



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. 38

LORD’S DAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2014

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Morning Service – 11am

Evening Service – 4pm

Prelude

The Lord Is in His Holy Temple

Call to Worship

Hebrews 10:16-25

Romans 12:1-2

*Opening Hymn **

RHC 85 – “*O Day of Rest and Gladness*”

RHC 426 – “*All for Jesus*”

*Opening Prayer **

Jonathan Kim

Jonathan Kim

*Gloria Patri **

Glory Be to the Father

Responsive Reading

Psalm 87

*Second Hymn **

Psalm 87 verses 1-7
(to the tune of Maitland, RHC 391)

Announcements & Memory Verse

Jonathan Kim

Jonathan Kim

*Tithes & Offerings & Doxology **

RHC 434 – “*Savior, More Than Life to Me*”

Scriptural Text

Colossians 1:1-8

John 14:15-24

Pastoral Prayer

Dr Carl Martin

Dr Carl Martin

Sermon Message

Welcome to Colossae

The Evidence of Love

*Closing Hymn **

RHC 67 – “*Praise the Savior*”

Insert – “*O that the Lord would guide my ways*”

*Benediction/3-Fold Amen **

Dr Carl Martin

Dr Carl Martin

Postlude

The Lord Bless You

* 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

CHRIST'S PARABLES

THE GLORY OF THE SCRIPTURES

Scripture Text: Isaiah 6:1-10

Introduction

There are between thirty-five and sixty of Christ's parables recorded in the Scripture, depending on how they are counted. I would like to first of all consider with you how we are to approach the parables. There are many books on the parables that are readily available. We do not want to simply go through each parable for understanding sake and to be satisfied with only knowledge. It is better for us to understand the parables in a way that takes into account the Scripture, that the Word of God is searching us, not we searching the bible per se; we ought to expect the Word of God to transform us – to be changed by the Holy Spirit in the inner man (Eph 3:16).

When we approach the Scriptures expecting God to use His Word to search and change us, then we will approach Scriptures experimentally or experientially. When we come to the Word of God truly believing it to be what it claims to be, and submitting to its scrutiny of all aspects of our life, then we are reading God's Word experimentally. The Psalmist explains experimental reading of God's Word in this way, "*The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple.*"

When the bible tells us of someone who, as it were, wakes up to the reality of the glory of the Lord, we see immediately a profound reaction. Isaiah certainly experienced this in the vision he records in Isaiah 6. The Lord allowed him to have a glimpse into the throne room of heaven, and there he saw the majesty of the Lord (vs.1-2). Christ later explained in John 12:4 that what Isaiah saw on that occasion was His glory.

On the one hand, this experience of the glory of the Lord left Isaiah feeling undone/unworthy (v.5). On the other hand, it constrained him to such an extent that he was willing to go and preach the coming Kingdom of God (v.8). You can say that this experience was an awakening experience, like what Moses encountered with the burning bush. Until then, these men had not known or seen the radiance and splendour of the glory of God.

But when God's glory appeared to them, they were completely transformed. They felt their insignificance and sinfulness before a thrice-holy God. But ultimately they were compelled by the glory of God to serve Him.

As for us in this present age, how do we see it, or get such a glimpse of God's glory? It is not through some extra-biblical experiences, like the practices of the charismatic, or a superficial meditation of God's Word. But it is in a spirit of fervent and earnest prayer seeking for the Holy Spirit, who is the author of holy Scripture to unlock door of scripture that we may behold the beauty and splendour of His glory. For that to happen, we must first be born-again in the Spirit (John 3:5-8). Let us first consider...

1. The Glory of God's Word

For us who have been enjoying the liberty of worship and having our bibles with us for such a long time, we have become overly familiar with our bibles that so much so it has become another book to us, isn't it? When we approach the bible in our daily devotion, do we desire to see the radiance and splendour of the glory of God in His holy Word? Have we not lost that earnest desire to seek God in His Word?

The Word of God is glorious, it is God's personal letter to us, His blood bought children. There are many who think that it is better to hear the audible voice of God from heaven than to read the written Word of God as though this will elevate them to the position of Moses. But the apostle Peter tells us that he preferred the written word, when he says in 2 Peter 1, ¹⁹ *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:* ²⁰ *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.* ²¹ *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet 1:19-21).*

You see, the problem is not that the bible has lost its radiance and splendour. It is that by nature everything is out of order in our lives. We do not see things as they truly are. Sin has drawn a veil over our hearts, and we love this darkness rather than the light (John 3:19). By nature, we have lost the sense of being subject to God and accountable to Him. Actually, it is even worse than that. We actively rebel against His authority and transgress His laws (Romans 8:7). We imagine we can make God submit to us. We make His Word the object of our scrutiny, rather than submitting ourselves to its scrutiny. Many of us bible students and teachers think we understand the Bible, and yet we do not subject our hearts to the examination of Scriptures.

