



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

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The Elusive Abundant Life

“So I saw in my dream that the man began to run. Now he had not run far from his own door when his wife and children, perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on crying, “Life! life! eternal life! (Luke 14:26).” So he looked not behind him, (Genesis 19:17), but fled towards the middle of the plain. The neighbours also came out to see him run, (Jeremiah 20:10); and as he ran, some mocked, others threatened, and some cried after him to return; and among those that did so, there were two that were resolved to fetch him back by force.”

These words were written by John Bunyan 330 years ago, in his book, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. It shows the desperation of a man as he chased after eternal life, breaking free from the world that he was in. We Christians today should have a similar desperation – to chase after an abundant life.

Christ promised in John 10:10 – *“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”* However, this abundant life is elusive to some of us. We live life, but may not experience true Christian abundance, because we go to the wrong source.

The Abundant Life Is Found in Christ

Abundance in life is found only in Christ. For life to be abundant, we need both substance and wisdom. And God has given us both through Christ. Firstly, God has given us *all* things in Christ (Romans 8:32). And secondly, God has given us all the tools necessary to live a godly life (2 Peter 2:3).

The abundant life we seek is not primarily a life of comfort, for the Son of man had nowhere to lay his head (Matthew 8:20). It’s not primarily a life of reputation, for we shall be persecuted for his sake (John 15:20). It’s not primarily a life governed by our desires, for we need to deny ourselves (Luke 9:23). But it is a life all about Christ and his will accomplished in us, for we’re crucified in him and we live this life through him (Galatians 2:20).

Christ is the basis for that abundant life. If we obsess after *our* comfort, and *our* reputation, and *our* desires, then we can’t have a life founded upon *Christ* nor...

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have all things in *Christ*. But if we, by his grace, invest in Christ, we shall have abundance.

Desire and Pursue the Abundant Life

One reason why we don't experience true Christian abundance is because we don't desire it. We know that living the Christian life is hard – we need to deny the flesh, mortify sin, and be heavenly minded – these things don't come naturally to us. But we also know the results of doing these things – among them are wisdom, love, liberty, hope, and confidence.

The pilgrim knew what he wanted. Which is why, after he heard the gospel and was given instructions to travel to the celestial city, he began to run, to the dismay of his wife and children. His desire for that life overwhelmed him. He hungered for it more than anything else.

Luke 14:26 says, *“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”* We see here that desire for Christ and desire for an abundant life must be more passionate and desperate than our desire for anything else.

Is Christ more important than the world to us? Is peace in him more desirable than security in things? Is contentment in Christ more attractive than comfort in relationships? It's not that these things are necessarily wrong, but we may often be put in a position where our hope in them exceeds our hope in Christ; where we yearn after security and crave after companionship more than Christ.

And when we're tested, we're brought to a point where we might admit that a bigger paycheck soothes our nerves more than Christ. And we're brought to a point where we might admit that a companion is better than the fellowship of Christ. It is then that we need to tweak our desire for him and to remind ourselves of how lovely Christ is.

Admittedly, it's not always easy to desire Christ more. It's easy when we're in love with him; but at other times, it dips and wanes. And so to experience abundance, a certain resolve is needed in putting away distractions.

Be Resolved to Put Away Distractions

When the pilgrim was running desperately after eternal life, I'm sure he was tempted to turn around at the cries of his children and wife, but we see that he was resolute in his task – he plugged his ears and refused to look back – his desperation drove him to be single-minded.

In Genesis 19:17, the angel said to Lot and his family, *“Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.”* Lot was commanded not to look back for the sake of his life. Many a pursuit for abundance has been abandoned because of distractions. I'm sure Lot's wife desperately wanted to escape to save her life, but affection for the...

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burning city distracted her.

Spurgeon asked, *“Do you find yourself forgetful of Jesus? Something steals your heart away, and you become unmindful of Him who should have your affection? Some earthly business captures your attention when you should have your eye steadily fixed upon the cross? It is far too often the unending cry of world, world, world; and the constant noise of earth, earth, earth – which take away the soul from Christ.”*

What are some of the things that distract us? One obvious one is work. Work often leaves us with no time to live life. Working hard is needful, but working too hard is sinful, and that can be a snare. Another is church – church activities can keep us too busy but not blessed – beware that one! Then there are those things that are not necessarily wrong, but may draw our attention from Christ – they are peculiar to each one of us, and we need to discern the Lord’s will concerning them. Do we know what our distractions are?

