



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. 23 No. 41

LORD’S DAY 13 OCTOBER 2019

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Morning Service – 11am

Afternoon Service – 3pm

Prelude

The Lord Is in His Holy Temple

Call to Worship

Psalm 92:1-4

Psalm 108:3-5

*Opening Hymn **

RHC 47 – “Great is Thy Faithfulness”

RHC 16 – “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name”

*Opening Prayer **

John Poh

John Poh

*Gloria Patri **

Glory Be to the Father

Responsive Reading

Psalm 29

*Second Hymn **

Psalm 29 verses 1-4
(to the tune of St Peter, RHC 456)

Announcements & Memory Verse

John Poh

John Poh

*Tithes & Offerings & Doxology **

Insert – “My Song Is Love Unknown”

Scriptural Text

Joshua 12

Romans 8:37-39

Pastoral Prayer

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

Sermon Message

The Unchanging Character of God

Believers Are More Than Conquerors Through Christ

*Closing Hymn **

RHC 359 – “My Faith Looks Up to Thee”

Insert – “More Than Conquerors”

*Benediction/3-Fold Amen **

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

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.

MARTIN LUTHER (PART 1)

by Dr David Allen

“THE REFORMATION IS LUTHER AND LUTHER IS THE REFORMATION.”¹

In the 1970's I got to know Professor James Atkinson, Professor of Biblical History and Literature at the University of Sheffield, whose book “*The Great Light: Luther and the Reformation*” remains the classic study of Luther. Professor Atkinson's obituary in the Times read of him “*he lived Luther, thought Luther, and breathed Luther.*” It was Professor Atkinson who first introduced me as a young Christian to Martin Luther.

We are in grave danger of both underestimating and even forgetting the surpassing privilege that is ours in our Reformation heritage. Since Vatican II, many gullible Protestants have dropped their guard and now imagine that Rome has changed.

Protestant churches by and large will do nothing to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the nailing of the 95 THESES on the gate of Wittenberg Cathedral on 31 October 1517. The Roman Catholic Church however, sees the 500th anniversary as an opportunity to lure unsuspecting Protestants back into the spidery web of Romanism.

- The **Vatican's Philatelic and Numismatic Office** are printing 17 new stamps this year, one of which will feature Martin Luther as the Church of Rome tries to rewrite history. They will also publish a stamp to celebrate the 100th year anniversary of the apparition of ‘***Our Lady of Fatima***,’ and another celebrating the 300th anniversary of ‘***Our Lady of Aparacida, Brazil***.’
- The Vatican has also given its backing to a central square in Rome being named after Martin Luther. The site chosen is the Oppian Hill, a park that overlooks the Coliseum and is to be named ***Piazza Martin Lutero***. Note: when Martin Luther visited Rome in 1510, he said, “***If there is a hell, Rome is built over it.***”
- Further on 31 October, Pope Francis will visit the Protestant Cathedral at Lund in southern Sweden and that will mark a yearlong commemoration of the Reformation by the Lutheran Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

1483-1513: LUTHER THE PEASANT PRIEST

Martin Luther was born in the Saxon village of Eisleban on November 10, 1483. Luther never forgot his humble background: “***I am a peasant's son; my father, grandfather, all my ancestors were genuine peasants.***”² The rough surroundings and Spartan discipline equipped him for the rapport he was to have with Germany's lower and middle classes. Educated at the University of Erfurt, he planned to fulfil his father's wishes and to practice law.

One night, in a violent storm his friend was struck dead by lightning. In this Luther believed he saw the hand of an angry God; and in great fear, and gratitude that his own life was spared, offered himself to God and His service. In the 15th century that meant only one thing, entering a monastery. He returned to Erfurt, not as a student to study Law, but as a monk. At the age of twenty-two entered the ***Augustinian Eremite monastery*** on July 17, 1505, in sure and certain hope of delivering his soul from all its present conflict and of gaining eternal salvation.

¹ Atkinson J., *The Great Light*, Paternoster Press, 1968, p.11

² *Ibid*

- In September, 1505, he received the tonsure and took the cowl.
- As a clerical novice he was taught all the prescribed acts to go about with eyes downcast, never to laugh, never to eat or speak except at prescribed times, and to beg for bread in the streets.
- He was confined in a single cell measuring nine feet by six feet, in which were one chair, one table, one candlestick and a straw bed.
- He ate twice a day, once only on fast days (of which there were a hundred a year).
- He had no heating in his cell, which was a very severe discipline in a German winter.

Luther had entered the monastery because he was in anxiety about the state of his soul, but found that the spiritual life served only **to sharpen his anxiety without allaying it**. He knew he could never be certain of having confessed his sins in their entirety, and therefore could never experience forgiveness.

The melancholic Luther was in a morbid state of spiritual wretchedness and misery.

