



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

Vol. 11 No. 34

LORD'S DAY 26 AUGUST 2007

7 PRACTICAL PRECEPTS FOR THE BELIEVERS' PROPER CONCERN

Psalm 37

Introduction

The Psalms have been a balm of Gilead and a great spiritual resource of comfort, solace and divine consolation. This particular Psalm is an excellent useful didactic sermon; it is not only for our devotion, but also for our conduct. It is "Maschil-a teaching Psalm". It is an exposition of some of the hardest chapters in the book of Providence, the advancement of the wicked and the difficulties of the righteous, and an exhortation to conduct ourselves as becoming of our calling. The work of the prophets (and David to some extent as well) was to expound the law to the people. Now the law of Moses had promised temporal blessings to the obedient, and denounced temporal miseries against the disobedient, which principally referred to the people of God and the unregenerate respectively. In this Psalm, David **forbade us to fret at the prosperity of the wicked in their wicked ways, and he gave good reasons why we should not fret or be overly anxious at them.**

This Psalm was written by King David as an older man, as it says in verse 25. He had collected a lot of wisdom over his years as a shepherd and as a king and he was sharing some here in this Psalm. It follows on from where Psalm 36 leaves off which contrasts the wicked and the righteous. One will find themes about the wicked prospering and how we should react to them and themes about trusting and depending on God through everything.

Many today are often deeply anxious and worrying more about many things from health to work, studies, and the family, our children and even the ministry. We live in a fretful age as properly diagnosed in Psalm 37. The Psalm opens with these words: "*Fret not thyself*" is absolutely relevant there that we need to hear today. Tonight is a pertinent study for us all as we need to learn the biblical secret to overcome undue anxious care and concern over the wicked. Consider 7 practical precepts that will assist us in this matter.

Have the right role models (verses 1, 2)

Verses 1 and 2 bring out key messages that run right throughout this Psalm: "*Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.*" David noticed that there were arrogant and self righteous people who seemed to rebel against God and His servants, who had no respect for the preaching of the law, for the scriptures or for...

Continued on Page 2...

the temple worship and yet these very people seemed to live prosperous and successful lives. The "bad" people seemed to be having a good time.

David's wise advice here is "do not be envious of those who do wrong" (v.2). They may be successful for a while but it will not last. Like grass, they might grow and multiply while the summer is here, but when the winter arrives, they will soon dry up and disappear. Do not envy those who are self-righteous and have evil designs although they may be doing well for this is only in the short run.

If we are going to model after or look up to some people, then these are the people to look up to, says David: read verse 37, "... *behold the upright*", i.e. those who follow God's ways. The Psalmist is saying, choose people who fear God and of sound character as the ones you should follow, as your role models, and emulate their edifying examples.

We need to take our eyes off those who are not living the way God wants them to. There are many bad role models in the newspapers (i.e. celebrities, actresses, etc), on the football pitches or on the TV or youtube just about every day. You might have some bad role models in your workplace, school, camp, or even in your church, family or friends. And they may be successful at least by worldly definition. They may seem to prosper and they seem to have it all and we seem to struggle. David advised us to take our eyes off them, or you might start behaving like them, focus on the things of God instead! They may be proud, arrogant and self righteous and successful now, but they are not pleasing in the eyes of God. As it says in verse 10, "*For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.*" It is only temporary and remember, they have not got the approval of God, Rather be humble and be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him, do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked and depraved schemes.

Christians should also choose the right role models and emulate their God honouring qualities and personal godliness. Look up to and respect God honouring and Christ-centred Christians who demonstrates the fruit of the Spirit in meekness, temperance, longsuffering, faith, gentleness, goodness, peace, love, and joy (Galatians 5:22, 23). A faithful believer will love Christ and the gospel, His word and work, and is faithful and fervent for God is a good model for us. How can one be more faithful and fruitful for the Lord? How can one live out a more effective and joyful life for Christ as a Christian witness for Him? Consider the spiritually meek, blameless, observe the upright, and mimic or follow them instead (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Trust in the Lord and do good (verse 3)

The redeemed are encouraged to fully trust the Lord and do our part as well. That God will direct and dispose of our actions and affairs so as may be most for His glory when we trust in him (Psalm 37:23): "*The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord*". By his grace and Holy Spirit he directs the thoughts, affections, and designs of good men. By his providence he overrules the events that concern them, so as to make their way plain before them, both what they should do and what they may expect. God orders the steps of a good man; not only his way in general, by his sovereign will and guidance, but his particular steps as well. He does not always show him his way at a long distance, but leads him step by step, as children are led, and so keeps him in a continual dependence upon his guidance; and this, (1) Because "*he delighteth in his way*", and is well pleased with the paths of righteousness wherein he walks. "*For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous*" (Psalm 1:6), knows it with favour, and therefore directs it. (2) That he may...

