



NEW LIFE

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

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GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT

*By Elder Khoo Peng Kiat, Life B-P Church, S'pore
(adapted from Life B-P Church bulletin dated 11 January 2009)*

What is Godliness?

Godliness means great reverence towards God. It "denotes the energy of piety in the life, both internal and external, not the religion that leads to piety, but the religious life that manifests religion" (E.W. Bullinger). It is more than religious observance and godly conduct. It is living a life so full of love for God. It is doing that which is well-pleasing to Him.

John Calvin said "Godliness is a very great gain to us because, by means of it, we obtain the benefit, not only of being heirs of the world, but likewise of enjoying Christ and all His riches."

The Apostle Paul said, "*Exercise thyself rather to godliness: for bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*" (1 Timothy 4:7- 8).

Godliness is therefore profitable for all things both in Time and Eternity.

As Christians we are "*partakers of the divine nature*" (2 Peter 1: 3, 6, 7) and we are exhorted to supplicate, pray and intercede for all those in authority that they "*may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty*" (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

What is Contentment?

Contentment is a state of not wanting more. It is being satisfied with what one has presently; satisfied with one's lot in life; satisfied with one's respective calling. (1 Cor 7:20). It comes from appreciating what one has rather than longing for what one does not have. It is a state of inward self-sufficiency, not dependent on circumstances. No wonder the Apostle Paul said, "*But godliness with contentment is great gain*" (1Tim 6:6). Godliness makes us content, and to be content is the highest good. No one can be happy or content who lives only for self.

Many people, sad to say, believe that contentment depends on the accumulation of material wealth. Others suppose that fulfilment can be found in fame, popularity, business success, and what have you. We have yet to meet an unbeliever who has amassed great wealth and doesn't want anymore.

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Human nature being what it is, enough is not enough; enough means something more!

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, "No man ever need fear offering a reward of a thousand pounds to a contented man, for if anyone came to claim the reward, he would prove his discontent."

You say, "If I had a little more, I should be very satisfied. You make a mistake. If you are not content with what you have, you would not be satisfied if it were doubled."

Secret to Contentment

The secret is not Money; it is Godliness.

*"It is not the vastness of your wealth, That ever brings you peace,
It's not the getting for yourself, That makes your strivings cease.
It's in the smallness of your wants, Contentment comes to bless;
It's giving to another's needs, That gives you happiness."
(D.J.Silver).*

Criteria for Contentment

- Be content with your wages. (Luke 3:14b)
- Be content with your lot in life. (Philippians 4:11)
- Be content with food, clothing and shelter. (1Timothy 6:8)
- Be content with your present possessions. (Hebrews 13:5)

The Apostle Paul's exhortation to all believers is that whatever our circumstances in life, we are to be content. Why? Because we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can bring nothing out.

Furthermore, we are exhorted to *"be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"* (Hebrews 13:5b). Not only will He not forsake us but He will not fail (Joshua 1:5) nor forget us (Isaiah 49:15).

The Apostle Paul said, *"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."* (Philippians 4:11-12).

It is said that a man's contentment is in his mind, not in the extent of his possessions.

Alexander the Great, "with all the world at his feet, cries for another world to conquer."

Contentment is not having everything we want, but enjoying everything we have presently. Actually what do we need more than food, clothing and shelter? As Christians we should not allow the few things we really need to disturb our minds. We are simply going to be content because we are under the special care of the divine Provider and Sustainer. Hence we can find perfect contentment even with bare necessities. But, sad to say, there are still many people even among...

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Christians who have plenty of food, water, fine houses, large bank accounts, etc. and somehow still complain and never seem satisfied.

Dear reader, are you sinfully discontented with your station in life, or are you truly joyful with whatever the Lord has provided? Jesus said, *"Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth"* (Luke 12:15).

Basically Life Falls into Three Stages

1. Stage of Birth

Our Entry into this World: We brought nothing in.

At birth we brought nothing in. We came in stark naked. Job said, *"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither"* (Job 1:21a).

"Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house increased; For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him" (Psalm 49:16-17).

"As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand." (Ecclesiastes 5:15-16).

The Apostle Paul said, *"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out"* (1Timothy 6:7).

2. Stage of Life

It is between birth and death. Life is different from birth and death.

From the womb to the tomb is a short journey. Moses said, *"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength, they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away"* (Psalm 90:10).

3. Stage of Death

At death we carry nothing out. We leave this world just as we entered it, with nothing. No matter how many possessions we might have, we can't take them with us when we leave this earth.

Jesus said, *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"* (Matthew 6:19-21).

Jim Elliott said, "He is no fool to give what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose."

So let us invest in things eternal; let us occupy ourselves more and more in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. *"For what shall it profit a man, if he...*

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shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

Our Existence in this World is brief and uncertain

In the Bible, physical life is compared to things which are brief like a vapour (James 4:14), like a flower (Job 14:1-2), like a pilgrimage (Genesis 47:9), etc. Life is compared to things which are small like dust (Psalm 103:14), like a hand-breadth (Psalm 39:5), etc. Life is compared to something swift like an eagle swooping on its prey (Job 9:26), like grass (1Peter 1:24)

Our Exit from this World

In Genesis 5 we have this constant recurrent phrase: *"and he died"* reminding us that we are mortal beings. God said to Adam, *"for out of it (dust) wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"* (Genesis 3:19). Solomon said, *"All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again"* (Ecclesiastes 3: 20).