- In September, 1506, he professed the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and in May, 1507, he was ordained priest.
- In the autumn of 1508, the young scholar was called to the new university of Wittenberg. There he taught Aristotle and the Bible and it was there he qualified to hold a university chair.
- There was a general desire to reform the Augustinian order by bringing the lax houses up to the standards of the strict houses. Luther was assigned the task of taking the appeal of Erfurt to Rome in 1510.

The four weeks Luther spent in Rome turned out to be a time of grave disillusionment. The simple, devout, learned monk hoped for spiritual and pastoral guidance from the ***Eternal City***, but all he found were ***ignorant priests***.

- When he celebrated mass, his slow reverence created a bottle-neck, and he was pushed on by mass priests anxious to gabble through their allotted quota, crying "***Passa! Passa!***"
- He went on all the pilgrimages available.
- He crawled on his knees up the twenty-eight steps of the Scala Sancta saying a ***Pater Noster*** on each step and kissing each piously. This performance was guaranteed to free a soul from purgatory at one stroke.
- He was shocked at the profligacy of the Papal curia, as well as the conduct of the common people whom 1500 years of Christianity had seemingly left untouched and who would perform their natural bodily functions in the street like dogs.

Upon his return to Erfurt, it was clear to Luther that: **first**, Rome had lost the keys of the kingdom. He said, "***I took onions to Rome and brought back garlic.***" This led Luther to a re-appraisal of the Gospel. **Secondly**, Luther began to learn what it was to stand alone against the majority. Ten years later, Luther was to defend himself against the Papal Bull of Excommunication: "***Do we not read in the Old Testament that God generally raised up only one prophet at a time? Moses was alone during the exodus from Egypt. Elijah was alone in King Ahab's day. After him, Elisha stood alone. Isaiah was alone in Jerusalem. Hosea alone in Israel, Jeremiah alone in Judea, Ezekiel alone in Babylon, and so it went. Even though they had many disciples called 'children of the prophets,' God never allowed more than one man alone to preach and rebuke the people.***"³

³ Fuller, Otis: Valiant for the Truth", p. 120

John Staupitz, his Vicar General and a Professor of Theology at Wittenberg, convinced Luther that his mission was to be a doctor of theology and a preacher, and therefore transferred Luther to Wittenberg once more, where he was commissioned in June, 1512. He was allocated a room which remained his study till his death thirty-four years later. ***“It was there, on that miserable heap of sand, that this unknown scholarly monk lifted Christianity off its hinges and rehung it strait.”***⁴

From his Wittenberg study he stormed the papacy, and prepared his lectures for the university and prepared his sermons. Yet still, Luther did not know the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ. Luther knew nothing of this transition from the fear of hell and judgment to the rapturous enjoyment of the love of God.

The ***seven years of monasticism*** were years of darkness. Monastic discipline deepened Luther’s despair. Luther had been taught that the moment the priest whispered, ***“I now absolve thee,”*** all sins were driven from the soul (except, of course, original sin), but Luther did not know forgiveness as a real experience.

- He turned to all the well-tried means: private chastisement, fastings, vigils, prayers. He tried to propitiate God by doing extra.
- He ruined his health with his much striving. His bones stuck out like an old nag’s.
- There hovered over him in his helpless plight the threat of an angry God and the Day of Judgment. **He felt an overpowering fear of God, a trembling awareness of Him.**
- So intense was his awareness of the thrice holy God in all His eternal majesty, and so intense his own frailty and sin, that he was like a moth longing for the flame and about to be scorched to death by that desire.

Nevertheless, Luther had the hand of the Lord upon him. Luther had scaled the heights by the ladder of ***medieval mysticism***, but when he reached the summit he found there was nothing there. Like Nicodemus of old, he needed to be born again. In the University Library at Erfurt he discovered a complete copy of the Bible, and to his great delight made it his chief study. He began to invest his hope in the Bible, where he would see the harmony between the twin concepts of **the wrath of God** and **the love of God in the unity of the gospel**.

He heard the word of the Lord and it was that word that he declared. He became God-possessed.

- He was drawn to the Augustinian view of predestination, a view which seemed best able to explain his own experience as well as the Biblical teaching.
- The Catholic teaching was that the human element is the determining factor in man’s salvation.
- Augustine in contrast taught that salvation is due to an eternal decree, and is therefore infallible. It is an eternal election to eternal life, a choice made in perfect justice, a choice not only to grace but to eternal glory.
- Luther was in a state of spiritual torture at this hour.
- He grew fatalist, almost determinist. He felt impotent to change his fate decreed for him from all eternity, unable to know for certain whether he belonged to the elect or to the reprobate. He knew God to be thrice holy One and that he himself was a miserable sinner unable to make himself acceptable to God.
- Staupitz, who was deeply read in the Bible sought to turn Luther’s mind away from the **system of penance** to the **reality of repentance**, to the depth of an inward change and conversion.
- Staupitz for all his faults and inconsistencies, taught Luther to see God in Christ, whom God sent not as a condemning judge but as a living and redeeming Saviour. Staupitz never really understood the battle raging in the soul of Luther, but he comforted Luther by his kindness, and helped Luther by dwelling on the Cross.

