



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. 29 No. 05

LORD’S DAY 02 FEBRUARY 2025

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Morning Service – 11am

Prelude

The Lord Is in His Holy Temple

Call to Worship

John 1:1-5

*Opening Hymn **

RHC 49 – “How Great Thou Art”

Opening Prayer

Joey Seow

Responsive Reading

Psalm 137

*Second Hymn **

Psalm 137 verses 1-6

(to the tune of Vox Dilecti, RHC 298)

Scriptural Text

Colossians 3:1-17

Pastoral Prayer

Eld George Chew

Sermon Message

Put on the new self

*Closing Hymn **

RHC 487 – “New Life in Christ”

*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 42

Q: What is the sum of the Ten Commandments?

A: The sum of the Ten Commandments is, TO LOVE THE LORD OUR GOD, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and OUR NEIGHBOUR as ourselves.

Comments:

The whole of God’s commands to us are here summed up in one word – LOVE. The man who with his whole soul loves God and his neighbour, fulfils the law. *Neighbour* here means not merely one who lives near us, but, as Christ teaches us (Luke 10), whoever holds kindred with us, or is a man.

Scriptural Reference:

Matthew 23:37, 39, 40; Romans 13:10

Dear brethren, as we are celebrating the Chinese New Year, our bulletin this week will cover the conclusion (part 2) of the article "A Christian Perspective of some Chinese New Year traditions and practices" written by Rev Jack Sin, pastor of Sovereign Hope Bible-Presbyterian Church. Do read Chan kei Thong, Faith of our Fathers, Discovering God in Ancient China, Imprint Edition, 2008 for an insightful study of this relevant subject.

A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE OF SOME CHINESE NEW YEAR TRADITIONS AND PRACTICES – Part 2

House Spring Cleaning

On the first day of Chinese New Year, there is a superstition that we are not supposed to sweep the house for it means it will sweep away the "prosperity" or "luck" which is a false notion. The once a year spring cleaning of the house is a laudable practice. This is normally done one or two weeks before the Chinese New Year and one would throw away old unwanted things and spruce up the whole house till it is spick and span and one is ready to receive guests and visitors to the home. It also has the sense of a new beginning, which we do not accept the false belief or superstition by some of getting rid of the "bad luck" of the previous year. Some may hide their brooms because brooms and sweeping are all "bad luck"; they will sweep out the "good luck for the year" which is unnecessary. (Interestingly, some Christians do their house cleaning even into the morning of the first day of the Chinese New Year and there is nothing wrong with that.) Some say that we also should only speak sweet words and eat "nian gao", i.e. sweet cakes, fried with eggs and flour which is supposed to sweeten the mouth of the "kitchen god" who is returning to heaven, according to a popular folklore which is unsound and not required. Some superstitious Chinese even say that we cannot break anything on the first day because it will be "bad luck" for the rest of the year and there is no basis for that belief or practice either.

Reunion Dinner

We also have the good practice of the Chinese tradition of the family reunion dinner on the Eve of the Chinese New Year where the family gathers to celebrate the reunion and build up the unity of the family (some will travel for thousands of miles in China for this). This is commendable and worthy of our continued observance. The reunion dinner on the eve of Chinese New Year is perfectly in order as it is a celebration of the renewal of our family and communal ties and enhance domestic unity, as all the members of the extended family return for a sumptuous home-cooked meal together (normally at home although now some families may eat out in a restaurant too). These are some of the good traditions that we should keep today as we celebrate Chinese New Year. As for the matter of the "loh hei" or the tossing up of the raw fish dish and ingredients as high as possible before eating so as to "symbolize that one can get more business in the new year", it is a thing indifferent or not necessary, but the eating of the fresh raw fish and its ingredients is fine and definitely delectable during the dinner.

