



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. 16

LORD'S DAY 18 APRIL 2021

ORDER OF WORSHIP

| | <i>Morning Service – 11am</i> | <i>Afternoon Service – 3pm</i> |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Call to Worship</i> | Psalm 65:1-4 | Psalm 125:1-2 |
| <i>Opening Prayer</i> | Pr Mok Chee Cheong | Jonathan Kim |
| <i>Opening Hymn</i> | RHC 8 – <i>"Holy, Holy, Holy"</i> | --- |
| <i>Responsive Reading</i> | Psalm 108 | --- |
| <i>Scriptural Text</i> | Acts 7:13 | Zechariah 2:1-5 |
| <i>Pastoral Prayer</i> | Pr Mok Chee Cheong | Pr Mok Chee Cheong |
| <i>Sermon Message</i> | <i>The Second Time</i> | <i>An Appeal to Return to Christ</i> |
| <i>Closing Hymn</i> | <i>"Jesus, Lover of My Soul"</i> | --- |
| <i>Benediction</i> | Pr Mok Chee Cheong | Pr Mok Chee Cheong |

SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 59

Q: Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?

A: From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the CHRISTIAN Sabbath.

Comments:

The Patriarchal and Jewish Sabbath was held on the *Saturday*, because that was the day on which God rested from Creation. The Christian Sabbath is held on the *Sunday*, because that is the day on which our Saviour arose from the grave. The change was made in accordance with the practice of the Apostles and the early Church.

Scriptural Reference:

Genesis 2:3, Acts 20:7, Revelation 1:10

MEMORY VERSE

| Last Week | This Week | Next Week |
|--|--|---|
| <i>"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."</i> | <i>"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."</i> | <i>"For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her."</i> |
| Acts 4:12 | Acts 5:31 | Zechariah 2:5 |

GOD'S PAINFUL CURE FOR THE SIN OF SELF-PITY

Self-pity is all-too tempting, even attractive. We can see it in others, even in the victimhood culture around us but not so much in ourselves. It flies under the radar because it is often expressed with a sense of righteous indignation or false humility. It is easy to move from feeling that things are not going the way that they should (according to what is right) to the settled conviction that they are not going the way we think they should. It then comes to be about our importance and how we are ignored and perhaps not listened to. Nobody understands and gives us recognition. So, a sense of spurned entitlement arises, surreptitiously allowing pride a foothold. When we think things are not going as we know they should we can also be tempted to question God subconsciously. Self-pity warps our perspective. If we had the right view of God's sovereign wisdom, goodness and justice we would see who He is and what He is doing and express our thankfulness. We would turn to His pity away from our own. We need to be better able to recognise the temptation and dangers of self-pity to seek God's way of deliverance from it.

Self-pity loves to respond to a crisis. We can see this in Jonah chapter 4. After all that he has experienced, Jonah sits down to nurse his fears, discontent and grievances. Here we encounter Jonah complaints at God's dealings with Nineveh and his wish to be dead (v1-4). We see how self-pity fuels sin, especially anger, resentment and bitterness. He thinks that he knows how God should act and is greatly displeased that He does not comply. We see how self-pity is a kind of inverted pride that seeks to justify ourselves no matter what. Self-pity is so deeply rooted that it is not easily removed. The Lord must show Jonah how warped and self-centred his perspective has become, He does this through first providing and then removing a small plant with its welcome shade. The prophet has more pity on a plant than a vast city of needy souls. Ultimately his self-pity is silenced by the clear declaration of God's infinite pity towards sinners. But it is such a serious sin that it can only be treated by thoroughly exposing its danger and purging its corruption. George Hutcheson draws much practical teaching from this chapter in the following updated extract.

1. SELF-PITY OFTEN FUELS SIN

Corruptions may lurk and remain alive in those who have gone through many crises and so might have had them mortified. Jonah after many difficulties, is still angry and impatient. It is a great sin to seek to have God's dealings shaped according to the mould of our mind. Jonah's sin is that he is very angry and exceedingly displeased with what God did (Jonah 4:1).

Corruption may sometimes so prevail with the children of God, that it will not just be a temptation within the heart that is quickly suppressed. It may even break out with their own consent against God for a time. Jonah vents his anger in prayer to the Lord and much of what goes under the name of prayer may involve letting loose our corruption and temper. What is called prayer here is in effect is a bitter expostulation with God and venting of Jonah's vehement desire to die.

