



NEW LIFE

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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 24 JUNE 2007

My dear readers,

SAFETY, FULLNESS, AND SWEET REFRESHMENT, TO BE FOUND IN CHRIST

by Jonathan Edwards (1752), minimally edited from Works, 2.929–36

(Part 2 of 3, continuation from week dated 10 June 2007)

"And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." (Isaiah 32:2)

II. There is provision in Christ for the satisfaction and full contentment of the needy and thirsty soul

This is the sense of those words in the text, *"as rivers of water in a dry place,"* in a dry and parched wilderness, where there is a great want of water, and where travellers are ready to be destroyed with thirst, such as was that wilderness in which the children of Israel wandered. This comparison is used elsewhere in the Scriptures, Psalm 63:1, *"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is."* Psalm 143:6, *"I stretch forth my hands unto thee; my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land."* Those who travel in such a land, who wander in such a wilderness, are in extreme need of water. They are ready to perish for the want of it, and thus they have a great thirst and longing for it.

It is said that Christ is a river of water, because there is such a fullness in Him, so plentiful a provision for the satisfaction of the needy and longing soul. When one is extremely thirsty, though it is not a small draught of water will satisfy him, yet when he comes to a river, he finds a fullness, there he may drink full draughts. Christ is like a river, in that He has a sufficiency not only for one thirsty soul, but by supplying him the fountain is not lessened. There is not the less afforded to those who come afterwards. A thirsty man does not sensibly lessen a river by quenching his thirst.

Christ is like a river in another respect. A river is continually flowing, there are fresh supplies of water coming from the fountain head continually, so that a man may live by it, and be supplied with water all his life. So Christ is an ever-flowing fountain. He is continually supplying His people, and the fountain is not spent. They who live upon Christ, may have fresh supplies from Him to all eternity. They may have an increase of blessedness that is new, and new still, and which never will come to an end.

In enlarging this second proposition, let us consider:

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Man's Natural Craving for Happiness

First, what is it that the soul of every man naturally and necessarily craves?

(1) The soul of every man necessarily craves happiness. This is a universal appetite of human nature that is alike in the good and the bad. It is as universal as the very essence of the soul, because it necessarily and immediately flows from that essence. It is not only natural to all mankind, but to the angels. It is universal among all reasonable, intelligent beings, in heaven, earth, or hell, because it flows necessarily from an intelligent nature. There is no rational being, nor can there be any, without a love and desire of happiness. It is impossible that there should be any creature made that should love misery, or not love happiness, since it implies a manifest contradiction. For the very notion of misery is to be in a state that nature abhors, and the notion of happiness is to be in such a state as is most agreeable to nature.

Therefore, this craving of happiness must be insuperable, and what never can be changed. It never can be overcome, or in any way abated. Young and old love happiness alike, and good and bad, wise and unwise, though there is a great variety as to men's ideas of happiness. Some think it is to be found in one thing, and some in another, yet as to the desire of happiness in general, there is no variety. There are particular appetites that may be restrained, and kept under, and conquered, but this general appetite for happiness never can be.

(2) The soul of every man craves a happiness that is equal to the capacity of his nature. The soul of man is like a vessel: the capacity of the soul is as the largeness or contents of the vessel. And therefore, if man has much pleasure and happiness, yet if the vessel is not full, the craving will not cease. Every creature is restless till it enjoys what is equal to the capacity of its nature. Thus we may observe in the brutes: when they have that which is suitable to their nature, and proportional to their capacity, they are contented. Man is of such a nature that he is capable of an exceedingly great degree of happiness. He is made of a vastly higher nature than the brutes, and therefore he must have vastly higher happiness to satisfy. The pleasures of the outward senses, which content the beasts, will not content man. He has other faculties of a higher nature that stand in need of something to fill them. If the sense be satiated, yet if the faculties of the soul are not filled, man will be in a craving restless state.

It is more especially by reason of the faculty of understanding that the soul is capable of so great a happiness, and desires so much. The understanding is an exceedingly extensive faculty. It extends itself beyond the limits of earth, beyond the limits of the creation. As we are capable of understanding immensely more than we do understand, who can tell how far the understanding of men is capable of stretching itself? And as the understanding enlarges, the desire will enlarge with it. It must therefore be an incomprehensible object that must satisfy the soul. It will never be contented with that, and that only, to which it can see an end. It will never be satisfied with that happiness to which it can find a bottom.

A man may seem to take contentment for a little while in a finite object, but after he has had a little experience, he finds that he wants something besides. This is very apparent from the experience of this restless craving world. Everyone is inquiring, "*Who will shew us any good?*" (Ps 4:6).

Man's Want of Happiness

Second, men in their fallen state are in very great want of this happiness. They were...

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once in the enjoyment of it, but mankind are sunk to a very low estate. We are naturally poor, destitute creatures. We came naked into the world, and our souls as well as our bodies are in a wretched, miserable condition. We are so far from having food to eat suitable to our nature, that we are greedy after the husks which the swine do eat.

