



# 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. 18 No. 11

**LORD’S DAY 16 MARCH 2014**

## ORDER OF WORSHIP

	<i>Morning Service – 11am</i>	<i>Evening Service – 4pm</i>
<i>Prelude</i>	<i>The Lord Is in His Holy Temple</i>	
<i>Call to Worship</i>	Isaiah 60:1-2	Psalm 138:1-2
<i>Opening Hymn *</i>	RHC 49 – “How Great Thou Art!”	RHC 88 – “Praise Him! Praise Him!”
<i>Opening Prayer *</i>	John Poh	John Poh
<i>Gloria Patri *</i>	<i>Glory Be to the Father</i>	
<i>Responsive Reading</i>	Psalm 61	---
<i>Second Hymn *</i>	<i>Psalm 61, verses 1-4</i> (to the tune of Wiltshire, RHC 35)	---
<i>Announcements &amp; Memory Verse</i>	John Poh	John Poh
<i>Tithes &amp; Offerings &amp; Doxology *</i>	RHC 425 – “Take the World, but Give Me Jesus”	---
<i>Scriptural Text</i>	Romans 2:6-11	Matthew 5:8
<i>Pastoral Prayer</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong
<i>Sermon Message</i>	<i>Judgement According to Deeds</i>	<i>Blessed are the Pure in Heart</i>
<i>Closing Hymn *</i>	RHC 247 – “Cleanse Me”	RHC 395 – “A Heart Like Thine”
<i>Benediction/3-Fold Amen *</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong
<i>Postlude</i>	<i>The Lord Bless You</i>	

\* Congregation Stands

### THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE

The Lord is in His holy temple,  
The Lord is in His holy temple:  
Let all the earth keep silence,  
Let all the earth keep silence before Him -  
Keep silence, keep silence before Him. Amen.

### DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heav’nly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

### GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.

### THE LORD BLESS YOU

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
The Lord lift His countenance upon you,  
and give you peace, and give you peace;  
The Lord make His face to shine upon you,  
And be gracious unto you, be gracious,  
The Lord be gracious, gracious unto you. Amen.

**Church Theme 2014 – “Waiting for God” – Isaiah 30:18**

# UNANSWERED PRAYER

*“Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles” (Romans 1:13)*

## Introduction

**Many believers generally have no difficulty in understanding and accepting God’s denial of their prayer request particularly for those items that are non-essential, for example, praying for a Harley Davidson’s motorbike or for a luxury car.**

**There is nothing inherently wrong to have such things but it is certainly not a “must have” kind of items. To be denied of such prayer requests will very unlikely pose a problem for the believers to submit to God’s answer of a “no” to their prayers.**

**However, what are about prayers that are of a spiritual nature, like the prayer of the Apostle Paul in Romans 1:13 - “Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,)”.**

His prayer surely was one that is good, proper, noble, unselfish and of pure motive for the benefits of the saints - *“that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.”* It was a prayer for the right things, and entirely worthy and of spiritual motive.

Notice more importantly that Paul does not give an explanation of why his proposed visit to Rome was hindered, at least not in this instance. In not providing an explanation here, opens the way for us to reflect on why perfectly proper prayers may go unanswered and what we may learn from this.

I would like to suggest the following reasons for our instruction on how to discern, and submit humbly to God’s sovereign direction and to handle supplications that are totally in line with God’s will, yet it remain unfulfilled in the way we expected.

**Reason #1** - *Unanswered prayer may be God’s way of showing us that we are not needed for the work we are praying for as we think we are.*

This is clear in Paul’s situation. He had been praying that he might be permitted to visit Rome to serve and strengthen the Roman Christians. But noble as this desire may have been, it is also clear that the believers in Rome were doing quite well without Paul’s ministry. Though the saints in Rome will no doubt benefit much should God send him there to build up their faith, yet in God’s perfect will, Paul was not needed, at least not for that moment. God was absolutely able to bless and prosper His church without Paul’s or anyone else personal ministrations.

If we are true to honesty, most of our prayers though good and proper, have ourselves at the centre and we assume that if God is to answer them, He must do so through us as His agents. Such thinking and attitude hinder our understanding that God is not limited in His ways to bring to pass what He wills through someone else or other means.

