



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)

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LORD'S DAY 17 DECEMBER 2006

God our Comfort and Strength (Isaiah 40:1-31)

Introduction

God has revealed Himself to us in His word recorded by the prophet Isaiah. There is only one true and living God and he cares for us and is still interested in our wellbeing. Israel had fallen away from God during Isaiah's time. One of the reasons behind this is that they had forgotten who God was and what he can do for them.

Many in our own time have become just as estranged from the true and living God. It is needful and important for believers to remember just who God is. We find the answers in His word, the Scriptures. The fortieth chapter of Isaiah is devoted to remembering God as our comfort and strength and we shall discuss it tonight.

A God That Forgives

In Isaiah 40:1,2, we note that God is holy, pure and righteous. And yet he is a gracious and merciful God. There must be payment made for our sins or we are lost. Jesus sacrificed Himself to atone for our sins. He became "the way" back to the Father (John 14:6). God forgives on His terms, not ours. To reject the gospel is to reject God's forgiveness. Man may try to reinvent a God who forgives through other means than faith in Christ, but in truth there is no other way (Acts 4:12; Acts 3:37,38). Repent and confess your sins and he will surely forgive us of all our iniquities.

A God That Came to dwell among men

We are to clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; and make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. (Isaiah 40:3; see vs. 3-8). God came personally and directly to our world to answer our deepest need. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was announced by the voice crying in the wilderness, "Behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world!" (John 1:29). It was about seven centuries after the prophet Isaiah had written these words that the voice of John announced the Lord's presence in the wilderness. The words of Jesus are those by which God speaks to us today (Hebrews 1:1-3). Isaiah placed great confidence in the everlasting word of the Lord and so should we. We noted "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, But the word of our God abideth forever." (Isaiah 40:8).

A God That Rewards

The Lord God will come with might, and His reward is with Him. Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, and gather the lambs, and carry them in His bosom; gently lead the nursing ewes. (Isaiah 40:10,11). This is good news and refreshing for the troubled souls of Isaiah's day. But it ought not to be any less refreshing for us as well, but that depends on the amount of faith we have. The Lord will come and His "recompense" or "reward" is with Him. He is not so unjust...

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as to ignore our efforts when we serve and honour him first (Hebrews 6:10). Isaiah uses the figure of a super-shepherd tending His lambs, even carrying them all with a strong, providing and protecting arm. Jesus refers to Himself as "the good shepherd" (John 10:11). And he laid down his life for his sheep that we may have hope and life forever more.

A God of Infinite Power and Wisdom

God who created the earth also weighed the mountains in a balance, and the hills in a pair of scales in a figurative sense (Isaiah 40:12; see vs. 12-17). God is the beginning of all wisdom, knowledge and power. He is the source of knowledge and of this whole universe. He can do that which is impossible for man to do, by saving us from sin and condemnation and hell (Matthew 19:24). This means that if we will truly place our trust in Him, then we can be confident and assured about the outcome of our faith - the salvation of our souls. We are in "good hands" when we place ourselves in God's care.

A Jealous God

To whom then will you liken God or with whom will you compare Him with? (Isaiah 40:18-20). The Lord will not accept second place in our lives. He is the Creator. He is not just another idol of wood or stone. He is not just another friend, or possession. He is not a hobby to pursue when we feel like it or a game to play when convenient. He is the living almighty Jehovah God that deserves our full commitment and devotion, and he is worthy of our praise worship and laud. And as Jesus said, "You cannot serve God and mammon." (Matthew 5:24), there is no compromises with other religious faiths.

A Creator God

"Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these heaven and the earth and the stars The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power Not one of them is missing." (Isaiah 40:26; see vs. 21-26). At a word God willed the galaxies into existence. At a word He created everything and the day will come when He will remove them because they will have performed their purpose (Psalm 19:1-3; Hebrews 1:10-12; 2 Peter 3:9-13, Heb 11:3). This God of such dynamic creative ability and power is also aware of every single event in His universe. Jesus said not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice and that we are of more value than sparrows (Matthew 10:29-31).

A God That Judges

Justice does not escape the notice of our God? (Isaiah 40:27). People seem to have an idea that God does not know or is not interested, or that perhaps we can explain our sins away. It's a false notion. God is aware, and will bring every act to judgment (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14). And one day he will right every wrong and men will be accountable to him for their actions and deeds.

A God That Strengthens

We are weak and feeble people and often impatient. There is more to life and speed and we are to learn to wait patiently upon the Lord and there is a sure reward for those who do that. Those who wait for the Lord will regain new strength; and they will mount up with wings like eagles, and not be weary. (Isaiah 40:31). There is no good reason to exchange God for any thing else, especially a false god of our own imagination. Our God will provide us with what we need to overcome sin and the world and gives us eternal victory through his might and power. That is something other gods cannot do. He deserves our full surrender and dedication so, let us adore and serve God with greater love and fervour in the new year knowing that He is an omniscient God who cares and is our great comfort and strength .

