



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. 25 No. 49

LORD’S DAY 05 DECEMBER 2021

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Morning Service – 11am

Afternoon Service – 2pm

The Lord Is in His Holy Temple

Prelude

Call to Worship

Opening Prayer

Opening Hymn *

Responsive Reading

Second Hymn

Scriptural Text

Pastoral Prayer

Sermon Message

The Lord’s Supper

Closing Hymn *

Benediction/3-Fold

Amen *

Postlude

*** Congregation Stands**

Micah 5:2,4

Ps Timothy Poh

RHC 151 – “O Come, O Come,
Emmanuel”

Psalm 131

Psalm 131 (to the tune of Lloyd, RHC 563)

Luke 2:1-20

Ps Timothy Poh

Rich Man, Poor Man

Ps Timothy Poh

RHC 159 – “While Shepherds Watched
Their Flocks”

Ps Timothy Poh

The Lord Bless You

Psalm 138:1-5

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

RHC 5 – “Command thy Blessing
from Above”

John 15:5-7

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

Death to Self-Sufficiency

RHC 388 – “O for a Closer Walk
with God”

Pr Mok Chee Cheong

SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 92

Q: What is a sacrament?

A: A Sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by CHRIST, wherein, – by sensible signs – Christ, and the benefits of the New Covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

Comments:

We are here taught that the marks of a sacrament are: 1. That it is appointed by Christ; 2. That it is a way of teaching the gospel by outward signs. Its uses are three in number: 1. To represent the gospel to us, or teach it plainly; 2. To seal the gospel to us, or confirm our faith in it; 3. To apply the gospel to us, or bring it home to our hearts. The word sacrament is derived from a Latin word, which signified the sacred oath of fidelity to his commander, which the soldier took on entering the army for the service of his country. In a Christian sense, it means the vow of fidelity and obedience to Christ which is taken when we enter the Church. This vow was taken for us in Baptism, when we were infants. In the Lord’s Supper, we take it upon ourselves.

Scriptural Reference:

Genesis 17:10, Romans 4:11

MEMORY VERSE

Last Week

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”

John 11:25

This Week

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”

Ecclesiastes 12:13

Next Week

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”

John 15:5

WHEN IS NOSTALGIA SINFUL?

Introduction

Perhaps especially when there is so much unsettling change it's easy to feel nostalgic—even for 2019. A recent scientific study identified higher happiness levels “during the early days of the pandemic” arising from feelings of nostalgia. For some, reaching out to simpler and less complex times has been a coping mechanism. This sentimental longing for our own past or some period in history can be beneficial if it draws us towards things that are of value. Yet nostalgia often paints a rosy picture of how it used to be compared to now. No doubt at some point we will be nostalgic for lockdowns. Dwelling on the past obsessively can be unhelpful and unhealthy but can it be sinful? It was for Israel of course as they looked back to Egypt with mournful regret. Nostalgia makes it hard to look ahead with the right attitude of hope and expectation since we are always harking back (Philippians 3:13). Surely we need hope more than ever in the current context rather than a wistful longing to be comfortable? Ecclesiastes 7:10 warns us in relation to nostalgia — “Say not thou, What is *the cause* that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.” It doesn't say that it is wrong and sinful in itself. Rather it says that there is a subtle and dangerous temptation that can accompany it. We can be drawn into a distorted perspective inclining us to question God's providence and purpose. In our discontent we begin to dispute the way things are. Why are we left in such a situation? Can any good come out of it? Such an attitude is neither wise nor right.

Alexander Nisbet shows how Ecclesiastes 7:10 guards us against quarrelling with the Lord's dealings in this way. We are not to question why He should do this and complain at His appointing a hard lot to any of us. Neither are we to be so swallowed up by lament for the times that we fail to highlight what is positive and what may be the purpose behind it all. There is a danger of making such an absolute comparison between our times and the past that we feel the present is hopeless. This is a verse that needs to be understood and applied carefully and Nisbet helps us to do that in the following updated extract.

1. IT IS NOT SINFUL TO RECOGNISE THAT TIMES HAVE BECOME WORSE

This is not to be understood, as if the present times were not often worse than the former in many respects, seeing that is foretold (Matthew 24:12; 2 Timothy 3:1).

2. IT IS NOT SINFUL TO ASK WHY THE TIMES HAVE BECOME WORSE

It is not that the Lord's people must not search into what sins people have committed to cause the change of times to the worse. Nor are they forbidden from lamenting the defections or miseries of their times. Both of these are duties for them (Lamentations 3:40). It is the duty of the Lord's people to search out the sinful causes which provoke the Lord to change times to the worse. We are to enquire into the wise reasons He has for doing so and to bewail that later times have degenerated so far from the purity and holiness of former periods.

3. IT IS SINFUL TO BE DISCONTENTED THAT THE TIMES HAVE BECOME WORSE

It is, however, a great sin to quarrel with Providence, or to enquire concerning this matter with a fretting discontentment of spirit. It is as if we were saying that things are not well ordered by Divine Providence, if we do not have as much peace and prosperity and as great freedom from outward trouble as those who were before us have had. For this is the evil here dissuaded from: to ask the cause why the former times were better than these.

