



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. 22 No. 07

LORD’S DAY 18 FEBRUARY 2018

ORDER OF WORSHIP

	<i>Morning Service – 11am</i>	<i>Afternoon Service – 3pm</i>
<i>Prelude</i>	<i>The Lord Is in His Holy Temple</i>	
<i>Call to Worship</i>	Psalm 103:19-22	Psalm 51:10-12
<i>Opening Hymn *</i>	RHC 16 – “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name”	RHC 233 – “O Breath of Life”
<i>Opening Prayer *</i>	John Poh	Mr Charles Scott-Pearson
<i>Gloria Patri *</i>	<i>Glory Be to the Father</i>	---
<i>Responsive Reading</i>	Psalm 103	---
<i>Second Hymn *</i>	<i>Psalm 103 verses 1-5</i> (to the tune of St Agnes, RHC 57)	---
<i>Announcements & Memory Verse</i>	John Poh	Mr Charles Scott-Pearson
<i>Tithes & Offerings & Doxology *</i>	RHC 214 – “I Know That My Redeemer Lives”	---
<i>Scriptural Text</i>	Matthew 6:1-18	Genesis 35
<i>Pastoral Prayer</i>	Mr Charles Scott-Pearson	Mr Charles Scott-Pearson
<i>Sermon Message</i>	<i>Real Religion</i>	<i>Back to Bethel</i>
<i>Closing Hymn *</i>	RHC 389 – “Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord”	RHC 370 – “Nearer, My God, to Thee”
<i>Benediction/3-Fold Amen *</i>	Mr Charles Scott-Pearson	Mr Charles Scott-Pearson
<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.

GOD'S UNCHANGING GOODNESS

Adapted from Life BP Church Singapore Weekly, Sunday 18th February 2018

Goodness is the prized object in Lunar New Year celebrations all over the world. We see it in the usual greetings exchanged during this season: Wishes are expressed that the new year will be a good one and that there will be overflowing happiness, health and wealth for everyone. This can also be seen in the many customs that have developed over the years in connection with the Lunar New Year. Many of them are observed in the hope that they will somehow bring an increase in one's good fortune, or that they will at least prevent anything from hindering that increase.

For instance, red decorations are used to ward off evil spirits and misfortune. The word "*Fu*" is hung upside down because the Chinese word for 'upside down' sounds like the word for 'arrive.' People give out *hong baos* liberally to bring greater returns of prosperity. When visiting they bring a pair of mandarin oranges to give wealth to each household because the words for 'gold' and 'orange' sound alike in Cantonese. Raw fish is eaten on the seventh day because the Chinese word for *fish* sounds like the word 'surplus' and the word for *raw* may also mean 'life' or 'grow.'

We who know Christ should not hold to any of these superstitious beliefs when we eat these goodies or take part in any non-religious Chinese customs during this festive season. Nothing that you do or that you refrain from doing can add more to your happiness, prosperity or lifespan. Goodness does not come from uttering certain phrases of good wishes, or from eating food with auspicious names, or from the use of certain colours.

Goodness comes from only one source: God. He is the fountain of all goodness for us! This truth is taught most clearly in James 1:17 – "*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*" There are two precious truths in this verse about God's goodness.

God is the Giver of All that is Good

The beginning of v.17 says that "*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.*" This teaches us that God gives only good gifts and everything that is good comes from Him. Some of God's gifts are even mentioned within the same chapter: wisdom (v.5); the eternal crown of life for enduring trials (v.12) and the Word of Truth, which is the Gospel (v.18). These gifts are so much more precious than all the material blessings that are commonly sought by men.

Besides these, there are other gifts from God that may not seem to be good at first, but are just as good and perfect as these gifts. For instance, God gave the apostle Paul a thorn in the flesh which caused him so much discomfort that he besought the Lord thrice to remove it from him. But it became a blessing to him in the end, for he discovered how he can be strong even in his weakest moments through God's sufficient grace!

Whatever God gives is always good. God may sometimes give us difficult trials to endure, but these trials will eventually work to develop the priceless virtue of patience in us (James 1:3, cf. Hebrews 12:11).

