



COVENANT

Bible-Presbyterian Church

Preaching Christ for His Glory and His Kingdom

Order of Worship — 17 December 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	111 - <i>Angels from the Realms of Glory</i>
*Invocation & † <i>Gloria Patri</i>	
Scripture Reading	Luke 24:13-32
Hymn	90 - <i>Hark! The Herald Angels Sing</i>
Tithes & Offering	
**† <i>Doxology</i> & Offertory Prayer	
Scripture Reading	Acts 18:18-28
Hymn	494 - <i>All the Way My Saviour Leads Me</i>
Confession of Faith & Pastoral Prayer	
Sermon	"The Work of Teaching and Learning"
*Closing Hymn	TP 119:97-108
*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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Same Sex Marriage - Jerome or Augustine?

The Sack of Rome

24 August 410 would be a day etched in the minds of the inhabitants of Rome. It would also be a day etched in the minds of the Visigoths.

That was the sack of Rome.

To the invading Visigoths, it was a date to be remembered with joy, honor, and victory. To the invaded Romans, it was a date to be remembered with chagrin, resentment, and sadness.

For 10 years, King Alaric of the Visigoths had attacked the Roman Empire. He advanced on "The Eternal City" and finally, after 2 years of siege campaign, the city fell.

The Despairing Response of Jerome

This was a great shock to many in those days. The people could not believe that Rome could fall because it was a city of great political and spiritual importance.

Jerome the theologian, fleeing Rome and retreating to Bethlehem, wrote of that fall - "*The City which had taken the whole world was itself taken.*"

He looked at the situation with great discouragement. He fled. Like Chicken Little, he proclaimed that the sky was falling just because a tiny acorn dropped on his head.

Along with him, many of his religious contemporaries were proclaiming that this event was a judgment of God because of the debauchery of the city.

The Patient Response of Augustine

On the other hand, Augustine, another theologian, looked at the same situation through a completely different set of lenses.

He reacted to the news of the sack of Rome, not with self-imposed exile, but by writing a series of sermons and a book - "The City of God."

Therein, he advised Christians to look to God - not to ignore the political turmoil - but to deal with it. He likened the events to an olive press that served to produce pure oil.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Augustine did not see it as punishment for specific sin, although he did admit it was a natural outgrowth of man's depravity.

Therefore, the Christian was not to run away from it. Instead, in the face of such problems, he was to look to the future and continue to serve Christ in a fallen world.

Using allegory, Augustine described the Christian as a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem. However, he was not yet in that city, but a pilgrim journeying there.

And until he arrived, he was a resident of Babylon - a city completely opposed to God.

So Augustine said that Christians were to live under the intense pressure of this world because it prepared them for the pleasures of the world to come.

Hence, to Augustine, it would be wrong for the Christian to flee. The sky is not falling. It was terrible that Rome was destroyed, yes, but it wasn't the end of the world.

The Christian didn't have to be like Jerome, retreating away to Bethlehem, just because Rome was destroyed.

Same Sex Marriage

Similarly, 7 December 2017 would be a day etched in the minds of many. Many rejoiced openly and many mourned secretly.

It was the day when the Marriage Amendment Act was passed in the Australian Parliament, allowing for same sex marriage.

Before the legislation was adopted, attempts were made to protect the religious freedoms of those disagreeing with the Act. These were all defeated.

This means that if you own a business, you cannot refuse to cater to a same sex wedding. Only religious celebrants and religious facilities are exempted.

How do we react to all of this?

Firstly, there is no need to run away.

Internet chatter shows that many Christians have vowed to move to Maranoa, the electorate with the most "no" votes.

What happens when opinions there change? And they will! We will always be living in Babylon. No place on earth is safe from the ravages of idolatry.

Even in the purest churches on earth, there will always be mixture and error.

Secondly, there is no need to overreact.

There was a married Christian couple who vowed to get divorced to protest federal same sex legislation. This would prove more difficult than anticipated.

The Anabaptist groups, such as the Mennonites and Amish, would form their own communes separate from the legislation and rule of the government.

They do not serve in the military, have no photo IDs, do not pay taxes, and are exempt from state education standards. They are a real pain.

While we are not of the world, we are in the world. We are called to submit to

government so that they may carry out their duties of maintaining rule & order.

Thirdly, there is a need to maintain Biblical convictions and foster boldness in a complicated world.

Would it be unfaithful for a Christian business owner to cater same sex weddings? This is a difficult question. But it is not an isolated one. Can a Christian florist supply flowers for worship in a Buddhist temple?

