



# NEW LIFE

## BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

44 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6NN      Charity No. 1060655  
 Tel: 020 7328 0869 (Manse)  
 Email: [newlifebplondon@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:newlifebplondon@yahoo.co.uk)      Website: [www.newlifebpc.org.uk](http://www.newlifebpc.org.uk)  
 Supervisory Pastor: Rev Lim Chee Boon  
 Resident Minister: Pr Mok Chee Cheong      Email: [pastor@newlifebpc.org.uk](mailto:pastor@newlifebpc.org.uk)

*“For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9)*

Vol. 24 No. 52

**LORD’S DAY 27 DECEMBER 2020**

### ORDER OF WORSHIP

|                           | <i>Morning Service – 11am</i>     | <i>Afternoon Service – 3pm</i> |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Call to Worship</i>    | Psalm 146:1-5                     | Joshua 1:9                     |
| <i>Opening Prayer</i>     | Pr Mok Chee Cheong                | John Poh                       |
| <i>Responsive Reading</i> | Psalm 92                          | ---                            |
| <i>Scriptural Text</i>    | Jeremiah 20:1                     | Hebrews 8:1                    |
| <i>Pastoral Prayer</i>    | Pr Mok Chee Cheong                | Pr Mok Chee Cheong             |
| <i>Sermon Message</i>     | <i>Consolations from the Lord</i> | <i>A Great High Priest</i>     |
| <i>Benediction</i>        | Pr Mok Chee Cheong                | Pr Mok Chee Cheong             |

### NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear fellow worshippers and friends,  
 The government has announced that London has entered the Tier 4 category for Covid-19 restrictions. Whilst places of worship are able to stay open, the Church Committee has decided to close the Church to safeguard the wellbeing of the congregation.  
 Both Morning and Afternoon Worship Service will be conducted online.  
 If you require the link to our online zoom services, or have any questions or require further clarity, please call the church manse, or email us at admin 'at' [newlifebpc.org.uk](http://newlifebpc.org.uk).  
 The Church Prayer Meeting will revert to every Sunday at 10:00am before the Morning Worship Service, beginning in January 2021 if the government guidelines concerning Covid-19 permits.

### SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 43

**Q: What is the preface to the Ten Commandments?**

*A: The preface to the Ten Commandments is in these words, ‘I AM THE LORD THY GOD, WHICH HAVE BROUGHT THEE OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE.*

Comments:

These are the words which precede the Ten Commandments. They were spoken to the children of Israel at Mount Sinai, shortly after their deliverance from the bondage of the Egyptians. And they may be applied to us in token of our deliverance from the bondage of sin.

Scriptural Reference:

Exodus 20:2

### MEMORY VERSE

#### Last Week

*“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”*

**Jeremiah 17:9**

#### This Week

*“Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”*

**Hebrews 7:25**

#### Next Week

*“Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers.”*

**Jeremiah 20:13**

# **WHY GOD LEAVES HIS PEOPLE IN A WORLD OF SIN AND SORROW**

Why doesn't God immediately take His beloved ones to Himself out of this world of sin and sorrow? It's a real question that occurs to many at some time or other for various reasons. Why the affliction and troubles? Perhaps it is an abiding question for those who are lingering in this world when they would long to be out of it. Yet the Lord still has a purpose for their prayers and testimony however small they feel their contribution may be. Others are worn down and wearied with the constant reminders of sin and sorrow. What a world it is where this is brought before us wherever we look. Perhaps they mourn over the pitiful progress they seem to make in spiritual things. Wouldn't it be best for them to be taken from this world? Yet it is Christ's purpose for them to be here, He has prayed for them to be left in the world (John 17:15). He has eminently wise reasons for that. What are those reasons? Let us consider some of them.