Continued on Page 3...

delight in his way. Because God orders his way according to his own will, therefore he delights in it; for, as he loves his own image upon us, so he is well pleased with what we do under his guidance. *"Depart from evil, and do good"*. Cease to do evil and abhor it; learn to do well and cleave to it; this is true religion. **We must abound in godliness and with our tongues and demeanour must glorify God and edify others. It is part of the character of a righteous man** (Psalm 37:30) that his mouth *"speaketh wisdom"*; not only he speaks wisely, but he speaks wisdom, like Solomon himself, for the instruction of those about him.

Delight yourself in the Lord (verse 4)

David says, in this well-known verse, *"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."* (v.4). That delight really comes through when you know and respect a person well. And it is the same way with our relationship with God. **To delight ourselves in Him, we need to spend time in His presence, in prayer and the meditation of His word on a regular basis.** We need to get deeper and be more intimate in our relationship with God. It is only this way that His wonderful character, His phenomenal love, His great mercy, His amazing faithfulness, will overwhelm us as we get to know Him better. When we do all these, we will delight ourselves in Him and His holy precepts, presence and desires are ours as well.

When one delight oneself in the Lord, then one's desires start aligning themselves with His desires. Gradually, the things that were once important to you no longer are, as you put God first and love His kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). We need to have Christ honouring eternal priorities (Colossians 3:1, 2). Your desires become His desires, and He will give you the desires of your heart, He will give you them when you ask Him, because your priorities have altered to be aligned to heaven's wishes. That is what it means when it says, *"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."*

Totally commit your ways to Him (verse 5)

Verses 5 and 6 say, *"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday."* We are asked to fully trust in Him and to commit our ways to Him in daily fervent prayer and seek His will always. We must make God our guide, and submit in every thing to His guidance and disposal; and then all our affairs, even those that seem most intricate and perplexing, shall be changed to His satisfaction and our joy, Psalms 37:5, 6. The duty is that we are to do it aright, and it will make us effective and meaningful instruments for Christ: *"Commit thy way unto the LORD"*; roll thy way upon the Lord, Proverbs 16:3, Psalm 55:22 *"Cast thy burden upon the LORD"*, the burden of thy care (1 Peter 5:7). "By prayer, fervently spread your case and all your cares before the Lord and trust in Him to bring it to pass, according to His will and time." We must do our duty faithfully and then leave the rest with God. *"He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday."* (Psalms 37:6).

Rest in the Lord and wait patiently (verse 7)

This is an impatient and reckless generation. **Patience carries with it a lot of "WAIT"**. We are told in v. 34 *"Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it."* In Isaiah 40:31, we are reminded that *"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall..."*

Continued on Page 4...

mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Psalm 27:14 counsels us to *"Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD."* We are not to fret because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. For we are to trust and wait upon the justice of God with full confidence.

Often we are apt to disquiet ourselves with needless fruitless discontent and distrust that it is so unnecessary. Let us compose ourselves by believing in God: *"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him"* (Psalm 37:7), that is, be well reconciled to all He does and acquiesce in it, for that is best because it is what God has appointed; and be well satisfied that He will still make all to work for good to us, though we know not how or which way. *Be silent to the Lord* (so the word is), not with a sullen, but a submissive silence. **There are generally 4 answers to prayer generally, and they are: Direct, Different, Delayed and Denied.** A patient bearing of what is laid upon us, with a patient expectation of what is further appointed for us, is as much our interest as it is our duty, for there is a great deal of reason for it. *"Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass"* who, though he is a bad man, yet thrives and grows rich and great in the world; and brings wicked devices to pass against those that are virtuous and good. If your heart is affected adversely, remember to *"cease from anger"* (Psalms 37:8) and check the first stirrings of discontent and envy, strife and hatred, and do not harbour any unedifying thoughts of God and His providence. Be not angry at any thing that God has allowed to happen, but forsake that wrath; but ask God for grace to bear with it. **(Anger is one letter short of DANGER** and those who fly in a rage seldom make a good landing.) *"Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil"*, do not envy them their prosperity, lest thou be tempted to fall in with them and to take the same evil course that they take to enrich and advance themselves. Note, an angry, discontented, contentious and murmuring spirit lies open to many temptations; and those who indulge it are in danger of doing evil and sinning against God.

