



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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From the PREACHER'S HEART

SO CLOSE AND YET SO FAR (3)

Introduction

The last time we have looked at "How far may a man go in the way to heaven and yet be but almost a Christians?" The answer to this question can be summarised into the following points.

1. He may have much knowledge.
2. He may have great gifts.
3. He have a high profession (profess to be a Christian).
4. He may go against sin.
5. He may desire grace.
6. He may tremble at the Word.
7. He may delight in the Word.
8. He may be a member of the church of Christ.
9. He may have great hopes of heaven.
10. He may be under great and visible changes. (like an angel like light).
11. He may be very zealous in the matters of religion.
12. He may be much in prayer.
13. He may suffer for Christ.
14. He may be called of God.
15. He may, in some sense, have the Spirit of God (eg. Cain, Balaam, Judas – have it only transiently, not abidingly).
16. He may have some kind of faith (not experiential saving faith).
17. He may love the people of God.
18. He may go far in obeying the commands of God.
19. He may be, in some sense, sanctified.
20. He may do all, as to external duties, that a true Christian can, and yet be no better than almost a Christian.

Oh, how we need to watch our hearts and examine it deeply in the light of God inerrant and infallible Word.

Why is it that many men go so far that they come to be almost Christians?

Having looked at 'how', we now want to consider the 'why'.

Continued on Page 2...

“It may be to answer the call of conscience. Though few men have grace, yet all men have conscience.” But conscience alone does not go far enough to bring a sinner to the cross. It is through grace alone that will drive a sinner to true repentance. Paul says, *“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him”* (Titus 1:16).

We must recognise that the natural conscience of men might be heighten exceedingly and much regulated but it is not at all renew by the Holy Spirit. “You read in Hebrews 6:4 of some who were once enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost. What work shall we call this? It could not be a saving work, a true change and conversion of state for, notwithstanding this enlightening, tasting, and partaking, they are said to fall away, verse 6. Had it been a true grace, they could never have fallen away from that. A believer may fall but he cannot fall away. He may fall foully but he cannot fall finally, for underneath are the everlasting arms.” A believer’s faith is guaranteed by the “prayer of Christ that our faith fail not” (Luke 22:32).

So the conscience of a natural man may be enlightened, he may have tasted the good word of God and be partakers of the Holy Spirit, so stirred is he, yet “he had not the Spirit renewing him for he was cast out himself.

“When Absalom set Joab’s corn fields on fire, then he ran to him though he refused before. So when God lets a sparks of hell, as it were, fall upon the sinner’s conscience in applying the terrors of the Word, this drive the sinner to a life of duties (duties only) which he never minded before. The ground of many a man’s engaging in religion is the trouble of his conscience, and the end of his continuing in religion is the quieting of conscience.”

Though our natural conscience speaks aloud and clear but its voice is never enough to bring us to a true consecrated relation with the Saviour, not until Christ embraced him and his conscience renew by the Spirit of God.

How is it that many are but almost Christians when they have gone thus far? What is the cause of this?

“First, it is for lack of right and sound conviction. If a man is not thoroughly convinced of sin and his heart truly broken, whatever his profession of godliness may be, yet he will be sure to miscarry. Every work of conviction is not a thorough work; there are convictions that are only natural and rational, but not from the powerful work of the Spirit of God.”

This is the kind of conviction you read of in Romans 2:14-15. The Gentiles mentioned in the text were those who did not have the law but still had their consciences bearing witness and accusing or excusing one another. “Though they did not have the light of Scripture, yet they had conviction from the light of nature. Now, by the help of the Gospel light, these convictions may be much improved and yet the heart not renewed.

The work of conviction by the Holy Spirit will carry it through to the final stage of...

Continued on Page 3...

conversion. It does not leave the sinner in a stage of just being hype up, feeling guilty out of fear of punishment. It does “not drive the soul from God but unto God.”

“Spiritual conviction is an essential part of a sound conversion. Conversion begins here. True conversion begins in convictions and true convictions end in conversion. Till the sinner is convinced of sin, he can never be converted from sin. Till sin is thoroughly revealed to us, interest in the blood of Christ cannot rightly be claimed by us. Nay, as long as sin is unseen, Christ will be unsought. “They that be whole need not the physician, but they that are sick.”