Lion Dance and Firecrackers

For some Chinese businessmen, the traditional lion and dragon dance to bring good luck by prancing lions and dancing dragons to chase away the "bad omen" in some business or shops is prevalent during the Chinese New Year season. As much as we respect others, this is not advisable for Christians as most, if not all of them, have their origins in martial arts groups which are religious in nature.

The use of loud sounding fire crackers (and by tradition, it was meant to ward off the evil monster "nian", "年") by young and old is a thing of the past for Singapore, but is still widely practiced in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and some other countries. The reason why it is banned in Singapore is because many accidents associated with firecrackers have caused grievous hurt to children and even sparked off fires leading to the untimely deaths of some. It is a thing impractical and from the point of safety and its questionable origins, its practice is not to be encouraged.

Family Visitation

However, we should keep up the good tradition of visiting families and relatives; and exchange oranges and greetings, during the Chinese New Year season and exchange "ang pows" for the children, wishing them God's blessings and peace to the home. They are meaningful social family encounters and gatherings of our Chinese culture. When we wish somebody "Blessed or Peaceful Chinese New Year", we are aware of our need to depend on God and to live in a manner worthy of our calling as Christians as well. For us, it is a seasonal celebration of the deeper meaning of "Xin Nian", "新年", a new year, as it represents a new year of new opportunities, hope and joy to serve and glorify God. Why? Because the God of the Bible who is our Redeemer is the reason and foundation of our joy for the new year and we are to depend on Christ alone, "therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Relevant Biblical References

There are more relevant Scriptures to be read and contemplated on concerning this issue and let us consider the following Pauline advice:

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31) and give thanks to God. Let us rejoice and offer praise and thanks to God for this blessed season as there are much goodies and cookies to eat during this occasion (and exercise moderation in all things too).

"Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22) in this new year, we are to avoid covetousness, the worshipping of idols or the veneration of the dead, immoral dancing or any form of religious or moral compromise.

"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." (Romans 14:13). Do not eat food offered to idols or participate in gambling (i.e. mahjong), drugs taking, fighting, stealing, smoking or drinking alcohol during the festive season.

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." (Galatians 5:13). We are to remember our accountability to God and to show genuine love and concern for one another in good spirit during the festive season.

"But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ" (1 Corinthians 8:12).

A Christian may never know whether there is a brother who may be steep in ancestral worship or idolatry before he is saved and thus by compromising our testimony in idol worship, we may actually wound the weak conscience of this brother and thereby will be sinning against Christ.

Conclusion

We thank God for our Chinese roots and many Chinese are Christians too, dating back to the 7th century BC when Nestorius visited China. May our gracious Lord grant us true joy, peace, grace and hope in this Chinese New Year season (which lasts for 15 days traditionally) as we pray for our family and nation and witness to our relatives and friends for Christ with the gospel of salvation (take a copy of the Chinese gospel tract on CNY) in an edifying and godly manner and to honour Him before men and be a good testimony for Him during the festive Chinese New Year celebrations and the rest of the year till He returns. Praise the Lord!

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

Our Lord's Day activities begin with the **Worship Service** at **11.00 am** followed by a **Bible Study & Children's Sunday School** at **1:30pm**. 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 worshipping with us today.

For those unable to attend Church in person, please join our Worship Service and Bible Study on our live-stream via YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/@NewLifeBPCLondon>

We thank God for providing Eld George Chew to minister to us this Lord's Day.

Next Lord's Day, our speaker will be Dr David Allen.

Please note we will be observing the Lord's Supper next Lord's Day.

Tithes & Offerings – The offering box is located at the entrance to the Church Sanctuary.

After-Service Fellowship – Join us for lunch fellowship after the morning worship service.

Today, we will have a carry-in lunch. Thanks to all who have contributed a dish for today.

Afternoon Bible Study – No bible study this week.

Children's Sunday School – No Sunday School this week.

MEMORY VERSE

Last Week

"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

Acts 10:34-35

This Week

"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:"

Colossians 3:10

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