



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. 25 No. 11

LORD’S DAY 14 MARCH 2021

ORDER OF WORSHIP

	<i>Morning Service – 11am</i>	<i>Afternoon Service – 3pm</i>
<i>Call to Worship</i>	Psalm 36:5-10	Psalm 143:7-12
<i>Opening Prayer</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	John Poh
<i>Opening Hymn</i>	RHC 36 – “High in the Heavens, Eternal God”	---
<i>Responsive Reading</i>	Psalm 103	---
<i>Scriptural Text</i>	Ruth 2:15	Acts 2:1-4
<i>Pastoral Prayer</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong
<i>Sermon Message</i>	<i>Spiritual Harvesting</i>	<i>The Day of Pentecost</i>
<i>Closing Hymn</i>	RHC 136 – “Come, Ye Thankful People”	---
<i>Benediction</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong

SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 54

Q: What is required in the Third Commandment?

A: *The Third Commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God’s name, titles, attributes, ordinances, Word, and works.*

Comments:

The Third Commandment bids us use in very reverent manner – 1. God’s names, such as *the Lord*; 2. His titles, such as *King of Kings*; 3. His attributes, such as *holiness*; 4. His ordinances, such as *prayer*; 5. His Word, or *the Bible*; 6. His works, such as *man*.

Scriptural Reference:

Psalm 29:2, Ecclesiastes 5:1, Job 36:24.

MEMORY VERSE

Last Week

“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.”

1 Timothy 6:7-8

This Week

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Acts 1:8

Next Week

“The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.”

Ruth 2:12

WHAT IS THE BEST POSSIBLE LIFE?

Hugh Binning pondered this question deeply from Scripture and in the following updated extract, we have the fruit of that study. It combines extracts from a sermon that he preached on Psalm 73:28 and a lecture on the theme of union and communion with God as the great ultimate purpose of the gospel.

1. THE BEST POSSIBLE LIFE ELUDES MANY

Everyone seeks happiness and wellbeing. Whatever they pursue is sought because it is deemed to be good in itself or helps to attain that which may be called good. But the great misery is, that there is so much ignorance and misconception concerning that which is truly good. Even when anything of what is good is known, there is so little serious consideration and application of it to ourselves. This makes most people wander in pursuit of various things which are not the true good of the soul. They set their hearts on that which is nothing until they find their hearts fall down as a building that lacks a foundation and then they turn again to some other vanity. Thus, the wanderings of men are infinite because the byways are innumerable, even though there is only one true way.

The turnings and toiling of one person are many because they quickly lose the scent of happiness in every way they fall into and therefore must turn to another. They never set about this great business in a solid way and are never resolute about where this happiness can be found and seek it urgently there. Rather, they fluctuate between uncertain apprehensions and various desires.

2. THE BEST POSSIBLE LIFE IS NOT IN THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD

Let us thus set aside all other things which are the pursuits and endeavours of most people. Their natural desires are towards health, food, clothing, life and liberty, peace, and such like, but the more rational sort seek after some shadow of wisdom and virtue. Most have excessive unlimited desires towards riches, pleasure, promotion, and all that we have spoken is enclosed within the narrow compass of men's abode here, which is but for a moment.

Even if it were possible that anyone could enjoy all these desires and delights for the space of a hundred years with everything contributing to his personal satisfaction, within a few years death must close his life, peace, health, and all. His poor soul that was drowned in that gulf of pleasure, shall then find itself robbed of its precious treasure, God's favour. And so, it shall remain in everlasting banishment from His presence. Do you think, such a man was happy? No, Lazarus is happy, who is now blessed in Abraham's bosom, who enjoys an eternity of happiness for a moment's misery! (Luke 16:25) But you know that it is not even possible in this life to attain to the imagined happiness we described. All the gain found is not able to recompense the cost and expense of grief, vexation, care, toiling and sweating concerning them.

3. THE BEST POSSIBLE LIFE IS OUR GREATEST CONCERN

This is the great business we have to do here in this world. We must know where the true wellbeing and eternal welfare of our souls are to be found and by all means apply ourselves to that as the only thing necessary, in comparison of which all other things are indifferent.