Secondly, it is the lack of a thorough work of grace in the heart of the sinner. “A man can never be a true Christian nor accepted of God”, though he may profess of his religious piety, without a work of grace in the heart. There must be the spirit and affections to accompany that profession, a sincerity of hearts in the performance and not just outward in form. “With sincerity, God accepts the least we do; without sincerity, God rejects the most we do or can do. Thousands perish and go to hell in the midst of all their performances and duties merely for lack of sincerity of heart to God.” There can be no sincerity of heart in any soul till there is a genuine “work of grace wrought there by the Spirit of God”.

What is the reason that many go no further in the profession of religion than to be almost Christians?

“It is because they deceive themselves in the truth of their own condition. They mistake their state and think it goof and safe when it is bad and dangerous”. They live under the guise of their Christian duties and outward performances without the slightest concern of the true state of their hearts.

It is more important to them that others see their outward form of godliness than what God sees in them. “There is nothing more common than for a man to think himself something when he is nothing, and so he deceives himself. Many a man thinks his sin pardoned when, alas, he is still in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity! Many a man thinks he has grace when he has none. This was the very temper of Laodicea: “Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked.” As poor as she was in grace, she thought she was rich. As miserable and naked as she was, yet she thought she had need of nothing.

Five grounds for this mistake

1. The desperate deceitfulness of the heart of every natural man.

We can never put our trust even in our heart for Jeremiah warns in Jeremiah 17:9 “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*” Let us not forget that the old nature is still in us and everyone who is born into this world and born in sin and therefore the heart of every natural man is “deceitful above all things.” “O but hear Solomon in this case: “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool. This is a good rule, “remember to distrust”; and it was Austin’s

Continued on Page 4...

maxim, who said, “that man that trusts his own heart shall be sure to find himself deceived at last.”

2. This mistake arises from the pride of man’s spirit.

“There is a proud heart in every natural man. There was much of this pride in Adam’s sin, and there is much of it in all Adam’s sons.” Is it not true that in each of us there is always this spirit of “I thank God that I am not as other men?” Each of us has an eye to see our own beauty but not our deformity; our parts but not our spots; our seeming righteousness but not our real wretchedness. “It must be a work of grace that must show a man the lack of grace. The haughty eye looks upward, but the humble eye looks downward; and, therefore, this is the believer’s motto: “The least of saints, the greatest sinners.”

3. Many deceive themselves with common grace instead of saving through that resemblance that is between them.

Many have taken common grace for saving because it is like saving grace, “as many may be under a supernatural work and yet fall short of a saving work. The first raises nature, the second only renews nature. Though every saving work of the Spirit is supernatural, yet every supernatural work of the Spirit is not saving; and hence many deceive their own souls by taking a supernatural work for a saving work.”

4. Many mistake a profession of religion for a work of conversion and outside reformation for a sure sign of inward regeneration.

If the outside of the cup is washed, is it then true that the inside is all clean? “This is the common rock that so many souls split upon to their eternal hazard, taking up a form of godliness but denying the power thereof” (2 Timothy 3:5).

5. Lack of a home application of the law of God to the heart and conscience to reveal to a man the true state and condition he is in.

There is a great difference between apprehension of our depraved condition without the Word of God and apprehension with the Word. The apostle Paul said, “I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” Paul had the law, for he was a Pharisee; they had the “form of knowledge, and of the truth of the law but it was without the power and efficacy of it upon his heart and conscience convincing, awakening, and discovering sin.

“When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died”. What this means is that “the Word of the Lord came with power upon his soul when the Spirit of God set it home effectually upon his conscience”, then his hope ceased and his confidence failed. “When God had awakened conscience by the Word, then I saw my sin alive and powerful and myself dead and miserable. So that this is the reason why men go no further in the profession of religion than to...

Continued on Page 5...

be almost Christians. It is because they mistake their state and think it is good when it is not.

Conclusion

It is Satan cunningness to persuade sinners to take up a form of godliness if he cannot keep sinners in their open profaneness. "If he cannot entice them on their lusts with a total neglect of heaven, then he entices them to such a profession as is sure to fall short of heaven. He will consent to the leaving of some sins as long as we keep the rest; to doing some duties as long as we neglect the rest. He cares not which way we come to hell, as long as he gets us there at last."

"Most professors are like iron between two equal loadstones. God draws and they propend towards God; and the world draws and they incline to the world. They are between both. They would not leave God for the world if they might not be engaged to leave the world for God. But, if they must part with all, with every lust, every darling, every beloved sin, why, then the spirit of Demas possesses them and God is forsaken by them."

"My Brethren, this is the great reason why many that are come to be almost Christians go no further. Some one beloved lust or other hinders them and, after long and high profession, parts them and Christ forever. They ran well, but here it is that they give out and, after all, fall short and perish to eternity."