It is said that death is a necessary end; it will come when it will. It is inevitable; it is certain. Sooner or Later - it's a matter of time. *"And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27; see also Job 1:21b; 1 Timothy 6:7).

Conclusion

The apostle Paul said, *"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."* (Philippians 4:11)

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what men shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:5-6; see also Genesis 28:15; Deuteronomy 13:6; Joshua 1:5; Psalm 56:11; 118:6)

"Better is a little with the fear of the LORD, than great treasure and trouble therewith." (Proverbs 15:16). May each one of us pursue "Godliness with Contentment" which is true prosperity. And may we put on the "jewel of contentment" and may "Godliness and Contentment" be our portion in life.

Sobering Reflections for the year 2008

By Rev Jack Sin, Maranatha B-P Church, S'pore

Hab 3:17-19, *'Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.'*

Introduction

The words of the prophet Habakkuk (written about 600 BC) rings a bell in our hearts, ...

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for one may say, what then, should we, at the last day of the year, render thanks and praise unto the Almighty God? Though the fields (economy) have not yielded an abundant harvest, as in this year (and the next year as the economic growth is revised downwards) jobs are on the line, business profits are down and banks are not lending money as easily as they do before. Our barns (or bank accounts) are not full, but with only a scanty crop year (maybe even pay freeze for some if not pay cuts for others) however we can still praise and thank God for His mercies and grace through the year for safety and protection, for our children and our loved ones, health and strength that sickness has not visited our homes and church. Though business have suffered, the proclamation of the gospel of church from this church is not abated as we see the message of everlasting life preached to many people both locally and abroad to the saving of souls and comfort of the saints. We still have reason to continue to worship, praise and thank the Almighty God if we trust, obey and look upon to Him.

A Confused and Depressed World

1 Cor 10:31 says, '*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*' and Col 3:23 says, '*And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.*'

We are in a big mess financially and politically around the world since Sep 2008. What have been brewing for quite a while over the past years of plenty and covetous living by the inordinate desire for riches, had become a striking characteristic of modern depraved man that plagued the world with this financial calamity. Many hop on to the bandwagon and tried to get rich quick through short terms gains including some local investors. For many do not seek God and His kingdom nor His righteousness but wealth and pleasure that they might use it for themselves. They saw, perhaps, that riches would attract prestige and admiration or give them a social position that they will surround him with luxuries, ministering to his fleshy appetites. Some sought all means of gaining these ends including foolish and reckless speculations in the market place with the accumulation of self centred possessions and assets. The sordid and debasing passion cumulated into a global meltdown and many lives were figuratively burnt and adversely affected. Some tried to increase their wealth by false means as in the latest mega fraud by Bernard Madoff, a big time New York fund manager with 50 billion to his name ignominiously.

Paul in 1 Tim 6:10 says, '*For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*' Others, despising such slow but steady methods of gain, by honest hard work and diligence struck out boldly, and plunged into the undue excitement of risky speculation. They speculated in stocks, bonds, shares and commodities, gambled in foreign exchange and other commodities, properties and stocks. This concentration of the mind upon merely material acquisitions in an incredible mania for wealth, which one can be elated temporarily by the rise of stocks in the 1990s, and the next it can become gloom worldwide. There is the fear of a greater economic decline in 2009 with more than 20 countries which are in recession now (including Singapore, Japan, Germany, Italy and USA) and more will join in the motley gang. Iceland's financial system had completely collapse and Zimbabwe is down with runaway inflation and cholera, and others with their own political woes as in Thailand and India with its recent terrorist attacks in Mumbai. Israel has begun its military operations against Hamas in the Gaza and tension is high in the Middle East. These events have destroyed peace and brought in sorrow and sadness when the world ignore or go against the teachings of true religion which advises us to lay up our treasures, not on earth (which is ephemeral), but in heaven. (Mt 6:21-33; Col 3:1-2).

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Sinful Indulgences

The indulgence of the passion for wealth is pernicious to our spiritual walk with God. The quest for temporal and destructible wealth may bring worldly extravagance and luxury into the social life of believers but often leanness to the soul. The simplicity of a faithful and meek Christian life in worshipping and serving God as an accountable steward is treated with disdain or neglected. We soon witnessed the great falling away of a nation's spiritual health and growth like America which is supposed to be Christian but has largely denied its Christian principles in practice with the restriction of prayer in public schools, the forbidding of the display of the Ten Commandments and the teaching of evolution instead of biblical creationism, approval of homosexuality, abortions, euthanasia (and cloning soon). This is a sure way to spiritual degeneration which characterize its economic, social and spiritual decline. Moral principle are soon yielded to the fascination of riches and the exigencies of the time 1 Cor 6:12 says, *'All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.'* A heavy purse would not outweigh the positive merits of spiritual character change (Gal 5:22-23). Marriage was also undermined with the increase in immorality, divorces, abortion and homosexuality is on the rise and teenage pregnancies too.