There are many questions to grapple with and they are hard to answer.

Many of the Jews who were taken exile stopped grappling with these questions and gave in - such as Esther, in hiding her identity and eating the king's meat.

But a remnant did struggle on - like Daniel and his three friends who refused to compromise. They suffered for it.

While God alone is the Lord of the conscience, there must be an overt living out of our faith.

For those who have constant contact with Babylon, it will be difficult and there will be suffering - even by merely speaking out your convictions.

But this is the lot of the citizen of Jerusalem. This is what we're called to do.

Like Augustine, we do not despair. This was not unexpected. And what is also not unexpected is the backlash that you will receive for living as a Christian.

Living under this intense pressure prepares us and purifies us. ~ *Pastor*

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 182. How doth the Spirit help us to pray?

A. We not knowing what to pray for as we ought, the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, by enabling us to understand both for whom, and what, and how prayer is to be made; and by working and quickening in our hearts (although not in all persons, nor at all times, in the same measure,) those apprehensions, affections, and graces which are requisite for the right performance of that duty.

Worship Service Roster

Service	This Week (17.12.17)	Next Week (24.12.17)
Speaker	Mark Chen	Mark Chen
Worship Leader	Mark Chen	Jimmy Orchard
Pianist	Valerie Lee	Eugene Lim
Welcomers	Johnny & Lydia Orchard	Danny & Susie Tan
Offering Stewards	John Tan*, Vincent Chiu* Paul Butler, Jacob Woo	David Lim David Pang
Ushers	Wendy Gong, Jerome Ng	-
Kitchen Duties	Adeline Ng*, Carmel Sriharan Val Withnell	Eileen Tay*, Lisa Lim Mary-Anne Chan
PA Duty	Jacob Woo	Ian Tay
<i>Prayer Meeting</i>	<i>22 December 2017</i>	<i>29 December 2017</i>
Facilitator	Mark Chen	Mark Chen
Pianist	Jerome Ng	Eugene 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. Next week's message: "Giving God Glory" (Luke 2:8-14). This is an evangelistic message. Please invite your unbelieving friends and loved ones.
3. Junior Worship will be in recess for the next two Sundays.
4. Bible Conference 2018. Dates: 23-26 April 2018. Speaker: Pastor Allen Beardmore. Venue: Hotel Lord Forrest, Bunbury. Please register with Ken Chong or Ken Hong.
5. Bible Study Tour of Israel and Jordan. Dates: 9-21 December 2018. Please contact Pastor Mark if you are interested.

Appointments for the Week	Last Lord's Day Tithes & Offering, & Attendance
<p>WED 10:00 am Craft Group</p> <p>FRI 7:30 pm CBI & Prayer Meeting</p> <p>SUN 9:00 am Sunday School</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">10:00 am Worship Service</p>	<p>General Fund - \$3,538.95 (*DD - \$200.00). Missions Fund - \$180.00.</p> <p>Building Fund - \$300.00 (*DD - \$300.00).</p> <p>Total Tithes & Offering - \$4,018.95.</p> <p>Attendance - 143.</p> <p><i>*DD: direct deposit</i></p>

Building Fund to Date & Bank Account Details	
Available Building Fund	\$92,501.82
Last Week's Collection	\$300.00
Total	\$92,801.82
Outstanding Loan	- \$390,000.00
Amount Still Needed	\$297,198.18
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.

The Work of Teaching and Learning Acts 18:18-28

When technology increases, there are functions on electronic devices that even the most technologically advanced of us don't know how to use or are unaware exist. But when we do, we can do much more. Similarly, even after years of studying the Scriptures, there are gaps in our understanding. When those gaps are closed, it results in greater maturity and usefulness.

1. Led by God to Teach or Not to Teach

- a. An open door
- b. A submission to God's will
- c. A call to strengthen

2. Led by God to Learn

- a. Great teachers are still deficient
- b. A humility to learn
- c. A great teacher becomes greater

When there are gaps in our knowledge, like the Corinthians, the Emmaus disciples, and Apollos, it leads to all kinds of deficiencies. But the teachers here submitted themselves to the leading of the Lord. Christ was clearly guiding them for the sake of his church.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Why do you think that Bible-believing, fundamental Christians, with their church distinctive doctrines, are among the hardest to teach?
2. What should one do if a teacher in church teaches wrongly or is incomplete in his understanding of the Scriptures?
3. What gaps in your understanding do you think you need to close? How open are you to acknowledging there are gaps?