



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

44 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6NN

Charity No. 1060655

Tel: 020 7328 0869 (Manse)

Email: newlifeplondon@yahoo.co.uk

Website: www.newlifebpc.org.uk

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

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Experiencing God during the Economic Crisis

As the world plunges deeper into a long economic crisis, there is one thing we must know: Behind it all is a sovereign God who is in full control. He who created the heavens and the earth out of nothing is still ruling and overruling all the affairs of this world. Psalm 104:27-30 tells us that all creatures on earth ultimately depend on God to sustain their life: *"These wait all upon Thee; that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That Thou givest them they gather: Thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust."*

And thus, even in this crisis, God is revealing His sovereign power to the world. He opens His hand to shower the world with blessings, and the economies thrive. He closes His hand, and they are troubled! Those who are adversely affected by the crisis may then ask: Why has God allowed this to affect me? What is His purpose for causing all this? What good can there be in having my pay cut, or in being retrenched, or in having to tighten my belt?

God's purpose may be to humble you, and make you turn back to Him. Perhaps you have felt so exalted with your own success that you need to be brought down, so that like the humbled King Nebuchadnezzar you will finally admit: *"Now I praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase."* (Daniel 4:37)

Perhaps God is using this crisis to refine your faith in Him so that you may come forth as gold (Job 23:10). It may also be His training programme to prepare you for higher service. Or perhaps it may be a divine messenger from God, sent to teach you how to glory in your infirmities so that the power of Christ may rest upon you (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Strange as it may sound, this crisis is specially ordained by God for your own good. This is His ultimate purpose for every personal crisis that His children have to face in life – whether it is sickness, loss, trial or difficulty. It is only as we realise this that we will begin to experience God in the midst of any crisis.

One person who experienced God in a moment of deep personal crisis was the prophet Jeremiah. There is perhaps no prophet who suffered more than him. He wrote the book of Lamentations to express his deep sorrow over a national crisis that had befallen Israel in his time – the Babylonian captivity and the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. But that is not all that the book of Lamentations contains. The third chapter describes how Jeremiah experienced God in a time of personal crisis. It also provides us with seven steps we can take to do the same.

Continued on Page 2...

1. Hope in God's unfailing love.

Jeremiah was falsely accused of being a traitor and then cast into a dark and awful dungeon where he was left to languish, forsaken and forgotten by the outside world (Jeremiah 38:6 cf. Lamentations 3:7,9). In verses 17-20 he describes his utter despair and desolation – *"And Thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgot prosperity. And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the LORD: Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me."*

But in the midst of despair, a ray of hope shone brightly in Jeremiah's heart – *"This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: Great is Thy faithfulness."* (verses 21-23)

When you face difficult circumstances, can you see God's mercy and faithfulness beyond all the discomfort and grief you feel? Can you see that His sovereign hand that lays these heavy burdens upon you is still a hand of divine love and goodness? We will be able to see this only if our perception of God's love is based on the promise He has given in His Word, to love us unconditionally (Jeremiah 31:3). His love never fails. It remains firm and steadfast forever! Whenever you feel down, please remember this: God remains faithful. He never gets tired of keeping you or of looking after you.

2. Know that God is your portion.

Verse 24 – *"The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him."* The word "portion" here means inheritance, something that is given to you to possess. This thought can bring much comfort when you endure the loss of your earthly possessions. Even if you should lose everything – all your wealth, property, friends and loved ones – there is one precious possession you can never lose – God Himself! (Cf. Genesis 15:1; Numbers 18:20)

Do you regard God as your portion, and as your most precious possession? (Psalm 73:25) Is He all that you hope for and live for? If He is, then nothing in this world can take away your joy in life, because nothing can ever take Him away from you.

3. Seek God's help patiently.

Verses 25-26 – *"The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."* Let God know all your troubles and worries, and ask for His help.

But please be patient when you pray. Jesus taught His disciples that they should not give up praying, when God does not seem to answer. He described how a woman kept on asking a judge to help her even though He just ignored her, until the judge finally relented and helped her (Luke 18:1-5). If you keep on praying, you too will find the help you need in the end.

4. Trust that all things will work out for good.

Verse 27 – *"It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth."* There is a divine purpose for every trial and affliction. It is intended to bring good results. It may enable you to learn more about trusting God. It may show you your own true self and your hidden weaknesses. Peter, the self-confident disciple of Christ, knew how weak he really was only after he faced a crisis where he denied Christ 3 times.

Continued on Page 3...

Ultimately, God allows trials in your life so that you will become more like Christ. You are being sculpted by God, the skilled master craftsman. Every blow of His chisel makes you a little more like Christ! But you must endure the blows patiently to see the good results.

