



COVENANT Bible-Presbyterian Church

Preaching Christ for His Glory and His Kingdom

Order of Worship — 8 March 2015

Theme for the Year: "Out of Myself and into the Savior" (Ezekiel 14:4-6)

Prelude	<i>The Lord Is in His Holy Temple</i>
Call to Worship	
*Opening Hymn	1 - <i>O Worship the King</i>
*Invocation & † <i>Gloria Patri</i>	
Responsive Reading	Psalm 101
Hymn	Insert - <i>Of Loyalty and Justice</i>
Tithes & Offering	
*† <i>Doxology</i> & Offertory Prayer	
Scripture Reading	Esther 8:1-10:3
Hymn	201 - He Is Able to Deliver Thee
Confession of Faith & Pastoral Prayer	
Sermon	"God Delivers His People"
*Closing Hymn	474 - <i>Only a Sinner</i>
*Benediction & † <i>Threefold Amen</i>	
Silent Prayer & Postlude	<i>The Lord Bless You and Keep You</i>
Announcements	† <i>Inside cover of hymnal</i>

**Congregation standing*

Covenant Bible-Presbyterian Church meets every Sunday at 3:00 pm
at 47 Davis Road, Attadale, Western Australia
Website: www.covenantbpc.org.au
Email: pastor@covenantbpc.org.au

Response to Worldwide Persecution of the Church

Islamic State Persecution of Christians

Over the pulpit, I have made mention of the massacre of the 21 Egyptian Christian workers in Libya.

Many of you will have already read that story online or in the newspapers, or have watched it on the news.

There was a video produced by the Islamic State showing 12 of them being beheaded. They refused to deny Jesus and died calling upon his name.

There are other kinds of persecutions that are happening all over as well.

Persecutions Elsewhere

The underground church in China is persecuted because they refuse to be governed by the government which imposes anti-Christian restrictions on the churches.

In "Christian" countries, Christians are being persecuted as well. Businesses that refuse to cater to gay weddings are persecuted.

A Christian florist in America has been found guilty of discrimination when she refused to provide floral arrangements for a same-sex wedding. She may lose her business and have to pay a hefty fine. The person whose wedding she refused to service, was a customer she had served loyally for over 9 years.

A Christian baker in Northern Ireland refused to make a cake with the words "Support Gay Marriage" below an image of the Sesame Street muppets Bert and Ernie. He has been threatened with legal action unless he pays compensation.

Courage or Capitulation?

There are Christians who, by providence, have experienced persecution because they exercised their moral courage. And they continue

to exercise courage in the face of persecution. They are an example to us.

There are also many Christians who, because of their inherent weakness, have capitulated. They are people, who like us, deserve mercy and prayers, that they may stand strong for the Lord.

Persecution Should Be Expected!

As Christians, if we live holy, we will be persecuted. 2 Timothy 3:12 says, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

Jesus told us to expect persecution - unbelievers would hate us just as they hated him (John 15:18-20).

While many of us won't lose our lives for Christ, we should not be surprised if we suffer for right.

Often, we don't suffer because we don't shine enough for Christ. Instead, we often suffer for wrong!

The cost of discipleship is high. We will never be prepared to surrender our lives for Christ if we aren't prepared to surrender our moral choices to him now.

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."

Why We Should Not Be Afraid

Discipleship is a tall order. To be a Christian is to be completely sold out for Christ. He owns us.

He owns our lives. We are "to be faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10).

He owns our emotion. Jesus calls us to rejoice when we are persecuted. It is an honor to suffer for Christ. Acts 5:41 says, "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

It is natural to be afraid. It is easier to hide our identity like Esther did.

We are also afraid that we won't have the strength to suffer. But we are promised grace to endure. 2 Corinthians 9:8 says, *"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."*

The American florist was offered a deal - she would pay a penalty of \$2000 and agree not to "discriminate."

Her response was simple - *"You are asking me to walk in the way of a well-known betrayer, one who sold something of infinite worth for 30 pieces of silver. That is something I will not do."* She loved not her life unto death.

The reason why we fear losing out, suffering, and persecution for obedience to God is because we love our lives more than we love Christ.

The cost of discipleship is an ongoing thing. To live is Christ, to die is gain (Philippians 1:21). This is difficult.

Grief for the Persecuted and Prayer for the Persecutors

Let us pray, therefore, for those who are persecuted. Not only do we weep for them (Romans 12:15), but we pray that

those suffering would experience joy and strength to endure their suffering.