Cease from anger and be "meek" (verses 8-11)

With the cessation of sinful anger, v. 11 says, *"But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."* It is that word "meek" that we want to focus on. Meekness is not a common word that we use to describe people these days and certainly not a factor of assessment by worldly employers in the workplace. The meaning of the word can sometimes get lost. Often when we say someone is "meek" today, we might think of somebody who is shy, weak, nervous or lacking in self-confidence.

And yet that is absolutely not how the Bible describes the meek. In the Bible, meekness is a positive trait. It is a quality of spirit, it is an attitude towards God, it is a way of relating to experiences that places God at the very centre of everything. **Perfect meekness was shown in none other than Jesus own life, especially in those last few hours leading up to His crucifixion** (Philippians 2:5-10). Who is a meek person? Consider Moses in Numbers 12:3 which says, *"(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)"* and he is the God sanctioned leader of the Israelites who stood up to the pharaoh, the superpower of the day and deliver God's people out of bondage in freedom with great power and approval from heaven.

So what is real meekness? Jesus' Sermon on the Mount says: *"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."* (Matthew 5:5). The Greek word for meekness is praotes. Listen to what the Vine's Dictionary says about praotes:

Continued on Page 5...

"It is the temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without dispute or resisting; it is closely linked to the word [humility] and follows directly upon it... it is only the humble and lowly heart which is also meek, and which, as such does not arrogantly fight against God and more or less struggle and contend with Him."

That is meekness. **It is the opposite of self or our own righteousness. Meekness is about completely giving ourselves over to Him and totally trusting Him without contending for ourselves, regardless of what's going on in our lives. Meekness is not a sign of being weak or of helplessness**, on the contrary, meekness is a sign of strength, of God's strength in us. Looking to Jesus (Hebrews 12:1, 2), the perfect example of meekness, when they tried Him, He remained silent, not because He did not know how to defend Himself but because He recognized that His Father had a greater purpose in all this. When they beat and whipped Him, He did not complain, not because His spirit was crushed and defeated but this is in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 53:1-6). When they nailed Him by his hands and feet to the cross, He did not attack His torturers, even though He could have easily squashed them with an army of angels, no, the only thing that Jesus said was "forgive them for they know not what they do". Our Lord Jesus' strength is showed in His meekness. **True meekness is a sign of strength. It is controlled Strength from God. It is strength under submission to heaven.** That is true biblical meekness which we need to cultivate today in our lives and ministry.

"But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." (Psalms 37:11). Perhaps they have not abundance of wealth to delight in; but they have that which is better, abundance of peace, inward peace and tranquility of mind, peace with God, and then peace in God, that great peace which those have that love God's law, whom nothing shall offend (Psalm 119:165), that abundance of peace which is in the kingdom of Christ (Psalm 72:7), that peace which the world cannot give (John 14:27), and which the wicked and proud cannot have (Isaiah 57:21). This they shall delight themselves in God and in it they shall have a continual peace and rest; while those that have abundance of wealth do but cumber and perplex themselves with many burdens and cares.

"The LORD knoweth the days of the upright" (Psalms 37:18a). He takes particular notice of them, of all they do and of all that happens to them. He keeps account of the days of their service, and not one day's work shall go unrewarded, and of the days of their suffering, that for those also they may receive a recompence.

The Psalmist states that of the righteous, *"their inheritance shall be for ever"* (Psalms 37:18b); not their inheritance in the earth, but that incorruptible reward which is laid up for them in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelations 14:13). Those that are sure of an everlasting inheritance in the other world have no reason to envy the wicked and their transitory power, positions, possessions and pleasures in this world.