Hudson Taylor, the great pioneer missionary to China learned this function of prayer by letting God to carry out His work in His way, in His time and by His means. Not long after Taylor had been in China, he was moved to pray for two missionaries for each of China's eleven provinces plus Mongolia, twenty-four in all. He has no means of supporting them, so he had to pray for sufficient funds as well. God's answer was first for the request of twenty-four missionaries, and then subsequently the thousands who later went to China under the auspices of the China Inland Mission.

Was Taylor necessary for this work? Yes, in a way. His prayers were necessary. But he was not the means of conveying the blessing of God to those many provinces of China personally.

**Reason #2** - *God may have other work for us to do.*

This seems to be the main reason for the Apostle Paul being hindered. In the fifteen chapter of Romans, he speaks of his ministry among the remote cities of the Gentiles as a fulfillment of Isaiah 52:15 - *"But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand"* (Romans 15:21).

Then he adds unexpectedly in v.22 - *"For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you."* So it was his ministry among the people of Asia and Greece that had kept his visitation to Rome, and that is why Paul did not chafe under the hinderances God sent. He recognized that delay in reaching Rome was for the sake of the Christian mission elsewhere. This is what we need to learn too, and be content through learning it.

If you are praying for something and God is not answering your request with a direct answer, then ask what you can accomplish in the meantime and give yourself wholly to do that. It does not mean that God may not give you what you are asking for eventually, but in the meantime you will be doing something else that will glory God's name.

**Reason #3** - *There may be spiritual warfare of which you and I are unaware.*

There are such examples in the Bible. Paul spoke of "thorn" in his flesh, *"the messenger of Satan to buffet"* (2 Cor 12:7), saying that he prayed three times for it to be removed but denied his request and instead promised him in v.9 - *"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."*

A second example is that of Daniel, who prayed for something but did not receive an answer to his prayer until three weeks later. The angel who brought him the answer explained to Daniel that *"thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia"* (Daniel 10:1-14). The answer to Daniel's prayer was delayed.

Spiritual battles are mysteries to us, because we cannot see the warfare. But there are spiritual battles, and we need to know something about it. They are important reason why some of our prayers go unanswered or delayed.

## Reasons for unanswered prayer

**1. Unconfessed sin.** Did you know that there are more verses in the Bible saying that God will not answer prayers than there are verses that say He will? The chief hinderance to unanswered prayer concerns sin. Isaiah wrote, *“Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear”* (Isaiah 59:1-2).

If God is not answering your prayers - particularly not any of your prayers, then you should ask whether you are cherishing some sin. If so, you need to confess it for full forgiveness and cleansing.

**2. Wrong Motives.** James pointed this out when he said, *“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts”* (James 4:3). As an example, a woman may pray for the conversion of her husband, but with wrong motives - not for his good, that he may be delivered from hell and enjoy fellowship with God in this life - but because it would be much more pleasant for her to have a Christian husband or because other Christians would think better of her.

If we are praying with wrong motives, we need to be changed by God through prayer so we might pray effectual prayer.

**3. Laziness.** It is said that Elijah prayed “earnestly” that it would not rain and that it did not rain for three and a half years (James 5:17). Prayer was a serious business with him. One reason our prayers are not answered is that we are not serious about them in that we show no sign of urgency by procrastination.

**4. We are too busy.** Sometimes we are too busy to pray “earnestly.” But, as someone has said, “If we are too busy to pray, we are too busy.” Do not excuse yourself, each one of us has exactly the same amount of time in a day as every other person. If we say we are too busy to pray, what we are really saying is that we consider the things we are doing to be more important than praying. This is a theological misunderstanding.

**5. Idols in the heart.** In the book of Ezekiel, the Lord asked, *“these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?”* (Ezekiel 14:3).

Is an idol keeping you from having your prayers answered? Is that idol a person? A boyfriend? A girlfriend? A wife? A husband? Your children or grandchildren? Is it your job? Is it your lifestyle? Your social position? Your worldly reputation? Is it your self-image? Are you determined above all else to be “successful”? To put anything ahead of God or between you and God is idolatry. It is a categorical hinderance.

**6. Stinginess in our giving.** Jesus says, *“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again”* (Luke 6:38).

This is quite clear. Torrey writes, “Here God distinctly tells us that he measures out his benefactions to us in exactly the same measure that we measure out our benefactions to others. And some of us use such “tiny” pint cup measures in our giving that God can only give us a pint cup blessing.”

**7. Unbelief.** The greatest cause of failure in our prayer life, and the area in which we most need to change, is unbelief. James exhorts those who pray - *“let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord”* (James 1:6-7).