⁴ Atkinson, p.15

As Luther turned to the Bible, he began to go it alone. He was working on his lectures on the Psalms in the summer of 1513 when the familiar phrase of Psalm 31, “**deliver me in thy righteousness**” began to disturb him. Wherein lay the “deliverance”? Surely, he thought, if a righteous God met unrighteous man, man would be utterly destroyed. He was confused, and as he meditated and pored over the Bible, he became excited when he read “**Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’**” – Romans 1.17

- The Holy Spirit began to reveal unto Luther that a man is not justified in God’s sight by his own works, or merits, or righteousness, but by faith in Christ:
- in other words by Christ’s work and not ours;
- that salvation was no longer a case of man and his works but God and His work;
- that it was no longer a matter of man’s righteousness but God’s righteousness. He saw the righteousness of God as the righteousness which reached out for a soul which, if left to its own devices, would be utterly and eternally lost.
- through the study of Paul’s epistles, he was led to see that justification came by faith in Christ only, with no attending merit on man’s part. A profound peace swept over his soul.
- Luther writes, “**When I realized this I felt myself absolutely born again. The gates of paradise had been flung open and I had entered. There and then the Holy Scripture took on another look to me.**”⁵

He rediscovered and thereafter revived the primitive evangelical faith in God as first expressed in its original purity in the Scriptures of Truth. **Luther’s soul was saved by an unyielding and uncompromising faith in the Bible as the inspired, pure and preserved Word of God.** He wanted every man and woman to look again with fresh eyes at God’s work for man as recorded in the Bible.

Luther, aided by his friend and associate Philip Melancthon, translated the Bible into the language of the people. It was and remains a magnificent achievement. His ardent desire was: “**Let the Scriptures be put into the hands of everybody; let everyone interpret them for himself, according to the light he has; let there be private judgment; let spiritual liberty be revived, as in Apostolic days. Then only will the people be emancipated from the Middle Ages, and arise in their power and majesty, and obey the voice of enlightened conscience, and be true to their convictions, and practice the virtues which Christianity commands, and obey God rather than men.**”⁶

Such theology rang the death knell for the sacrificing mass priest and his mediating and mysterious powers. The call now from Luther was for an educated ministry who could teach, preach and minister the treasures of Christ’s gospel.

- Luther’s burden was to point men to Christ and His Gospel.
- He saw countless souls lost and dying for want of the saving theology revealed in the Bible.
- Salvation was not a matter of works, but solely a matter of grace.
- Faith was no longer a human achievement or effort, but the free gift of God (Eph. 2.8).
- It was the Word of God and the preaching of that Word rather than the administration of the sacraments which Luther saw as the chief mission of the church.
- It was the Word of God that gives the church her commission and also preserves and governs the Church.
- When the Word was preached Christ was active and operative.

⁵ Introduction to Latin edition of Works (Wittenberg, 1545). WA. 54, 186

⁶ Quoted by David Otis Fuller in “Valiant for the Truth”, Oliphants 1962, p.118

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
Sat 19 th October	No Bible Study & Prayer Meeting	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.
<i>Next Lord's Day</i>	<i>Morning Service</i> <i>Afternoon Service</i>	LORD'S DAY DUTIES
Preacher	Pr Mok Chee Cheong Pr Mok Chee Cheong	<u>TODAY: 13/10/2019</u>
Message	TBC TBC	Chairman: Pr Mok
Text	TBC TBC	Organist: Anthony
NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS		Pianist: Anthony
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday School: Sunday School for young children and toddlers will be held at 1:45pm. Please invite friends and family to attend • Church Pulpit Ministry: Please continue to pray for Pr Mok as he takes up the pulpit ministry here in London. 		Ushers: Daniel / Margaret
		Lunch: Tom
		Washing Up: Volunteers
		PA Crew: Venise / Mark
		<u>NEXT WEEK: 20/10/2019</u>
		Chairman: John
Worship Service Collections - Last Sunday: £561.00, Lunch: £26.80		Church Maintenance Fund
Attendance - Morning: 25 (A) 8 (C), Afternoon: 14 (A) 8 (C)		Total: £5,710.50

SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 86

Q: What is Faith in Jesus Christ?

A: Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we RECEIVE and REST UPON HIM ALONE for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

Comments:

Grace means undeserved favour or kindness. A saving grace means an act of God's favour ending in salvation. Faith is such a grace. And it is here said to consist in *receiving* Christ – that is, in believing what is said of him in the Bible, and *resting upon him* – that is, trusting our souls to him as our Saviour. We rest on him *alone*, and not in anything we may or can do. Our plea is, *Christ only*.

Scriptural Reference:

John 3:16, Acts 4:12

MEMORY VERSE

Last Week	This Week	Next Week
<p><i>“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”</i></p> <p>2 Timothy 2:2</p>	<p><i>“Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.”</i></p> <p>Psalms 27:14</p>	<p><i>“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it”</i></p> <p>1 Corinthians 10:13</p>