



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)

Vol. 11 No. 20

LORD'S DAY 13 MAY 2007

My dear readers,

The Kingdom of God

by George Whitefield, on September 13, 1741, in Glasgow, Scotland

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17).

As God shall enable me, first, I shall endeavour to explain what you are to understand by "the kingdom of God"; secondly, I shall endeavour to show that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink"; and thirdly, I shall show you what "the kingdom of God" positively is, namely, "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

We are to take the kingdom of God in the text as signifying that inward work of grace, that kingdom which the Lord Jesus Christ sets up in the hearts of all that are truly brought home to God; so that when the apostle tells us, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink," it is the same as though he had said, "My dear friends, do not quarrel about outward things; for the kingdom of God, or true and undefiled religion, heart and soul religion, is not meat and drink."

Why It Isn't "Meat and Drink"?

By "meat and drink," if we compare the text with the context, we are to understand no more than this: that the kingdom of God, or true religion, doth not consist in abstaining from a particular meat or drink. But I shall take the words in a more comprehensive sense, and shall endeavour to show you that the kingdom of God, or true and undefiled religion, doth not consist in any, no, not in all outward things, put them altogether.

Denominations. The kingdom of God, or true and undefiled religion, doth not consist in being of this or that particular sect or communion. Perhaps, my dear friends, were many of you asked what reason you can give for the hope that is in you, what title you have to call yourself Christians—perhaps you could say no more for yourselves than this, namely, that you belong to such a church, and worship God in the same way in which your fathers and mothers worshiped God before you.

There are certainly Christians among all sects and communions that have learned the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. I do not mean that there are Christians among Arians, Socinians, or those that deny the divinity of Jesus Christ—I am sure the devil is priest of such congregations as these—but I mean there are Christians among other sects that may differ from us in the outward worship of God. Therefore, my dear friends, learn to be more catholic, more unconfined in your notions; for if you place the kingdom of God merely in a sect, you place it in that in which it doth not consist.

Baptism. Again, as the kingdom of God doth not consist in being of this or that sect, so neither doth it consist in being baptized when you were young. Baptism is certainly an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ—it ought certainly to be administered; but then, my dear friends, take care that you do not make a Christ of your baptism, for there have been many baptized with water, as you were, who were never savingly baptized with the Holy Ghost.

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Orthodox doctrine. But further: as the kingdom of God and true religion doth not consist in being baptized, neither doth it consist in being orthodox in our notions, or being able to talk fluently of the Gospel. You may have orthodox heads, and yet you may have the devil in your hearts; you may have clear heads, you may be able to speak as it were, with the tongues of men and angels, the doctrines of the Gospel, but yet, at the same time, you may never have felt them upon your own souls.

And if you have never felt the power of them upon your hearts, your talk of Christ and free justification, and having rational convictions of these truths, will but increase your condemnation, and you will only go to hell with so much more solemnity. Take care, therefore, of resting in a form of knowledge—it is dangerous; if you do, you place the kingdom of God in meat and drink.

Morality. Again, some of you, perhaps, may think I have not reached you yet; therefore I go further, to show you that the kingdom of God doth not consist in a dry, lifeless morality. I do not cry down morality, but so far as this, that you do not rest in your morality, that you do not think you are Christians because you are not vicious—because you now and then do some good action.

Why, self-love will carry a man to perform all moral actions. A man, perhaps, will not get drunk for fear of making his head ache; a man may be honest because it would spoil his reputation to steal. And so a man who has not the love of God in his heart may do moral actions. But if you depend on morality, if you make a Christ of it, and go about it to establish a righteousness of your own, and think your morality will recommend you to God, my dear friends, you are building upon a rotten foundation, you will find yourselves mistaken, and that the kingdom of God is not in your hearts.

Piety. A great many of you may think that you go to church, and receive the sacrament once or twice a year (though I do think that is too seldom, by a great deal, to have it administered), you may read your Bibles, you may have family worship, you may say your prayers in your closets, and yet at the same time, my dear friends, you know nothing of the Lord Jesus Christ in your hearts. You may have a token, and receive the sacrament, and perhaps at the same time be eating and drinking your own damnation.

I speak from mine own experience. I know how much I was deceived with a form of godliness. I made conscience of fasting twice a week; I made conscience of praying nine times a day and received the sacrament every Sabbath day, and yet knew nothing of inward religion in my heart, till God was pleased to dart a ray of light into my soul, and show me I must be a new creature, or be damned for evermore. Being, therefore, so long deceived myself, I speak with more sympathy to you who are resting on a round of duties and model of performance.

Others, again, perhaps you may be saying, "Well, if a man may go thus far and not be a Christian, as I am sure he may, and a great deal further, you will be apt to cry out, 'Who, then, can be saved?' And O that I could hear you asking this question in earnest!

What the Kingdom of God Is?