Testimony from Sis Hwan Jing

Dear fellow Bros and Sisters,

I'm sorry half of the people in the list might not have met me but I've sent it out to all. Some of you might have heard about my prayers for a part-time job and how specific it had to be i.e. only on Mon/Thurs/Fri, near enough to home and church, no need CRB checks, don't mind me starting only on the 2nd week of Jan and ending June, ideally related to my current profession (i.e. healthcare/ therapy), don't need lots of paperwork, and still allow me enough time to study and go to church.

Well, I got a job as a support worker for a middle aged lady living in Pimlico (1 direct bus from home). She's lovely and used to having a support worker from China who is quitting this Wednesday, doesn't mind me for only 6 months and doing without someone for 1 month. I'm just amazed at how perfect the arrangement is and how God has intervened through the agent to make it work. The agent's decision was based on the fact that it is very difficult to find someone over the Christmas period, and too expensive to advertise, hence he preferred to take me in based on my performance at a previous job interview (which I did not get).

Through this I've learned how specific God can be, and when I trust Him to work in my life, He can allow things to happen beyond my expectations. And the importance of prayer and fellowship!

Thank God for placing me in the midst of your fellowship and allowing me to grow!

Happy holidays! I'll be away in Singapore from 14 Dec till 9 Jan.

Hwan Jing

In Green Pastures Devotional Readings for Every Day of the Year

By J.R. Miller, D.D.

17 December 2006

MORNING

MATTHEW 6:5 “And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.”

THEY do not pray to God at all, and their aim is not to receive blessings in answer, but to have men think that they are devout. They have their reward—that is, they get what they pray for: men see them.

We need to guard against an expression of our religion for men's eyes, and not for God's. It were better if we gave our gifts without any thought of praise or commendation, simply for the sake of Christ, and for the helping of others.

We should train ourselves to do our good deeds without seeking praise. Florence Nightingale, having gone like an angel of mercy among the hospitals in Crimea, until her name was enshrined deep in every soldier's heart, asked to be excused from having her picture taken, as thousands begged her to do, that she might drop out and be forgotten, and that Christ alone might be remembered as the Author of the blessings which her hand had distributed in His name.

EVENING

REMEMBERING KINDNESSES

AT the time when help, deliverance, or favour comes to us, our hearts are very warm with grateful feeling. “We will never forget this kindness,” we say. But do we never forget it? We remember injuries done to us. We all know how hard it is to forget a wrong that another has inflicted upon us. Sometimes we say, with martyr-like air, “I forgive him, but I can never forget the injury.” Slightings and cutting words and unkindnesses and neglects—how well we remember these. But have we as good memories for favours, kindnesses, blessings? Ought we not to have? Shall we not train ourselves rather to forget the hurts we receive as the lake forgets the ploughing of the keel through its waters, and to remember with faithful gratitude every smallest kindness done to us?

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON
CHURCH THEME: STRIVING TO LIVE ABOVE OUR SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS
IN CHRIST (Ephesians 1:3)

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm.**

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
Morning	Today: 17/12/2006	Next Week: 24/12/2006	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. Also, a special welcome to Ang Choon Book & family, Angela & family and George Tan & family who attended our worship service last week.
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	Seetoh Yoong Chiang	
<i>Speaker:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Message:</i>	Pressing Toward the Mark	The Night of Angelic Praise	
<i>Text:</i>	Philippians 3:7-21	Luke 2:8-15	
<i>Organist:</i>	Yanning	Anthony	
Evening			
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jeff Pun	Jonathan Kim	NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
<i>Speaker:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evening Service: Westminster Larger Catechism (WLC) <i>Q156. Is the Word of God to be read by all?</i> <i>Q157. How is the Word of God to be read?</i> Do stay back and find out the answers from the Word of God.
<i>Message:</i>	Repentance, Faith, and use of the Word	Christmas Carol Service	
<i>Text:</i>	WLC Questions 156-157	Tbd	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Anthony	Anthony	
Other Duties			
	Today	Next Week	
<i>Ushers</i>	Jeff / Constance	Wah Soon/Rebecca	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Joyce	No Sunday School	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Maureen	Constance	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	YAF Group 2/Volunteers	YAF Group 1/Volunteers	
<i>Bible Study:</i>	Video Presentation	Video Presentation	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 22 Dec	7.00 pm	Young Adults Fellowship: No YAF Fellowship	
Sat 23 Dec	4.00 pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Spkr/C'man: Pr Mok	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
Offering: £336.10		Lunch: £33.83	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch Night Service (31 Dec): On 31 Dec, we will have a Watch Night Service in place of the evening worship service. This will commence at 6:00 pm. • Basic Bible Knowledge (BBK): The BBK classes will commence in Jan 07. For those who are seeking baptism and interested in church memberships, please see Pr Mok.

Home visitation to Bro. Chin Kiong's place at Ipswich on 8 Dec 06