



# COVENANT

## Bible-Presbyterian Church

*Preaching Christ for His Glory and His Kingdom*

**Order of Worship – 27 May 2018**

**Theme for the Year: "King Jesus Must Reign" (1 Corinthians 15:25)**

Prelude	<i>The Lord Is in His Holy Temple</i>
Call to Worship	
*Opening Hymn	1 - <i>O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing!</i>
*Invocation & † <i>Gloria Patri</i>	
Scripture Reading	Revelation 2:1-7
Hymn	550 - <i>Search Me, O God</i>
Tithes & Offering	
**† <i>Doxology</i> & Offertory Prayer	
Scripture Reading	Acts 28:30-31
Hymn	551 - <i>Take Thou Our Minds, Dear Lord</i>
Confession of Faith & Pastoral Prayer	
Sermon	"Always for the Gospel"
*Closing Hymn	599 - <i>Hold the Fort</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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## When Virtues Turn Into Deadly Vices

### *Virtues Commanded*

All Christians should be virtuous. The Bible praises people of virtue (Pro 12:4, 31:10).

The Bible gives instructions to us to be virtuous - we are to think virtuous thoughts (Phi 4:8) because we are called to virtue (2 Pet 1:3,5).

There are many virtues described in the Bible. There are the character virtues like faith, hope, and love; and action virtues like giving and praying.

### *Virtues Rebuked*

In Matthew 6, Jesus taught about action virtues like giving and praying; and spoke to believers who did them.

These were expressions of their faith and love. They were good things. However, when Jesus spoke about them, he rebuked them.

Jesus was not rebuking vices - he was rebuking virtues done wrongly. This means that virtues, while good, can be deadly in the hands of believers.

This reveals a scary truth - we don't always do spiritual things spiritually. And even if we do spiritual things, we may not be spiritual.

### *Virtues and Hypocrisy*

These believers were practicing virtues hypocritically. That we are all hypocrites is a true statement.

We are saints, but we sin; we are God's children, but we give in to temptation; we are part of the church, but we bite and devour one another.

We can be right in our spiritual disciplines but our motives may be far from God.

But why don't we see this mismatch in our lives? It is because these virtues can lead us into sin. Chrysostom once said, "*Where virtue is, there are many*

*snares.*" Virtues do not always make us more virtuous. What irony!

### *Virtues Are Not Our Chief End*

Virtues are not our highest goal. Not even character virtues.

Our chief and highest goal is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. And if our virtues are done wrongly, then we do not glorify God.

But how can love be a deadly virtue? When we love to the extent that we never rebuke, love becomes deadly. When we show mercy but do not call for repentance, mercy is proud.

Likewise, giving, prayer, and fasting without God are sinful.

These virtues are necessary but only when cultivated to glorify God, will they bring honor to him and virtue to us.

### *Examples of Virtues Turning Deadly*

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the priest and Levite - religious men - showed no mercy. They had their own definition of holiness. But their holiness was not a virtue.

On the other hand, the Samaritan outcast showed true virtue.

The Sadducees and Pharisees were renowned for their religiosity. But their zeal had filled their hearts to do evil in falsely accusing Jesus.

On the other hand, the pagan governor Pilate recognized truth.

They had a zeal for righteousness that was not according to knowledge. Their righteousness had turned into vice.

They killed Jesus because they wanted to be righteous.

In Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son, we see how virtue turned into vice.

Yes, the prodigal son was ungodly. He left home and lived a life of prodigality. But he repented and returned.

The older brother, who was not prodigal, neither left; became incensed at his brother's reception. He was jealous his virtues were not rewarded; but his brother's vices were overlooked.

And as such, his virtues made him so judgmental that they produced vices.

While the prodigal was licentious, the older brother was self-righteous. The prodigal was a relativist and the brother was a legalist.

He was irreligious, his brother sanctimonious. One immoral, the other pharisaical. The prodigal had to repent of his vices; but the brother had to repent of his virtues!

#### *Virtues Can Turn Deadly in Church*

The Pharisee thanked God that he was not like other men. He fasted twice a week and gave his possessions - unlike the publican!

These were good virtues, but they had turned into vice because he despised others.

It can be the same in church.

A Christian can love truth so much, but use that love of truth to hate others who differ from them in doctrine. This makes love a vice.

Those who serve may despise those who don't serve as much.

Those who give may be disappointed in those whom they think should give more.

Those who are actively involved in the life of the church may look down on those who are less involved in the life of the church.

These are commendable virtues - truth, giving, serving, and involvement in church. But they can turn into vices.

True virtue will encourage and forbear rather than bicker. True virtue will love others despite their weaknesses. True virtue will show mercy; but will also gently admonish. True virtue will lift a finger to help those less virtuous.

