



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. 26 No. 45

LORD’S DAY 06 NOVEMBER 2022

ORDER OF WORSHIP

	<i>Morning Service – 11am</i>	<i>Afternoon Service – 3pm</i>
<i>Prelude</i>	<i>The Lord Is in His Holy Temple</i>	
<i>Call to Worship</i>	Psalm 71:22-23	Psalm 72:17-19
<i>Opening Prayer</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong
<i>Opening Hymn *</i>	RHC 47 – “Great is Thy Faithfulness”	RHC 50 – “Jesus, my Lord, my God, my All”
<i>Responsive Reading</i>	Psalm 29	---
<i>Second Hymn *</i>	<i>Psalm 29 verses 1-4</i> (to the tune of St Peter, RHC456)	---
<i>Scriptural Text</i>	Exodus 34:29-35	1 Corinthians 13:7
<i>Pastoral Prayer</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong
<i>Sermon Message</i>	<i>A Foretaste of the Saints’ Glorification</i>	<i>The Difficulties of Christian Love</i>
<i>Closing Hymn *</i>	RHC 212 – “Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus”	Insert – “O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus”
<i>Benediction/3-Fold Amen *</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong
<i>Postlude</i>	<i>The Lord Bless You</i>	---
<i>* Congregation Stands</i>		

THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE

The Lord is in His holy temple,
The Lord is in His holy temple:
Let all the earth keep silence,
Let all the earth keep silence before Him -
Keep silence, keep silence before Him. Amen.

THE LORD BLESS YOU

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord lift His countenance upon you,
and give you peace, and give you peace;
The Lord make His face to shine upon you,
And be gracious unto you, be gracious,
The Lord be gracious, gracious unto you. Amen.

SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 33

Q: What is justification?

A: Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Comments:

Justification means pronouncing a person righteous; it is the opposite of *condemnation*. It is said to be an *act*, because it is done at once; and an act of God’s *free grace*, because we can do nothing of ourselves to deserve it. It consists of two parts – *pardon* and *acceptance*; and we are taught also that the *cause* of it is not our own goodness, but *Christ’s*, and that Christ’s righteousness becomes ours through *faith*.

Scriptural Reference:

Romans 3:24, Ephesians 1:7, Romans 5:19, Galatians 2:16

THE HOLLOW CORE OF HUMAN FLOURISHING

The secularism of our age makes a virtue of, not exactly excluding God from our lives, but confining Him to the parts of our lives where we find Him useful in our pursuit of personal human flourishing. But the seemingly valuable goal of personal flourishing, pursued in its own right, does not lead to actual flourishing, where we find real satisfaction and fulfilment in our lives. Instead it leaves us with a nagging sense of emptiness and futility. The perfect life, the perfect artwork, perfect happiness is always just out of reach. Why is this? We can't lay all the blame on other people, or structural barriers to our personal fulfilment. Such things may frustrate us but ultimately the problem is that we are looking for fulfilment in the wrong place. The things around us and within us are simply incapable of meeting our deepest desires and needs. In the following updated extract, Alexander Nisbet draws on the wisdom of Ecclesiastes to make this point. When we sideline God in our lives, or make Him subservient to our own self-directed goals, we doom ourselves unavoidably to futility and emptiness.

The preacher says, "All is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1:2). All created things, and all human endeavours related to them, are insufficient for yielding any true contentment. "All is nothing," it could be translated, or "empty of any virtue as to the effect of making us happy." This includes created delights such as riches, honours, and worldly pleasures, particularly as they are abused, and "subjected to vanity" (Rom. 8:20), by people seeking their chief good from them. Also "vanity" are all the efforts we make by human power or skill to make ourselves happy, or contented, whether in the contemplation or the enjoyment of created things. These are vain because they are unable to afford any thing but disappointment, and disappointment in the highest degree, "vanity of vanities."

