



NEW LIFE BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

44 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6NN

Charity No. 1060655

Tel: 020 7328 0869 (Manse)

Email: newlifebplondon@yahoo.co.uk

Website: www.newlifebpc.org.uk

Supervisory Pastor: Rev Lim Chee Boon

Resident Minister: Pr Mok Chee Cheong

Email: pastor@newlifebpc.org.uk

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

Vol. 26 No. 47

LORD’S DAY 20 NOVEMBER 2022

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Morning Service – 11am

Afternoon Service – 3pm

Prelude

The Lord Is in His Holy Temple

Call to Worship

Psalm 95:1-3 & 6

Psalm 96:1-4

Opening Prayer

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

Opening Hymn *

RHC 60 – “*This Day at thy Creating Word*”

RHC 360 – “*My God, is Any Hour so Sweet*”

Responsive Reading

Psalm 31

Second Hymn *

Psalm 31 verses 1-6
(to the tune of St Stephen, RHC 397)

Scriptural Text

Zephaniah 1

1 Corinthians 15:26

Pastoral Prayer

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

Sermon Message

Judgement is a Reality

The Destruction of Our Last Enemy

Closing Hymn *

Insert – “*Lo! He Comes With Clouds Descending*”

RHC 13 – “*Abide with me*”

Benediction/3-Fold

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

Amen *

Postlude

The Lord Bless You

* **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 35

Q: What is sanctification?

A: Sanctification is the work of God’s free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the IMAGE OF GOD, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

Comments:

Sanctification means making a person holy. It is here said to be a *work*, because it is done, not at once, but gradually, and a work of *grace* because it proceeds from God’s undeserved goodness, and is wrought in us from first to last by his own Spirit. It consists in our being made *like to God* – that is, in gradually learning to hate and cease from sin, and to love and practise holiness; and this is called a *renewing*, because it is restoring us to the state in which we were at first.

Justification, adoption and sanctification are thus seen to be all necessary to salvation. In justification, the sinner is pardoned; in adoption, he is brought into the family, in sanctification, his is cleansed from all sin.

Scriptural Reference:

Titus 3:5, Ephesians 4:24, Philippians 3:13-14, Proverbs 4:18

THE BEREAN'S NOBLE RECEPTION OF THE WORD: HOW THEY RECEIVED IT

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Acts 17:11

Two things Scripture tells us about the Bereans' reception of the Word: first it was "with all readiness of mind" and; second, the Bereans received it only because it agreed with the Scriptures, which they searched daily.

First, "they received the word with all readiness of mind" (v. 11). The phrase "readiness of mind" is with eagerness, willingness, and even passion. The Bereans were very keen, very eager, and very enthusiastic to hear. The Bereans were thrilled to find a man sent from God to explain the Scriptures to them; they readily received Paul's message as from God. Only very unwillingly, therefore, would the Bereans have missed a service at the synagogue. They had been regular, enthusiastic listeners before Paul arrived; and their zeal was only doubled when they heard Paul's message. The Bereans were the kind of people who said on the Sabbath: "Quick: let's get ready! Paul is going to explain the Scriptures to us!" They eagerly prepared for the preaching and looked forward to it.

Specifically, the Bereans were keen to hear, listen to, and understand Paul's teaching concerning the Messiah (Jesus). They eagerly looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, and they were excited to hear a man who could teach them about him from the Old Testament. They were keen to know as much about this Jesus as Paul could tell them. They wanted to know who this Messiah was, what salvation he had come to bring, and how the cross and resurrection fit into God's plan for his people. Unlike the Thessalonians the Bereans did not dismiss the gospel out of hand: they heard Paul, they considered what he said, and finally they believed.

Do you receive the Word with readiness of mind—with all readiness of mind? Do you receive it with eagerness, willingness, passion, and zeal? If you do, then you are like the Bereans. The Bereans received the Word, as it should be received, because it is God's Word. They did not despise it, or criticize it; they did not mock it or show disdain. They were not indifferent to it, but they submitted to it and they obeyed it. They embraced the Word not as something intellectually stimulating, but as authoritative: as authoritative as the Old Testament Scriptures, as we shall see. Therefore, the Bereans believed the Word, they lived according to it, and the Word changed them: if Jesus was the Messiah who suffered, died, and rose again, as Paul proved, then they believed in this Messiah and turned from sin.

