



# NEW LIFE BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

44 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6NN

Charity No. 1060655

Tel: 020 7328 0869 (Manse)

Email: [newlifebplondon@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:newlifebplondon@yahoo.co.uk)

Website: [www.newlifebpc.org.uk](http://www.newlifebpc.org.uk)

Supervisory Pastor: Rev Lim Chee Boon

Resident Minister: Pr Mok Chee Cheong

Email: [pastor@newlifebpc.org.uk](mailto:pastor@newlifebpc.org.uk)

*“For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9)*

Vol. 26 No. 51

**LORD’S DAY 18 DECEMBER 2022**

## ORDER OF WORSHIP

### *Morning Service – 11am*

### *Afternoon Service – 3pm*

*Prelude*

*The Lord Is in His Holy Temple*

*Call to Worship*

Psalm 106:47-48

Psalm 108:1-5

*Opening Prayer*

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

*Opening Hymn \**

RHC 2 – “O Worship the King”

RHC 4 – “Love Divine, all Loves Excelling”

*Responsive Reading*

Psalm 35

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*Second Hymn \**

*Psalm 35 verses 24-28*  
(to the tune of Evan, RHC 259)

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*Scriptural Text*

Jude 24-25

Nahum 3:7

*Pastoral Prayer*

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

*Sermon Message*

*Faith and Perseverance to the Glory of God*

*The Source of the Christian Comfort*

*Closing Hymn \**

Insert – “Keep Us, Lord, O Keep Us Ever”

RHC 239 – “Come, Gracious Spirit, Heavenly Dove”

*Benediction/3-Fold*

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

*Amen \**

*Postlude*

*The Lord Bless You*

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*\* Congregation Stands*

### **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 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

# **SENSITIVITY TO SPIRITUAL INSENSITIVITY**

**The 2021 Census for England and Wales has shown that only 46% of the population now identify themselves as Christian, making Christianity now a minority religion in England and Wales. The most concerning thing about this is not so much that Christianity is losing political influence in the nation, as if all that matters is our voice and social prestige, or as if Christ's church is only valid with popular approval and credibility. Instead, it gives us reason to mourn the emptiness and hopelessness that people consign themselves to when they don't know Jesus Christ, as well as the disrespect and dishonour we collectively do to God when on the national level we are so rapidly turning our backs on Him and His ways. But do these concerns really register with us? Are we alive to the tragedy of these things? Perhaps at one time we cared about the eternal destiny of our fellow-sinners and God's reputation and public glory, but now our eyes glide over the bad news and a malaise of apathy paralyses us from even turning to the Lord about the situation. In the following updated extract, William Guthrie meditates on the prayer in Isaiah 63 which confesses and laments hard-heartedness in the Lord's people when confronted with societal and moral problems.**

These are very sad words, *“O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?”* (Isaiah 63:17) It is one of the heaviest and saddest troubles from the hands of God on men and women, to have their hearts hardened from His fear. And yet things are not desperate, or past remedy, so long as there is enough softness of heart as to perceive the hardness of our hearts, and to be capable of regretting it before God. Hard softness, as we may call it, is not the worst kind of hardness, or at least it is not the greatest degree of it. The Lord had graciously bounded their hardness so that it had not gone the full length that it could have done. This is how they notice it, and say, *“Why hast thou suffered our hearts to be hardened from thy fear, and to be so hard that we should not fear thy name?”*

## **HARDNESS OF HEART IS SOMETHING FOR US TO CONFESS**

Whenever it is said that the Lord hardens, it is not meant that He does so by infusing any sinful qualities into the heart (James 1:13). God is incomprehensibly holy, and infinitely removed from being accessory to anything that is sinful in the creature. But it is said that He hardens when He permits and leaves someone to the hardness of their own heart (which is natural to the offspring of fallen Adam), but also when He withholds or withdraws something of the grace given to the creature, on which hardness of heart follows. But seeing as the majesty of God is under no obligation to give grace to the creature, that hardness of heart cannot be charged on Him, nor can He be blamed for withholding abused grace from them.

You must therefore look on the complaint as not being spoken in a way of proud or ill-natured expostulation laying all the blame on God, and evading or shifting it off themselves. No, the words point to how the Lord was interacting with the church members who are speaking here. Nor are we to think that these words are spoken irreverently, in a way of complaining about God, but only in a way of expostulation with themselves. It is as if they said, *“Lord, what have we done that has provoked Thee to deal with us in this way?”* There is the hint of a desire to know what sin in them it was that had brought on this plague of hardness of heart, which was grievous to them beyond anything in their external condition and captivity.