SPIRITUAL BEINGS NEED SPIRITUAL FULFILMENT

There are earthly and tangible delights which are in themselves good, and in their right use lawful, and subservient to us for attaining true happiness. Yet even these prove altogether unprofitable, and unsatisfying to us, if we seek to enjoy them as our chief good. They are so disproportionate, so inadequate, to the human soul. The nature of the soul is spiritual, and the soul is capable of enjoying an infinite good – God reconciled to through Christ as our portion. This is why our souls can never be satisfied with these fading and transitory things. All temporary delights, mainly because they are fading, and unable to satisfy the immortal soul, are here pronounced to be vanity of vanities.

THE "JUST A BIT MORE" FALLACY

Solomon continues, "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing" (Ecclesiastes 1:8). While people are pursuing earthly contentments as their chief good, they foolishly imagine that if they just had a bit more of them, they would then be satisfied. Yet, pursuing earthly things as our best portion always ends in dissatisfaction, not only in the pursuit but also when they are attained, as if by drinking, you only become more thirsty. All the toil and wearisome labour that people have in pursuing these lying vanities, and all the dissatisfaction and even disgust they feel in consuming them, never in the slightest diverts them from spending themselves yet further in the pursuit! They still keep gazing at these unsatisfying sights, and still listen greedily to the

voice of temptations and corruption, expecting to find happiness in these things. Even when their efforts are unspeakable weariness, yet still they labour in the same way.

THE “NOW WE KNOW BETTER” FALLACY

In fact, people persist in this, so entranced with the apparent sweetness of earthly things, as if nothing like it had ever been tasted by anyone who ever lived before. It is as if they had found out, or could find, new ways of achieving happiness, and get more fulfilment than anyone ever did before. “There is no new thing under the sun,” Solomon says. “Is there anything of which it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us” (Ecclesiastes 1:9–10). This refutes anyone who thinks that previous generations were short-sighted in finding happiness in earthly things, and that now we will easily find out new and more excellent delights, and new and more effective ways of attaining to them. The Holy Spirit contradicts this. Whatever methods they invent are only the same as others have tried before. They are unsatisfactory, and have a sting in their tail.

THE “THEN MY WORRIES WILL BE OVER” FALLACY

Solomon had all possible advantages to allow him to enjoy as much as anyone could from all the choicest flower of created things. In Ecclesiastes 2:4–8 he mentions, for example, his stately buildings, the paradise-like orchards he planted, his numerous attendants, his great herds of cattle. He also had great plenty of the best sorts of jewels, and variety of excellent music.

But so empty are all created things, and so unable to give satisfaction, that when you have your eyes filled with the most delectable sights that they can afford you, and your taste and smell refreshed with the most delicious of them, and your future secure with the abundance of all sorts of riches – even then, your heart will readily be frequented with sad thoughts, in the midst of it all. Many cares and fears will readily mix themselves with all your enjoyments.

THE “FOLLOWING MY HEART” FALLACY

In verses 10–11 Solomon confesses that he threw himself into finding joy in life’s pleasures. Although he was a true child of God, yet he gave himself permission to pursue happiness in earthly things and gorge himself on whatever his eyes desired or his heart rejoiced in. Yet, reflecting later on that period in his life, he can only conclude that he had met with nothing but emptiness, and disappointed of any true satisfaction. His soul was gnawed away with the tormenting challenges of his conscience for pouring out his delight so much on these things; this is the “vexation” he speaks of. In his final analysis he says there was “no profit” in all these things. He found nothing remaining over and above, besides disappointment and vexation.

When the Lord is not made the prime delight of our souls (as He alone deserves to be; Song 2:3), we are at the mercy of whatever represents itself to us as desirable or fulfilling. Whatever it is, we are ready to give ourselves up to it! We have God’s restraining grace to thank, if we are kept back from the most heinous wickedness in this pursuit.

