



# 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. 24 No. 48

LORD'S DAY 29 NOVEMBER 2020

### ORDER OF WORSHIP

#### **Morning Service – 11am**

Psalm 112:1-4

#### **Afternoon Service – 3pm**

Psalm 145:8-10

**Call to Worship**

Jonathan Kim

**Opening Prayer**

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**Responsive Reading**

Hebrews 5

**Scriptural Text**

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Christ's Compassion and Our Obedience**

**Sermon Message**

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

**Benediction**

### **NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

We are pleased to inform the worshippers and visitors of New Life Bible Presbyterian Church that **the church premise will resume holding worship services on Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020.**

**Please note that there will be strict social distancing measures put in place. Face coverings must be worn in the church at all times out of consideration for all worshippers.**

Please email admin 'at' [newlifebpc.org.uk](http://newlifebpc.org.uk) for more information.

**Weekly Prayer Meeting** will be held online every Friday, 7pm. Please contact Pr Mok for more information.

### **SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 39**

**Q: What is the duty which God requireth of man?**

**A: The duty which God requireth of man, is OBEDIENCE TO HIS REVEALED WILL.**

#### Comments:

Having just learned what God has done, is doing, and means to do for us, we are now to be told what he requires us to do *for him*. What he requires of us is *obedience* to all that he reveals. This is our *duty*, or *what we ought to do*.

#### Scriptural Reference:

Ecclesiastes 12:13, Micah 6:8

### **MEMORY VERSE**

#### **Last Week**

*"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls..."*

**Jeremiah 6:16**

#### **This Week**

*"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"*

**Hebrews 4:12**

#### **Next Week**

*"But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD."*

**Jeremiah 9:24**

# **WHAT MAKES OUR HOME A SANCTUARY NOT A PRISON**

## **Introduction**

In the midst of restrictions that keep many people in their houses more than ever, home may be both sanctuary and prison. It has been the experience of many during 2020. For some people making the home a sanctuary means spending more to create greater luxury, calm and comfort. But if we have nothing more than what is material, it can never of course give true peace. If it is a sanctuary because it is a place devoted to the worship of self, it will ultimately prove to be a prison. We can seek sanctuary in many things in this world outside of the Creator but we will not find the true rest our souls crave. It is the presence of God that makes a little sanctuary for us. He has promised it to His people in all circumstances, even in the midst of trials and afflictions.

The people of God in exile from Jerusalem were inclined to reflect on the sanctuary they had lost in terms of the glorious temple built there (Ezekiel 7:20; Psalm 137:1). They had lost something irreplaceable, but God promises that He Himself will be “*a little sanctuary*” to them (Ezekiel 11:16). God had not been taken from them. The affliction had come from God Himself, He had scattered them in His providence using various means. He promises to draw near to them in the affliction while encouraging them to see Him at work in His providence (Isaiah 45:6-7). He was afflicting them and bringing them through trials in love (Proverbs 3:12). He loves His people too much to deny them the medicine of affliction when they require it. As we give ourselves to Scripture and prayer and walk in a humble and holy way with God, we may know much of His presence.

## **1. GOD IS A SANCTUARY FOR DEFENCE**

The sanctuary was a place of refuge and defence. It was a place to defend holy things, for such things were stored up in sanctuaries. The sanctuary was deemed a privileged place, from which no thing or person might be taken away without sacrilege. Joab fled to the tabernacle of the Lord and took hold of the horns of the altar for this reason (1 Kings 2:28). God would be a sanctuary to him in this sense (Isaiah 8:13-14; Jeremiah 42:11). God would deliver them, He was a sanctuary to them in this place. When the fiery furnace was heated so hot and they cast into it, Daniel’s three friends found God a sanctuary to them (Daniel 3).

## **2. GOD IS A SANCTUARY BY HIS SPECIAL PRESENCE**

In the temple the people had God’s special presence. Zion, where the temple stood, was called the habitation and rest of God (Psalm 132:13-14). God’s goings and ways are said to be in the sanctuary, Psalm 77:13; Psalm 68:24). David says He had seen God in the sanctuary (Psalm 63:2). God would be a sanctuary to them in this sense, they would have His special presence. He had left the temple at Jerusalem, the glory was gone, and now He was with them in Babylon. Ezekiel had the heavens opened to him by the river Chebar and saw visions of God. God manifested Himself in a special way to him, and to Daniel in Babylon. God had no church elsewhere, and now He was with his people there, and calls them His flock four times in one verse (Ezekiel 34:8) and twelve times his flock in the whole of chapter 34.

