:5b

Let's pray,

Thank you Lord for the comfort and joy we find in you and for giving us the assurance that you'll never leave us or forsake us. You're indeed our perfect Father and your tender love goes beyond the love of a mother. Help us all to fully grasp the dimension of your love for us and to accept and rest in this beautiful truth. Fill our hearts with your peace that surpasses all understanding, in Jesus' name. Amen

Song 1 – Sovereign Over Us (Michel W. Smith)

<https://youtu.be/vw5osFG4WZk> Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

*There is strength within the sorrow
There is beauty in our tears
And you meet us in our mourning
With a love that cast out fear
You are working in our waiting
You're sanctifying us
When beyond our understanding
You're teaching us to trust*

**Your plans are still to prosper
You have not forgotten us
You're with us in the fire and the flood
You're faithful forever, perfect in love
You are sovereign over us**

*You are wisdom unimagined
Who could understand your ways
Reigning high above the heavens
Reaching down in endless grace
You're the lifter of the lowly
Compassionate and kind
You surround and you uphold me
And your promises are my delight*

*Even what the enemy means for evil
You turn it for our good
You turn it for our good and for your glory
Even in the valley, you are faithful
You're working for our good
You're working for our good and for your glory*

Song 2 – Cornerstone - Hillsong

<https://youtu.be/a3HH-1Zbs> Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly trust in Jesus name

Christ alone, Cornerstone
Weak made strong
In the Saviour's love
Through the storm
He is Lord, Lord of all

When darkness seems to hide His face
I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil
My anchor holds within the veil

When He shall come with trumpet sound
Oh, may I then in Him be found
Dressed in His righteousness alone
Faultless stand before the throne

Message:

**Series on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians – Ephesians 2:11-22
Immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine!
Diverse, but United in Christ!**

Introduction

We've been walking through Paul's letter to the Ephesians and last week we meditated on the first 10 verses of this chapter, where Paul's reminded believers in Ephesus of their condition before they had met Jesus. They were spiritually dead in their transgressions and sins, but God by His immeasurable grace and abundant love and mercy had made them alive in Christ. The Father made it possible for you and me to have a relationship with him, through Jesus' death and resurrection. If we have a relationship with Him we are alive and if don't we are dead as David Herring explained the concept of spiritual death and life in the Bible. Only in Jesus we can have life and life in its fullness. ***"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, so that no one should boast."*** ***Ephesians 2:8-9*** We also learned that we are not saved by what we do, however what we do (the good works that God prepared in advance for us to do) is the evidence that we have been saved. ***"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*** ***Ephesians 2:10*** The Greek word "Kalos" that Paul uses for "good" combined with "Ergon"= 'works' has a deeper and powerful meaning. It denotes something which is intrinsically "good," and so here are synonyms that we can use to enhance the meaning and the type of work God had prepared in advance for us to do, which is "beautiful to look at, excellent, noble, surpassing, precious, useful, suitable, commendable, admirable. And nothing is more excellent, powerful, pleasant and beautiful than when we live in perfect unity in Christ and this is the theme of my message today. **Diverse, but United in Christ!** The Body of Christ is made up of people from every tribe, language and nation. It's an international, multicultural and multicoloured community living in unity and love because of Jesus. We read in ***Psalms 133:1*** ***"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!*** And Jesus said in ***John 13:34-35*** ***"A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*** However, we live in a deeply divided world today with all kinds of walls we built separating us from one another. Differences in race, culture, social status, political affiliation, preferences, gender, age, style of worship and so on. The world is yet to see a diverse and united church breaking down all dividing walls and glorifying and worshipping God together. In 1963, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. said, ***"It is appalling that the most segregated hour of Christian America is at 11 o'clock on Sunday morning"*** and, according to experts, that assertion remains true today. This week Andrea and I were thinking and praying about a mission statement for our church's new website and we came up with the following sentence: ***"To worship God by building community, embracing diversity and discipling the nations."*** And my prayer is that this will really be our motto for the next hundred years. To worship God building one another in love, embracing diversity and preaching the Gospel to all. God's love is for all and His desire is that all come to salvation and receive the gift of eternal life. ***"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*** ***John 3:16*** Let us read ***Ephesians 2:11-22*** ***"Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called 'uncircumcised' by those who call themselves 'the circumcision' (which is done in the body by human hands) – remember that at that time you were separated from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the***

barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

I – Circumcision of the Heart – v. 11

“Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called ‘uncircumcised’ by those who call themselves ‘the circumcision’ (which is done in the body by human hands...” Paul is addressing the Ephesians with a problem, an issue of division and it is important for us to remember that the church in the first century was formed mainly by these two groups of people; Jews and Gentiles. Before they had an encounter with Jesus the Messiah, those two people groups had huge issues and differences that separated them from each other. The Jews were a chosen nation, a people whom God gave the law to and gave the promises of redemption with the coming of the Messiah. God had a covenant with Abraham to bless him so that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed. That was God's purpose from the beginning when He chose Abraham and formed the nation of Israel. They were to be a light to all nations around them. God's purpose was always to reach out to the entire human race by sending Jesus Christ into the world. Circumcision was a practice established by God in the old covenant given to Abraham and his decedents that every male had to be circumcised in the eighth day after birth. Circumcision of the flesh done by human hands was a sign that they had a covenant with God. However, instead of being a light to Gentiles, the people of Israel separated themselves from everybody else and wanted to keep God only for themselves. They became arrogant and lost the purpose of why they had been chosen. Many Jews of Jesus' day viewed Gentiles as “unclean” and far away from God's love and care. On some occasions, Jews even referred to Gentiles with the pejorative term “dogs” to express their complex of superiority above other people. Unfortunately, this complex of superiority can still permeate in the mindset of believers in Christ today. Pride can come into our hearts and we may start to think of ourselves as above other people from other cultures and religions far away from God's love. We need to repent and ask God to forgive us. No one is outside of God's love and He sent Jesus to die on the cross for all of humanity. We have a tendency to segregate ourselves from other communities. We sometimes tolerate our differences instead of embracing them. Before Jesus came, Gentiles who converted to the God of Israel, were called proselyte and could not mix with the “holy people”. There was a wall in the courtyard of the temple that was built by Herod which would separate Jews from Gentiles when they came to worship. There was also a veil inside the temple that would separate the holy place from the holy of the holies where the arc of the covenant was kept. Only once a year on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would enter to intercede on behalf of the people. The Bible tells us that when Jesus died on the cross the veil was torn from top to bottom. A new covenant was established by the blood of Jesus, everyone can now have access to the presence of

God and it no longer requires an outward sign, a circumcision of the flesh but rather a circumcision in the heart. In His pact of love with us, he promised to always be faithful and also desires genuine love, faith and devotion from us. Andrea and I both have wedding rings, which is an external sign of the covenant of love we made on our wedding day. The one she wears has my name written in Arabic letters and the one I wear also has her name written in Arabic. However, the fact we are wearing the rings doesn't mean we are still devoted and in love with one other. I could still be wearing the ring but have my heart far away going after other women and committing adultery. This is just like what the people of Israel did, even though they had been chosen and had a sign on their flesh, they turned their backs on God and went on worshiping other gods. God is always interested in the heart of man and He desires a genuine love and it is not based on outward and external signs. The fact you have been born in a Christian home and in a Christian country doesn't mean you have a relationship with God. It is important that you open your heart to God and invite Jesus to be your Lord and Saviour. ***“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.”*** ***Romans 2:28-29*** The Gentiles were everyone else outside of the covenant and they were the majority of believers in Ephesus and Paul reminds them of their circumstances before they met Christ. ***“Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.”*** V.12

II – A New Humanity in Christ v13-15

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace,” In Christ they now have a new covenant and it is based on the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. The blood of Jesus has reconciled both Jew and Gentile with God and with one another. Jesus died for the sins of all humanity! Jewish believers no longer needed to offer sacrifice of animals and have their priests interceding on their behalf in the temple. They could now be in God's presence; 24/07, anywhere in the world because Jesus the Messiah had opened the way. Their sins had been forgiven and they could enjoy peace with God. Gentiles that were separated from Christ were brought near by the blood of Christ. They could now enjoy a close and intimate relationship with God. The Son, Jesus Christ reconciled us all with the Father. Jesus is our peace! Jews and Gentiles were made one in Christ! We can only have peace with others because we have peace with God. We can only love and embrace others, because we have been loved and embraced by God, our Father. We can only forgive because we have been forgiven! Reconciliation is only possible because of the cross.

III – Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven v 19-22

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Gentiles that were excluded from citizenship in Israel,

have now become members of the family of God. A new nation had been formed and the citizenship is available for everyone. People from every tribe, tongue and nation can be part of the Kingdom of God. Jesus is the Saviour for all! ***“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:26-29*** Those without hope and without God are now the temple where God dwells in with His presence through His Holy Spirit and their hearts were filled with hope. Filled with the assurance and peace that they belong to God and that their citizenship is in heaven! We are only here for a little while, compared to an eternity with God in His Kingdom. It doesn’t matter where you come from, if you are black or white and if you’re an immigrant, a refugee or an asylum seeker. God has prepared a home for you. Even though we are blessed by being a part of this free and prosperous nation, I would like to remind you all that our real citizenship is in heaven. As restrictions are being lifted slowly we are looking forward to meeting again in our church building. It is important for us to remember that church is not a building. The presence of God is there when we meet because His presence is in us, dwelling in our hearts.

Conclusion

God has a covenant of love with us and he wants to dwell in our hearts. May our devotion and love for Him increase more and more and may this be a sign that we belong to Him. We have been reconciled with God and one another by the blood of Jesus and we can now have peace with God and with one another. May our church be a diverse and multicultural body of people from every nation, language, and background. May we move beyond the concept of tolerance in our society and start to embrace one another in love and in unity.

Let’s pray...

Heavenly Father, I thank you for your constant presence reminding us that we belong to Jesus. Thank you because all the barriers that once separated us from you and from one another have been destroyed by the blood of Jesus. God, please search us and if there are still walls of prejudice, fear and suspicion in our hearts I pray that by the power of your Holy Spirit they will start trembling down. Lord I pray for Buckminster Road Baptist church and all other churches in our city, nation and around the world. I pray that they will continue grow in diversity and in unity. May the world know that we are your disciples because of the love we share with one another. Father, I ask you all these things in the name of Jesus, amen.

Intercessory Prayer by Kaiser Nbola

Mighty and everlasting father we want to thank you for the gift of life, family, love and we thank you for the gift of congregation. Father as we come to worship and praise your holy name, we commit this Sunday worship into your mighty hands that you may lead us. Help us to open our hearts and our minds to receive your word. Father we pray that as we look forward as a church we continue to listen to your voice on which direction you want to take us. Father open our hearts too so that we may receive your words with open hearts and gladly implement your instructions. Help us to use our hands, our feet and our body to serve you in whatever way we are able to. Empower us to do your work diligently father. We pray that you bless Claudio and his family to continue to lead us

