



# COVENANT

## Bible-Presbyterian Church

*Preaching Christ for His Glory and His Kingdom*

### Order of Worship — 5 November 2017

**Theme for the Year: "What Would Jesus Say About Your Church?" (Rev 3:22)**

Prelude	<i>The Lord Is in His Holy Temple</i>
Call to Worship	
*Opening Hymn	40 - <i>Stand Up, and Bless the Lord</i>
*Invocation & † <i>Gloria Patri</i>	
Scripture Reading	Philippians 1:1-18
The Lord's Supper	
Hymn	235 - <i>To Calvary, Lord, in Spirit Now</i>
Hymn	560 - <i>Take My Life and Let It Be</i>
Tithes & Offering	
*† <i>Doxology</i> & Offertory Prayer	
Scripture Reading	Acts 16:6-25
Hymn	Psalms 119f
Confession of Faith & Pastoral Prayer	
Sermon	"A Shut Door, an Open Heart, a Locked Prison"
*Closing Hymn	55 - <i>God Moves in a Mysterious Way</i>
*Benediction & <i>Threefold Amen</i>	
Silent Prayer & Postlude	
Announcements	<i>*Congregation standing</i>

†Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:  
And to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning,  
Is now and ever shall be:  
World without end. Amen.

††Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise him, all creatures here below;  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
Amen.

Covenant Bible-Presbyterian Church meets every Sunday at 10:00 am  
at 47 Davis Road, Attadale, Western Australia

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## The Reformation View of the Individual Versus Secular Individualism

In last week's bulletin, we explored how the Reformation had rediscovered the Biblical view of the individual.

It led to many things we take for granted today, such as our free access to God in prayer, a personal salvation, and the dignity of our person in terms of our vocation.

But the rediscovery of Biblical individualism was not done at the expense of the church and society.

*The Individual Was Part of the Larger Church*

The Reformation view of the individual included a biblical view of the individual's place in the church.

So while he was a priest, there were still offices in the church; and while he could interpret the Bible for himself; God had gifted the church with pastors and teachers down the ages.

There was a place for the individual to be governed, moulded, and shaped by others in the church.

But the Reformation was not a gloriously uniform movement. There were Radical Reformers - like some Anabaptists who argued that since *Sola Scriptura* meant that the personal interpretation of the Bible guided by the Spirit trumped every other teacher or council.

However, the church is the pillar and ground of truth - and it is the consensus of Bible-believing teachers and believers through the ages that guard and present that truth and right interpretation.

It is not the mere individual. *Sola Scriptura* does not mean *Solo Scriptura* (me and my Bible).

Those that dismiss church history and historical theology for his own interpretation make the same fatal

mistake as the Medieval Church. While she elevated tradition and church interpretation to the same level as the Scriptures, such individuals elevate themselves to the same level as the Scriptures.

In this view everything is evaluated according to the individual's opinion of what is and is not scriptural. "Scripture alone" is not "me alone."

That's why Luther and the Reformers, in their defense of the faith, quoted not only from Scripture, but from early church fathers to show that their theology was not new, but ancient.

So the Reformation view of the individual was not an unguarded, ungoverned individualism.

*The Origin of Secular Individualism*

Modern day secular individualism had its historical roots in Transcendentalism - a movement of the early 1800s.

It taught that since society and religious institutions have corrupted the purity of the individual, people must free themselves from these things to be truly independent.

This was best captured in a paper by Ralph Waldo Emerson entitled "Self-Reliance."

He said that religion forced individuals to give up their freedom and persecuted those who acted independently.

In that paper he wrote - "*An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man and to achieve true independence, insist on one's self; never imitate.*"

The problem with this idea is that it calls the church the shadow of one man, and if an individual is to truly be individual, he must throw off that institution. But whose shadow is cast by the church?? It is Christ himself.

To have the individualism of the Transcendental movement, which is today's secular individualism, is to reject Christ.

### *No One Is Ever Truly Independent*

What secular individualism fails to understand is that no one is truly independent.

The authority over the individual in Medieval times was the Medieval Church. The authority over the individual in the Reformation was Christ and His Word.

And secular individualism has the harshest authority ever - self, and ultimately Satan himself (Isaiah 14:12-14).

Those who buy into a secular individualism will live for self, act for self, and kill for self. Those who believe in a biblical individualism will live for Christ, act for Christ, and die for Christ (Galatians 2:20).

### *A God-Glorifying Individualism*

The Reformers stood firm on their individualism. But they glorified God by it through their faithfulness.

Martin Luther said, *"Unless I am convinced by sacred Scripture, or by evident reason, I cannot recant, for my conscience is held captive by the word of God, and to act against conscience is neither right nor safe."* He was captive to God. Ruled by God.

Athanasius of Alexandria, was involved in the Arian controversy of the 4th century.

And when it seemed at one point that a large proportion of the church was lapsing into Arianism, his friends counseled him to back down from the fight saying that the whole world was against him.

Athanasius replied by saying that he was against the world - *"Athanasius contra mundum."* One man against the world. Very individualistic but subservient to the glory of God.

These men were willing to stand alone - not for their health, pride, or some self-motivated principle.

Why were the apostles and the early Christians willing to die for their faith? Because they surrendered to Christ.

This was the same with individuals in Scripture like Abraham who left his idols to follow Christ. This was like Paul who went against his past to follow Christ.

