



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. 27 No. 51

LORD’S DAY 17 DECEMBER 2023

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Morning Service – 11am

Prelude

The Lord Is in His Holy Temple

Call to Worship

Psalm 9:1-2

Opening Prayer

Jonathan Kim

Opening Hymn *

RHC 19 – *“Come, We That Love the Lord”*

Responsive Reading

Psalm 86

Second Hymn *

Psalm 86 verses 1-7
(to the tune of tune of Beatitudo, RHC 63)

Scriptural Text

Luke 5:1-11

Pastoral Prayer

Rev Paul Hanna

Sermon Message

Half Hearted Service for the Master

Closing Hymn *

RHC 407 – *“Jesus Calls Us”*

Benediction/3-Fold Amen *

Rev Paul Hanna

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 90

Q: How is the Word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?

A: That the Word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer, receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practise it in our lives.

Comments:

We are here taught the proper way to use the Bible. We must use it carefully, reverently, and prayerfully. We must believe what it tells us, and do what it bids us. And we must receive the truth in the love of it, else the Word read will not profit our souls.

Scriptural Reference:

Psalm 119:18, Hebrews 4:2, Psalm 119:11, John 7:17

EL ROI – GOD WHO SEES ME

The name of God El Roi, which means 'God who sees me', is found in Genesis. The book of Genesis had many well-known people like Adam, Noah, Abraham, Joseph etc. An ordinary slave girl named Hagar gives this name to God. She was neither wealthy nor full of faith, and some got entangled in a big mess in Abraham's family. The story surrounding this incident is not pretty, just like many of our life situations. But it is an important lesson that God remains faithful, and He is El Roi- the God who sees us.

The beauty of the Bible is it doesn't sugar-coat reality. We find in the Bible the gross sins of David and even weak moments of Peter. In Genesis 16, we see the mistake of Abraham and Sarah. They distrusted God and found solutions in man's way. Warren W Wiersbe comments on this section, "Do not miss the practical lessons here: whenever we run ahead of God, there is trouble. The flesh loves to help God, but true faith is shown in patience (Isaiah 28:16). We cannot mix faith and flesh, law and grace, promise and self-effort...A willingness to wait on the Lord is another evidence that you are walking by faith."

The human plan of Sarah to use Hagar to have a child for Abraham backfired. Sarah was upset with Hagar attitude, and Abraham, too wisely or foolishly, decided to stay out of this contention between the two women. So much can be said about these mistakes, but the lesson to remember is God's way alone is the best path, and man's way always fail, always brings heartache and more confusion. The Bible describes the result of this whole incident in Genesis 16 in one short, telling sentence in verse 6, "*And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.*". For Hagar, life is out of control, hopeless and only full of struggles. Have you ever felt like this?

God Sees Hagar struggles in Genesis 16:7 and finds Hagar in the wilderness of Shur. She was homeless, hungry, pregnant, and broke. Two people who could help her abandoned her, but God did not abandon Hagar. Instead, God went to her right where she was. God calls Hagar by name, empathises with the situation, and meets her needs. Seen by God, however, she was empowered, in return, to see Him. God was no longer a vague concept or the God of Abraham, but God became real to her, so real that she gave God a name, El Roi, which means "*And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?*" (Genesis 16:13).

Hagar gave God the name "El Roi" – the God who sees. This name of God is only seen in the scripture once though its concept is seen throughout the scriptures. God knows us and sees us. God sees our heartache, depressions, struggles, turmoil and challenges. He is our El Roi – He is the God who sees you. El Roi saw the barren Sarai convincing Abram to have a child with servant Hagar. El Roi also saw the mistreatment Hagar experienced at the hands of jealous and disgruntled Sarai. Even when all have forgotten and abandoned, El Roi saw Hagar flee into the desert Shur, surely doomed to die. But to Hagar, God revealed in Genesis 16:13 that he is El Roi. God who sees us our struggles and miseries also offered a solution to the problems.

God offers a solution for Hagar in Genesis 16:8-9, "*And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? And whither wilt thou go? And she said I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.*" When the angel of the Lord spoke to Hagar, he called her by name and designation "Sarah's servant". He then gave her explicit instructions, the

solution, "Return to your mistress, and submit to her authority." El Roi, who revealed Himself, prophesied the nation to come from the birth of her son, Ishmael. This promise was quickly fulfilled in Genesis 21:17. Hagar did obey God and returned to Sarah. However, Hagar did not continue her submission, and the hatred grew between Hagar and Sarah. Eventually, Hagar and Ishmael once again leave the protection of Abraham's home. The Middle East would be different if Hagar followed God's plan. In all the imperfections of man, God the sovereign still rules and yet sees the need of God's children.

What does the name of God El Roi teach us? God knows us and sees us all the time, especially in our dire times of loneliness, frustration and depressions. Psalm 33:18-19 says, *"Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield"*. Jesus is alive, and he prays for us, and His love never fails. Don't feel alone and a failure. El Roi brings hope for your future. You don't have to be a spiritual giant like Abraham to be seen of God, even a nobody like Hagar 'God sees'. We can trust the El Roi. In Jeremiah 29:11, God says, *"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."*

Another lesson to remember from the Genesis 16 saga is God allows mess in our life, and there is always a message to trust God as no problem is too big for our God. God knows precisely what you need to do to turn your situation around. Don't give up but turn to Christ. He knows and sees you and will guide you in the solution. These also teach us to treat others, especially those under us, with grace and dignity. And not to let bitterness and jealousy bring the worst in the relationships. Be patient and trust in Him. God sees our secrets. God knows our battle scars. God sees our strength. He is unceasingly watching us and unfolding His perfect plan for our lives. Remember that God sees you no matter how ugly or complicated or hopeless your situation seems. Be humble and trust Him for *"God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."* 1 Peter 5:6-7.

Let us ponder these words concerning El Roi in Psalm 121, *"My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."* El Roi never sleeps and sees us always giving the undivided attention. Psalm 33:13 says, *'The Lord looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man;'*. The psalmist declaring God's omniscience declares in Psalm 139:1-4, *"O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether."* This thought that God sees you and knows you can either be terrifying or comforting, fear-inducing or a great assurance. To the sinful, it should bring repentance and to the weak and struggling hope. For Hagar, God was comforting. God sees us too. He knows your past, failures, success, pain, paths and does not forget your future too. May you rely on El Roi and listen to His solutions and obey it wholly.

Rev Mathews Abraham, Singapore

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

Our Lord's Day activities begins with the **Worship Services** at **11.00 am**. 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 is 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.

Post-Lunch Bible Study – Rev Hanna will speak on the topic "The 1859 Ulster Revival".

MEMORY VERSE

Last Week

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."

Isaiah 45:22

This Week

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

1 Corinthians 15:58

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

Dear all,

While the legal Covid restrictions having been lifted, we will continue to observe the following precautions:

- We continue to urge those who feel unwell (especially with Covid symptoms) to stay home and join us at our online services.
- Please place your offerings in the offering box when entering or exiting the church.
- During worship services, please continue to sit with your own households.
- While not required, the use of face covering is voluntary. 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