Perhaps you have never yet asked in earnest why you came into the world. No wonder you wander and walk randomly, seeing you have not settled on any certain aim. You would not be so foolish in any lesser business, but O how foolish people are in the main business.

4. THE BEST POSSIBLE LIFE IS GOD-CENTRED

The right consideration of the great purpose of enjoying God would shine on you and direct your way. But while you have not set this purpose before you—the enjoyment of God—you must spend your time either in doing nothing towards that purpose or in doing contrary to it. All your other lawful business, callings, and occupations are only by the by. They are not the end nor the means. Yet you make them your only business even though they are entirely irrelevant to it.

If you do not often draw near God by prayer (in secret and by faith in His Son Christ) as lost miserable sinners to be saved and reconciled by Him, do not be deceived. You have no fellowship with Him, and you will not enjoy Him afterwards. You cannot say that have no one else on earth besides God because you do have many other things besides God. You can have nothing of God unless you make Him everything to you—unless you have Him alone.

Those souls that come to Him and see their misery without Him know how good it is to do so. It is not only good but best, indeed it is the only good. “None is good, save one, that is, God” (Luke 18:19) and there is nothing good for us but this one thing, to be near God. So near, indeed, that we may be one—one spirit with the Lord—“for he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:17). Let all your meditations, affections and conduct proclaim that you have none in heaven but God and none on the earth that you desire besides Him. He will certainly guide you to the end and receive you into glory. Then you will rest from your labours because you will dwell in Him, and enjoy that which you longed and laboured for.

The Psalmist says, “It is good for me to draw near to God” (Psalm 73:28). He is so resolved on this that if no-one else in the world was of the same mind, he would not change. Though everyone else would walk in other ways, he would choose to be alone in this rather than be in the greatest crowd.

5. THE BEST POSSIBLE LIFE BRINGS TRUE HAPPINESS

The Psalmist says, “It is good for me to draw near to God”. These words are the holy resolution of a holy heart, concerning that which is the highest good. You see the way to happiness, and you find the particular application of that to his soul, or of his soul to it.

It is a matter of great consolation that God’s glory and our happiness are linked together, so that whoever sets His glory before them as their single aim are taking the fullest and most certain way to true blessedness. God’s glory is our ultimate purpose of man. But our happiness—which consists in the enjoyment of God—is subordinate to this, yet inseparable from it.

We were created for the purpose of communion and fellowship with God. This is why man was made with an immortal soul which was capable of this, and this is our greatest dignity and eminence above the creatures. Adam had some characteristics resembling God impressed on him by God’s finger in His first moulding him in righteousness and holiness. He was also created with a capacity of receiving more from God by communion with Him. Other creatures already have all they will have and all they can have. But Adam was made better to aspire to greater likeness and conformity to God, so that his soul may shine more and more to the perfect day.

6. THE BEST POSSIBLE LIFE RESTORES THE BLESSINGS LOST IN THE FALL

But we must pause a little here and consider our misery in having fallen from such excellence. Sin has interposed between God and man and this dissolves the union and hinders the communion. An enemy has come between two friends and put them at odds, an eternal odds. Sin has sown this discord and alienated our hearts from God. Man's glory consisted in the irradiation of the soul from God's shining countenance. But sin interposing has eclipsed that light and brought an eternal night of darkness over the soul. No beams of divine favour and love can now break through directly towards us, because of the cloud of our sins that separates between God and us.

What will we do? How will we see His face in joy? Certainly, it would have been altogether impossible, if our Lord Jesus Christ had not come, who is "the light and life of men." The Father shines on Him, and the beams of His love reflect upon us, from the Son. We are rebels standing at a distance from God, Christ comes between, a mediator and a peacemaker, to reconcile us to God. "God is in Christ reconciling the world." God first makes a union of natures with Christ, and so He comes near to us, down to us who could not come up to Him, and then He sends out the word of reconciliation—the gospel (1 John 1:3). It is a voice of peace and invitation to the fellowship of God. Behold, then the happiness of man is the very end and purpose of the gospel.