I have told you what it [the kingdom of God] is not; I shall now proceed to show you what it is. It is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

First, the kingdom of God is "righteousness." By righteousness we are here to understand the complete, perfect, and all-sufficient righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, as including both his active and his passive obedience. My dear friends, we have no righteousness of our own; our best righteousness, take them altogether, are but so many filthy rags; we can only be accepted for the sake of the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. This righteousness must be imputed and made over to us, and applied to our hearts; and till we get this righteousness brought home to our souls, we are in a state of death and damnation—the wrath of God abideth in us.

You call yourselves Christians, and would count me uncharitable to call it in question; but I exhort you to let conscience speak out, do not bribe it any longer. Did you ever see yourselves as damned sinners? Did conviction ever fasten upon your hearts? And after you had been made to see your want of Christ, and made to hunger and thirst after righteousness, did you lay hold on Christ by faith? Did you ever close with Christ? Was Christ's righteousness ever put upon your naked souls? Was ever a feeling application of His righteousness made to your hearts? Was it, or was it not? If not, you are in a

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damnable state—you are out of Christ; for the apostle says here, "The kingdom of God is righteousness"; that is, righteousness of Christ applied and brought home to the heart.

It follows, "peace." "The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace." By peace I do not understand that false peace, or rather carnal security, into which so many are fallen. It is a peace of God's making, it is a peace of God's giving, it is a peace that the world can not give, it is a peace that can be felt, it is a peace that passeth human understanding—it is a peace that results from a sense of having Christ's righteousness brought home to the soul.

Did God ever bring a comfortable promise with power to your soul? And after you have been praying, and fearing that you would be damned, did you ever feel peace flow in like a river upon your soul? So that you could say, "Now I know that God is my friend, now I know that Jesus is my Savior, now I can call Him 'My Lord, and my God,' now I know that Christ hath not only died for others, but I know that Jesus hath died for me in particular." O my dear friends, it is impossible to tell you the comfort of this peace.

But there is something more—there is "joy in the Holy Ghost." I have often thought that if the apostle Paul were to come and preach now, he would be reckoned one of the greatest enthusiasts on earth. He talked of the Holy Ghost, of feeling the Holy Ghost; and so we must all feel it, all experience it, all receive it, or we can never see a holy God with comfort.

There are a great many, I believe, who think religion is a poor melancholy thing, and they are afraid to be Christians. But, my dear friends, there is no true joy till you can joy in God and Christ. I know wicked men and men of pleasure will have a little laughter; but what is it, but like the crackling of a few thorns under a pot—it makes a blaze and soon goes out.

I know what it is to take pleasure in sin; but I always found the smart that followed was ten thousand times more hurtful than any gratification I could receive. But they who joy in God have a joy that strangers intermeddle not with—it is a joy that no man can take from them; it amounts to a full assurance of faith that the soul is reconciled to God through Christ, that Jesus dwells in the heart; and when the soul reflects on itself, it magnifies the Lord, and rejoices in God its Savior. Thus we are told that "Zaccheus received Christ joyfully," [and] that "the eunuch went on his way rejoicing."

But, my friends, how few are there here who have been made partakers of this kingdom! Perhaps the kingdom of the devil, instead of the kingdom of God, is in your hearts. Here are many thousands of souls, that must shortly appear with me, a poor creature, in the general assembly of all mankind before God in judgment. God Almighty knows whether some of you may not drop down dead before you go out of the churchyard; and yet, perhaps most are strangers to the Lord Jesus Christ in their hearts.

Perhaps curiosity has brought you out to hear a poor babbler preach. But, my friends, I came to promote God's glory; and if the Lord should make use of such a worthless worm, such a wretched creature as I am, to do your precious souls good, nothing would rejoice me more than to hear that God makes the foolishness of preaching a means of making many believe.

I was long myself deceived with a form of godliness, and I know what it is to be a factor for the devil, to be led captive by the devil at his will, to have the kingdom of the devil in my heart; and I hope I can say, through free grace, I know what it is to have the kingdom of God erected in me. It is God's goodness that such a poor wretch as I am converted; though sometimes when I am speaking of God's goodness I am afraid he will strike me down dead.

Conclusion

Let me draw out my soul and heart to you, my dear friends, my dear guilty friends, poor bleeding souls, who must shortly take your last farewell, and fly into endless eternity. Methinks the very sight is awful (I could almost weep over you, as our Lord did over Jerusalem), to think in how short a time every soul of you must die—some of you to go to heaven, and others to go to the devil for evermore.

O, my dear friends, these are matters of eternal moment. I did not come to tickle your ears; if I had a mind to do so, I would play the orator; no, but I came, if God should be pleased, to touch your hearts. What shall I say to you? Open the door of your heart, that the King of glory, the blessed Jesus, may come in and erect his kingdom in your soul. Make room for Christ; the Lord Jesus desires to sup with

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you tonight; Christ is willing to come into any of your hearts that will be pleased to open and receive him.

