



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 30 JULY 2006

Dear Readers,

HOW IN THE WORLD DOES GOD LOVE THE WORLD?

One of the greatest outrages in the world, if not the greatest, is the fact that God loves the world. In order for God to love the world, He had to put the wrath due unto them upon Christ – that's unfair. The reverse is also true – the mercy He should've shown Christ, He gave unto man – this unfairness, also called 'mercy', exists because God loves the sinful world.

God Does Not Love All Things The Same Way

Now, when we talk about God's love, we need to be careful to distinguish how God loves; if not, we'll squeeze God into our understanding of how He should love. Naturally, God doesn't love all things – he hates certain things like sin. God also doesn't love all men equally – for we know that God has elected some because He loved these and not others. But we also know that God does show lovingkindness to this sinful world – He doesn't destroy it right away – He even allows sinners to hear the gospel – this is a sign of mercy.

Now, some people will look at this and say that God contradicts himself – on one hand He loves certain people and not others but on the other hand He loves all. It's a contradiction! But we need to understand that there are different aspects of God's love to the people of the world.

1. God's Mercy towards His Creation

The Bible speaks of God's providential love over all creation. The word "love" is not used, but the idea is there. God created everything, and He pronounced everything to be "good" (Gen 1) – He delights in all that He has made. Jesus describes God as taking care of His creatures – He provides them food and knows when they die (Matt 6).

John MacDuff describes this loving providence, *"Our Omnipotent God keeps watch over the lichen on the rock, and the lily on the mountain side. He tempers His wind to the fragile flower as it trembles on the lip of the Alpine glacier. He follows the timid bird to its cleft; feeds the young raven's brood; and notes the fall of the sparrow."*

Even though His creation is now corrupt, God still doesn't destroy it because He is kind towards it and merciful. If He wanted to, He could've destroyed everything right away, instead, He's long-suffering. The long-suffering that God has towards the world is termed...

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as lovingkindness by Calvin.

2. God's Electing Love towards His Chosen

The Bible also speaks of God's particular, effective, selecting love toward His elect. There's a love He sets on those He had chosen that He does not set on others. Deuteronomy 7:7-8 reveals that...

"The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

Now, some would be very upset at this, because it's saying that God is unfair – but God IS unfair – when we remind ourselves that no one is deserving of God's love but God's wrath, then it makes us less demanding that God should show this equal love to everyone. The Reformer John Flavel said it well, *"It may be you may think this is harsh and severe – that God should hold only some of His creatures under everlasting sufferings for sin. But when you have well considered, that the One against whom you sin is the infinite blessed God, and that sin is an infinite evil committed against Him; and when you consider how God dealt with the angels that fell, for one sin – you will alter your minds about it!"*

If we think that God must give equal opportunity to everyone to believe, then God must give equal riches and intelligence to all men. But He hasn't, and if He gives to one more than another, and if He saves one and not another, He is sovereign and has every moral right to do so considering how everyone deserves eternal suffering.

3. God's Conditional Love towards the Obedient

God's love is sometimes directed toward His people conditionally. Jude exhorts his readers to remain in God's love (Jude 21), and Jesus in John 15:9. God shows His love on His people if they obey. Parents love their children, but especially the obedient child.

John 3:16

So knowing that God doesn't love all equally or in the same way, let's take a look at John 3:16. What's important when understanding John 3:16 is the context. There are two lessons we can learn. The first is that God loves all races of people in the world – He doesn't prefer one group over another. The second is that God loves the world despite its sinfulness, enough to set into motion a plan of salvation.

God Loves All Races of People in the World

In John 3, Jesus spoke to a Pharisee. Nicodemus came to Jesus in the cover of night because in the previous chapter, Jesus made a lot of enemies among the Jews by clearing the temple of money changers. The Jews believed they were God's chosen people – their confidence was in that – and they thought that they could do no wrong

Jesus also upset the people when He told them that He would rebuild the temple in 3 days. Though Jesus spoke about the temple of His body, the people thought He spoke about the temple that took 46 years to build.

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To the Jews, the temple represented God's presence with His chosen people. When God threatened to destroy them as a people during Jeremiah's days, the people wouldn't believe it. In Jeremiah 7:3-4, we see God's word of warning to them to walk holy – *"Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these."* They couldn't believe that God would destroy His people – after all, His presence (the temple) was with them. And so they reassured themselves with the words, *"The temple of the LORD"* as if pointing indignantly to it.

And so Jesus' words caused much disturbance – it overturned their belief that favor belonged only to them as God's chosen. But Jesus told Nicodemus that salvation and favor were not by race but by being born again. Nicodemus couldn't get it – he still had the concept of racial and 'uterine' birth. That's why Christ used the illustration of the brazen serpent, that salvation was by being born of the Spirit and by repentance.