## **3. GOD IS A SANCTUARY FOR ACCEPTANCE**

Their persons and prayers were accepted in the temple. This was why they went to the temple so much for prayer (Acts 3:1; Luke 18:10). David says in Psalm 20:3 that the offerings and sacrifices in the temple were accepted (see Psalm 18:1). When they had corrupted the worship of God, He tells them their burnt-offerings were not acceptable nor their sacrifices sweet as they had been before (Jeremiah 6:20). It was prophesied that in the future, they would come to God’s altar with acceptance (Isaiah 60:7), this was where they could find acceptance. But they could

also have this in Babylon. When Daniel made his prayer to God for himself and his people in Daniel 9, Gabriel comes and tells him that he was greatly beloved of God. When Mordecai and Esther fasted, their persons and prayers were regarded and accepted in Babylon.

#### **4. GOD IS A SANCTUARY FOR ENCOURAGEMENT AND HELP**

Help came from the sanctuary and strength from Zion (Psalm 20:2). *Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary*” (Psalm 96:6). There they had counsel to direct them, ordinances to sanctify them, and promises to comfort them. They would not lack these in Babylon, God would be to them a sanctuary for help. This is why He stirred up the spirit of Jeremiah to write to the captives and counsel them what to do (Jeremiah 29:5-7). God gave them prophets in Babylon: Ezekiel and Daniel by whom He counselled them from time to time. He also made Babylon an ordinance to cleanse them. They had many promises, various in this chapter and others (see Ezekiel 34 and 36). It is full of sweet, gracious, and comforting promises.

#### **5. GOD IS A SANCTUARY IN ALL CONDITIONS**

Whatever others think or say of God’s people, wherever they are driven, whatever they lose or suffer, God will be a little sanctuary to them. These Israelites were rejected and condemned by those at Jerusalem, carried captive into Babylon. They had lost country, comforts, city privileges, temple ordinances, possessions and liberties. They had hard slavery. When they were now in this situation, God was a sanctuary to them. He preserved them, gave them His presence, accepted their persons and prayers, gave them counsel, sanctified and comforted them. He was a special sanctuary to them, and in place of all ordinances.

If you understand “sanctuary” to mean the land of Canaan as some think (see Exodus 15:17; Psalm 114:2), God would be a land of Canaan to them. Or take it to mean sanctification or heaven (Psalm 102:19), God would be a heaven to them. However the Jews in Babylon might appear in the world, either to those in Zion or Babylon, they were glorious in the eye of God. He calls them His glory and they would be a sanctuary unto them.

This should give comfort to those who are deprived of ordinances, possessions, liberties, friends, country, and who suffer very hard and sharp things. If they are godly, God will be a sanctuary to them. Has He not always been a sanctuary to us, and a stone of stumbling unto others, and for a rock of offence? If God has been a sanctuary to defend us, to give us His presence, to accept our persons and prayers, to send us help, counsel, comfort, deliverance, let us sanctify this God Himself in our heart, make Him our dread and fear, and He will still be a sanctuary to us. *Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord*” (Psalm 134:2).

#### **6. GOD IS A SANCTUARY IN ALL PLACES**

There is no place that can hinder God from taking care of and showing kindness to His people. They were in Babylon, a profane, polluted land, they were scattered throughout those countries, and yet God was a sanctuary to them, and said he would be so in the countries where they would come. When they were in Egypt, God was a sanctuary to them there, and now was so in Babylon also. *God is no respecter of persons*” or places (Acts 10:34-35). He accepts those who work righteousness and fear Him wherever they are. God’s people fear Him and work righteousness wherever they are cast: into foreign nations, as these Jews; the dungeon, as Jeremiah; into the bottom of the sea, as Jonah; into the fiery furnace, as the three youths; into the lions’ den, as Daniel. God is a sanctuary to them. If a person is godly, they will have the praise as well as the protection of God (Romans 2:29).

— adapted and edited from William Greenhill, *Reformation Scotland*