



# 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. 04

LORD’S DAY 24 JANUARY 2021

## ORDER OF WORSHIP

	<i>Morning Service – 11am</i>	<i>Afternoon Service – 3pm</i>
<i>Call to Worship</i>	Psalm 149:1-4	Psalm 73:24-26
<i>Opening Prayer</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Jonathan Kim
<i>Opening Hymn</i>	<i>The God of Abraham Praise</i>	---
<i>Responsive Reading</i>	Psalm 96	---
<i>Second Hymn</i>	<i>Psalm 96 verse 1-9</i> <i>(to the tune of Ellacombe)</i>	
<i>Scriptural Text</i>	Jeremiah 39:1	Hebrews 12:1
<i>Pastoral Prayer</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong
<i>Sermon Message</i>	<i>Trust the Word</i>	<i>The Heavenward Race</i>
<i>Closing Hymn</i>	<i>Thy Word Have I Hid in My Heart</i>	---
<i>Benediction</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong

## SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 47

### **Q: What is forbidden in the First Commandment?**

*A: The First Commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying the true God, as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other which is due to him alone.*

### Comments:

The First Commandment forbids us: 1. To deny God, which is *atheism*; 2. To worship any other God, which is *idolatry*; 3. To glorify any other God, which is *profanity*.

### Scriptural Reference:

Psalm 14:1, Matthew 4:10, Romans 1:25

## MEMORY VERSE

### **Last Week**

*“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”*

**Jeremiah 31:33**

### **This Week**

*“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him”*

**Hebrews 11:6**

### **Next Week**

*“Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me”*

**Jeremiah 32:27**

# **HOW TO LISTEN TO A SERMON?**

Hundreds of thousands of minutes. That's a lifetime total of hearing sermons. But listening to sermons involves far more than clocking up time staying awake during preaching. Despite the amount of time we devote to this, clear guidance on how to listen to sermons is rare. Christ says that it matters how we hear the Word (Luke 8:18). The benefit we derive depends on the way we listen. So how ought we to listen?

It's important that we benefit from the preaching we hear. We have ears so that we might listen to God's Word (Matthew 11:15; Mark 8:18). And when we do listen we need to understand, it is a solemn thing to be always hearing without understanding (Mark 4:12). Our hearts and lives should produce fruit from what we hear (Luke 8:15).

We also need to pay attention to what we hear as well as how we hear it (Mark 4:24). When we compare what we hear in sermons with what Scripture says we are also listening in the right way (Acts 18:11). Although something preached may not seem to be exactly what we think we need right now, we are to store it up for when we will need it most (Isaiah 42:23).

No doubt online sermons have been beneficial to many. But if they incline us to think less of preaching in reality and in the context of public worship we are not listening in the right way. Particularly if people feel they can skip church and listen at home. Perhaps it doesn't seem so attractive as listening to their favourite celebrity preacher but it is God's appointed context. There is a bond between a minister and his congregation that is absent from an online sermon from another preacher. We are not to be sermon tasters but sermon doers.

In this updated extract, James Durham gives some helpful advice for how to benefit from hearing the Word preached. Listening well to a sermon begins before we ever get to church. As the Larger Catechism puts it, we need "preparation and prayer" before going to hear the Word preached. This is where we need to start.

## **1. LISTEN WITH PREPARATION**

This involves:

- praying for the preacher;
- praying for ourselves that we may profit by the Word;
- preparing ourselves to be in a spiritually settled condition for such an activity;
- seeking to have the right estimation of the Word;
- blessing God for His Word and for any good received beforehand by it.

## **2. LISTEN IN PERSON**

We need to be present to listen (Acts 10:33). If we are absent from church, neglecting gospel opportunities we are not listening in person. Neither are we properly there in person if we are sleeping during the sermon when we should be listening.

### **3. LISTEN WITH EXPECTATION**

We should go to hear with an expectation of and longing for the presence of God or of meeting with Him. We come with hunger and thirst as new born babes, having laid aside anything that may hinder receiving it with desire (2 Peter 2:1-2).

### **4. LISTEN TO GOD**

When we are called to hear the Word we meet with God in His ordinances. We must be present, as before God, to hear, as Cornelius was (Acts 10:33). Go to hear out of respect for God's honour. Go to hear out of conscience not out of mere custom or for appearance's sake.

We must look to God, receiving the Word as God's Word, not as man's (1 Peter 1:23-25; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 4:11). There is a special fear which we ought to have before His name. There ought therefore to be trembling and fear in our attending to these ordinances (Isaiah 66:2; Ecclesiastes 5:1-2 and Malachi 2:5).