John 3:14-15 says, *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."* It isn't because you're a physical Jew that you received salvation and favor from God, but it's because you came to God in repentance having been born again by the Spirit.

Then Jesus went on to say that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Salvation was for the world – something they couldn't understand. And that's why in the following chapter, Jesus went to Samaria and He preached the gospel to the Samaritan woman, the Samaritans being a bastard religion to the Jews. And the greatest insult was that the Samaritans actually believed. John 4:40-41 says, *"So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his own word."*

The Jews hated the Samaritans, because they were considered impure. Jesus even used the parable of the good Samaritan to show that a person the Jews considered outside of God's kingdom, could do the works of God. When Jesus gave the Great Commission, he told the people to *"be witnesses unto both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

The love of God to the world is to every race – not to the Jews alone. It's to every income group, every educational level, every 'personality', and every language group. No race has a monopoly. That's the first lesson – God loves all races of people in the world – he doesn't prefer one over another.

God Loves this Sinful World

The second lesson is this – God loves the world despite its sinfulness, enough to set into motion a plan of salvation. But just how sinful is the world and why should God save it?

1 John 2:15-17 says, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."* The world is filled with much evil and darkness. This is how Jesus described the people of the world – John 3:19-20 says, *"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their..."*

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deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

The comparison between darkness and the world is seen throughout John – Jesus is a light that shines in the darkness but the darkness comprehended it not. He came into the world, but the world knew Him not. Jesus prayed for his disciples – that He was sending them into the world and the world hates them because they are not of the world as Christ...

Is not of the world. We see a contrast! The word "world" emphasizes wickedness. Hence, the word in John 3:16 doesn't refer to every single person – that's not the whole point of Jesus' theology – it's not the bigness that Jesus is referring to – but He's referring to the badness of it.

Jesus explained to Nicodemus that God loved this wicked and blind world that He sent Christ into this world to be that light of salvation. Horatius Bonar says, *"The world is blind, and knows it not; the world is poor, and thinks itself rich; the world is foolish, and thinks itself wise. It is not aware of the extent of its ruin, alienation, and depravity. It is not alive to its danger, its hopeless prospects; nor its doom."*

God didn't have to send Christ into the world. But the fact that He did shows that He was merciful, even to a world that hated Him. Let's not confuse the emphasis here, and make John 3:16 mean that God loves every single person in the world with the same love he has towards the elect. It simply means that He loves in spite of such wickedness.

Practical Application

So the two lessons are these – God's love is not restricted to one people group and God loves a sinful fallen world. So how does this apply to us? There are two applications.

Firstly, Christians must never be selective of who we reach out to. Ever see the make up of our church? Most people are of a certain income level, educational level, and racial group. No wonder so many people feel out of place! No wonder we find it difficult to minister to so many people! We are too comfortable in our homogenous state. We may witness to those in our offices and our colleagues, but why not to that lady who clears up after us in the food court? Although we are Christians, many of us are blatant racists – cracking racist jokes and allowing racial prejudices to affect our actions.

Secondly, we who believe in Christ, being rescued from this fallen world – why do we love it the way we do? Why do we still nurse the self in us? Why? Christ loved us, a sinful people, to rescue us – and He commands us to obey Him. When we have tiffs with one another, we don't know how to say 'forgive me,' but rather we try to forget our fights with time and paltry efforts of kindness; or insist that the offending party seeks forgiveness. God's love for the world is manifested in Him being a light in the world to rescue men from its darkness. But we make the love of God of none effect by loving the world not as He did, but by hiding our light under a bushel and by running to its vanity.

How in the world does God loving the world affect our love for it? Let us love it as He does.

*Preacher Mark Chen
Life BP Church, Singapore*

The Christian's Daily Remembrancer

by Ps. James Smith

30 July 2006

“He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord” 1 Corinthians 1:31

IT IS VAIN TO GLORY IN MAN. It is unlawful to glory in ourselves, our descent, our possessions, our connections, or doings; if we glory it must be only in the Lord. We must glory in Him as gracious and merciful, exercising lovingkindness and tender mercies in the earth; in what He is to His people – their God, their portion, and their Friend; in what He has done for us, has already given to us, and will without doubt bestow upon us. Let us glory in Christ crucified for our sins, raised for our justification, and ascended to heaven in order to plead our cause, and take possession of the kingdom in our names; in our relation to Him, interest in Him, and oneness with Him; this is our glory, that we are on with Christ, and one with the Father through Him; that we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; that all things are for our sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God. Beloved, let us glory in the Lord, in His free grace, eternal love, everlasting covenant, precious promises, splendid mansions, and mysteries yet to be revealed in us.

