



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. 28 No. 14

LORD’S DAY 07 APRIL 2024

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Morning Service – 11am

Prelude

The Lord Is in His Holy Temple

Call to Worship

Psalm 57:9-11

Opening Hymn *

RHC 24 – “Praise to the Lord, The Almighty”

Opening Prayer

John Poh

Responsive Reading

Psalm 101

Second Hymn *

Psalm 101

(to the tune of Cleansing Fountain, RHC 173)

Scriptural Text

Acts 2:42-47

Pastoral Prayer

Eld George Chew

Sermon Message

Expectations from the Church

Closing Hymn *

RHC 262 – “I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord!”

Benediction/3-Fold Amen *

Eld George Chew

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 106

Q: What do we pray for in the Sixth Petition?

A: In the Sixth Petition – (which is, AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL) – we pray, That God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

Comments:

Temptation means anything that would induce us to sin. And in this petition we ask one of two things from God – either that he would take all temptation away from us, or that he would enable us to resist and overcome it.

Scriptural Reference:

Matthew 26:41, Psalm 19:13, 2 Timothy 4:18

HOW TO BE GODLY - PART 6

We have studied that there are three public means of grace: (1) the ministry of the Word, (2) the partaking of the sacraments, and (3) public prayers. Having studied the first two means of grace, now I am going to talk about the third one, "public prayer."

Public prayer

Westminster Confession of Faith 14.1 reads, "The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word: by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened." The grace of faith is wrought by "the ministry of the word," "the administration of the sacraments," and "prayers." My focus in this article is on public prayers, not private.

Public prayers profit us

Public prayers are solemnly offered to God in public worship. How do we benefit from public prayers? In what way is public prayer a public means of grace? First, negatively speaking, if a man does not receive any benefit from public prayers, it is not the fault of prayer itself, which is a good ordinance, but he is unfit to receive benefit from the prayer. We may find many reasons why he is unfit to receive benefit from the prayers. The most prominent reason is that he is negligent in hearing and attending to the prayers. It is also possible that he is prejudiced in his opinions over many spiritual matters due to his lack of understanding of the Scriptures. His mind may be wandering and not able to focus on prayers. Of course, if he keeps sins in his heart, he cannot concentrate on prayers, and he can hardly say Amen to prayers. All of these negative elements imply that we ought to come to public prayers with prepared hearts.

Second, positively, we cannot but say that public prayer is a means of grace. (1) Matthew 18:20 says, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The presence of the Lord Himself is promised whenever two or three believers are gathered together. Its immediate context is of church discipline. However, it is not an overextension to say that it could be applicable to other occasions when believers are gathered together in His name, including for prayers. (2) All the remedies for negative elements found in the previous paragraph point out that public prayers cannot but be a means of grace. If a man prepares his heart to hear and attend to public prayers during public worship, he cannot but receive benefits from the prayers. If a man removes his unclean thoughts from his mind and receives the understanding of the holy will of God in His Word and joins other worshippers in public prayers, he cannot but be blessed by the prayers. Therefore, public prayers are beneficial to the worshippers.

Third, there are some cautions we must take in public prayers. (1) Public prayer is not just of formalities, though formalities should not be neglected, either. For example, think of Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who defiled the Lord's sacrifices. Psalm 141:2 reads, "Let my prayer be set forth before thee *as incense*; *and* the lifting up of my hands *as the evening sacrifice*." Prayer is like incense in the Temple. It is like a sacrifice. This holy sacrifice can be defiled by sinful man. Sinful man must be changed, but the sacrifice is still the same. When a man changes himself, his prayer will become different. (2) Public prayer does not refuse all set forms of prayers. Prayers cannot be offered extemporaneously according to our needs. Of course, we cannot deny that people could offer lifeless prayers simply by reciting set prayers, as if such prayers themselves have any magical power in them. If there are good and exemplary prayers, to pray these prayers is not sinful, if the praying party brings their hearts with it. If those set prayers have excellent and spiritual contents, why can't we use them? Interestingly, the book of Psalms is a book of praises and also a book of prayers. There are prescribed words we can use in our prayers! After all, it is the Lord who taught us a prayer known to us as "the Lord's Prayer." I hope that none of us will say that it is a sin to pray the Lord's prayer as a public prayer.