*Yours warmly in Christ
Preacher Mok*

(*) Note: All quotations excluding Bible verses are taken from Matthew Mead's discourse on "The Almost Christian Discovered"

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## **Say It Now**

If you have a tender message,  
Or a loving word to say,  
Don't wait till you forget it,  
But whisper it today!  
The tender words unspoken,  
The letter never sent,  
The long-forgotten messages,  
The wealth of love unspent.  
For these some hearts are breaking,  
For these some loved ones wait,  
Then give them what they're needing,  
Before it is too late!

# WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

## CHURCH THEME: WALK IN THE NEWNESS OF LIFE (Romans 6:4)

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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Morning</b>                                                                                                                                                                 | <i>Today: 09/09/2007</i>                      | <i>Next Week: 16/09/2007</i>                             | <p>We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We specially like to welcome Meghan Tally to the morning worship service last Lord's Day.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Family Worship:</b> Those who would like to open up their homes for family worship for the months of September and October, please inform Pr Mok.</li> <li>• <b>Memory Verse for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter:</b> Those who would like to carry out the memory verse review, please see Pr Mok. Please note that the deadline is today, 9 Sep 2007.</li> <li>• <b>Areas of Service:</b> For those who are interested to help in the any of the church ministries, please see Pr Mok or Daniel.</li> <li>• <b>Parking Restrictions:</b> Please take note that between 13 Sep to 13 Oct (inclusive of Saturdays and Sundays), Brent Council will implement parking restrictions within zone "KQ". For those who are driving, please ensure that you are not parking within the restricted area.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">~~~~~</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Two eyes to look to God,<br/>Two ears to hear His Word,<br/>Two feet to serve the Lord,<br/>Two hands to wield His Sword,<br/>One heart to love His ways,<br/>One tongue to sing His praise—<br/>Take them, Saviour, let them be<br/>Always busy, serving Thee!</i></p> |
| <i>Chairman:</i>                                                                                                                                                               | Jonathan Kim                                  | John Poh                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Preacher:</i>                                                                                                                                                               | Pr Mok Chee Cheong                            | Pr Mok Chee Cheong                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Message:</i>                                                                                                                                                                | The Human Problem                             | The Promise of Salvation                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Text:</i>                                                                                                                                                                   | Romans 5:12                                   | Genesis 12:1-3                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Organist:</i>                                                                                                                                                               | Anthony                                       | Yanning                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Evening</b>                                                                                                                                                                 |                                               |                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Chairman:</i>                                                                                                                                                               | John Poh                                      | Jonathan Kim                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Preacher:</i>                                                                                                                                                               | Pr Mok Chee Cheong                            | Pr Mok Chee Cheong                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Message:</i>                                                                                                                                                                | The Last Adam                                 | The First Sacrifice                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Text:</i>                                                                                                                                                                   | Genesis 2-3;<br>1 Corinthians 15:22           | Genesis 3:21; 4:4                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Pianist:</i>                                                                                                                                                                | Yanning                                       | Anthony                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Other Duties                                                                                                                                                                   |                                               |                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>Today: 09/09/2007</i>                      | <i>Next Week: 16/09/2007</i>                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Ushers</i>                                                                                                                                                                  | Wah Soon/Evelyn                               | Chin Kiong/Sharon                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Sunday Sch:</i>                                                                                                                                                             | Yanning                                       | Carol                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Lunch:</i>                                                                                                                                                                  | Constance                                     | Maureen                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Washing-up:</i>                                                                                                                                                             | Volunteers                                    | Volunteers                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Bible Study:</i>                                                                                                                                                            | BBK                                           | BBK                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Appointments of the Week                                                                                                                                                       |                                               |                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Fri 14 Sep                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Young Adults Fellowship:</b><br>No meeting |                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Sat 15 Sep                                                                                                                                                                     | 4.00 pm                                       | <b>Prayer Meeting &amp; Bible Study:</b><br>Spkr: Pr Mok |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Last Week's Worship Service Collections                                                                                                                                        |                                               |                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Offering:</b> £590.30                                                                                                                                                       |                                               | <b>Book Sales:</b> £3.00                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                |                                               | <b>Lunch:</b> £27.00                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Memory Verse                                                                                                                                                                   |                                               |                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Previous Week (September 07 Wk 1): Luke 19:10</i>                                                                                                                           |                                               |                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.                                                                                                            |                                               |                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>This Week (September 07 Wk 2): Romans 5:18</i>                                                                                                                              |                                               |                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. |                                               |                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |