

NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

44 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6NN

Charity No. 1060655

Tel: 020 7328 0869 (Manse)

Email: newlifeblondon@yahoo.co.uk

Website: www.newlifebpc.co.uk

Preacher & Church Administrator: Mok Chee Cheong 07921 929515

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

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LORD'S DAY 19 NOVEMBER 2006

The Unity of the Spirit

A Sabbath Afternoon Reflection by Ps Jeff O'Neil

Come my soul and meditate on this portion of God's word as given by brother Paul in his Ephesian letter in ch. 4, v. 3,—"*Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*"

The Apostle, in writing this epistle, is fully aware that the Church was comprised of different races, Jew and Gentile; different backgrounds; disparate personalities and states of grace, and that such racial temperaments could come into collision, so causing division and dissension. There are always different tastes, intellects and passions in the society of saints. He teaches the similitude of the body in order to describe the oneness and organism of the Church, that appears in v. 4, and he develops it in ch. 4, v. 16; ch. 5, v. 30; and in 1 Corinthians 12:12. His concern is that there be no dislocation within the body, no fragmentation of the membership.

Unfortunately, disruption amongst God's people has always been the bane of the Church down through the ages. The people of God seem to have a propensity to self-destruct. Generally, this is caused by an insistence of an individual, or party within the ranks, to try and force a particular emphasis. It might well be legitimate, but by pragmatically dogmatising without a concensus of agreement, division is caused. Instead of a bond of union, there are fights over a bone of contention.

John Owen could write, even in his day, "It is generally acknowledged that there is a great decay of love, a great want of peace and unity among professors of the Gospel in the world." This repeats itself from generation to generation, and from church to church. Notwithstanding, it is frequently warned against in Scripture, and the saints encouraged and commanded otherwise, as in the verse before me. True unity is a spiritual unity, and it is a unity of faith (v. 5), for there is one faith and one baptism. This is as a consequence of being united to one Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Unified in Him and by Him. Unified in the fundamental doctrines, and charitable in secondaries. Such unity arises from the love of God being shed abroad in our hearts.

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But when I look at this verse, it does not speak of a unity to be acquired, discovered or fabricated, but presupposes that unity already exists! Indeed, when someone is converted there is an immediate spiritual unity with Christ, and consequently integration and engrafting into the Body of Christ. Now this thought discovers the fallacy of the Ecumenical Movement, in that it organizes meetings in order to work toward unity: whereas true spiritual oneness already exists amongst those who have experienced salvation through Christ.

Paul then, is encouraging the Ephesian Christians to keep this unity. He writes, "Endeavour to keep," i.e. preserve what already is true. This word, 'endeavour' does not totally capture the import of his exhortation, for it can carry with it a possibility of failure. Rather it means, "Spare no effort," and carefully guard what is in being. It also means, to be promptly earnest and diligently hold fast. It has a sense of 'to labour,' which is an industry for every one of us without exception.

Now this unity is a unity of the Spirit, which can have a two-fold meaning. It can mean, 'the Holy Spirit,' who graces the life of every believer and must not be grieved. Or rather, it could mean, to keep a spiritual unity, having the same sentiments, desires and ambition, thus, being of one mind and one spirit. It is not solely a matter of having a uniform outward connection, or the same confession, but an inward like-mindedness, and Christ-likeness.

But such oneness is to be kept in the bond of peace, or translated, 'by the bond of peace.' A quietness of spirit, that engenders a spiritual calm between the members of the body. The word 'bond' here, means to 'tie together.' A bond of peace, that binds hearts together in Christian love. Without peace there is fractiousness, discord and contention, but a peaceful disposition creates an atmosphere of well-being between each other. Heart answering to heart in love. A oneness, that is an imitation of the environment of Heaven.

How then, to promote this climate of peace and unity? Well, verse 2 gives a collection of self-abnegating graces that are grounds for this beautiful plant to grow in. If we could outvie each other in these, what grace would reign, what love be experienced, and what peace would ensue, "With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love" (v. 2). Matthew Henry writes, "The more lowliness the more like-mindedness."

But when contention unmasks its ugly face, each party must realize that each has the One Lord, the One God and Father, the One Spirit, One Faith and One Baptism, One Hope and the One engrafting into the One Body. It is only then, upon the realization of this, experimentally and practically, that I can walk worthy of the vocation wherewith I am called.

Behold, how good a thing it is,
and how becoming well,
Together such as brethren are
In unity to dwell.

Funny Sayings

Funny how a \$100 "looks" so big when you take it to church, but so small when you take it to the mall.

Funny how long it takes to serve God for an hour, but how quickly a team plays 60 minutes of basketball.

Funny how long a couple of hours spent at church are, but how short they are when watching a movie.

Funny how we can't think of anything to say when we pray, but don't have difficulty thinking of things to talk about to a friend.

Funny how we get thrilled when a baseball game goes into extra innings, but we complain when a sermon is longer than the regular time.