My dear friends, I would preach with all my heart till midnight, to do you good, till I could preach no more. Oh, that this body might hold out to speak more for my dear Redeemer! Had I a thousand lives, had I a thousand tongues, they should be employed in inviting sinners to come to Jesus Christ! Come, then, let me prevail with some of you to come along with me. Come, poor, lost, undone sinner, come just as you are to Christ, and say, "If I be damned, I will perish at the feet of Jesus Christ, where never one perished yet." He will receive you with open arms; the dear Redeemer is willing to receive you all.

³⁷ All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.... ⁴⁴ No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.... ⁶⁵ ... No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father" (John 6:37, 44, 65)

Adapted from Pilgrim Covenant Church, Singapore

**Theme for Morning Worship Service: "Serving in the Kingdom of Christ"
Sabbath Day Programme from May – Jul 2007**

Date		Message	Scripture Text
MAY	13	What is the Kingdom of Christ?	Colossians 1:13
	20	Why Serve in the Kingdom of Christ?	Romans 12:1-8
	27	The Awesome Privilege of Serving in Christ's Kingdom	Hebrews 12:28, 29
JUN	03	The Requirements for Serving in Christ's Kingdom	Luke 9:57-62
	10	Do You Have the Heart of a Servant?	Matthew 20:20-28
	17	The Christian's Two Citizenships	Eph 2:19; Rom 13:7
	24	Motivations for Serving in Christ's Kingdom	2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10
JUL	01	Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God	Matthew 6:33
	08	Lord, What Wilt Thou Have Me to Do?	Acts 9:6
	15	Are You Equipped for Service in Christ's Kingdom?	1 Corinthians 12:4-11
	22	Fervent in Spirit, Serving the Lord	Romans 12:11
	29	The Challenges of Serving in Christ's Kingdom	Luke 10:1-9

**Theme for Evening Worship Service: "Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts"
Sabbath Day Programme from May – Jul 2007**

Date		Message	Scripture Text
MAY	13	Me A Gifted Child?	1 Corinthians 12:1-11
	20	They That Win Souls Are Wise	Ephesians 4:11
	27	I See What He Means	Romans 12:7
JUN	03	Faith That Moves Mountains	1 Corinthians 12:9
	10	Lover Of Strangers	Romans 12:13
	17	Identifying Truth From Error	1 Corinthians 12:10
	24	He Fires Me To Action	Romans 12:8
JUL	01	The Blessing Of Giving	Romans 12:8
	08	Can I Offer My Service?	1 Corinthians 12:28
	15	Who Is In-Charge?	1 Corinthians 12:28
	22	Know The State Of Your Flock	Ephesians 4:11
	29	A Church in Service	Philippians 2:14-18

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
Morning	Today: 13/05/2007	Next Week: 20/05/2007	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Speaker:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Message:</i>	What is the Kingdom of Christ?	Why Serve in the Kingdom of Christ?	NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
<i>Text:</i>	Colossians 1:13	Romans 12:1-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Worship: Those who would like to open their homes for the month of June, please see Pr Mok. • Prayer Requests: (1) Pray for the students that God will grant them health and wisdom as they prepare for their coming examinations. (2) Pray for Bro. Soon Hui who is currently hospitalised in Cambridge due to chest pain. (3) Pray for Elder Ford who is experiencing knee pain and could not join us for worship. • Tracting on the Lord's Day: Those who are interested, please gather at the main entrance at 10.30am. • School of Theology at Metropolitan Tabernacle: The theme for this year programme is "The Glory of Christ in the Working Church". It will be held from 3rd – 5th Jul 2007. For further details, please help yourself to the application form available at the Book Table. • Next Sunday Lunch: Those who are able to help in cooking Sunday lunch and washing dishes on 20th May 07, please see Pr.Mok. • New departure procedure after morning worship service: With effect from today, after the morning worship service, kindly adjourn to the Fellowship Hall through the church entrance and along the passage way. • Gentle Reminder: Please switch off your mobile phone or put it in silent mode during worship services. And no food and beverages are allowed in the sanctuary.
<i>Organist:</i>	Yanning	Anthony	
Evening			
<i>Chairman:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	John Poh	
<i>Speaker:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Message:</i>	Me, A Gifted Child?	They That Win Souls Are Wise	
<i>Text:</i>	1 Corinthians 12:1-11	Ephesians 4:11	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Joy	Feng Qian	
Other Duties			
	Today: 13/05/2007	Next Week: 20/05/2007	
<i>Ushers</i>	Chin Kiong/Jee	Wah Soon/Evelyn	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Joyce	Yanning	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Constance	Volunteers	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>Bible Study:</i>	BBK	BBK	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 18 May	7:30 pm	Young Adults Fellowship: Led by: Pr Mok	
Sat 19 May	4.00 pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Spkr: Pr Mok	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
Offering: £248.81		Lunch: £32.02	
<h2 style="margin: 0;"><u>Memory Verse</u></h2>			
<i>Previous Week (May 07 Wk 1): Psalm 19:9</i>			
The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.			
<i>This Week (May 07 Wk 2): Ephesians 5:5</i>			
For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.			

