



# 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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**LORD'S DAY 23 NOVEMBER 2008**

*Dear brethren,*

The Apostle Paul writes in Philippians 4:4 that as Christians, we should *'Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice'*. So, to remind us of our *'duty'* to *'rejoice'*, this week's bulletin features two articles written by Pastor Ian Hamilton, who is the pastor of the Cambridge Presbyterian Church. The articles have been extracted from the Banner of Truth website and they are meant for your personal encouragement and edification...

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## Christian Joy

*by Pastor Ian Hamilton (Banner of Truth dated 25 September 2007)*

Alexander Whyte, an eminent Scottish minister in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, wrote of Christians who lived as if sanctification were by vinegar. I was reminded of this when preparing recently to preach on Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. As Luke concludes his account of this eunuch's conversion, he tells us, *'he went on his way rejoicing.'* The gospel of God's great grace in Christ had not only brought him into a right, restored relationship with God, it had filled his heart with joy.

It can hardly be denied that some Christians live as if sanctification were by vinegar. There is little evident joy in their lives. Their response (as I once, sadly, said to a friend at university) is that their joy lies deep in their hearts. But is the believer's joy to be buried so deeply in his/her heart that its presence never breaks the surface and radiates on their face and in their general demeanour? Surely not.

The deep seriousness of the Christian life is not an excuse for living as if sanctification were by vinegar. The expectation of God's Word is that the child of God will *'rejoice in the Lord always'*. The Psalmist summons us to *'make a joyful noise to the Lord.'* Peter even tells us that the suffering Christians to whom he was writing were *'filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'* You will understand, of course, that I am not saying that believers will walk about with a constant grin on their faces - that would be both un-natural and ridiculous. There is a deep and solemn seriousness about the Christian life. We are called to bear witness to the saving Lordship of our Jesus Christ in a world that denies and defies him. We stand, under God, between men and women and a lost eternity. While we are a *'fragrance of life'* to some, we are also a *'fragrance of death'* to others (2 Cor. 2:15-16). And yet, this deeply solemn fact is not to mute, far less eclipse, the joy that is ours in Christ.

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Consider for a moment our many reasons for '*joy unspeakable and full of glory.*' We are saved sinners. God in his grace has rescued us from the coming wrath. We are justified sinners. In Christ we have an eternally secure relationship with God. We are God's own adopted children. We once were '*children of wrath,*' but now we are the sons of God's love. Once we were facing the nightmare prospect of hell, excluded forever from the presence of the Lord. Now, because of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are heading for the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The Triune God is our God and we are his people. Nothing can separate us from his love to us in Christ Jesus. Of all people in this universe we are the most privileged and blessed. We can even say with Paul, '*having nothing yet possessing everything,*' because all things are ours in Christ (1 Cor. 3:22-23).

It is because all this is true of us that the words of the hymn-writer resonate within us as we sing: '*He makes the saddest heart to sing.*' Yes, our joy is deep; but it is no less to be evident. People need to see that the gospel of redeeming grace is a delight to us. They need to see that Jesus makes a difference to how we live and how we look! I know that the Lord has made us all different. There is a joyful spontaneity among our African brothers and sisters that is not native to the '*slightly less*' effervescent Englishman, or even Scotsman. But are we not guilty of taking refuge in national characteristics, when the real reason why we lack evident joy is that we are not as thrilled with the Saviour and his grace as we should be? Surely even the dourest Scotsman who comes to saving faith cannot but smile and rejoice in the great mercy that has raised him from a dung heap and set him among princes?

Paul summons us to '*rejoice in the Lord always.*' And in case we miss the force of his summons he says, '*and again I say rejoice.*' Take time, make time, to meditate on the inestimable blessings that are yours in Christ. '*Count your blessings; name them one by one.*' Above all, glory in the God of your salvation. Your meditating may well bring forth tears, but they will be joyful, thankful tears. When I was a student, some Christians I knew wore a badge with the words, '*Smile, God Loves You.*' I thought the badge was silly (and probably it was). But if Christians cannot smile at the wonder of God's love for them, something is seriously wrong. Sanctification is never by vinegar - it is always by loving-kindness and tender mercy, even in the sorest of ordained providences. Jesus does make the saddest heart to sing.

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## **Rejoice in the Lord Always**

*by Pastor Ian Hamilton (an article extracted from Banner of Truth dated 7 November 2008)*

The Christian life is to be a life of constant, unhindered joy - or at least, so says the apostle Paul: '*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*' According to Paul, joy is not to be an occasional feature in the believer's life, it is to be a constant reality, a daily, moment by moment reality. Does this seem a somewhat unreal expectation? Is Paul expecting too much? Is he even living in the real world, where disappointments, discouragements, and disasters can, and do, blast the believer's life? Is it not the height of spiritual escapism to think that Christians should always be rejoicing?