This was a question asked by Anthony Burgess in one of his sermons and he seeks to answer it for the benefit of those hearing him. He is expounding Christ's prayer for His people not to be taken out of the world (John 17:15). Some people like Enoch and Elijah did have a sudden and glorious call away from this world, but that is not ordinarily the case. Although God loves His people, this does not necessarily mean He must keep them from all misery in this world and give them immediate happiness with Himself in heaven. We think that God ought to give us what will provide us with most happiness, especially seeing as He can if He is willing to do that. Human reason says, "How can God love me, when He keeps heaven and eternal glory from me?" But God's love, and His children's hardship in this world may be consistent with each other.

Our Saviour intended the greatest good for His disciples in His prayer, yet He corrects and moderates it. It is not as if He would have them immediately taken to glory. He is content they should be in the fire for a while, to have their dross purged away. God could do many things for His people, which He will not do. He could immediately crown them with eternal glory when they are converted. Or else He could give them perfect and thoroughly sanctified hearts. He could make the world a paradise for them, so that the way to heaven would be no longer straight and narrow, but broad and easy. God could do this, but it pleases Him in His wisdom to follow another course, and appoint a wilderness for us to go through before we can enter in Canaan. Why does God's love not immediately take the godly out of this world? Since God loves them and they love God, we would think that love would not rest until it had the nearest union possible. But God has reasons for leaving them in this world. Burgess explains what they are in the following updated extract.

## **1. THEY HAVE A WORK TO DO**

Godly men must be present in the world so that they may promote the kingdom of God and bring others to the knowledge of God. This is especially true of the apostles, as apostles, and so of all those that have any office and ministry in the church of God. These are as necessary as the sun is to the world, as the stars in a dark night, as salt to season and preserve from putrefaction. All believers are to use their gifts for others and by their example should give such a glorious light, that others may glorify God (1 Peter 2:12).

If the apostles had been taken up to heaven immediately, where would have been the leaven put into the three measures of meal? Where would the mustard seed be sown, that would grow up into a great tree? If the apostles were the planters and founders of the church, it was necessary that they should continue for some time in the world. The world was a wilderness, that could not immediately be made a garden. It was the devil's habitation; he could not

suddenly be dispossessed.

Since God has service for His people to do, no wonder they must continue in this valley of misery. Paul speaks about this fully, it was necessary for them that he would remain although it was better for himself to depart and be with Christ. (Philippians 1:23). It is certainly better for the people of God and ministers of the gospel especially (at the forefront of the battle and exposed to more hatred) to be with Christ in heaven. There they shall be free from all this virulence and the opposition of the ungodly. Yet if we consider the world and the people with whom they live, their life and presence is very necessary. God's people have work to do, a course to finish, and so they must not look to have the wages before they have laboured in the vineyard.

## **2. THEY NEED TO EXERCISE GRACE**

God will not immediately take them out of this troublesome world so that they may be exercised, and made stronger in their graces. God did not immediately put the Israelites into Canaan. Rather, He led them into many dangers and assaulted them with many enemies, so that their valour in themselves and their dependence on God might be more apparent. God will not train up His children to be idle. No sooner does He make them His than He lets the world and the devil loose on them. Why? To draw out their graces, to teach them all spiritual military discipline. They are to fight as the good soldiers of Christ and put on the whole armour of God, because they *“wrestle not against flesh and blood, but principalities, against powers”* (Ephesians 6:12). The world is a field, in which spiritual battles are to be fought which the Lord beholds. It is also compared to running a race, where there is no time to be idle or sit still, but to focus all their thoughts and the whole heart on the crown they strive for. Expect therefore to have experiences that draw out faith, zeal and heavenly fortitude.

## **3. THEY NEED TO ESTEEM CHRIST EVEN MORE**

God does not take us immediately out of the world but leaves us here in combat with the relics of sinful corruption. This is so that being humbled by it, we may better esteem Christ and His righteousness. When we read of Paul taken captive by his lusts and crying out with misery, what does he do? See how powerfully this drives him to Christ, *“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Romans 7:25).