However, while God is the Giver of all good things and everything that He gives is good, He is not the giver of all that is NOT good, such as evil, sin and death. In our passage God's perfect gifts are contrasted against the imperfect gifts we receive when we give in to our own sinful lusts and passions. Yielding to tempting offers, no matter how good and desirable they seem to be, will only bring sin and death to us (vv.14,15).

This should be remembered especially during this festive season when people tend to overindulge themselves and throw all caution to the wind. While we should be thankful for all legitimate goodies that we can enjoy in Lunar New Year festivities, we must keep within acceptable limits and not yield to temptation.

Another lesson we can learn from v.17 is that the way that God gives is always good. This is highlighted in the two instances of the word 'gift' in the verse which are different words in the original Greek. The first one which is in the phrase, *'every good gift'* refers to the act or manner of giving. The second one which is in the phrase, *'every perfect gift'* refers to whatever is given. By combining them together James tells us that God's goodness is seen both in His gifts, and in the way that He gives them. God's giving is always out of pure unconditional love. Gifts that are given with love are the best gifts to receive!

However in this world there are some gifts that are better for us not to receive at all, such as gifts that are given grudgingly or gifts that are given with an ulterior motive. If someone wants to give you a big *hong bao*, expecting you to give him an unfair advantage over others, you should not accept it. Proverbs 17:23 says, *"A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment."*

God's giving is never like that. Goodness is behind every act of giving by Him. For instance, in v.5 we are told about how God gives wisdom: *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."* There is only one condition that we need to fulfill, and that is to ask Him in faith (vv.6,7).

The words, *'cometh down'* in v.17 teach us that God gives constantly. The tense used here indicates that the good and perfect gifts of God keep coming down to us. God's giving is not like the way that we give out *hong baos* – we do it only once a year. God's giving is all the year round. We receive a constant flow of gifts from Him! You are receiving gifts from God even at this very moment, because Acts 17:28 says, *"in Him we live and move and have our being."*

King David was so amazed when he thought of this that he wrote in Psalm 139:17-18 – *"How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee."* David testifies of God's constant care over him, providing for his every need.

Thus we have learned that everything God gives is good, that the way He gives is good, and that He gives constantly. What should all this mean to us? Since God is the Giver of all that is good, we should give Him all the credit for every blessing or good thing that befalls us. We should never attribute any happiness, health and wealth we receive to good fortune or good luck. Neither should we say in their heart, *"My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth."*

God warned the Israelites against this when they were about to enter the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 8:7-17). He said that when they enjoy its abundance, and had eaten until they were full and had become rich they must not forget that God is the source of all their blessings. They must not think that they had earned them through their own diligent efforts and ingenuity.

If your business has been doing well, or if you have received a hefty bonus recently, please do not make the mistake of taking any credit for it. Likewise, if you are a student who has obtained good results for your exams you should not rob God of the honour He deserves by taking credit for those good grades. We must never cease to acknowledge that *"every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."*

God's Goodness Never Changes

The description of God as the Father of lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning is an interesting way of saying that God never changes. It compares Him with the changes that can be observed in the sun and the moon. God is called 'the Father of lights' because He created them on the fourth day of creation. According to Genesis 1:16, "*God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.*"

The date for the Lunar New Year is defined as the day when the new moon of the first lunar month appears. But this day changes every year. This year it happens to be on 16 Feb. Next year it will be on 5 Feb, and in 2020 it will be on 25 Jan. Every few years an extra intercalary month has to be added to the calendar to compensate for all the changes and to shift the date of the New Year back to the right position.

The Lunar New Year is therefore just like the sun and the moon in this aspect – it is subject to change. In fact every Lunar New Year season reminds us about this thing called change. It heralds the change from the old year to a new year. Change can also be seen when we sit together at our reunion dinner and when we visit relatives whom we meet only once a year: We become aware that we have all grown a little older. Some may have been taken away in death while others may have been added through marriage or birth.

Change is welcome if it brings good progress and development. But change is not welcome when it brings uncertainty and insecurity. Don't you sometimes wish that your circumstances can remain unchanged especially when things are going very well for you? But you know that this is simply not possible. Whatever goodness you derive out of this real world does not last long because of change.