The people of God may have been corrected for and brought to condemn their own past sinful ways and fall into them again though temptation. Jonah now approves his former way of rebellion which he had previously condemned (Jonah 2:8). He now thinks he had done well in fleeing from God (Jonah 4:2).

2. SELF-PITY IS SELF-WILLED

As the fallen children of Adam, we are often tempted to presume we would guide things better than God if we our way. Jonah shows that he thought it would have been better to have gone to Tarshish than to have come to Nineveh (Jonah 4:2). When someone is tempted in this way, they will not lack plausible pretences to justify themselves and make their preference seem reasonable. Jonah has such good reasons that he even dares to appeal to God Himself. Did Jonah not anticipate this accurately in his own country? He could see that God's mercy would make his words of threatening to be in vain and bring his ministry into contempt. Thus, he did the right thing in fleeing he says. But our reasonings must submit to God's sovereign will and give way to His infinite wisdom.

3. SELF-PITY DIMINISHES GOD'S PITY

The mercy of God toward lost sinners is so far beyond human mercy, that it may sometimes make His dearest children unhappy that He is so merciful. God's mercy to Nineveh because He is so gracious and merciful was offensive to Jonah (Jonah 4:2). God is so gracious, that He is not easily provoked by sinners. When He is provoked, He is easily reconciled to them again. Jonah knew this in his own country and now saw it verified.

It is a great mistake to think that mercy manifested to humbled sinners should make them despise God or His servants. Mercy is rather a most effectual means to produce the fear of God, and respect to His ordinances and messengers (Psalm 130:4). Jonah's reasoning against God's mercy is based on a mistake and is evidence of his being carried headlong with his vehemence.

4. SELF-PITY LEADS TO EXTREMES

It is clear evidence of an embittered spirit when any condition (however bad) seems better to them than the present situation. Thus, Jonah thinks it better to die than live, not because he desires glory but rather seeks rest from his present troubles. It ought rather to have made him afraid to think of going out of the world in such a bitter spirit (Jonah 4:3).

The children of God in their temptations may very ardently express the dross of their own heart in seeking that which is altogether wrong. In his bitterness Jonah asks the Lord to take away his life. The saints have great mercy in having a Mediator to correct their prayers.

It is a sign of great corruption and self-love when we seek our own contentment and satisfaction in dying or living, rather than being subject to the will of God. It is mean cowardice angrily to seek to be out of this life because of any trouble we encounter in it through following God. Jonah's sin is such that he gives this reasons in his bitterness that it is better for him to die than to live.

5. SELF-PITY REQUIRES GOD'S PITY

The Lord reproves Jonah's anger and appeals to his own better judgment whether it was fitting to complain in this way. The Lord bears with the weaknesses of His servants in great meekness and patience while they are in such a condition and there is hope of recovery. We learn this from the Lord's gentle reproof of great anger and stubbornness. The mercy of God, which he resented being shown to Nineveh, is the cause of his own safety (Jonah 4:4). Gentle reproofs from God and His tender dealing with His children, ought to make the deepest impression on them. The Lord chose this way so that Jonah in seeing God's goodness toward him (who was so often off course) might be the more deeply convicted. When the children of God calm down from their anger, they will be most severe against themselves for their impatience and

misconduct. The Lord therefore appeals to Jonah to judge his own way in such a frame of mind as being the fittest judge to pass hard censure on himself.

6. SELF-PITY IS STUBBORN

It may be very hard to convince a child of God of their error when they are under this temptation. They may even go on in their way when God reproveth them for it (Jonah 4:4-5). Inordinate affections may not only bring people to show themselves in opposition to the will of God, but also easily draw them into delusion. If people will not believe truth but seek it to be according as they wish, they will still expect that things should be so. The forty days had expired and Jonah had been informed of God's will, yet he still expects to see what he wants to happen. He went to see what would become of the city considering it possible they might yet perish, turn from their repenting; or that God would change His purpose of mercy.