It is necessary that we should be kept in this conflict here below. This is so that we might be conscious of our unworthiness and groan under our corruptions. This makes long after Christ, we magnify His love and all that He has done for us. Everything within us cries out for a Christ and the grace of God through Him when we feel ourselves sinking. It makes us importune the favour of God. God wills that we find out by experience the bitterness and weight of sin, so that we may love Christ more, who bore God's wrath for us.

## **4. THEY NEED TO SEE MORE OF HIMSELF**

God will not take His people immediately out of the world, that so His goodness, mercy and providence, His wisdom and faithfulness may be the more discovered to us. In heaven there the church is at rest, it is out of all danger, there are no waves, no rocks. So that the wisdom and providence of God in keeping His church there, is not at all discovered. When the waters were dried up, Noah had no more necessity for an ark. The Lord therefore wills that we experience these dangers and temptations, so that His care and love may better manifested. The greater the dangers are, the more His faithfulness is revealed. Is it not an admirable thing to consider how God has preserved a church and people to serve Him faithfully, when hell and the world have conspired to destroy them? By this means God has been made known to the world. The craftsman's skill in relation to the metal is seen when it is in the fire. The pilot's art is manifested, when his ship is on rocks and waves, and under many tempests. Though the

world is a place of dangers and temptations for us, yet it is the mirror to display the glorious attributes of God to His children.

## **5. THEY NEED TO DESIRE HEAVEN MORE**

God purposes to have His people in this world, so that heaven may be all the more welcome. It is so that they may desire that eternal glory all the more earnestly. The labouring man who has worked hard, is glad of his rest at night. Scripture calls heaven a rest (Hebrews 4:9). How welcome it will be after all your troubles, calamities and miseries, at last to have rest! Here in this life, you have no rest, sin troubles you, the world troubles you, your own heart troubles you, but there remains a rest. And how happy that must be to you. We are pilgrims, whose blessedness it is to get home at last. God therefore will have you experience all kinds of conflicts, spiritual and temporal. He will create one trial after another so that you will say, "we have no abiding place here". Never did those endangered passengers in Paul's ship desire more to get to the haven out of all their dangers, then we are to get out of all these troubles into heaven.

## **6. THEY NEED TO SERVE GOD MORE**

God does not immediately take us into heaven, because it is fitting that since we have served sin in this world, we should serve God as much in this world. Your life has been a reproach and a dishonour to Him. It is fitting it should bring glory to His name. Though it is your loss to be kept from heaven, though every day is your great hinderance, yet you are to deny yourself for God's glory. Remember you gave yourself to serve sin, remember how much service the devil has had from you. So that if you love God's glory more than your own, you are to be willing to spend yourself for Him, as you have done against Him.

## **7. THEY NEED TO HELP OTHERS**

God does not remove His immediately out of the world, because of the relations they have. Children need their godly father, the wife needs her godly husband. Although it would be better for them to be in heaven, yet not for their's. We must be resigned to God's will when they are taken from us (John 14:28). We all ought to rejoice when our friends are taken out of this world into glory, but in so far as their presence was a comfort and necessary to us, we may grieve. In the law of Moses, God forbade the mother bird being killed with her young ones. How much more will He show kindness to His people than the birds of the air. It is true that God in His wisdom does often take His own children out of the world too soon (as we think) when they are in the prime of their service. It is too soon also for their children and dependents, but God is even merciful in this though we do not at present see it. God has determined in mercy the time of our abode in this world (John 13:36).

## **8. THEY NEED TO WAIT UNTIL THE BEST TIME**

It is not always best to have the best good immediately, but in its time. It is true that to be with the Lord and be freed from sin is best in itself absolutely considered. But when other things are considered it is not best. God makes everything beautiful in his time. None could be more loved of the Father, than Christ Himself, He came from the bosom of His Father, yet until He had finished His course, He is kept from Him. The child's duty is not to learn the best book first, but what he is most capable of. Though heaven and glory are best, yet it is not best at this time for us to partake of it. So that when it is best to go out of this world, must be left to the wisdom of God.

- adapted from Anthony Burgess, *reformationscotland.org*