In Christ my full salvation stands,

In Him alone my glorying be;

Nothing shall pluck me from His hands,

From condemnation I am free;

His holiness my costly dress,

And my best robe His righteousness.



My God, with heavenly wisdom bless,

And teach me how Thyself to please:

Work in me both to will and do,

That I Thy glory may pursue.

In Green Pastures
Devotional Readings for Every Day of the
Year

By J.R. Miller, D.D.

30 July 2006

MORNING

CORINTHIANS 5:9 “Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.”

THE Christian should always be a worker for his Master. “We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us.” The mission of every one who believes and is saved is to be a winner of other souls. Our life itself should be a gospel of divine grace, so full of love that every one who comes under our influence, even casually, shall hear a silent message, pleading, “Be ye reconciled to God.”

The life must always be such an ambassador, first, before we speak a word. The most eloquent pleading will have no effect in winning others to Christ unless the love of Christ be first shown in our life.

“God loves you and I love you,” is the only evangel that will reach our hearts. You cannot kindle fire with ice. A selfish man cannot preach a gospel of love to others. The love of God, which we declare, must be interpreted in human love, which we show in our own eager interest in others.

We must bear the cross in our own life, or we need not talk about the cross on Calvary.

EVENING

WHAT WE TRY TO DO

CHRIST accepts what we try our best to do for Him, what we truly want to do, even though no results come from our efforts. This ought to be a comfort to many of us, for we do not do, any of us, indeed, what it is in our hearts to do. Our hands are awkward and unskillful, and fail to work out the beauty that our mind dreams. We go out with high resolve and loving thought to do some sweet service for our Lord, and come back with tears and sad regret over the failure or the marring of what we meant to do. But Christ knows what our hearts planned and what we wanted to do, and that is what He counts and sets down on His books.

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: 30/07/2006 | Next Week: 06/08/2006 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day morning. |
| <i>Chairman:</i> | Jonathan Kim | Alvin Chow | |
| <i>Speaker:</i> | Rev Lim Chee Boon | Rev Lim Chee Boon | |
| <i>Message:</i> | Are You Afraid To Believe? | Christ's Humility | |
| <i>Text:</i> | John 12:37-50 | John 13:1-20 | |
| <i>Organist:</i> | Yanning | Anthony | |
| Evening | | | |
| <i>Chairman:</i> | John Poh | Jeff Pun | |
| <i>Speaker:</i> | Rev Lim Chee Boon | Rev Lim Chee Boon | |
| <i>Message:</i> | The Scroll Opened | The Sight of God's Glory | |
| <i>Text:</i> | Revelation 5:1-14 | Exodus 16:1-12 | |
| <i>Pianist:</i> | Ming Yann | Anthony | |
| Other Duties | | | NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS |
| | Today | Next Week | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Worship Singspiration: This will take place 10 minutes before the worship service begins. Please purpose in your heart to the join the singspiration. • Continue to pray for those who are sick: Pray for Rev Lim, he has an appointment with the TIA clinic on 8 August. • Visa Application: Continue to pray for Mok for his missionary/minister's visa application. • Pray for journey mercies: For those who are travelling. Peter & Esther Chia (Switzerland), Jeff & Becky, Zane Hsu & Melody (Lille). Continue to pray for Mok & Carol, Amanda and Feng Qian who are in Singapore. • Maasai Mission: Pray for the settlement of the land issues. Also, pray for Sis Chan Pui Meng – for God's protection and blessing in her clinic ministry to the Maasai. |
| <i>Ushers</i> | John/Ming Yann | Jeff/Yoong Chiang | |
| <i>Sunday Sch:</i> | Esmeralda | Lyn | |
| <i>Lunch:</i> | Maureen Poh | Maureen Poh | |
| <i>Washing-up:</i> | YAF Group 1 | YAF Group 2 | |
| <i>Bible Study:</i> | DHW – Genesis 25 | DHW – Genesis 26 | |
| Appointments of the Week | | | |
| Wed 2 Aug | 7:30 pm | Mid Week Prayer Meeting: C'man: Rev Lim | |
| Fri 4 Aug | 7.00 pm | Young Adults Fellowship: Led by Rev Lim (Book of Daniel) | |
| Sat 5 Aug | 4.00 pm | Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Spkr/C'man: Jonathan | |
| Last Week's Worship Service Collections | | | |
| Offering: £202.55 | | Lunch: £35.18 | |
| Renovation Fund: £100.00 | | | |

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

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*Keep Thou my way, O Lord,  
 be Thou ever nigh;  
 Strong is Thy mighty arm,  
 weak and frail am I;  
 Then, my unchanging Friend,  
 on Thee, my hopes depend,  
 Till life's brief day shall end,  
 be Thou ever nigh.*