



COVENANT

Bible-Presbyterian Church

Preaching Christ for His Glory and His Kingdom

Order of Worship — 21 May 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	3 - <i>Holy, Holy, Holy</i>
*Invocation & † <i>Gloria Patri</i>	
Scripture Reading	Luke 10:1-24
Hymn	TP 10:7-14
Tithes & Offering	
**† <i>Doxology</i> & Offertory Prayer	
Scripture Reading	Acts 8:5-25
Hymn	576 - <i>Above Thine Own Ambitions Here</i>
Confession of Faith & Pastoral Prayer	
Sermon	"Simony"
*Closing Hymn	588 - <i>A Mighty Fortress Is Our God</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 Tyranny of "Weaker" Brethren and the Exuberance of Youth

The Exuberance of Youth

Recently, on one Sunday, I had a very pleasant conversation with a young worshiper who had a genuine question about Christian liberty.

This worshiper was toying with the idea of doing something exuberantly expressive to their appearance as a mark of celebration.

While it was not something sinful, the person was concerned it might not be socially acceptable by some church folks.

A Series of Questions

It got me thinking about why it would not be socially acceptable in church - other than the fact that I, personally, would find it hideous.

But more important than that, it got me thinking about the potential backlash of the church folks on something possibly harmless.

Was it because of weak consciences or draconian social norms? Or was it because of perception of rebellion, worldliness, or desire for attention in young people?

And then it got me thinking about how we allow our actions to be ruled by the weak consciences of others, the judgment of others, and the outrage of others.

And then it got me thinking about how a church could function or not function if it was filled with a majority of people with such touchy consciences. Or maybe a minority of touchy people? Or what if it was only one very vocal touchy person?

Indeed, how could a church function under the tyranny of weaker brethren?

Defining the Weaker and the "Weaker" Brother

One of the great principles of Christian living in the Bible is that of freedom in Christ. Jesus has freed us from legalistic bondage. As Christians, we are free to do ANYTHING that is not sinful.

Paul defended this freedom very vigorously in Galatians 5:1 - "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free..."

But Paul also qualified himself. Sometimes, we must voluntarily restrict our freedom for the sake of others who are weaker in faith (1 Cor 8-10, Rom 14).

There are those who think it sinful to do certain things - even though these things are not sinful.

These are the weaker brethren. Their conscience is weak - they have not yet learned that these things are not sinful.

An example used in the Bible is meat offered to idols. Paul says that it is okay to eat it (1 Cor 8:4,8). But some who believe it to be wrong, may be emboldened in their conscience to eat it, when they see you eating it (1 Cor 8:9,10). So therefore, because of them, show love, and refrain from eating something that is perfectly alright to eat (1 Cor 8:13).

But what happens if you're not dealing with a genuine weaker brother? What happens if he's a professional "weaker" brother?

That is, someone who is not weak in conscience, but actually strong in conviction, but weak in understanding - someone who is easily outraged at others using their liberty in ways that he doesn't agree with.

What if everyone in the church has to adjust their activities to the capacity of its most dysfunctional (and vocal) member?

Handling the "Weaker" Brother

To those who were mature, Paul never hesitated to demand mature behavior from them. When Peter ministered in Galatia, he didn't uphold Christian freedom - Peter didn't dare eat with the Gentile believers in the presence of the Jewish believers. So, Paul rebuked him to his face (Gal 2:11)!

To those who were genuinely weak, even though he didn't agree with their scruples, Paul taught and nurtured them. That's how you help weak Christians.

But what about the "weaker" brethren - those who have strong convictions but remained willfully or unwittingly weak? You pay them no heed...for now.

Sisters, have you ever had a string of pearls where each pearl was uniformly beautiful and lustrous, except for one with a blemish? What do you do with that string of pearls? Keep it away? No, you wear it, but the part with the uglier pearl, you cover with your hair. You don't get rid of it - but you hide it.

In 1 Corinthians 12:23 Paul was speaking about certain members of the church - like certain body parts. They were uncomely or unpresentable - therefore, they should be hidden.

Could Paul have been thinking about those "weak" and easily outraged

members? Perhaps they shouldn't be given too much exposure or attention.

The church should never be controlled by its least presentable pearl. But even so, Paul does not ignore these people. Because the church is like a temple built with all the people, the weaker ones are supported by the stronger ones.

Back to the Question

I would like to thank the young person for their sensible, mature, and loving inquiry. It showed sensitivity and a heart of submission.

Some words of advice (and applicable to all young people with various life choices): speak to your parents for their words of wisdom; willingly submit to their counsel or instruction; ask yourself if your proposal is out of rebellion, worldliness, or attention-seeking. Celebration, expression, and youthful exuberance are all wonderful things.

But don't make me put you behind the tall guy in the next church photograph!

And to those who are easily disturbed by certain fashion choices that, while not sinful are certainly exuberant, did you know that John Owen wore a big huge powdered wig and a purple silk brocade outfit when his Puritan brothers were wearing black? ~ Pastor



Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 146. Which is the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment is, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

Q. 147. What are the duties required in the tenth commandment?

A. The duties required in the tenth commandment are, such a full contentment with our own condition, and such a charitable frame of the whole soul towards our neighbor, as that all our inward motions and affections touching him, tend unto, and further all that good which is his.