I have mentioned all three public means of grace: (1) the ministry of the Word, (2) administration of the sacraments, and (3) the public prayers. Now, I am going to pay attention to private means of helps

of grace. As the word private indicates, so private means of grace refer to more personal helps for our godliness. While the public means of grace may be used on the Lord's Days, the private means can be used in and throughout the other six days, or in times of persecutions when religious freedom is prohibited. It means that public means may not be used daily, but private means can help us to grow in godliness on a daily basis. Thus, our growth in godliness depends on our faithfulness not only on the Day of the Lord but also every day.

The private means strengthen the public means

The public means help and assist us to grow in grace. However, they need to be assisted by the private means for even greater benefits. For example, the ministry of the Word benefits the hearers of the Word through the public worship. However, if we read, meditate, and study the Scriptures in private during the weekdays, we will receive greater benefits from the public ministry of the Word. Private reading of the Scripture will prepare the hearts of the worshippers, and, when we receive the public ministry of the Word, we will understand better and are able to apply the lessons to our personal lives more effectively.

In private life, we prepare ourselves to receive the Lord's Supper, which strengthens our spiritual health and enables us to receive greater blessings by partaking of it. Private means help us to examine ourselves concerning the spiritual and biblical knowledge we have, to come in truth faith and unfeigned repentance, and to esteem the truths of salvation and the Savior as the Scripture teaches. Thus, when we come to a public means of grace, the Lord's Supper, we receive greater blessings. Likewise, the private means strengthens the work and efficacy of the private means.

Public prayers can surely be strengthened by private prayers. If we do not practice a prayer life in private, through family prayers and personal prayers, we may not receive benefits of public prayers as much as we should. If we neglect to pray to God alone in secret and in our families, we surely pray in hypocrisy through public prayers. We are drawing near to God with our mouths, but our hearts are far away from Him (Matthew 15:8-9). If we are not used to praying in private, public prayer becomes wearisome and a nuisance to us. Besides, when we do not support our public prayers with private prayers, we are separating the public spiritual life from the private, instead of uniting them both by faith. Our private prayers will strengthen our public prayers in sincerity and good will.

All who use the public means of grace must also use the private means of grace, if they desire their healthy growth in grace. Both means are necessary for growth in godliness. Such combined efforts are not only necessary but also mandatory for proper Christian life.

Watchfulness

The first of seven private helps Rogers suggested is "watchfulness." By watchfulness, he means "a careful observing of our hearts and diligent looking to our ways, that they may be pleasing and acceptable unto God" (Rogers, Kindle loc., 628 of 2097). (1) It refers to observing the heart. Proverbs 4:23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life." By being watchful, we look diligently to our ways as Psalm 39:1, "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me." Watchfulness is commended in the Scriptures that we should live accordingly. 1 Peter 5:8 says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." The Greek word for "vigilant" means "1) to watch 2) metaph. give strict attention to, be cautious, active 2a) to take heed lest through remission and indolence some destructive calamity suddenly overtake one." "Be sober (sober-minded or be alert)" is not enough. It must come with "be vigilant (watchfulness)." Even though we are in good order of sober mind, we will be lost if we are not watchful. The Lord said to His choicest disciples in Matthew 26:41, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak." It tells us that our godly growth comes when both are kept together. We pray and watch our lives at the same time.

Rev Okman Ki

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 live on YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/@NewLifeBPCLondon>

We thank God for providing Rev Mark Lehman to minister to the church till mid-May.

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.

MEMORY VERSE

Last Week

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

Romans 8:28

This Week

*“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:
Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”*

Hebrews 10:24-25

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

Dear all,

When attending the church Worship Service and Bible Study, 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 online.
- 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.

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