Funny how hard it is to read a chapter in the bible, but how easy it is to read 100 pages of a best selling novel.

Funny how people want to get a front seat at any game or concert, but scramble to get a back seat at church services.

Funny how we need 2 or 3 weeks advance notice to fit a church event into our schedule, but can adjust our schedule for other events at the last moment.

Funny how hard it is for people to learn a simple gospel well enough to tell others, but how simple it is for the same people to understand and repeat gossip.

Funny how we believe what the newspaper say, but question what the Bible says.

Funny how everyone wants to go to heaven provided they do not have to believe, or think, or say, or do anything.

Funny how you can send a thousand jokes' through e-mail and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing.

FUNNY, ISN'T IT ? Are you laughing? Are you thinking?

Spread the Word and give thanks to the Lord For He is good!

Funny?.....

Sad.

In Green Pastures Devotional Readings for Every Day of the Year

By J.R. Miller, D.D.

19 November 2006

MORNING

LUKE 13:2 "And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?"

THERE is a mystery in suffering which no one can fathom or understand. In ancient times the belief was that troubles were punishment for wrongs committed. We cannot tell why there is so much pain in human life. We may be sure, however, that if we accept our trouble, it will leave a blessing in our lives.

There are many sufferers who are blessed above measure through their pain. I remember a woman who for fourteen years had not walked a step. She sat in her chair, unable to lift hand or foot. Every joint in her body was drawn, and she suffered excruciating pain continually. Yet, I never saw such patience, such uncomplaining quietness. Her face shone as if it had been transfigured by a holy light burning within. She was a benediction to her household. There poured out from her room an influence which softened all hearts. There is a blessed ministry of suffering whose influence we never can realise in this world.

EVENING


MISERY OF BORROWING TROUBLE

MANY people are always dreading coming troubles. They are well enough now, and well enough off, but they may get sick, or they may become poor, or some other trouble may befall them. A large part of human unhappiness is caused by needless forebodings—dreading ills that never happen. It is a miserable way to live, this looking out into the future and filling it with imaginary shapes of evil. No doubt there are real troubles lying concealed in the future for all of us, but let us not dread to go on with quiet faith, since over us the bough of God's eternal goodness bends.

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: 19/11/2006 | Next Week: 26/11/2006 | We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day and a special welcome to Matholauy Ichasake, Tim Pau and Niao Wei |
| <i>Chairman:</i> | Seetoh Yong Chiang | John Poh | |
| <i>Speaker:</i> | Pr Mok Chee Cheong | Pr Mok Chee Cheong | |
| <i>Message:</i> | Seeing Is Not Believing | The Appearance of Christ | |
| <i>Text:</i> | John 20:19-29 | John 20:30-21:25 | |
| <i>Organist:</i> | Yanning Ding | Anthony | NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS |
| Evening | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evening Service: Westminster Larger Catechism (WLC) Q.146. Which is the tenth commandment? Q.147. What are the duties required in the tenth commandment? Q.148. What are the sins forbidden in the tenth commandment? <p style="text-align: center;">Do stay back and find out the answers from the Word of God.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of Service: For those who are interested to help in the kitchen ministry, Pre-worship singing, musicians, or post lunch washing-up and Library, please see Jonathan/Mok. • Sat Prayer Meeting: We thank God for the recent increase in attendance and would like encourage more prayer warriors to come and join us. The meeting will be followed by fellowship dinner. • RPG for Jan – Mar 2007 is ready for your collection at the book table. Please help yourself to as many copies as your need. |
| <i>Chairman:</i> | Pr Mok Chee Cheong | Alvin Chow | |
| <i>Speaker:</i> | Pr Mok Chee Cheong | Pr Mok Chee Cheong | |
| <i>Message:</i> | The Tenth Commandment | Summary of the Decalogue | |
| <i>Text:</i> | WLC Questions 146-148 | WLC Questions 100-148 | |
| <i>Pianist:</i> | Anthony | Feng Qian | |
| Other Duties | | | |
| | Today | Next Week | |
| <i>Ushers</i> | Mok / Constance | Wah Soon / Sharon Chan | |
| <i>Sunday Sch:</i> | Carol Mok | Yanning | |
| <i>Lunch:</i> | Maureen | Maureen | |
| <i>Washing-up:</i> | YAF Group 1/Volunteers | Prema / Yetta | |
| <i>Bible Study:</i> | Video | Video | |
| Appointments of the Week | | | |
| Fri 9 Nov | 7.00 pm | Young Adults Fellowship: BS Leader: Anthony Poh | |
| Sat 10 Nov | 4.00 pm | Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Spkr/C'man: Pr Mok | |
| Last Week's Worship Service Collections | | | |
| Offering: £185.50 | YAF: £45.50 | Lunch: £37.00 | |
|  | | | |
| Student Outreach at LSE on 16 Nov 2006 | | | |