The poverty of man in a natural condition, appears in his discontented, craving spirit. It shows that the soul is very empty, when like the horse-leech, it cries, *“Give, give, and saith not, It is enough.”* We are naturally like the prodigal, for we once were rich, but we departed from our father’s house, and have squandered away our wealth, and are become poor, hungry, famishing wretches (Lk 15:11ff.).

Men in a natural condition may find something to gratify their senses, but there is nothing to feed the soul. That more noble and more essential part perishes for lack of food. They may fare sumptuously every day, and they may pamper their bodies, but the soul cannot be fed from a sumptuous table. They may drink wine in bowls, yet the spiritual part is not refreshed. The superior faculties want to be supplied as well as the inferior. True poverty and true misery consist in the want of those things of which our spiritual part stands in need.

Man’s Natural Blindness to his Real Needs

Third, those sinners who are thoroughly awakened, are sensible of their great want. Multitudes of men are not sensible of their miserable, needy condition. There are many who are thus poor, and think themselves rich, and increased in goods. Indeed there are no natural men that have true contentment. They are all restless, and crying, *“Who will shew us any good?”* (Ps 4:6). But multitudes are not sensible how exceedingly necessitous is their condition. But the thoroughly awakened soul sees that he is very far from true happiness, that those things which he possesses will never make him happy, and that for all his outward possessions he is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. He becomes sensible of the short continuance and uncertainty of those things, and their insufficiency to satisfy a troubled conscience. He wants something else to give him peace and ease. If you would tell him that he might have a kingdom, it would not quiet him. He desires to have his sins pardoned, and to be at peace with his Judge. He is poor, and he becomes a beggar. He comes and cries for help. He does not thirst because he as yet sees where true happiness is to be found, but because he sees that he has it not, and cannot find it. He is without comfort, and does not know where to find it, but he longs for it. O, what would he not give, if he could find some satisfying peace and comfort!

Such are those hungry, thirsty souls that Christ so often invites to come to Him, *“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness”* (Isa 55:1–2). *“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.... And [he] that is athirst... let him [come and] take [of] the water of life freely”* (Jn 7:37; Rev 22:17).

Contentment may be found in Christ alone

Fourth, there is in Christ Jesus provision for the full satisfaction and contentment of such as these.

(1) The excellency of Christ is such, that the discovery of it is exceedingly contenting and satisfying to the soul. The inquiry of the soul is after that which is most excellent. The...

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carnal soul imagines that earthly things are excellent. One thinks riches most excellent, another has the highest esteem of honour, and to another carnal pleasure appears the most excellent; but the soul cannot find contentment in any of these things, because it soon finds an end to their excellency.

Worldly men imagine that there is true excellency and true happiness in those things which they are pursuing. They think that if they could but obtain them, they should be happy. When they obtain them and cannot find happiness, they look for happiness in something else, and are still upon the pursuit.

But Christ Jesus has true excellency, and so great excellency, that when they come to see it they look no further, but the mind rests there. It sees a transcendent glory and an ineffable sweetness in Him. It sees that till now it has been pursuing shadows, but that now it has found the substance. [It sees] that before it had been seeking happiness in the stream, but that now it has found the ocean. The excellency of Christ is an object adequate to the natural cravings of the soul, and is sufficient to fill the capacity. It is an infinite excellency, such an one as the mind desires, in which it can find no bounds. The more the mind is used to it, the more excellent it appears. Every new discovery makes this beauty appear more ravishing, and the mind sees no end. Here is room enough for the mind to go deeper and deeper, and never come to the bottom. The soul is exceedingly ravished when it first looks on this beauty, and it is never weary of it. The mind never has any satiety, but Christ's excellency is always fresh and new, and tends as much to delight, after it has seen a thousand or ten thousand years, as when it was seen the first moment. The excellency of Christ is an object suited to the superior faculties of man. It is suited to entertain the faculty of reason and understanding, and there is nothing so worthy about which the understanding can be employed as this excellency. No other object is so great, noble, and exalted.

This excellency of Jesus Christ is the suitable food of the rational soul. The soul that comes to Christ, feeds upon this, and lives upon it. It is that bread which came down from heaven, of which he that eats shall not die. It is angels' food (Ps 78:25), and it is that wine and milk that is given without money, and without price. This is that fatness in which the believing soul delights itself. Here the longing soul may be satisfied, and the hungry soul may be filled with goodness. The delight and contentment that is to be found here, passeth understanding, and is unspeakable and full of glory. It is impossible for those who have tasted of this fountain, and know the sweetness of it, ever to forsake it. The soul has found the river of water of life, and it desires no other drink. It has found the tree of life, and it desires no other fruit.

(2) The manifestation of the love of Christ gives the soul abundant contentment. This love of Christ is exceeding sweet and satisfying. It is better than life, because it is the love of a person of such dignity and excellency. The sweetness of His love depends very much upon the greatness of His excellency: so much the more lovely the person, so much the more desirable is His love. How sweet must the love of that person be, who is the eternal Son of God, who is of equal dignity with the Father! How great a happiness must it be to be the object of the love of Him who is the Creator of the world, and by whom all things consist, and who is exalted at God's right hand, and made head over principalities and powers in heavenly places, who has all things put under His feet, and is King of kings and Lord of lords, and is the brightness of the Father's glory! Surely to be beloved by Him is enough to satisfy the soul of a worm of the dust.