In the worst of times, it shall still be well with the righteous (Psalms 37:19): *"They shall not be ashamed"* of their hope and confidence in God, nor of the profession they have made of true Christian religion; for the comfort of that will stand them in stead, and be a real support to them, in evil times. Even *"in the days of famine"*, when others are dying for hunger round about them, *"they shall be satisfied"*, as Elijah was; for God will provide food sufficient for them, or give them hearts to be satisfied and content. We are to rejoice in God as the God of our salvation even when *the fig-tree does not blossom* (Habakkuk 3:17, 18).

How about us today? Whenever God tries to work in our lives, do we submit or do we...

Continued on Page 6...

resist him? **We need to humbly submit and surrender ourselves over to Him all the time.** How about meekness towards other people in your relationships? **Meekness is not about self-righteousness, arrogance and pride.** Look at Jesus, our suffering Messiah and who walked the cruel road to Calvary and died on our behalf. We need to pray for more of the Spirit's control as to what comes out of our mouths or actions for some can be out of anger, hatred, self-interest, strife or arrogance or pride. Continue to look towards God, despite our trials and testings, repent of our sins and always trust in Him.

Testimony of God's faithful divine provisions (verses 12-24)

It is promised that we shall be well provided for in this world: *"so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."* He does not say, "As man's life consists not in the abundance of these things"; but, "Thou shalt have a place to live in, and that in the land, in Canaan, the valley of vision, and thou shalt have food convenient for thee." Thou shalt have a quiet settlement, and a comfortable maintenance: *Verily thou shalt be fed.* Some read it, *Thou shalt be fed by faith*, as the just are said to live by faith, and it is good living, good feeding, upon the promises. *"Verily thou shalt be fed,* as Elijah in the famine, with what is needful for thee." God himself is a Shepherd, a Feeder, to all those that trust in Him and it shall be enough (Psalm 23:1).

That God will keep us from being ruined by our falls either into sin or into trouble (Psalms 37:24): *"Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down"*. A good man may be overtaken in a fault temporary, but the grace of God shall recover him to repentance, so that he shall not be utterly cast down. Though he may, for a time, lose the joy of God's salvation, yet they shall be restored to him; for God shall uphold him with His hand and His free Spirit. A good man may be in distress in the short run, but he shall not be utterly cast down; God will be the strength of his heart when his flesh and heart fail, and will uphold him with his comforts, so that the spirit he has made shall not fail before him.

Conclusion

Finally, the Psalm ends with Psalm 37:39, 40. *"The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord"*; it is the eternal salvation of the elect of God for those who *"ordereth his conversation aright"* (Psalms 50:23), is assured in the Lord. *He is their strength in time of trouble*, to support them under it and carry them through it. *He shall help them and deliver them*, help them to do their duties, to bear their burdens, and to maintain their spiritual conflicts, help them to bear their troubles well and, in due time, shall deliver them out of their troubles. He shall deliver them from the wicked and the ill-disposed that would try to overwhelm them and swallow them up, and secure them there finally, and the wicked would cease from troubling. He shall save them, not only keep them safe, but make them blessed, *because they trust in him*, and they have committed themselves to Him and reposed a confidence in Him, and have thereby honoured God and God will honour them in return as well. **This is our blessed assurance and estate when we trust and commit ourselves and rest in the Lord and wait upon Him patiently and cease from anger and do good and that is the will of God concerning us.**

*Rev Jack Sin
Maranatha B-P Church, S'pore
(Adapted from Maranatha Messenger dated 5 August 2007)*

Sabbath Day Programme from September to December 2007

Theme for Morning Worship Service: “Discovering Christ in the Old Testament (Luke 24:25-27)”

| Date | | Topic | Scripture Text |
|------------|----|---|----------------------|
| SEP | 02 | The Seed of the Woman | Genesis 3:15 |
| | 09 | The Last Adam | Gen 2-3; 1 Cor 15:22 |
| | 16 | The First Sacrifice | Gen 3:21; 4:4 |
| | 23 | Light in Their Dwellings | Exodus 10:23 |
| | 30 | Invited Preacher (Lord’s Supper) | |
| OCT | 07 | Invited Preacher | |
| | 14 | Reformation and Restoration | Romans 1:16,17 |
| | 21 | The Rock Was Christ | Exodus 17:6 |
| | 28 | God’s Throne of Grace | Exodus 25:17-22 |
| NOV | 04 | Invited Preacher (Lord’s Supper) | |
| | 11 | The Whole Burnt Offering | Leviticus 1:1-17 |
| | 18 | Servant of the LORD | Exodus 14:31 |
| | 25 | The Angel of the LORD | Genesis 16:7 |
| DEC | 02 | Invited Preacher (Lord’s Supper) | |
| | 09 | Priest of the Order of Melchizedek | Genesis 14:18-20 |
| | 16 | What is Your Name? | Exodus 3:14 |
| | 23 | The Word Was Made Flesh | John 1:14 |