We must always remember this - Jesus was gentle with the repentant but vice-filled people. He was severe with the unrepentant but "virtuous" people.

#### *We Are Not Virtuous*

When Jesus called his motley crew of disciples together, he commanded them to follow him.

They spent 3 1/2 years with him. And in that time, they heard his teaching.

But they were far from perfect. They were still arguing for preeminence. They were still jealous of one another. They still despised one another. They had conflicts with one another - even years after Christ had ascended.

But yet, they continued to follow Christ. They were not perfectly virtuous. Neither are we - until we reach heaven.

But until we reach that goal, we will need to grow in his grace and knowledge. Just like little children who are insufficient, but ever in need of instruction, so are we. We are not better than one another.

Jesus said in Luke 18:17, "*Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.*"

~ Pastor, with input from Lively Hope



## **Westminster Shorter Catechism**

Q. 23. What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?

A. Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the office of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

# Worship Service Roster

Service	This Week (27.5.18)	Next Week (3.6.18)
Speaker	Mark Chen	Mark Chen
Worship Leader	Johnson Lim	Mark Chen
Pianist	Ian Tay	Valerie Lee
Welcomers	John & Adeline Ng	Josephine Austin & Wendy Gong
Offering Stewards	Johnny Orchard*, Vincent Chiu* Yen Fye Yap, Lye Heng Chua	Micah Chiang*, Ian Read* Rex Sriharan, Johnny Orchard
Ushers	Jesslyn Leow, Joyce Ng	Dolphin Wai, Angela Yap
Kitchen Duties	Lydia Orchard*, Debbie Blake May Poon	Dina Portillo*, Aliza Chiu Peggy Woo, Julian Poon
PA Duty	Joel Chua	Raymond Woo
<i>Prayer Meeting</i>	<i>1 June 2018</i>	<i>8 June 2018</i>
Facilitator	Mark Chen	Mark Chen
Pianist	Eugene Lim	Jerome Ng

## Announcements

1. A warm welcome to all worshipers. May God richly bless you. Please stay behind after the service for fellowship and tea.
2. We will be celebrating Lord's Supper next Lord's Day. Please bring a dish to share at the fellowship lunch.
3. Next week's message: "Life Is Vain" (Ecclesiastes 1:1-18).
4. Next week's Junior Worship message: "From Lame to Upright" (Acts 3:1-11). Speaker: John Tan.
5. Retirees' Bible Study. Tuesday, 29 May 2018, 10am. Message by Pastor Mark: "What the Bible Says About Fasting". Potluck lunch after meeting.
6. Visitation this week by Pastor Mark Chen and Deacon Vincent Chiu; and Elder Jimmy Orchard and Deacon Johnson Lim.

Appointments for the Week	Last Lord's Day Tithes & Offering, & Attendance
TUE 10:00 am Retirees' Bible Study	General Fund - \$3,682.70
WED 10:00 am Craft Group	(*DD - \$200.00, #794 - \$18.80).
FRI 7:30 pm CBI & Prayer Meeting	Missions Fund - \$290.00
SAT 4:30 pm JF & TF	(*DD - \$100.00).
SUN 9:00 am Sunday School	Building Fund - \$1,500.00
10:00 am Worship Service	(*DD - \$1,300.00, #585 - \$200.00).
	Total Tithes & Offering - \$5,472.70.
	Attendance - 147.
	*DD: direct deposit

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.

Always for the Gospel  
Acts 28:30-31

In the book of Acts, God has grown the church from 120 disciples to hundreds of thousands in the world in 30 years. Paul had reached Rome after 3 years of imprisonment and disastrous travels. He now has a 2 year period of ministry in Rome. And he did not rest. He was always for the gospel.

1. The Willingness of Christians to Participate in Gospel Work
  - a. Paul did not work
  - b. The brethren supported him financially
2. The Willingness of Christians to Suffer for the Gospel
  - a. Under bondage to Rome and Christ
  - b. He continued to minister in his suffering
3. The Willingness of God to Bless the Church's Ministry
  - a. Peace in the eye of the storm
  - b. Christ and Christians suffer the storm

Paul was always for the gospel. Not only did he preach it, he lived it and died for it. While we may never have a ministry like Paul, we can support the gospel through our prayers and giving, and we can proclaim it and live it in our lives.

Questions for Reflection:

1. If Christ did not depend on one man - like Paul - to minister the gospel, but chose so many others when Paul was imprisoned, what does that tell you about your role in ministering and living the gospel?
2. If the gospel is about self-denial and surrender, what hindrances have you gone through in times of suffering and opposition to live the gospel well?