Even the children of God have so much of old Adam unmortified that they may in temptation, vent fearful attitudes. There is great need to pray that we are not led into temptation. Jonah, as a prophet, ought to have rejoiced at the success of his ministry and the repentance of sinners. But his mind is only bent upon the destruction of these penitent sinners and grieves to see that city still standing. He sat to see what would become of it, as though he was daily wishing its destruction, and grieving that he did not see it.

7. SELF-PITY IS NOT EASILY CURED

A spirit once broken and embittered with troubles is easily grieved and stirred up. Jonah responds bitterly to the heat that he experiences (Jonah 4:6). In healing His people's sin, the Lord must first lance their boil and expose more of their corruption before He applies any healing plasters. Jonah's anger is kindled even more before the disease can be healed.

When we give way to bitter discontent it will soon make us furious and illogical. Jonah wanted to die when he no longer had relief from the heat of the sun as if he should be exempted from bearing anything. People are scarcely themselves in a fit of passion.

8. SELF-PITY IS DISCONTENTMENT WITH PROVIDENCE

To be excessively discontented at Providence especially for small matters is entirely unfitting for the servants of God. This is implied here, it was not right for him as a prophet, to be angry (exceedingly angry, as the words may be read) for the gourd or plant (Jonah 4:9).

9. SELF-PITY IS PRIDE

The pride of the human heart is such that in temptation it will justify itself and even resist the verdict of God. Jonah's answer to the Lord's question teaches us this. He justifies his anger and says that nothing will please him except death which will rid him of these troubles.

10. SELF-PITY IS OFTEN SELF-CONTRADICTORY

Self-love easily blinds people so far that they will justify doing worse things than those they condemn in others. Jonah would not allow the Lord to be merciful even though it was for a just reason. Yet Jonah could permit himself to indulge in selfish rage (Jonah 4:10-11).

We ought to allow God more latitude in His way of working than we take for ourselves. The Lord shows Jonah that though blinded with caprice he had pity on a plant and should not the wise and sovereign Lord, spare Nineveh. He was willing to reason Jonah out of his folly despite being He to whom absolute submission of spirit was due.

The Lord can easily remove and expose the plausible pretexts advanced by selfish people. Whatever Jonah might pretend to be the cause of his grief for Nineveh being spared, the Lord shows that his bitterness flowed indeed from self-love to himself, as could be seen in the matter of the gourd or plant.

11. SELF-PITY IS ANSWERED BY GOD'S PITY

The Lord is so constant in His goodwill that He will not only show mercy but defend His doing so against all who will oppose it (Jonah 4:11). The Lord by teaches us by this example to devote our affections to things that have worth in themselves. He reproves Jonah's pity on the gourd (a thing of so small worth that it came up in one night and perished in another) as far worse than God's mercy in sparing the great city of Nineveh.

12. SELF-PITY CAN BE HEALED

The children of the Lord will at last be satisfied with all the Lord's dealings and will submit to His way in them as only right and wise despite all their complaints under temptation. The Lord gets the last word in this debate and it is evident from Jonah's silence and not answering again that he submitted at last. The testimony of this and of his unfeigned repentance for his misconduct is that these things are recorded here for the edification of the Church and for the glory of God.

— adapted and edited from an extract by *George Hutcheson* (1615-1674) - 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.

Church Maintenance Fund Total: £6,760.50

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

RHC8 - Holy, Holy, Holy

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to
Thee;
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty!
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, Holy, Holy! All the saints adore
Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around
the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down
before Thee,
Which wert and art and evermore shalt
be.

Holy, Holy, Holy! Tho the darkness hide
Thee,
Tho the eye of sinful man Thy glory may
not see;
Only Thou art holy - there is none beside
Thee,
Perfect in pow'r, in love and purity.

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy Name in
earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty,
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!.

Reginald Heber

Jesus, Lover of My Soul

Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high!
Hide me, O my Savior, hide -
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide.
O receive my soul at last!

Other refuge have I none -
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee.
Leave, ah, leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me!
All my trust on Thee is stayed -
All my help from Thee I bring.
Cover my defenseless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in Thee I find.
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is Thy name -
I am all unrighteousness;
False and full of sin I am,
Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace with Thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin.
Let the healing streams abound;
Make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art -
Freely let me take of Thee;
Spring Thou up within my heart,
Rise to all eternity.

Charles Wesley

Tune: HOLLINGSIDE