We so called "understand" the Bible just like a band of rebels might understand the laws of a government yet they break the very laws they understood. What I want to stress is this, since the Word of God is what it claims to be, the Word from God that is, then it must come with a glory second to none, then it must be most glorious because God Himself is glorious. But the word glory is quite abstract to us sinners. So what actually glory is?

We sometimes speak of a glorious day, and by that we typically mean a day with a lot of sunshine. Because of the luster of the sunlight, we see the magnificence of everything more easily and readily than on a cloudy and dreary day. This helps to illustrate how the Bible defines glory. According to the Bible, glory is the splendour that flows from a person's authority. In Hebrew, the word we translate as 'glory' literally means "weight." It is what you would feel if a king or other important person were in your presence. You would feel small or a 'nobody' in comparison with that person's importance, similar to how you might feel when you see the splendour of creation in the brilliant light of the sun; your are awe-struck. If we sense this feeling with some great person here on earth or in creation around us, how much more should we feel this with regard to God Himself, who has made all of creation and is greater than all.

So we must ask, why is it that so many Christians do not realise that the Word of God is so glorious just as God is full of glory and splendour? Why are there so many Christians who do not hold with high regard the glorious Word of God?

2. The Glory of God is Veiled

One of the main reasons many who handle Scripture do not see its profound, sin-exposing, life-changing glory is that they do not submit to it as God's Word. Somehow, in theory and in practice, the Word of God has been reduced to merely human words. Thus the glory is gone, at least from the minds and experience of the readers. The Word of God seems common and ordinary, more human than divine. Our natural minds are blind to the weight of the glory of Scripture.

In order, then, to read the Scriptures experimentally, as they should be read, we need to recognize, register, and respond inwardly to the glory they possess as the Word of God. We need to seek the Holy Spirit in prayer to put in our hearts that sense, or to restore in us that sense of God's weight of glory.

However, with the parables of Christ, we need to realise that something more is going on. In the parables, Christ is intentionally veiling or concealing His glory and the glory of His Kingdom. Many of us miss this point. They imagine Jesus spoke in parables simply to make His teaching easy, simple, and appealing to anyone who heard them. But if this was the case, why, then, did so many fail to appreciate the parables? Especially those in authority rejected Jesus' teaching (eg. in Matt 21:45-46).

Christ Himself explained what He was doing when He answered the disciples' question about why He chose to speak in parables. He states it this way: *"Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: ¹² That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them"* (Mar 4:11-12).

In other words, in the parables Christ is veiling His glory to conceal it from some, although He is ultimately revealing it to others. The veiling of Christ's glory began already when He became incarnate through the virgin birth. Think of how He was conceived and born in relative obscurity. He grew up and reached adulthood, still hidden from the public eye, not until He was thirty years old and begin His public ministry.

He was truly laying aside His glory in the earlier stage of His life. Even as He began His public ministry, He concealed His glory from the multitudes, though from time to time He would unveil something of His glory in His teaching and miracles. In fact, even His disciples did not understand the full meaning of many things that Christ was teaching. It was as if the truths about which He spoke were hidden. Proverbs 25:2 makes an interesting observation regarding the veiling of God's glory – *"² It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter"* (Pro 25:2).

As the divine Son of God, it was Christ's prerogative to conceal. As strange as it sounds, Christ ultimately would prove Himself more glorious by first hiding that glory. Let me give a simple example to which we can relate. Think of how much more exciting it is to receive a gift that is wrapped, even with the simple paper, than to receive a gift without the wrapping. The wrapping begs to be taken away so that the gift can be seen. So is the same of the parables that "wrap" the glory of Christ. Those who are spiritually blind, and hence are without humble, teachable faith – are blind to this glory. They see only the plain "wrapping," and because there is no true faith, they never receive what is inside. They might find a certain measure of attraction in these simple stories, but the mysteries of the Kingdom and the King of the Kingdom are hidden from them. Those who by faith believe, on the other hand, are shown something of this King and His Kingdom.

3. The Glory of God unveiled through the eyes of faith

In order to see the glory that Christ has concealed in the parables and throughout the Scriptures, we need to have our spiritual eyes opened by the work of His Holy Spirit. Through the work of the Spirit, the Lord needs to make us humble and teachable. We need faith to believe what we cannot understand with our fallen minds. We need to have the darkness of our minds driven back. We need the hindrances in our hearts and lives exposed and broken down. We need to become disciples who ask the Lord to “*declare unto us the parable*” (Matt 13:36).