5. Look forward to the end of the trial.

Verses 31,32 – *"For the Lord will not cast off for ever: But though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies."* Since God has a special purpose for allowing trials into your life, when His purpose is accomplished, the trials will come to an end. There is light at the end of the tunnel. Knowing that your trials will not go on forever will make them a little easier to bear.

6. Remember that God does not like to see you suffer.

Verses 33-36 – *"For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. To crush under His feet all the prisoners of the earth, to turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most high, to subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not."*

Wicked and cruel people may enjoy seeing you suffer. They do not care if you are treated unfairly or if your rights are violated. But God is not like them at all. The trials He allows you to go through are not designed to hurt you, but rather to bless you. And He knows exactly how much you can bear. He is just like a mother giving medicine to her child – she will be careful to give just the right dosage. This means that your suffering will never be more than what is needful or necessary for you to bear.

7. Remember that nothing can happen to you without God's permission.

Verse 37 – *"Who is he is that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?"* This truth can bring great comfort and assurance. No one, not even Satan can bother you, unless God allows him to do so. Each time Satan wanted to afflict Job, he always had to petition God to let him do it. And God allowed it only because He already knew the outcome and how much Job could endure.

He even knows the number of hairs you have on your head (Matthew 10:30). He knows how many new hairs you have grown today and how many have fallen off. Not only does He know it, He also controls it. No detail of your life is beyond His control. And He who controls all things in your life is He who loved you so much that He was willing even to give His only begotten Son to die on the cross for your sake. If He loves you that much, will He not take good care of you?

Having seen how we may experience God in times of personal crisis, we can now apply this to the economic crisis we are going through. There is however one important condition that must be met – only those who belong to God can experience Him in personal crisis. If you do not belong to Him, you have no part in any of the above blessings.

How then can you become a child of God? There is only one way: Surrender your life to Jesus Christ. This means repenting of your sins and asking Him to save you from your sins by His death on the cross. Then begin to live your life for Him and with Him every day. As you do this, you will experience God in your life! Will you turn to Jesus Christ today?

*Rev Charles Seet, Life B-P Church, S'pore
(adapted from Life B-P Church bulletin dated 30 November 2008)*

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON
CHURCH THEME: WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR
AND TREMBLING. (Philippians 2:12)

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: 07/12/2008	Next Week: 14/12/2008	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome Chang Kwok Wei, Paul Goh and Cheong Yen Li to our worship services last Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	Joey Seow	Jonathan Kim	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Rev Yeo Seow Phong	Dr David Allen	
<i>Message:</i>	Labourers With God	Tba	
<i>Text:</i>	1 Corinthians 3:5-23	Tba	
<i>Organist:</i>	Grace	Joy	
Evening			
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	John Poh	<p align="center">NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lord's Supper: Next week, we will be observing the Lord's Supper. Please come with your hearts prepared. • Calling of Resident Minister: Continue to pray for the Lord's calling for a resident minister. The church leaders are praying about calling Rev Timothy Ki. • Pray for those who are sick: Douglas (knee pain), Maria (ankle and joint pain), Constance (left heel pain), Maureen (knee pain), Anthony (recovery from collarbone fracture), John (fractured toe), Margaret (sprained wrist), Joy (cough) • Pray for those who are seeking employment: John, Constance (provision of a new job) • Pray for Journey Mercies: Mark & Hui Min (USA), Douglas (Ghana), Hubert (S'pore), Jiak Eng (S'pore), Josh (Yorkshire), Sophia's mum & sister (Korea), Margaret's niece (Nigeria) • Pre-Worship service prayer: Those serving on the Lord's Day, please gather at 10.30am for prayer.
<i>Preacher:</i>	Rev Yeo Seow Phong	Dr David Allen	
<i>Message:</i>	Looking And Hasting	Tba	
<i>Text:</i>	2 Peter 3:11-18	Tba	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Sophia	Sophia	
Other Duties			
	Today: 07/12/2008	Next Week: 14/12/2008	
<i>Ushers</i>	Joshua / Yetta	Daniel / Sharon	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Hannah	Hannah	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Constance	Maureen	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>PA Crew:</i>	John	Nicholas	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 12 Dec	7:30pm	Young Adults Fellowship: Bible Study – Survey of the Old Testament	
Sat 13 Dec	4.00pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Led by Rev Yeo Seow Phong	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
Offering: £135.92		Lunch: £31.10	
Memory Verse			
<i>Last Week (December 08 Wk 1): 1 Corinthians 13:7</i> Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.			
<i>This Week (December 08 Wk 1): 1 Corinthians 13:8</i> Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.			