Again, I ask—is that our response to the Word of God? On Sunday morning—or even on Saturday evening—do we prepare to hear the Word, so that we can receive it with all readiness of mind? Do we pray on Sunday morning before we come to worship: "Father, give me readiness of mind to receive thy Word" and "Father, give our pastor readiness of mind to preach thy Word so that we hear thy Word through thy servant"? Is that readiness of mind reflected in your attitude to the Word at home: do you come with all readiness of mind to personal and family devotions? Do you—as much as you are able—come with all readiness of mind to the weekly Bible studies? Do your children come with all readiness of mind—and with ample preparation too—to the catechism classes? That is the mark of a faithful church: the minister and the members receive the Word with readiness of mind, with all readiness of mind. Then you are Bereans.

But there is a second thing—perhaps even more famous—for which the Bereans are known: their ready reception of the Word was not gullibility, but it urged them to a serious search of the Scriptures. They tested Paul's message by the Scriptures. We need to be careful to understand what the Bereans were doing here. The Bereans were not skeptics, for they were eager: they received the Word with all

readiness of mind. Certainly, they had no skepticism about the inspired Scriptures. They believed that the books of Genesis through Malachi were the Word of God. They did not search the Scriptures, whether the Scriptures were true. They knew—they believed and were confident—that the Scriptures were true. The “new thing” that they had to check was Paul’s claim from the Scriptures that Jesus of Nazareth, the one who suffered, died, and rose, was the Christ. That was new revelation, if you will—they had not heard that before.

The Bereans’ readiness of mind compelled them to search the Scriptures. They were not satisfied simply to take Paul’s word for it: indeed, he claimed (as an apostle) divine authority, but they needed to test his message. In addition, they were not satisfied simply to hear one or two sermons on the Sabbath: they wanted to know more—much more—and so they went to the source, which was the source of Paul’s preaching: the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, they searched the Scriptures daily. Every day they examined the sacred writings, poring over the law, the prophets, the psalms, and the writings, to discover for themselves what the Scriptures taught. Notice that they searched the Scriptures: they did not search the writings of the rabbis or the traditions of the Jewish fathers; for them the Scriptures had authority.

This was not an unhealthy skepticism, but faithfulness to the truth. Consider what an undertaking this was for the Bereans. Private ownership of the Scriptures was rare because the copying of scrolls was a slow, laborious, and costly process. Therefore, it was probable that there was only one copy of the Scriptures in Berea: in the synagogue. The Bereans came to the synagogue and asked permission to use one of the scrolls of the sacred writings: perhaps a group came together to study the sacred writings. Furthermore, it was difficult to search the Scriptures in that day. We open our Bibles at certain pages; we find chapters and verses. The Bereans had scrolls, which had to be unfurled at particular places, and that was not an easy thing to do. You can imagine these Bereans studying the Scriptures, looking up passages, comparing Scripture with Scripture. They compared what they found in the Holy Writings with what Paul was preaching: “whether these things concerning Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah were so.” (Could it be true—did the Messiah really have to suffer? Could it be true—did the Messiah really have to rise again from the dead? Could it be true—is Jesus, this man whom Paul preaches, the promised Messiah, Christ, and Saviour?).

As I said, this was not unhealthy skepticism—they were not trying to prove Paul wrong; they were not trying to trap Paul: they were open to his message, but they were not willing to receive just any message without proper scrutiny. This behaviour of the Bereans is commendable and it presupposes a number of things about the Scriptures and about all believing recipients of the Word of God.

First, this presupposes the authority of the Holy Scriptures. There are many supposed authorities in the world. For some the majority is the authority, but the Bereans were a minority: they did not determine truth by the numbers who accepted it. For some tradition is the authority, but the Bereans did not examine the writings of the rabbis and the fathers. For some family is the authority, but the Bereans did not choose the way that pleased their family. The only authority for the Bereans—and for us—is the Holy Scripture. In the context of Acts 17, the Holy Scripture was the Old Testament, but for us the Holy Scripture consists of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. Even then, the new revelation of the apostles had to be tested by the earlier authority of the Old Testament.