This is how, I am suggesting to all us, to study the parables of Christ and to study the Word of God. If we truly desire to be transformed by the Word of God, then we must treat God’s Word, not as mere human words, but treat God’s Word as divine and subjecting our hearts and lives to its divine scrutiny.

What happens when the Lord unveils His glory? It is like what Paul pictured in 2 Corinthians 3:7-18. Paul refers to the time when God revealed His glory on Mount Horeb to instruct the people of Israel and to set up His Kingdom among them. Many had some initial sense that something special was happening. However, they soon failed to see anything glorious about it and turned aside to wicked idolatry (Exo. 32:1). To them God’s glory was concealed. But God revealed His glory to Moses, and in Moses at least, this revelation effected a change. His face shone to such an extent that he had to cover it when he returned from the mountain.

You see brethren, when God’s Word impacts us experimentally, it effects a change “from glory to glory” (2 Cor 3:18). We need to recapture God’s glory in our lives through a reverential study of God’s glorious word and by the power of prayer. We need this glory to change us by transcribing itself upon our hearts and lives. Ultimately, this change is the work of the Holy Spirit as John 16:13-15 tells us.

May the Spirit of God work in such a marvellous way that when we read the parables, or read the entire bible, His Word will indeed read our hearts and take control of lives. May the Spirit search our hearts as we search the Scriptures, and so may the Word of God have a thoroughgoing effect on our heart, soul, and mind (Deut 6:5).

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
Fri 26 Sept	4pm & 7pm	Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony <i>The Apostasy & Godless Federations</i> - Mr Ivan Foster	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We do hope that you have a blessed time of worship on this day.
Sat 27 Sept	4:00pm	Bible Study & Prayer Meeting	
Next Lord's Day	Morning Service	Evening Service	LORD'S DAY DUTIES
Preacher	Dr Carl Martin	Dr Carl Martin	<u>TODAY: 21/09/2014</u> Chairman: Jonathan Organist: Jasmine Pianist: Anthony Ushers: Daniel / Yetta Sunday School: Hannah / Rachael Lunch: Maureen Washing Up: Volunteers PA Crew: Scott <u>NEXT WEEK: 28/09/2014</u> Chairman: John Organist: Anthony Pianist: Jasmine Ushers: Tom / Yetta Sunday School: No Sunday School Lunch: Jasmine Washing Up: Volunteers PA Crew: Jonathan
Message	Heaven Shaped Hope	What Is a Paraklete?	
Text	Colossians 1:3-8	John 14:16-27	
NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-lunch Bible Study: Dr Martin will lead this week's study. • Pray for those who are sick: Douglas, Barbara, Prema, Margaret, May Chew, Constance, Deborah, Pastor & Mrs Ki, Susan, Dr Carl Martin, Dr Scott-Pearson, Nina, Helen, Eld Chew's mother, Rev Colin Wong, Patricia, Hannah, Shirley, Daniel, Dr Brian Green. • Pray for those seeking employment: Yetta, Magdalene. • Pray for those on travel: Margaret, Constance, Matthew. • Pulpit Ministry: Please pray for the church's sponsorship application and Pr Mok Chee Cheong's visa. • Church Cleaning: There will be church cleaning today after Sunday lunch. • Ladies Fellowship will be held after lunch next Sunday. • Retirement Service for Dr Stephen Scott-Pearson: Sat 4th October, 3pm at Westminster Baptist Church, 100 Horseferry Rd, London. 			
Worship Service Collections - Last Sunday: £744.10, Lunch: £42.00 Attendance - Morning: 23 (A) 4 (C), Evening: 17 (A) 4 (C)			

SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 34

Q: What is adoption?

A: Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number – and have a right to all the privileges – of the SONS OF GOD.

Comments:

*Adoption denotes the taking of a child who is a stranger into a family, and treating him as a member of it. Such is the adoption meant here. It too, like justification, is an act of pure favour on God's part, and confers blessings to which we had lost all claim. It confers upon us both the *rank* and *rights* of children, and makes us feel that we have both a *place* and a *portion as sons* in God's family.*

Scriptural Reference:

1 John 3:1, Romans 8:17

MEMORY VERSE

Last Week	This Week	Next Week
<p><i>“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others”</i></p> <p>Ephesians 2:3</p>	<p><i>“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,”</i></p> <p>Ephesians 2:4</p>	<p><i>“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)”</i></p> <p>Ephesians 2:5</p>