### **5. LISTEN WITH YOUR WHOLE HEART**

Listening is more than hearing, especially if the sermon is heard, but it is not understood (Matthew 13:13). But there is a danger when though it is understood, it is soon forgotten. We must avoid letting the Word slip out of our mind and rather retain and store up what we hear (Luke 9:44).

Listening involves devoting our ears and memories to what is preached. Not wandering in our minds and thoughts (Ezekiel 33:31-32). We must not devote only our ears and memories, however, but also throw open our hearts to the Word, to let it sink down in them.

### **6. LISTEN WITH SUBMISSION**

We must not go to hear with prejudice. Faith must mixed with hearing, giving credit to the Word. It is a great sin not to believe God's Word when we hear it (Hebrews 4:1-2). This happens when we fume against the reproofs of the Word and quibble with its teaching as well as when we reproach it rather than ourselves.

### **7. LISTEN WITH DEPENDENCE**

We must renounce our own resources to depend on Christ in seeking to hear the Word.

### **8. LISTEN IN THE RIGHT WAY**

We should thirst after the pure milk of the Word, that we may grow by it. We are not listening in the right way when our ears itch for novel expressions, words or things (1 Timothy 4:3). Neither must we give more weight and attention to things that are novel compared to duties or truths already known.

When the same truth, expression, or verse cited by one preacher is not respected and received as much as when it spoken by another we have partiality. We are respecting men in a way contrary to James 2:9. The same is true if we are diverted from what is said to love of the preacher. Or if we delight in what is spoken simply because it is spoken

by a certain preacher. If we delight in the manner of speaking or expression more than in God, respecting God and profiting spiritually we are not listening in the right way.

## **9. LISTEN WITH REVERENCE**

We do not have the right spirit if we disrespect the ordinance of preaching for some worldly or personal respects. Particularly if we prefer any small trivial thing to it.

Reverence involves avoiding vain looks, idle thoughts and other trifling, irreverent behaviour. This includes unnecessary speaking or talking during the time of the sermon. Even speaking in prayer disrespects the Word unless it is a very short prayer in reference to what is at present spoken.

When we stumble without cause at any expression in the sermon we are being irreverent. Especially when we are so frivolous as to laugh at what is spoken, undermining the ordinances of God's worship. This even relates to dressing in a way that shows befitting respect to preaching as God's ordinance. We should also show reverence in the way that we go away from hearing the Word.

## **10. LISTEN WITHOUT DISTRACTIONS**

We should be watchful to prevent what may divert, distract or constrain our minds when we come to hear. It is our responsibility to order things so that they may not be a hinderance to us in meeting with the blessing of the gospel.

Some are distracted by vain things while they should be listening. They notice the clothes others are wearing or the way the church building is decorated or constructed. We should avoid being distracted even by reading something additional (even though it is Scripture) when we should be listening. Even good thoughts can tend to divert us from hearing.

## **11. LISTEN PRAYERFULLY**

We ought to intermingle very short prayers for ourselves and others as we listen. We should pray for the preacher while he is preaching that God would help him. Pray that God would help us to keep such a Word for the time when we may need it. Bless God when words are spoken in the right way. Listening prayerfully will help us avoid quenching conviction of sin or the stirring of affection awakened by the Word.

## **12. LISTEN AND DO**

We ought not to listen more for knowing than for doing, more for informing the mind than for reforming the heart and life (James 1:22-25). We must apply it to ourselves and test whether we commit the faults or do the duties mentioned.

## **13. LISTEN FOR ETERNITY**

We must give due weight to God's warnings and threatenings of judgement and to the gospel. We must consider and make use of the preached Word as a means to convert as well as confirm (James 1:21). We ought to make use of the promises offered in preaching as directed by God to us through an authorised ambassador. We must lay due weight on them as coming from Him. We fail to listen for eternity when we reject the many

sweet offers of the gospel and do not come to the marriage of the King's Son (Matthew 22:1-14). In doing so we grieve God's Spirit who urges them on us. If we do not accept Christ and make use of Him, we tread Christ's blood under foot by having so little esteem for it.

## CONCLUSION

Listening to a sermon is a spiritual rather than merely intellectual or social activity. We must approach it in the right way. We can benefit a great deal from sermons if we prepare ourselves to listen to them in the right way and give careful and earnest attention to them. Afterwards we need to pray and meditate on the truths declared and make sure to practice what we have been shown is God's will for us. In our conversation with others we can encourage them to remember and benefit from the Word preached. Wouldn't it make a vast difference to our hearts, lives, families and churches if we did?

— *adapted from James Durham, Reformation Scotland*

### 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.

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.