If we do not believe God’s Word unquestioningly, why should we get what we pray for? Is it a surprise that our prayers are unanswered?

## **Conclusion**

As we have seen that there are numerous reasons why answers to prayers may have been delayed, denied or different, all the way from spiritual warfare in the heaven lies to our sin or unbelief. What are you to do? Should you keep on battering the brass doors of heaven with ineffectual petitions? Or should you accept God’s rejection? Should you quit praying?

The answer is in Jesus’ parable of the importunate widow, in which Luke teaches that we “ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1). Prayer may not change the circumstances, but it may change us, It may change history. Whatever the case maybe, we must keep praying.

Paul keep praying, he got to Rome eventually. George Mueller kept praying too. He prayed for his three friends who were not Christians. He prayed every day for more than sixty years. It seems as if his prayers would never be answered. However, two of those men were converted shortly before Mueller’s death, one at what was probably the last service Mueller held. The other was converted within a year of Mueller’s funeral. Unanswered prayer? How do we ever know it will remain unanswered? Since we do not, we ought always to pray and not give up.

~~ Pr Mok

# WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

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.

APPOINTMENTS FOR THE WEEK	WELCOME
Tues 18 Mar 4:00pm <b>Ladies Mid-Week Bible Study</b>	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome Eileen How, Peggy Lim and Hong Do to our worship services last Lord's Day.
Fri 21 Mar <b>No Young Adults Fellowship</b>	
Sat 22 Mar 4:00pm <b>Bible Study &amp; Prayer Meeting</b>	

Next Lord's Day	Morning Service	Evening Service	LORD'S DAY DUTIES
<b>Preacher</b>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	<b><u>TODAY: 16/03/2014</u></b>  <b>Chairman:</b> John <b>Organist:</b> Sarah <b>Pianist:</b> Anthony <b>Ushers:</b> Daniel / Yetta <b>Sunday School:</b> Hannah / Rachael <b>Lunch:</b> Maureen <b>Washing Up:</b> Volunteers <b>PA Crew:</b> Scott  <b><u>NEXT WEEK: 23/03/2014</u></b>  <b>Chairman:</b> Jonathan <b>Organist:</b> Anthony <b>Pianist:</b> Matthew <b>Ushers:</b> John / Margaret <b>Sunday School:</b> Hannah / Rachael <b>Lunch:</b> Maureen <b>Washing Up:</b> Volunteers <b>PA Crew:</b> Yangfan
<b>Message</b>	Not Hearers Only, But Doers	Blessed are the Peacemakers	
<b>Text</b>	Romans 2:12-15	Matthew 5:9	

NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pre-lunch Bible Study:</b> There will be a short video study on "Purity" by Dr Jim Berg</li> <li>• <b>Pray for those who are sick:</b> Douglas, Barbara, Prema, Margaret, May Chew, Constance, Deborah, Pastor Ki, Mrs Ki, Susan, Dr Carl Martin, Dr Scott-Pearson, Nina, Helen, Eld Chew's mother, Rev Colin Wong, Elizabeth, John, Tobias, Elliora.</li> <li>• <b>Pray for those seeking employment:</b> Yetta, Patricia</li> <li>• <b>Pulpit Ministry:</b> Pray for the Church Sponsorship application and Rev Colin Wong's visa application.</li> <li>• <b>Church cleaning next week after Lunch.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Worship Service Collections</b> - Last Sunday: £1136.63; Lunch: £52.00</p> <p><b>Attendance</b> - Morning: 32 (A) 6 (C), Evening: 20 (A) 2 (C)</p>

## SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 7

**Q: What are the decrees of God?**

*A: The decrees of God and his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.*

Comments:

The decrees of God are *his purposes*, or *what he has from eternity determined to do*. And this answer tells us that God has so appointed everything that comes to pass. Nothing happens by chance. Everything is arranged upon a plan, and that plan is the plan of God. He makes all things work together for good to them that love him, and for evil to them that hate him.

Scriptural Reference:

Isaiah 40:13, 14, Romans 8:28, Matthew 10:29

## MEMORY VERSE

Last Week	This Week	Next Week
<p><i>"Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD."</i></p> <p><b>Psalm 31:24</b></p>	<p><i>"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."</i></p> <p><b>Psalm 91:1</b></p>	<p><i>"I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust."</i></p> <p><b>Psalm 91:2</b></p>