The inordinate desire to live as the rich barred us with our limited means from the virtuous joys of a humble covenant home, and often tempted us with forbidden pleasures. Moreover, the moral evils of the day had crept into the Church and the Christian homes (2 Tim 3:1-5). Instead of being distinguished for the simplicity of their living and for their piety and benevolence, many were yielding to the downward tendency toward greater falling away, worldliness and profligacy. The godless and sensual style of modern life demands a rethink of our lives in the light of the warning of Almighty God in the hearts of redeemed men. The Church of Christ is in danger of becoming fatally secularized and misguided and hence will possibly lose its gospel appeal, biblical focus and evangelical emphasis if it is not revived and returned to God. Beware of all these today as John in Rev 3:16-19 says, *'So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.'*

Conclusion

Our God is faithful and gracious to His covenant people but we must not allow the greed of wealth, spiritual indifference, backsliding and idolatry to corrupt the fountains of truth, law and of justice. 1 Tim 6:11-12 says, *'But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.'*

This is a sobering time for reflection and contemplation for all as the psalmist reminds us in Psa 139:23-24, *'Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'*

Ask yourselves these questions :

As a church, are we drawn closer to God and to one another in the service and...

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fellowship of God?

As a family, have we grown in greater devotion to Christ and fear and nurture of our Lord?

As an individual, is there the correct priorities in life or are we engrossed and obsessed with worldly ambitions alone?

Something to think about seriously.

Let us ponder and seek the Lord and rededicate our lives to God and be vigilant, alert and be responsible witness and accountable stewards of the manifold grace of God as we await His soon return which will not be too long.

We will end with this thought provoking poem (adapted).

If Christ should Come To-Night

Is my house set in order
If Christ should come today?
What tasks would be unfinished
If I were called away?

Suppose an angel told me
At early morning light,
"Your Lord will come this evening,
You shall go Home to-night!"

Would ecstasy be clouded
By thought of work undone,
The seed I might have scattered,
The crowns I might have won?

The soul I meant to speak to,
The purse I meant to share,
And O the wasted moments
I meant to spend in prayer!

The weight of unsaved millions
Would press upon my heart.
In their death am I certain
That I had not a part?

And such a few short moments
In which to set things right!
How feverishly I'd labor
Until the waning light!

O slothful soul and careless heart,
O eyes which have no sight,
Work, lest you reap but vain regrets!
Your Lord may come to-night!

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: 18/01/2009</i>	<i>Next Week: 25/01/2009</i>	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome Yu Ling Lee to our worship service last Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	Joey Seow	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Rev Yeo Seow Phong	Mark Chen	
<i>Message:</i>	God's Distribution	Labouring in the Gospel Vineyard	
<i>Text:</i>	1 Corinthians 7:1-40	Colossians 1:24-29	
<i>Organist:</i>	Joy	Anthony	
Evening			
<i>Chairman:</i>	John Poh	Jonathan Kim	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Mark Chen	Rev Yeo Seow Phong	
<i>Message:</i>	Unity in the Work of the Church	Family Traits	
<i>Text:</i>	1 Corinthians 1:10-17	1 John 4, 5	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Grace	Hubert	
Other Duties			NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
	<i>Today: 18/01/2009</i>	<i>Next Week: 25/01/2009</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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), Anthony (recovery from collarbone fracture), Margaret (sprained wrist – check-up 9/2) • Pray for those who are seeking employment: John, Constance • Pray for Journey Mercies: Douglas (Ghana), Jiak Eng (S'pore) • SGAT Monthly Meeting: Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony (SGAT) will meet this Friday at 7pm. • Chinese New Year Carry-In Lunch, 25 Jan: A time for sharing. For those who are able to contribute a dish, please inform Daniel Poh. • Those serving on the Lord's Day: Please gather behind the pulpit area at 10.30am for prayer.
<i>Ushers</i>	Joshua / Yetta	John / Sharon	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Hannah	Hannah	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Constance	CNY – Carry In	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>PA Crew:</i>	Nicholas	Lee Wei	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 23 Jan	Young Adults Fellowship: No YAF Meeting		
Sat 24 Jan	4.00pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Led by Rev Yeo	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
Offering: £279.47		Lunch: £34.50	
Practical Kindness			
<i>Adapted from "In Green Pastures" by J.R. Miller, D.D.</i>			
<p>Kindness must be practical, not merely emotional and sentimental. It should not be satisfied with good wishes, sympathetic words, or even with prayers; it should put itself into some form that will do good. There are times when even prayer is a mockery. It is sometimes our duty to answer our own requests, to be ourselves the messengers we ask God to send to help others. We are God's angels when we find ourselves in the presence of human needs and sorrows which we can supply or comfort. Expressions of pity or sympathy are mockeries when we try to do nothing to relieve the distress.</p>			