Thus, the union is begun again in Christ, but as long as sin dwells in our mortal bodies it is not perfect, there is always some separation and some enmity in our hearts. But this is begun which is the seed of eternal communion, we are here partakers of the divine nature. It must aspire to a more perfect union with God. A believing soul looks upon God as its only portion—accounts nothing misery but to be separated from Him, and nothing blessedness but to be one with Him (Psalm 73:26).

It is true, indeed, that our heart and flesh often fail us and we become ignorant and brutish (Psalm 73:22 and 26). Our affections cleave to the earth and temptations with their violence turn our souls towards things other than God. Temptations and the corruptions of our hearts disturb our spirits easily and draw them away from the Lord towards any other thing. But yet we continue with Him and He keeps us with His right hand; we may fall, but we shall rise again. He is "the strength of our heart," (Psalm 73:26) and therefore He will turn our heart around again and fix it on its own portion. Our union here consists more in His holding us by His power, than our taking hold of Him by faith. Power and goodwill encamp about both faith and the soul.

7. THE BEST POSSIBLE LIFE HAS THE BEST BLESSINGS

God has made the life of religion attainable by His gracious promises. This is a blessed life, in approaching near to Himself, the fountain of all life. And this is a certain good, a universal good, and an eternal good.

(a) It is a certain good. It will not disappoint you as other things do. It is as certain that the soul that truly seeks this in God cannot be disappointed, as that He is faithful.

(b) It is a universal good. It includes everything because it is joined to the infinite all fulness of God. This advances the soul to participate in all that is in Him. This is health, (Psalm 42:11; Proverbs 3:8). This is light (John 8:12). It is life (John 11:25); liberty (John 8:36); food and raiment (Isaiah 61:10 and John 4:14). It is profit, pleasure, promotion in a superlative degree, all combined in one. It is the true good of both soul and body, and so the only good of a person.

(c) *It is an eternal good.* It will last as long as your soul lasts. Of all other things it may be said, “I have seen an end of them,” they were and are not”. But this will outlast time and all its changes. It will begin to be perfect when all perfection is at an end.

Ponder these things in your hearts and consider them concerning your own souls, so that you may say, “It is good for me to draw near to God.” Friends delight in one another and enjoy one another. Love opens the treasure of God’s fulness and makes a vent of divine bounty towards man, and it opens the heart of man and makes it large as the sand of the sea to receive from God. Our receiving from His fulness is all we can give Him. O what blessedness is this, for a soul to live in Him! And it lives in Him when it loves Him. And to taste of His sweetness and be satisfied with Him, this makes perfect oneness, and perfect oneness with God, who is “the fountain of life”, and in whose favour is life, is perfect blessedness.

8. THE BEST POSSIBLE LIFE CANNOT BE REJECTED WITHOUT THE GREATEST HARM

How lamentable it is that Christ came to restore us to our lost blessedness and yet almost no one considers it or lays it to heart. O how miserable, —twice miserable—is that soul that does not draw near to God in Christ, when God has come so near to us in Christ. What greater evil can be imagined than separation from the greatest good? And what greater good, than having access to the greatest good? Everything is happy and well, in so far as it is joined with and enjoys that it needs. Light is the perfection of the earth, remove it, and what a disconsolate and unpleasant thing it is! There is nothing necessary to the immortal spirit of man but God and, therefore, all its happiness or misery must be measured by the nearness or distance of this infinite goodness.

We are infinitely bound by creation, by many other bonds stronger than wedlock. We are bound to consecrate and devote ourselves wholly to God, but this is treacherously broken when we depart from Him. Everyone turns aside to vanity and lies and is guilty of heart adultery from God, and spiritual idolatry, because the affection that should be preserved chaste for Him is prostituted to every base object (Psalm 73:27). This is inevitably followed by the soul being divorced from God forever, an eternal eclipse of true and real life and comfort. Whoever draws back from the fountain of life and salvation inevitably finds perdition and destruction elsewhere (Hebrews 10:39).