If distractions prevent us from living in the will of Christ and from experiencing abundance, what shall we do with them? Obviously we are to put them away. But that will be very difficult.

Bear with Great Difficulty

When the pilgrim was leaving the city, his neighbours came out to watch him and mock him. This was the same with the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 20:10). In doing and in preaching what was right, he had to endure the insults of all around him. Many watched for him to fall and hoped for him to fail.

When we minimize the distractions and pursue the abundant life, we will no doubt be met with lots of opposition. Imagine if we scale down our work life – certainly there will be opposition. Imagine if we resist some of the busy work in church – we’ll be accused of tepidity. And there are a lot of other things we can and need to do in order to pursue that Christian life and abundance, which will incur much opposition. There might be those who would mock and deride us. And there might be those who would try to bring us back to conformity by pressure and force. We might mock and deride ourselves as well. And fear is a strong motivator for us to stop and conform.

Christian, if you know there are areas in your lives that hinder you from experiencing that abundance, resolve in your heart today to remove them. It will be difficult and painful; at times you will want to give up because it’s easier not to do anything about it – but bear with difficulty. Have the desperation that the pilgrim had. Have the resolve that Lot had. Have the courage that Jeremiah had. Remember this life is achievable. And Christ and the abundant life he offers will be worth it all.

Mark Chen

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

Our worship services begin promptly at 11.00 am and 4.00 pm.

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
Morning	<i>Today: 04/01/2009</i>	<i>Next Week: 11/01/2009</i>	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	John Poh	Joey Seow	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Mark Chen	Rev Yeo Seow Phong	
<i>Message:</i>	Live the Gospel	The Saints Shall Judge	NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
<i>Text:</i>	1 Peter 1:8–25	1 Corinthians 6:1–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lord's Supper: Next week, we will be observing the Lord's Supper. Please come with your hearts prepared. • Parking Restrictions: For those who are driving, please take note of the extended parking restrictions implemented by Brent Council: Zone "KQ" – 30 Dec to 8 Jan (inclusive of Saturdays and Sundays). • Calling of Resident Minister: Continue to pray for the Lord's calling for a resident minister. The church leaders are praying about calling Rev Timothy Ki. • Pray for those who are sick: Douglas (knee pain), Maria (ankle and joint pain), Constance (left heel pain), Maureen (knee pain), Anthony (recovery from collarbone fracture), Margaret (sprained wrist – check-up 9/1 and 9/2) • Pray for those who are seeking employment: John, Constance • Pray for Journey Mercies: Douglas (Ghana), Jiak Eng (S'pore), those returning from Christmas break – Joey & family, Yetta, Nicholas, Joy, Joshua and Sophia • Updated Duty Rota for Jan and Mar '09: The updated rota can be found on the notice board in the Fellowship Hall.
<i>Organist:</i>	Anthony	Joy	
Evening			
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	Joshua Flinn	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Mark Chen	Rev Yeo Seow Phong	
<i>Message:</i>	Be Perfectly Mended Together	Born of God	
<i>Text:</i>	2 Corinthians 13:10–14	1 John 3:1–24	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Grace	Sophia	
Other Duties			
	<i>Today: 04/01/2009</i>	<i>Next Week: 11/01/2009</i>	
<i>Ushers</i>	Daniel / Evelyn	Jonathan / Sharon	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Hannah	Hannah	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Constance	Maureen	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>PA Crew:</i>	Joshua	Nicholas	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 9 Jan	7:30pm	Young Adults Fellowship: Bible Study – Survey of the Old Testament	
Sat 10 Jan	4.00pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Led by Rev Yeo Seow Phong	
<u>Last Week's Worship Service Collections</u>			
Offering: 186.88		Lunch: £32.83	
<u>Memory Verse</u>			
<i>Last Week (December 08 Wk 4): 1 Corinthians 13:11</i>			
When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.			
<i>This Week (January 09 Wk 1): 1 Corinthians 13:12</i>			
For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.			