But not only that, we should weep and pray for ourselves, that we would live godly lives.

But not only that, we should weep and pray for the persecutors. They do such evil because they hate the cross.

Christ wept for the rebellious Jews and prayed that God would forgive his tormentors at the cross.

Pleading for Justice from God

Yet we pray for justice from God. The martyrs of Revelation cried out - *"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"*

We ask God to exact his wrath against those who would persecute the church. One day, all this shall be made right.

Conclusion

In light of this worldwide persecution, how morally courageous are we in light of greater opposition to Christianity? Shall we hide our identity and compromise?

We praise God for saving such weak people like us and we pray for his mercy. "Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). ~ Pastor



Westminster Confession of Faith XXIII - Of the Civil Magistrate

1. God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, has ordained civil magistrates, to be, under Him, over the people, for His own glory, and the public good: and, to this end, has armed them with the power of the sword, for the defence and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil doers.¹
2. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto:² in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth;³ so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war, upon just and necessary occasion.⁴

1. Romans 13:1-4; 1 Peter 2:13-14.

2. Proverbs 8:15-16; Romans 13:1-4.

3. Psalm 2:10-12; 1 Timothy 2:2; Psalm 82:3-4; 2 Samuel 23:3; 1 Peter 2:13.

4. Luke 3:14; Romans 13:4; Matthew 8:9-10; Acts 10:1-2; Revelation 17:14, 16.

Worship Service Roster

<i>Service</i>	<i>This Week (8.3.15)</i>	<i>Next Week (15.3.15)</i>
Speaker	Mark Chen	Mark Chen
Worship Leader	Jabez Huang	SK Loh
Pianist	Eugene Lim	Evelyn Lee
Welcomers	Kim & Jesslyn Leow	Jacob & Marilyn Woo
Offering Stewards	Paul Butler, Jansen Ng	LH Chua, David Pang
Usher	Jesslyn Leow	Marilyn Woo
Kitchen Duties	Helen Wong*, Sarah Siew Grace Wang	Sandy Chua*, Nget Chu Pang Eva Chiu
<i>Prayer Meeting</i>	<i>11 March 2015</i>	<i>18 March 2015</i>
Speaker	Mark Chen	Mark Chen
Chairperson	LH Chua	Jacob Woo
Pianist	Wendy Gong	Marilyn Woo

Announcements

1. A warm welcome to all worshipers. May God richly bless you. Please stay behind after the service for fellowship and tea.
2. Next week's message: "Jesus, a Healer of Souls" (Mathew 8:14-17, 9:1-13).
3. Church Anniversary Dinner. Venue: North Lake BBQ Restaurant (406 North Lake Road, Bibra Lake) Date: Sunday, 12 April 2015. Time: 7 pm. Subsidised cost: \$20/adult, \$15/child (4-12 years). Please register with Raymond and Peggy Woo.
4. Shepherding a Child's Heart Parenting Conference. Speaker: Dr Tedd Tripp. Dates: Monday, 13 - Wednesday, 15 April 2015. Time: 7:30 - 9:30 pm. Venue: Westminster Presbyterian Church (Bull Creek). Please register at www.covenantbpc.org.au/shepherding. Like and share it at www.facebook.com/shepherding.perth. Additional flyers are available at the foyer.
5. Volunteers Needed! Kitchen helpers and creche helpers for the Shepherding a Child's Heart Parenting Conference. Please indicate your availability to Terence Lee.

Appointments for the Week

WED	7:45 pm	Prayer Meeting - Psalm 102
FRI	7:45 pm	JF, YPG, and Parents' Group
SAT	8:00 pm	Men's Bible Study
SUN	2:00 pm	Adult Bible Class
	3:00 pm	Worship & Sunday School

Last Lord's Day Tithes & Offering, & Attendance

General Fund - \$3,862.25. *Missions Fund* - \$530.00 (#458 - \$100.00). *Building Fund* - \$100.00 (#201 - \$100.00). *Total Tithes & Offering* - \$4,492.25. Attendance - 127.

Elders: **Mark Chen (Pastor)** 0415 932 373. **Jimmy Orchard** 0413 274 407.

Deacons: **Ken Chong** 0402 553 313. **LH Chua** 0435 601 373. **Terence Lee** 0418 845 617. **Johnson Lim** 0402 145 682. **SK Loh** 9386 1660.