— adapted and edited from Hugh Binning (1627–1653), *Reformation Scotland*

NEWS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear Worshippers, as the Church Premises reopens for Morning Worship Service 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.

For the time being, the 3:00pm Afternoon Worship Service will still 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.

Tithes & Offerings – There will be an offering box at the entrance to the Church Sanctuary for you to place your offerings in.

The Task Force would like to wish all mothers a “Blessed Mother’s Day”.

CHURCH NOTICE

Dear fellow worshippers and friends,

We are pleased to inform the worshippers and visitors of New Life Bible Presbyterian Church that the church will resume holding worship services in the Church premise on Sunday mornings.

The church activities will take place as follows:

- Sunday Morning Worship Service, 11am – Church Premises & Online
- Sunday Afternoon Worship Service, 3pm – Online only

Provided that there is no worsening of the pandemic in London, we hope to start holding the Afternoon Worship Service and Fortnightly Bible Study within the church premises in the coming months.

Changes introduced to the Worship Services held at the church premises

In compliance with the current Government guidelines, the following changes have been introduced:

- Worship services will be limited to 60 minutes duration.
- No singing and offering collection during the worship service. Offerings can be made at the offering box when entering or exiting the church.
- All Bibles and hymn books will be kept and unavailable for use. Please bring your own Bible and remember to take it away with you after worship service.
- Adopt a 2-metre social distancing seating arrangement (household members may sit with each other).
- Face coverings to be worn in the church **at all times** out of consideration for all worshippers. For young children under the age of 11, the use of face covering is optional. **Please ensure you bring your own face covering.**
- No socialising with anyone outside of your household or support bubble within the Church premises.
- No socialising outside the Church premises.
- No food and drinks will be made available (Fellowship Lunch has been temporarily suspended).
- No access to non-essential areas of the church – this includes the Fellowship Hall and kitchen.
- New movement arrangements to be adopted (please follow directions).
- Temperature measurements will be taken for every worshipper and visitor.
- Worshippers and visitors are required to complete the contact details slip for the NHS Test & Trace service. These details will be kept securely in church for 21 days and then destroyed. They will only be submitted to Test & Trace if a Covid-19 case occurs.
- Alternatively, please download the NHS COVID-19 Mobile App and scan one of the QR codes in the Church entrance to check-in.

To join our online services or to obtain further updates, please visit the church website (www.newlifebpc.org.uk) or call the church manse (020 73280869).

With the Lord's blessing,

John Poh & Jonathan Kim
Task Force Members

RHC036 – High in the Heavens, Eternal God

High in the heavens, eternal God,
Thy goodness in full glory shines;
Thy truth shall break through every cloud
That veils and darkens thy designs.

Forever firm thy justice stands,
As mountains their foundations keep;
Wise are the wonders of thy hands;
Thy judgments are a mighty deep.

My God, how excellent thy grace,
Whence all our hope and comfort spring!
The sons of Adam in distress
Fly to the shadow of thy wing.

Life, like a fountain, rich and free,
Springs from the presence of my Lord;
And in thy light our souls shall see
The glories promised in thy word.

Isaac Watts

RHC136 - Come, Ye Thankful People

Come, ye thankful people, come -
Raise the song of harvest-home:
All is safely gathered in,
Ere the winter storms begin.
God, our Maker, doth provide
For our wants to be supplied:
Come to God's own temple, come -
Raise the song of harvest-home.

All the world is God's own field,
Fruit unto His praise to yield:
Wheat and tares together sown,
Unto joy or sorrow grown.
First the blade, and then the ear,
Then the full corn shall appear:
Lord of harvest, grant that we
Wholesome grain and pure may be.

For the Lord our God shall come,
And shall take His harvest home:
From His field shall in that day
All offences purge away -
Give His angels charge at last
In the fire the tares to cast,
But the fruitful ears to store
In His garner evermore.

Even so, Lord, quickly come
To Thy final harvest-home:
Gather Thou Thy people in,
Free from sorrow, free from sin;
There, forever purified,
In Thy presence to abide;
Come, with all Thine angels, come -
Raise the glorious harvest-home.

Henry Alford