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We can hardly, however, accuse Paul of engaging in spiritual escapism, or of suggesting that believers live trouble-free lives. For one thing, his own life was a catalogue of disappointments, discouragements, and disasters (read 2 Corinthians 11:23-29); and for another, he never tired of telling Christians that the life of faith was a life beset with trials, temptations and persecutions (read Acts 14:21-22, 2 Timothy 3:10-12). Paul was no head-in-the-clouds Christian. He well knew, by bitter experience, the pains and sorrows of the believing life. And yet, he still writes, *'Rejoice in the Lord always'*, and in case we don't quite take in the force of what he has said, he repeats himself, *'I will say it again: Rejoice!'* Paul is well aware of how seemingly impossible his command (for that is what it is) will appear to us. But in no sense is Paul suggesting that Christians will always have the sunshine of God's love and goodness shining on their backs, making it easy for them to rejoice. What he is saying, however, is that in spite of all the troubles and discouragements and disasters that can (and do) overtake the child of God, he is still able to *'rejoice.'* How can that be?

Look carefully at what Paul writes: *'Rejoice in the Lord.'* The Christian is to rejoice always because his joy is pre-eminently located not in his circumstances, but in his Saviour - the unchanging and unchangeable Lord Jesus Christ! Paul is not saying for one moment that believers should be walking around with a permanent grin, saying *'Praise the Lord'* every second sentence. For one thing, this is not the picture the Scriptures give us of our Lord Jesus, the proto-typical man of faith. Our Saviour knew the sore reality of disappointments and discouragements; he experienced the greatest weariness; he was *'despised and rejected by men.'* Christians are able to *'Rejoice always'*, because our joy is in who our God and Saviour is and in what he has done for us - and nothing can change his love for us, or change the constancy of his faithful character. This means that no matter what befalls the believer, he is still a child of God, a forgiven sinner, a heaven-bound saint, the most blessed being in the cosmos! If the Christian loses everything, he still has everything, for he cannot lose his Saviour, nor his great salvation. Martin Luther saw this and concludes his great Reformation hymn with these words:

*And though they take our life,  
Goods, honour, children, wife;  
Yet is their profit small,  
These things shall vanish all;  
The city of God remaineth.*

Paul is not saying that the Christian will always appear to be full of joy; but even through the bitterest of tears, the believing heart can rejoice in the Lord. Even in times of deepest and darkest perplexity, the child of God can rejoice, not because he can fully understand God's ways with him, but because he has a Saviour, who loved him and gave himself for him.

Christian joy can at times be *'out of this world.'* At other times it may be covered by an avalanche of trials and discouragements. But can we not always rejoice, seeing that our Lord Jesus is God over all, blessed forever? That he, who bore our sin and shame, is seated on the throne of the universe? That one day we shall see him as he is, and be forever with the Lord? Jesus is our cause for constant rejoicing.

# 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
<b>Morning</b>	<b>Today: 23/11/2008</b>	<b>Next Week: 30/11/2008</b>	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	John Poh	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Rev Yeo Seow Phong	Mr Chris Richards	
<i>Message:</i>	Are You A Carnal Christian?	Tba	<b>NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>
<i>Text:</i>	1 Corinthians 3:1-4	Tba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Calling of Resident Minister:</b> Continue to pray for the Lord's calling for a resident minister. The church leaders are praying about calling Rev Timothy Ki.</li> <li>• <b>YAF meeting (combined with SGAT):</b> On Friday, the YAF meeting will be a combined meeting with Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony (SGAT). The title of the message of the meeting is "The Confirmation of Prophecy".</li> <li>• <b>Pray for those who are sick:</b> Douglas (knee pain), Maria (ankle and joint pain), Constance (left heel pain), Maureen (knee pain), Anthony (recovery from collarbone fracture) and Jonathan (ankle)</li> <li>• <b>Pray for those who are seeking employment:</b> John (waiting for feedback from interviews), Constance (Thank God for the provision of a new job – to start in December)</li> <li>• <b>Pray for Journey Mercies:</b> Mark &amp; Hui Min (USA), Douglas (Ghana), Hubert (S'pore), Jiak Eng (S'pore)</li> <li>• <b>Online resource:</b> Visit the Church website for sermon recordings and hymns</li> </ul>
<i>Organist:</i>	Joy	Grace	
<b>Evening</b>			
<i>Chairman:</i>	John Poh	Jonathan Kim	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Rev Yeo Seow Phong	Mr Chris Richards	
<i>Message:</i>	They Are Willingly Ignorant	Tba	
<i>Text:</i>	2 Peter 3:5-10	Tba	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Sophia	Joy	
Other Duties			
	<b>Today: 23/11/2008</b>	<b>Next Week: 30/11/2008</b>	
<i>Ushers</i>	Joshua / Sharon	Daniel / Hannah	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Hannah	Hannah	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Maureen	Constance	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>PA Crew:</i>	Nicholas	Joshua	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 28 Nov	7:00pm	<b>Young Adults Fellowship:</b> Combined SGAT Meeting	
Sat 29 Nov	4.00pm	<b>Prayer Meeting &amp; Bible Study:</b> Led by Jonathan	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
<b>Offering:</b> £306.76	<b>Hospitality:</b> £40.00		
	<b>Lunch:</b> £46.60		
Memory Verse			
<i>Last Week (November 08 Wk 3): 1 Corinthians 13:5</i>			
Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;			
<i>This Week (November 08 Wk 4): 1 Corinthians 13:6</i>			
Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;			