How thankful we ought to be then that we have a God with whom is no variableness at all, not even the slightest shadow of turning! God is always the same, at all seasons of the year, and throughout all ages. There isn't the slightest change in His character, in His mode of being, or in His purposes and plans. What He was millions of ages ago, He is now; and what He is now, He will be countless millions of ages from now.

We can be very sure then that whatever changes there may be in human affairs or government policies; whatever reverses we may undergo; whatever oceans we may cross or mountains we may climb, God remains the same. He will always demonstrate the same consistent goodness, love and grace to those who seek after Him and abide in Him.

What should this truth mean to us now? Firstly, it becomes our firm ground for having strong hope in God (Hebrews 6:17-19). Secondly, it makes our study of God from the Scriptures worthwhile. Whatever we learn will never become outdated and irrelevant since God does not change. And it will give us all the constancy and stability that we need to cope with life in a world of change.

As we visit our relatives and friends this year, Let us make a good effort to tell them about goodness – not about the changing goodness that is sought by men through the various superstitious customs and beliefs of Chinese New Year, but about the unchanging goodness of God that comes through Jesus Christ. May the Lord help us to be a blessing to others.

- Rev Charles Seet

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am and 3.00 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
Weds 21st February	No Mid-Week Outreach Bible Study		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.
Fri 23rd February	7pm	Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony <i>The Teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ - The Parable of the Ten Virgins</i>	
Sat 24th February	No Bible Study & Prayer Meeting		
Next Lord's Day	Morning Service	Evening Service	LORD'S DAY DUTIES
Preacher	Mr Charles Scott-Pearson	Mr Charles Scott-Pearson	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>TODAY: 18/02/2018</u></p> <p>Chairman: John</p> <p>Organist: Anthony</p> <p>Pianist: Michael</p> <p>Ushers: Tom / Yetta</p> <p>Lunch: CNY Carry-In</p> <p>Washing Up: Volunteers</p> <p>PA Crew: Scott / Anthony</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>NEXT WEEK: 25/02/2018</u></p> <p>Chairman: Jonathan</p> <p>Organist: Michael</p> <p>Pianist: Matthew</p> <p>Ushers: John / Margaret</p> <p>Lunch: Volunteers</p> <p>Washing Up: Volunteers</p> <p>PA Crew: Scott / John</p>
Message	TBC	TBC	
Text	TBC	TBC	
NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday School: This afternoon at 1:45pm the church will be holding Sunday School for young children and toddlers, led by Sisters Elizabeth, Nina and Barbara. Please invite friends and family to attend. • Ladies Fellowship: This will be held after lunch next Lord's Day. • Church Pulpit Ministry: Pray for the Pulpit Ministry and for the calling of a new minister. • Changes to Church Activities from January 2018: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Evening worship will be brought forward to 3pm.</i> ➤ <i>No Pre-lunch Bible Study.</i> • Rev Patrick Tan was called home to be with the Lord yesterday morning. Rev Tan was the Church's previous Supervisory Pastor from New Life Singapore and spent some time in previous years pastoring to our congregation. The Church offers its condolences to the Tan family. 			
Worship Service Collections - Last Sunday: £525.85; Lunch: £31.60; Baalah Fund: £10 Attendance - Morning: 27 (A) 7 (C), Evening: 17 (A) 7 (C)			Church Maintenance Fund Total: £3,970.50
SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 106			
<p>Q: What do we pray for in the Sixth Petition?</p> <p><i>A: In the Sixth Petition – (which is, AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL) – we pray, That God would <u>either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.</u></i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p><i>Temptation</i> means anything that would induce us to sin. And in this petition we ask one of two things from God – either that he would take all temptation away from us, or that he would enable us to resist and overcome it.</p> <p><u>Scriptural Reference:</u></p> <p>Matthew 26:41, Psalm 19:13, 2 Timothy 4:18</p>			
MEMORY VERSE			
<p style="text-align: center;">Last Week</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 Corinthians 15:58</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">This Week</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Psalm 100:3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Next Week</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">James 5:16</p>	