It seems to be one of the evils of our time, that many, even good folk, are largely strangers to the condition of their own heart. More particularly, hardness of heart is an evil incident to the people of God. It is by the people of God that this complaint is made, “Why hast thou made us to err, and hardened our heart from thy fear?” We think it is made with much bashfulness, spoken by those who were ashamed that they could hardly claim that God was their Father. Yet they are necessitated to lay claim to God. They give Him much credit, as if merely the look of His eye could redress their condition.

## **SYMPTOMS OF HARDNESS OF HEART**

Here are a few symptoms and evidences of this hardness.

- When challenges for sin do not easily make impression on us. Though his own situation was particularly pointed out in the parable Nathan used, David took little notice of it in the way of applying it to himself.
- When we acknowledge our sins, yet without being affected by this so as to be made better.
- When the impression of a sin wears off easily. I think if we had spiritual dexterity in sinking challenges for sin in the blood of Christ, there would be no harm from that! But when the challenge is thrown off through deadness, or simply passes away somehow or another, or else is forgotten before we get any satisfying views of pardon, then our case is not right. This only hardens the heart still more.
- When we have troubles in providence, yet our ability to pray is restrained.
- When we become rash, heedless, precipitate, and fearless in worship and in walking, rushing forward without ever considering our own condition, walking as if there were no hazards in our walk and conversation, without fear of being indisposed for worship or any kind of duty.
- When we cast off the reverential fear that we ought to have, as if we did not live in the midst of snares and manifold temptations, or as if we did not have hearts ready to comply with every snare and temptation. Walking in the fear of the Lord all the day long is become a rare thing among Christians nowadays.

## **THE SERIOUSNESS OF HAVING A HARD HEART**

That felt hardness of heart is, in the account of God’s children, one of the heaviest and greatest of strokes that come upon them from the hand of God. It is picked out here as the worst of judgments. I think their hearts were at their mouths, and the tear in their eyes, when speaking out these words, “Why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?” They do not complain about their outward calamity, though it was more than ordinary; the stroke that most affected them was hardness of heart. “And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee; for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us because of our iniquities.” And, “all this is come upon us; yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.”

Now, the reasons why the people of God look upon this as a sad stroke are these.

- Because, of all the things that God could send us, hardness of heart has most of God’s displeasure in it.
- Because it borders very near to the condition of the reprobate.

- Because it prevents us from tackling the things that keep us labouring under it. We know that we are in the wrong, yet we cannot mourn for it before God. We sin, and cannot repent.
- Because it means we do not profit under any of God's providences. However He smites us, our hearts do not grieve.
- Put the question to yourselves:- What do think about the problem of hardness of heart, and how does it affect you? Do ye feel it one of the heaviest and saddest things that God could send you? Do you seriously think you would be content to take any other rebuke from Him, if only this hardness of heart was removed?

### **THINGS TO BEWARE OF BECAUSE THEY HAVE A HARDENING EFFECT**

If hardness of heart is your burden, I recommend that you would take it as a favour from God that it is actually a burden to you. Perhaps the fact that it is so little your burden makes you question if there is anything at all promising in your case and condition. Therefore search into the causes of it.

- Failing to take notice of conscience and convictions, and trying to quench the motions of the Spirit, gradually harden the heart. Where conscience tables a challenge, oh, then, let it speak out.
- Taking no notice of God's entreaties. Sometimes the Lord's calls are very urgent and pressing on us to entertain grace, communion, and fellowship with God, yet the soul does not listen but lets them pass by. This is why people who live under an entreating gospel, yet do not get God's grace, or evade the offer of it, are the most hardened of all people.
- Allowing sin to sit on the conscience unrepented of. As every act of sin strengthens the habit of sin, and disposes unto more acts of sin, so it hardens exceedingly, thrusts out from God, and keeps the soul still under its dominion.
- Formalism in worship, i.e., a continual custom of worshipping God formally, either in public, in the family, or in secret.
- Acknowledging a problem but omitting to wrestle with God for pardon and victory over sin.

The Lord convince us more thoroughly of the evil of hardness of heart, and teach us to make use of the right remedy through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*The Article, an extract, is taken from Reformation Scotland, by William Guthrie (1620–1665), who was minister of Fenwick in Ayrshire who is best known for his valuable book on salvation and assurance The Christian's Great Interest. 8 Dec, 2022*

# 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 1:30pm

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

**Christmas Day Lunch Fellowship** – Please speak to Bro. Mark if you wish to attend and contribute food.

**Worship Service Collections:** Last Sunday – £120.00,  
04/12/22 – Offering: £825.00

**Church Maintenance  
Fund Total:** £9,840.50

## MEMORY VERSE

### Last Week

*“The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.”*

**Zephaniah 3:17**

### This Week

*“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”*

**Jude 21**

### Next Week

*“The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.”*

**Nahum 1:7**

## 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](http://www.newlifebpc.org.uk)) or call the church manse (020 73280869).

With the Lord's blessing,

John Poh & Jonathan Kim  
Task Force Members