We should not quarrel with God's providence for appointing our lot in more troublesome times, and under more grievous oppressions than have been formerly. We should avoid speaking as if there were no cause why we should submit to a change of times from better to worse. The Spirit of the Lord does not give particular reasons of such changes here. There are many obvious reasons given in Scripture which are sufficient to satisfy us in relation to this. Rather, He prohibits and rebukes such boldness and gives a general reason of the dissuasive, that these inquiries flow from men's ignorance of the Lord's sovereignty and wisdom, who works all for His own glory, and the good of His people.

4. IT IS SINFUL NOT TO SUBMIT TO GOD'S PURPOSE THAT THE TIMES HAVE BECOME WORSE

To fret and repine that the present times are worse than the former shows us to be void of heavenly wisdom. This teaches those who have it to adore the righteousness of God in all His dealings. They do this even though they do not see the particular reasons for them (Jeremiah 12:1).

5. IT IS SINFUL TO IGNORE GOOD THINGS, EVEN THOUGH THE TIMES HAVE BECOME WORSE

Such submission often leads them to satisfying reasons clearly held forth in Scripture, namely that God in wisdom uses certain times to reveal men's perversity which at other times He sees fit to restrain. At times He chooses to advance by sore trials the faith, patience, and other graces of His people, which at other times He advances without such trials (Daniel 12:10).

This quarrelling with the Lord is evidence of great presumptuousness arising from an ignorance of the true condition of both the present and former times. This makes them fail to consider the good of the present times, which often exceeds that of the former as far as the evils and troubles of the present exceeds those of the former. Solomon says that in such a spirit we do not enquire wisely (or as it is literally in the Hebrew original "by wisdom") concerning this matter. The expression intends more than is expressed.

CONCLUSION

Nostalgia may have its benefits as well as its pitfalls, but it cannot really transform. It can bind us to the past in ways that debilitate us in the present. It recalls a past that cannot be recovered. Hope on the other hand, is always transformative. In some ways we could think of hope as nostalgia in reverse, a longing for our future home (2 Corinthians 5:1-4). Hope does not unsettle us, it anchors us (Hebrews 6:19). This kind of nostalgia in reverse is not sinful, rather it purifies us (1 John 3:3; 2 Peter 3:14). It strengthens us with patience (Romans 8:25). Surely we need to cultivate it more?

adapted and edited from Alexander Nisbet (1623-69), Reformation Scotland.org

NEWS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear Worshippers, as the Church Premises reopens for both Worship Services please note that there will be strict social distancing measures put in place. Face coverings must be worn in the church at all times out of consideration for all worshippers.

For those unable to attend Church in person, we will continue to stream our services online.

If you require the link to our online zoom services, or have any questions or require further clarity, please call the church manse, or email us at admin 'at' newlifebpc.org.uk.

Tithes & Offerings – There will be an offering box at the entrance to the Church Sanctuary for you to place your offerings in.

Worship Service Collections: 21/11/21 - £1146, 28/11/21 - £800, Maintenance Fund - £150

Church Maintenance Fund Total: £7,990.50

CHURCH NOTICE

Dear fellow worshippers and friends,

We are pleased to inform the worshippers and visitors of New Life Bible Presbyterian Church that the church will resume holding both worship services in the Church premise on Sunday.

The church activities will take place as follows:

- Sunday Morning Worship Service, 11am – Church Premises & Online
- Sunday Afternoon Worship Service, 2pm – Church Premises & Online

Provided that there is no worsening of the pandemic in London, we hope to start holding the Afternoon Worship Service and Fortnightly Bible Study within the church premises in the coming months.

Changes introduced to the Worship Services held at the church premises

In compliance with the current Government guidelines, the following changes have been introduced:

- No offering collection during the worship service. Offerings can be made at the offering box when entering or exiting the church.
- Adopt a 2-metre social distancing seating arrangement (household members may sit with each other).
- Face coverings to be worn in the church **at all times** out of consideration for all worshippers. For young children under the age of 11, the use of face covering is optional. **Please ensure you bring your own face covering.**
- No food and drinks will be made available (Fellowship Lunch has been temporarily suspended).
- After Morning Worship Service, you may gather for fellowship inside or outside of the Church premises, but please adhere to social distancing.
- No access to non-essential areas of the church – this includes the Fellowship Hall and kitchen.
- New movement arrangements to be adopted (please follow directions).
- Temperature measurements will be taken for every worshipper and visitor.
- Worshippers and visitors are required to complete the contact details slip for the NHS Test & Trace service. These details will be kept securely in church for 21 days and then destroyed. They will only be submitted to Test & Trace if a Covid-19 case occurs.
- Alternatively, please download the NHS COVID-19 Mobile App and scan one of the QR codes in the Church entrance to check-in.

To join our online services or to obtain further updates, 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