People often think it is a good enough reason to continue in their sinful way, to say that their heart prompts them so to do, and that they can take joy in the way they are going. Yet when the Lord awakes the conscience, they will realise that, far from being a warrant to go this way, it only increases their grief that they had the kind of heart that rejoiced so much in this sinfulness! “My heart rejoiced in all my labour” (v.10) was the reason that prevailed with Solomon to

abandon himself to his earthly pleasures, but now he sees it as something that aggravates his guilt and increases his grief.

THE BITTER EMPTINESS WE FEEL SHOULD PROMPT US TO PURSUE GOD INSTEAD

By verse 17, Solomon has related disappointment after disappointment from his attempts to find happiness in natural things and intellectual things. He has heaped up to himself all possible variety of earthly delights, but in the end he finds he “hates,” that is, “loathes, or despises” all these ways of living. Instead of finding fulfilment in estrangement from the Lord he has nothing but a gnawing of spirit.

Even as one of God’s people, it was a difficult thing to bring Solomon back from seeking fulfilment in earthly things once he had let himself go. Neither the voice of God’s Word, nor the voice of conscience, nor the influences of the Spirit, were sufficient to awake him or reclaim him. It wasn’t until the Lord sent this bitterness on his spirit, and made all his idols bitter to him, that he was brought to repentance.

All of us are naturally so wedded to our own will that as long as Christ’s sanctifying Spirit is not swaying our will in the right direction, we will rather desire not to live at all (even though we also have sneaking fears that things will not necessarily go well with us in the afterlife), than to be disappointed in what we have set our hearts on as a piece of happiness in this world.

When the Lord makes our life bitter to us, and other things grievous, while we are living at a distance from Him, then, especially if we are one of the Lord’s people, we should be far from taking it as a token of his wrath, and a sign that His purpose is to destroy us. On the contrary, take it as an evidence that He is preparing you for a new manifestation of His favour, after this time of being humbled. It is when our hearts are ravished with delight in any thing under the sun, more than with delight in God, that we are clearly under His displeasure. Then we should be afraid in case He abandons us to rejoice in this sinful way until we perish. In Solomon’s case, sensing the bitterness and vanity of earthly things became the means of his renewed repentance and faith in the Lord, and so spoke of God’s love and mercy towards him.

- *Article taken from Reformation Scotland — an updated extract from Alexander Nisbet (1623-69), who was a Covenanting minister and Bible expositor*

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

Our Lord's Day activities begins with the **Church Prayer Meeting** at **10:15 am** followed by the **Worship Services** at **11.00 am and 3.00 pm**. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear Worshippers, we extend a warm welcome to you this Lord's Day. We hope that you have a blessed time of worship with us today.

For those unable to attend Church in person, we are streaming our worship services online. To join our online services or for more information, please call the church manse, or email us at [admin 'at' newlifebpc.org.uk](mailto:admin@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.

Children's Sunday School – held after Morning Service at 1:45pm

After-Service Fellowship – Join us for lunch fellowship after the morning worship service. Please bring your own lunch as only drinks will be provided.

Worship Service Collections: Last Sunday - £190.00, Maintenance Fund: £100.00

Church Maintenance Fund Total: £9,640.50

MEMORY VERSE

Last Week

"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not."

1 Corinthians 10:23

This Week

"And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."

Exodus 34:6

Next Week

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

1 Corinthians 13:13

Pre-cautions for Worship Services held at the church premises:

With the lifting of the legal Covid restrictions on 24th Feb 2022, we will continue observing the following precautions:

- No offering collection during the worship service. Offerings can be made at the offering box when entering or exiting the church.
- Temperature measurements will still be taken for every worshipper and visitor for the time being. We continue to urge those who feel unwell (especially with Covid symptoms) not to come to the church services but join us at our online services.
- During worship services, please continue to sit with your own households.
- As per the current government advise, we suggest you use a face covering when attending the services. Please bring your own face covering.

To join our online services or for more information, 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