And this was because of their supreme master himself - who willingly submitted self to God in order to die on the cross.

As an individual, Christ had his fears - the fear of pain and death - but he prayed that God's will would be done and not his. He was an individual who was faithful and surrendered to his God.

He did not act for self as an individual. He did not live for self. He did not kill for self. Rather, he lived for God, acted for God, and died according to the will of God.

There is a call for us to be different because we are individuals in Christ. But as individuals, we do not live any longer henceforth for ourselves, but for our Lord and his church. ~ Pastor



## **Westminster Larger Catechism**

Q. 176. Wherein do the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper agree?

A. The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper agree, in that the author of both is God; the spiritual part of both is Christ and his benefits; both are seals of the same covenant, are to be dispensed by ministers of the gospel, and by none other; and to be continued in the Church of Christ until his second coming.

# Worship Service Roster

Service	This Week (5.11.17)	Next Week (12.11.17)
Speaker	Mark Chen	Mark Chen
Worship Leader	Mark Chen	Ken Chong
Pianist	Jabez Huang	Nancy Lim
Welcomers	Johnny & Lydia Orchard	Wendy Gong & Putri Harapan
Offering Stewards	Jansen Ng*, Steven Lim* Chris Budiman, Jacob Woo	Micah Chiang*, Vincent Chiu* Rex Sriharan, David Lim
Ushers	Eva Ng, Merilyn Woo	Joyce Ng, Jesslyn Leow
Kitchen Duties	Jesslyn Leow*, Josephine Austin Rosemary Fitzpatrick, Jackie Hong	Angela Yap*, Debbie Blake Victor Poon
PA Duty	Raymond Woo	Ian Tay
<i>Prayer Meeting</i>	<i>10 November 2017</i>	<i>17 November 2017</i>
Facilitator	Mark Chen	Mark Chen
Pianist	Jerome Ng	Nancy Lim

## Announcements

1. A warm welcome to all worshippers. May God richly bless you. Please stay behind after the service for fellowship and tea.
2. We are celebrating the Lord's Supper today. First time visitors wishing to partake the Lord's Supper should see an elder before the service.
3. Next week's message: "Appealing to God and Man" (Acts 16:25-40).
4. Next week's Junior Worship message - "Coming Near to God" (Hebrews 10:19-25). Speaker: Merilyn Woo.
5. Trinitarian Bible Society talk. "The Centrality of Scripture in the Reformation" by Rev Chris Tuck. Saturday, 25 Nov 2017 (9:30 am-3 pm) at Perth Free Presbyterian Church.
6. Reformation 500 Conference. Speaker: Charles Scott-Pearson (General-Secretary of the Protestant Alliance, UK). "The Life of Martin Luther" on Friday, 1 Dec 2017 at 7:30 pm. "Two Boys Who Reformed Their Nations" and "Does the Church Today Reflect the Benefits and Blessings of the Reformation?" on Saturday, 2 Dec 2017 at 4:30 pm.

Appointments for the Week	Last Lord's Day Tithes & Offering, & Attendance
WED 10:00 am Craft Group FRI 7:30 pm CBI & Prayer Meeting SAT 4:30 pm JF & TF 7:30 pm Men's Bible Study SUN 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship Service	General Fund - \$3,043.50 (*DD - \$200.00, #755 - \$11.50). Missions Fund - \$160.00. Building Fund - \$1,300.00 (*DD - \$1,300.00). Total Tithes & Offering - \$4,503.50. Attendance - 144. *DD: direct deposit

Building Fund to Date	
Available Building Fund \$85,101.82 Last Week's Collection \$1,300.00 Total \$86,401.82 Outstanding Loan - \$390,000.00 Amount Still Needed \$303,598.18	General Fund: BSB: 036-031 A/C: 316942 Missions Fund: BSB: 036-031 A/C: 316950 Building Fund: BSB: 036-031 A/C: 316969

Elders: **Mark Chen (Pastor)** 6114 4242, 0415 932 373. **Jimmy Orchard** 0413 274 407.

Deacons: **Johnson Lim** 0402 145 682. **Jacob Woo** 0421 212 206. **Vincent Chiu** 0417 929 149.

A Shut Door, an Open Heart, a Locked Prison  
Acts 16:6-25

As Christians, our life is not in our control but in Christ's control. Our plans that we have may be hindered or changed by him. Do we get perplexed and angry? But God's plans will always go the way he intends - and our plans are subservient to his. We are required to bear the cross and live his resurrection, because even in those times, God's will and light shine through.

1. A Shut Door
  - a. God shut the door
  - b. God's will is perfect
2. An Open Heart
  - a. The lady
  - b. The lady's heart opened by God
  - c. The lady's life changed by the Gospel
3. A Locked Prison
  - a. She was locked in prison
  - b. They were locked in prison
  - c. They were locked and free in prison

Under whose control are we? Is it our wallet, reputation, a grand future, our children's happiness, our job, our Christian service? Would these things or the perfect will of God control us when God were to change our plans? How does a truly open heart react to a shut door and locked prison?

Questions for Reflection:

1. Under whose control are you? Which thing greatly affects you so that when your plans are hindered, you are troubled, grieved, and angered?
2. What spiritual and practical steps are required so that you can rejoice even when your plans and purposes are changed by God by the shutting of doors and opening of ones you never expected?