Theme for Evening Worship Service: “Making Known His Glorious Salvation”

| Date | | Message | Scripture Text |
|------------|----|--|--------------------|
| SEP | 02 | What is Salvation? | Luke 19:10 |
| | 09 | The Human Problem | Romans 5:12 |
| | 16 | The Promise of Salvation | Genesis 12:1-3 |
| | 23 | The Divine Provision: The Incarnation | Galatians 4:4, 5 |
| | 30 | Invited Preacher | |
| OCT | 07 | Invited Preacher | |
| | 14 | The Divine Provision: The Cross | Luke 23:33-46 |
| | 21 | The Divine Provision: The Resurrection | 1 Cor 15:12-19 |
| | 28 | The Perspectives on Salvation | Ephesians 2:8-10 |
| NOV | 04 | Invited Preacher | |
| | 11 | The Consummation of Salvation | Titus 2:13 |
| | 18 | What Shall I Do? | Acts 2:37 |
| | 25 | What Am I Told to Do? | Mark 5:19, 20 |
| DEC | 02 | What if I Refuse to Do? | 1 Corinthians 9:16 |
| | 09 | TBD | TBD |
| | 16 | TBD | TBD |
| | 23 | TBD | TBD |

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 | <i>Today: 26/08/2007</i> | <i>Next Week: 02/09/2007</i> | We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. |
| <i>Chairman:</i> | Jonathan Kim | John Poh | |
| <i>Preacher:</i> | Pr Mok Chee Cheong | Pr Mok Chee Cheong | |
| <i>Message:</i> | Are you equipped for Service in Christ's Kingdom | The Seed of the Woman | NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS |
| <i>Text:</i> | 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 | Genesis 3:15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Worship: Family worship for the month of August is to be held at Christopher's (visitor) home on 29 Aug 2007 (Wed). Those who are interested to join in, please contact Pr Mok. For those who are interested to open up their homes in September and October, please inform Pr Mok. • Memory Verse for 2nd Quarter: Those who would like to carry out the memory verse review, please see Pr Mok. Please note that the deadline is 9 Sept 2007. • Sabbath School: The Sunday School is catered for children of ages 6-12. This will be held at the Library after the morning worship service. Children are encouraged to sit with their parents during morning service. • 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. • Church Website: Please take note that the new church website is www.newlifebpc.org.uk |
| <i>Organist:</i> | Anthony | Yanning | |
| Evening | | | |
| <i>Chairman:</i> | John Poh | Jonathan Kim | |
| <i>Preacher:</i> | Pr Mok Chee Cheong | Pr Mok Chee Cheong | |
| <i>Message:</i> | Who is In Charge | What is Salvation? | |
| <i>Text:</i> | 1 Corinthians 12:28 | Luke 19:10 | |
| <i>Pianist:</i> | Yanning | Yanning | |
| Other Duties | | | |
| | <i>Today: 26/08/2007</i> | <i>Next Week: 02/09/2007</i> | |
| <i>Ushers</i> | Daniel/Sharon | Jee/Constance | |
| <i>Sunday Sch:</i> | Joyce | Esmeralda | |
| <i>Lunch:</i> | Constance | Maureen | |
| <i>Washing-up:</i> | Volunteers | Volunteers | |
| <i>Bible Study:</i> | BBK | BBK | |
| Appointments of the Week | | | |
| Fri 31 Aug | 7.30 pm | Young Adults Fellowship: Meeting | |
| Sat 01 Sep | 4.00 pm | Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Spkr: Pr Mok | |
| Last Week's Worship Service Collections | | | |
| Offering: | £307.40 | Lunch: £19.41 | |
| Love Gift: | £100.00 | Book Sales: £7.00 | |
| Memory Verse | | | |
| <i>Previous Week (August 07 Wk 3): Romans 8:28</i> | | | |
| And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. | | | |
| <i>This Week (August 07 Wk 4): Colossians 3:12-14</i> | | | |
| Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. | | | |