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This love of Christ is also exceedingly sweet and satisfying from the greatness of it. It is a dying love, such love as never was before seen, and such as no other can parallel. There have been instances of very great love between one earthly friend and another: there was a surpassing love between David and Jonathan. But there never was any such love as Christ has towards believers. The satisfying nature of this love arises also from the sweet fruits of it. Those precious benefits that Christ bestows upon His people, and those precious promises which He has given them are the fruit of this love. Joy and hope are the constant streams that flow from this fountain, from the love of Christ.

(3) There is provision for the satisfaction and contentment of the thirsty longing soul in Christ, as He is the way to the Father, not only from the fullness of excellency and grace which He has in His own person, but as by Him we may come to God, may be reconciled to Him, and may be made happy in His favour and love.

The poverty and want of the soul in its natural state consist in its being separated from God, for God is the riches and the happiness of the creature. But we naturally are alienated from God, and God is alienated from us: our Maker is not at peace with us. But in Christ there is a way for a free communication between God and us, for us to come to God, and for God to communicate Himself to us by His Spirit. *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (Jn 14:6). *“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God”* (Eph 2:13, 18–19).

Christ, by being thus the way to the Father, is the way to true happiness and contentment. *“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture”* (Jn 10:9).

Conclusion (Part 2)

Hence I would take occasion to invite needy, thirsty souls to come to Jesus. *“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink”* (Jn 7:37). You that have not yet come to Christ, are in a poor, necessitous condition; you are in a parched wilderness, in a dry and thirsty land. And if you are thoroughly awakened, you are sensible that you are in distress and ready to faint for want of something to satisfy your souls. Come to Him who is *“as rivers of water in a dry place.”* There are plenty and fullness in Him. He is like a river that is always flowing, you may live by it forever, and never be in want. Come to Him who has such excellency as is sufficient to give full contentment to your soul, who is a person of transcendent glory, and ineffable beauty, where you may entertain the view of your soul forever without weariness, and without being cloyed. Accept of the offered love of Him who is the only begotten Son of God, and His elect, in whom His soul delights (cf. Isa 55:2). Through Christ, come to God the Father, from whom you have departed by sin. He is the way, the truth, and the life. He is the door, by which if any man enters he shall be saved.

*Adapted from Pilgrim Covenant Church, Singapore
(to be concluded next week)*

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: 24/06/2007	Next Week: 01/07/2007	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	John Poh	Jonathan Kim	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	<h3 style="text-align: center;">NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Worship will be held on 27 June (Wed) at the home of Sis Yetta at 7pm. For arrangements, please see Pr Mok. • Prayer Requests: (1) Pray for students who are waiting for their examinations. (2) Pray for those suffering physical ailments: Elder Ford (knee pains), Barbara Tibby (early stages of Alzheimer), Susan Teoh (abdominal pain – awaiting scan results). • Daily Devotion Materials: For the next quarter (July-Sept) is now available for collection. This daily devotion "Our Daily Walk" is based on the work of F. B. Meyer. Pick up one from the book table. • Those serving on the Lord's Day: Please gather behind the pulpit area at 10.30am for prayer. • Gentle Reminder: Please switch off your mobile phone or put it in silent mode during worship services. To keep the sanctity of worship, please refrain from bring food and beverages into the sanctuary. • 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.
<i>Message:</i>	The Awesome Privilege of Serving in Christ's Kingdom	The Requirements for Serving in Christ's Kingdom	
<i>Text:</i>	Hebrews 12:28, 29	Luke 9:57-62	
<i>Organist:</i>	Yanning	Anthony	
Evening			
<i>Chairman:</i>	Seetoh Yoong Chiang	Daniel Poh	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Message:</i>	I See What He Means	Faith That Moves Mountains	
<i>Text:</i>	Romans 12:7	1 Corinthians 12:9	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Joy	Feng Qian	
Other Duties			
	Today: 24/06/2007	Next Week: 01/07/2007	
<i>Ushers</i>	Jee/Evelyn	Wah Soon/Joyce	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Carol	Joyce	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Magdalene	Constance	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>Bible Study:</i>	BBK	BBK / DHW	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 29 Jun	7:30 pm	Young Adults Fellowship: Led by: Pr Mok	
Sat 30 Jun	4.00 pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Spkr: Seetoh Yoong Chiang	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
Offering: £582.65		Lunch: No Collection	
Memory Verse			
<i>Previous Week (June 07 Wk 3): Ecclesiastes 7:1</i>			
A good name <i>is</i> better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.			
<i>This Week (June 07 Wk 4): Hebrews 12:28 - 29</i>			
28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:			
29 For our God <i>is</i> a consuming fire.			