here in Buckminster Road Baptist Church. Father you continue to inspire them more and more. Give them the strength and the wisdom to lead this church to be able to reach out to the community and especially those who seek to know you and that together we all will put our energies, our minds, and resources in bringing the things that you want us to do to make this world a better place. Father, help us as facing challenges of the current pandemic. Help us father to overcome the fear and the anxiety that we all face, that we may see the brighter side of all this and that you are a loving and caring father. We pray that you will keep us safe from the disease. Bless all those who are putting their minds, their skills and knowledge in developing the vaccine and all the treatments to be able to hold the spread of this virus. Help the people who are doing these wonderful jobs that they may do it with love. Father we hope and pray that this job may bring the desire and intended result of restoring and keeping people safe from contracting the virus. We pray for all the nurses in the UK and across the globe who are putting their lives on the front line caring for those who are affected. We pray for those who have lost their loved ones to the virus and other infections. Father continue to give these nurses and doctors the strength and expertise to deliver care to people and that they may do it with love. Father we pray for all those who have been affected one way or the other by the pandemic. We also pray for those who have passed away that they may also rest in perfect peace. Father we pray that you may continue to console the families who have been left behind and that have lost loved ones that you keep strengthening them and give them the courage to believe and that the best is yet to come. Father that we want to pray that as we look forward to open our church during Easter, that you would be able to help us to provide all the resources that we need to make the church a safer place for us as we look forward to coming back to worship as a people. We pray for all of our members and our elderly people that are shielding that you continue to keep them safe and grant them good health. We pray for our young ones in our church that even as they go back to school father that you continue to look after them. Help them to embrace you in a way they have never done before. That this time around as we look forward to coming back from the restrictions that this pandemic, that you would not only here at Buckminster Road Baptist Church but to all churches in the UK and across the globe that young people will begin to see the essence of coming back to you and trusting in you that you are the father who loves and cares for them. Help the youth/junior teachers who are trying to impart the knowledge unto the young people. Help them to be able to prepare lessons that are engaging and to deliver the message that will transform young people. Help Lord the members of the church to embrace your word and put them into practice. Father we want to commit this summer in your hands that the lockdown restrictions will give space to all the families who are looking forward to a wonderful summer where they can meet their loved ones again and gather together to talk about all the things that have been affecting them and what they have achieved and endured during this period. We pray that family and friends will be able to gather again to be able to unite in love and talk about not just all the things that affected them, but again the things that they have learned in this period of time watching our weekly YouTube services and reflecting on them. Taking the messages that our minister delivers that they may be able to sit together and ponder and rejoice about the things they have heard about the works and about the things you have done in the past and you are doing in the present. Father we just pray that when all this is over, humanity will remember and acknowledge that you are the father of all nations. We just pray father that the leaders who are working tirelessly that they would be able to come up with decisions. I understand father sometimes decisions are very difficult to make. Just give them the wisdom and knowledge to be able to come up with laws and regulations,

things that will not only bring an end to the pandemic, but also to give hope to the people, that leadership is not confused but is trustworthy. Father we pray for all the groups that sometimes use our church. Father we pray that when the doors are open and restrictions are lifted that these groups will continue to come back to the building to foster their own growth. But father even as they stay at home during this period, continue to keep them safe and healthy and give them hope that sooner than later the doors will open again for them to come back and continue to build their various communities. We just ask all these things through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Song 3 – Mighty to Save - Hillsong

<https://youtu.be/t5ghKwGEQRA> Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

Everyone needs compassion
A love that's never failing
Let mercy fall on me
Everyone needs forgiveness
The kindness of a Saviour
The hope of nations

*Saviour, He can move the mountains
My God is mighty to save
He is mighty to save
Forever author of Salvation
He rose and conquered the grave
Jesus conquered the grave*

So take me as you find me
All my fears and failures
And fill my life again
I give my life to follow
Everything I believe in
And now I surrender

Shine your light and let the whole world see
We're singing for the glory of the risen King, Jesus

Final Words and Announcements

We are going to meet again in our church building on Good Friday, 2nd of April for an early evening service, starting at 6:30pm. On Easter Sunday we are planning two identical services. The first service will start at 9:30am and the second will start at 11:00am. We are encouraging our church members to come for the early service at 9:30am as we're going to baptize our dear Brother Richard Tranter on the second service and we want to give priority to his family and friends who might want to come to see his baptism. Please send me a text or email so I can book a seat for you as we have the restriction on social distance and our capacity is only 30 people inside the building. On Sunday, 11th of April, 10:45 is my commissioning service and Dr. Nick Ashton from

the East Midlands Baptist Association will be visiting us and leading the service. Please let me know as soon as possible you are coming as we have 10 or more friends wanting to come and visit for this special event. We are planning to continue recording our services and it will be available for you to watch also on our YouTube channel and on our new website. There are zoom meetings for the adults and for the youth every Wednesday at 7:30pm. Sandy and Andrea are also meeting with the juniors at 7pm. Gifts and tithes can be sent directly to the church's bank account and the details are as follow: A D L Memorial Buckminster – Account Number: 13749406 Sort Code: 09-01-51

Let me finish by praying over you all this blessing

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.”

Have a blessed week!