Worship Service Roster

Service	This Week (21.5.17)	Next Week (28.5.17)
Speaker	Mark Chen	Mark Chen
Worship Leader	Mark Chen	Johnson Lim
Pianist	Edward Lim	Eugene Lim
Welcomers	Ian & Merrill Read	Dolphin Wai & Putri Haripan
Offering Stewards	John Tan*, Chris Budiman* David Pang, Ken Chong	Jansen Ng*, Lye Heng Chua* Micah Chiang, Terence Lee
Ushers	Joyce Ng, Rebecca Lee	Jesslyn Leow, Josephine Austin
Kitchen Duties	Carmel Sriharan*, Grace Wang Vincent Chiu	Nancy Lim*, Eva Ng Val Withnell
PA Duty	Ken Hong	Ian Tay
Prayer Meeting	26 May 2017	2 June 2017
Facilitator	Mark Chen	Mark Chen
Pianist	Jerome Ng	Ian Tay

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: "A Personal Discipleship Ministry" (Acts 8:26-40).
3. Next week's Junior Worship message: "Standing Firm in Godly Affections" (Philippians 4:1-9). Speaker: Jackie Hong.
4. Combined Church Youth Camp. Dates: 14-15 July 2017. Theme: "Living as a Christian in a Non-Christian World". Speaker: Pastor Ron Nugent. Cost: \$55. Age range: High schoolers to working adults. Registration closes 4 June 2017. Please register with Eugene Lim, Jerome Ng or Micah Chiang.

Appointments for the Week	Last Lord's Day Tithes & Offering, & Attendance
WED 10:00 am Craft Group	General Fund - \$3,753.50 (#703 - \$110.00, #704 - \$17.00, #705 - \$300.00, #706 - \$200.00, #708 - \$200.00). Missions Fund - \$205.00 (#707 - \$5.00). Building Fund - \$300.00 (#534 - \$200.00, #535 - \$100.00). Total Tithes & Offering - \$4,258.50. Attendance - 147.
FRI 7:30 pm CBI & Prayer Meeting	
SAT 4:30 pm JF & TF	
7:30 pm Ladies' Bible Study	
SUN 9:00 am Sunday School	
10:00 am Worship Service	

Building Fund to Date	
Available Building Fund	\$85,435.93
Last Week's Collection	\$300.00
Total	\$85,735.93
Outstanding Loan	- \$416,000.00
Amount Still Needed	\$330,264.07
	Building Fund Account: Covenant Bible-Presbyterian Church (Westpac Bank, Applecross) BSB: 036-031 Acct: 316969 SWIFT: WPACAU2S

Elders: **Mark Chen (Pastor)** 6114 4242, 0415 932 373. **Jimmy Orchard** 0413 274 407.
 Deacons: **Ken Chong** 0402 553 313. **LH Chua** 0435 601 373. **Johnson Lim** 0402 145 682.
Jacob Woo 0421 212 206.

Simony
Acts 8.5-24

Simony is the buying and selling of a church office or spiritual role. People in the past would pay the bishop so they could be ordained to be a priest of a parish. With that came influence and money. Many ungodly men rose to high positions of church power. But this exaltation of self and desire for influence finds its source in Satan. Satan has always tried to usurp power from God and has always tried to tempt people to do it.

1. The Devil Loses Ground Through the Preaching and Demonstration of the Gospel
 - a. The power of the gospel over hatred
 - b. The power of the gospel over the influence of the devil himself
 - c. Before the influence of the gospel, Satan had control through deception
 - d. Widespread conversion
2. The Devilish Desire for Influence that Consumes False Believers
 - a. Genuine desire of gospel ministers
 - b. Exaltation of self
 - c. The desire to control the Spirit
 - d. Simon is an unbeliever

The love of self and desire for influence is the true message of Simon. It is something that even the true believer can fall prey to. The gospel must destroy self and exalt Christ.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How can vying for influence and power in a church be a ploy of Satan for destroying the church? What kind of influence should believers be vying for instead?
2. Simon's desire of imparting the Spirit sounds like such a noble and good thing. How can the church tell the difference between a good work done in Christ's name and that done with Satan's influence? How can we possibly detect self in it?

FUNDS NEEDED FOR MYANMAR

Dear Covenanters,

There are 2 needs for the Myanmar mission. The first is urgent and the second is not less urgent, but needful. Would you consider giving to both of them?

1. Government electric power is now available! Houses near the orphanage home are connecting to it, but they do this by their own expense as the government is cash strapped. It costs USD400 for one pole (this includes the poll and electric wire). The orphanage is 500 feet from the nearest pole and would require 2 poles to access the electricity. There is an urgent need for USD800. Here is a picture of the poles and you can see the orphanage in the distance.



2. The orphans in Myanmar get around by bicycles that were previously donated. But in the rainy season especially, the roads are not safe. The only path that the orphans use to get to school become too muddy for them to cycle because of floods. The orphans (and the church) are praying for a second hand vehicle for transport needs - to school and to church. So far we have received AUD500 of the USD10,000 needed to purchase such a vehicle. Please pray about giving to these needs. Here is a picture of a similar vehicle that was rented for a recent event.