Paul does not complain that the Bereans examined his teaching by the Scriptures: he welcomed it; he even insisted upon it. If the apostle allowed his teachings to be subject to the authority of Scripture, every preacher today must expect—and must demand—that his teaching is tested by Scripture. Examine what your pastor preaches and test it by the Scriptures. Listen to the sermons with your Bible open and compare what he says with the Bible.

Second, this presupposes the clarity or the perspicuity of the Scriptures. The ordinary believer in Berea with the Scriptures was able to test the apostle Paul. The ordinary believer in Berea was able to understand the Scriptures. The ordinary believer can understand Isaiah’s prophecies concerning the

Messiah sufficiently to know that they prophesy his death and resurrection. One does not need a degree in Greek or Hebrew or advanced studies in theology to understand the Scriptures: the simplest believer with a Bible can detect and refute false doctrine and can recognise and receive the true gospel of God's Word.

Third, this presupposes the Reformation principle of the office of all believers. Every believer has the Holy Spirit and is a prophet, priest, and king in Jesus Christ. Therefore, every believer has the right, responsibility, and ability to read the Scriptures. Therefore, no believer may ever blindly follow an ecclesiastical authority—a priest, bishop, or pope; or a pastor or theological professor. And yet we should issue a caution: there is a difference between the listening of the Bereans and hypercritical listening. Some people come to sermons only to criticise and only to find fault. They find fault with the content, the exegesis, the homiletics, and the delivery. They do not detect false doctrine, but they don't like the phraseology of a minister perhaps. They become carping critics of the pastor, always waiting for him to say something to which they might take offence, and they criticise the preaching in front of their children. The Bereans were not like that: they received the preaching with all readiness of mind, not with a hypercritical attitude. We need to find the correct balance.

That is hard to do because the minister is not Christ, and he never claims to be. The minister is a weak and sinful man. His sermons are not perfect. His delivery is not always good. Sometimes, he does not explain things with sufficient depth. Sometimes, he even misses the main idea of the text, and says good things, but does not identify the most important things from the text. Perhaps, you do not like his style, or you prefer another man's style. Then there is the temptation to despise the pastor: then you go home and spend the afternoon criticising the sermon. And you do this in front of your children, which will have disastrous consequences, for you undermine the authority of the Word of God in their minds. If you do not respect the preaching, why should they? If you despise the pastor, why should they respect their catechism teacher, since he is the same man?

Remember that there is a fine line between discernment (which is important) and hypercriticism (which is a sinful and proud attitude). Do not come to the preaching to judge it; the preaching judges you and it judges me. Even when the pastor is not a great swordsman, the Word of God is still a sword: *“For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”* (Heb. 4:12).

Finally, Luke gives us an inspired insight into the Bereans when he mentions their nobility. *“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica”* (v. 11). The word “noble” means, literally, “well born” or “high born.” A nobleman is one with a noble pedigree: his parents and grandparents were members of the upper class; perhaps he has royal blood in his veins. Of course, that is not the meaning here, for the Bereans were ordinary Jews. The word “noble” also means noble in a different sense: of a noble character.

But the real meaning of “well born” in verse 11 is spiritual nobility. One is spiritually noble when his father is the king and his elder brother is the Lord. One is spiritually noble when he is an heir of God and a joint heir of Christ. In other words, these Bereans were born of a noble birth from above: they were born from heaven; they were born again; and because they were born again they received the Word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily.

Show your spiritual pedigree. Show your spiritual nobility. Show that you have been born from above. You show that by your noble reception of God's Word

Article is taken from Reformed Free Publishing Association, by Martyn McGeown

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.

Help is needed to clean up the church premises on 11 & 18 December 2022 after lunch

Worship Service Collections: Last Sunday - £250.00

Church Maintenance Fund Total: £9,640.50

MEMORY VERSE

Last Week

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

1 Corinthians 13:13

This Week

“The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.”

Exodus 35:29

Next Week

“For in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

1 Corinthians 15:22

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