

# MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

23 August 2020

## English Worship Service

*"Present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28)*

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Sunday School: 10 am

Sunday English / Chinese Worship Service: 10.45 am

Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8.30 pm

**Rev Colin Wong (HP : 9665 8160); Elder Daniel Tau (HP : 9761 5415);  
Elder Peter Ong (HP : 9626 7045); Elder Royce Yeo (HP : 9362 3067)**

## Is Your Faith in God Strong?

### Introduction

Since the beginning of this year, many of us have heard much about the Covid-19 pandemic. Worldwide, we have almost 23 million coronavirus cases with close to 800,000 deaths, and still counting. Many countries' economies are in recession and will take years to recover.

Here in our country, we see how the pandemic has affected the livelihood of many. On top of the fear of contracting Covid-19, many are concerned about their job security and wonder how they are able to provide for their families, pay their mortgage loans, and other living expenses. As if this pandemic is not enough, there is this trade-cum-ideological war between two of the world most powerful nations. World peace is at stake. These events caused much consternation among many governments and their citizens.

What about us who are the children of God, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ? Should we be fearful and concern like the rest of the world? How should we respond to these realities? How should we interpret the event that is unfolding right before our eyes? Do we see the event just with our physical eyes or should we view it through the eyes of faith? Does God have a message for us through these events? What is the health status of your faith in the Lord in these days as you see all these happening? Are you able to withstand what may come and hit you personally? Is your faith in God strong?

### Is Your Faith in God Strong?

Your response during such a time will tell you whether your faith in God is strong.

Firstly, are you aware that you are a child of God, heirs of God and joint-heir with Christ (Romans 8:17)? Is your heart at rest and quiet like a child weaned off his mother? The un-weaned child frets when his mother does not suckle him. When our faith is strong, we like the weaned child, though weaned of his mother, yet will find rest and calm in the bosom of our Lord (Psalms 131:2). Nothing will distress us. No

terror will frighten us. No affliction will defeat us. Nor this pandemic or rumours of war will destabilize our faith in God. It is a blessed mark of our trust and faith in God during such times when we are like a weaned child, though weaned, yet we know that our God is near, and He is our stay and comfort, our peace and calm.

God's grace is sufficient for us to cope with all the bad news in this world. If your response is one of fear and panic, you need to come and draw near to the Lord and fully trust Him that He is your peace in this world of much tribulations. If your response to the ever-increasing bad news concerning this pandemic and world situation is peace and calm in the Lord, well, praise the Lord. Your faith in God is strong and steadfast.

Secondly, how are you interpreting the event that is unfolding right before you? Are you surprised that such a pandemic can happen, affected millions, and killed so many? Are you shocked that the world economies are in such dire state? I recall what the Lord Jesus says to the disciples when they asked Him concerning His coming again and the end of the world (Matthew 24:3). One of these signs is pestilences – fatal epidemic diseases (Matthew 24:7). This is not yet the end of the world. It is just the beginning of sorrows. However, it does point to the bible truth that we are living in perilous times and increasingly, we are seeing the end-times events unfolding before us.

What then should you do? Well, stay true and faithful to God in the midst of pestilences. Not only will we see diverse pandemics in the future, we will also see many false Christs, and increase of unbelief and disregard of all things, which are holy and righteous. In the midst of wars, rumours of wars be not troubled. When you see nations and kingdoms rise up against one another – like the trade war between USA and China, wars in the Middle East and territorial disputes among neighbouring countries – bear in mind this is not the end yet. Diverse places will have famines, pestilences and earthquakes. The current situation shall not be the last. There will be more nasty events to come. However, be not fearful. Be of good cheer. For your redemption draws near. The Day of the Lord is at hand.

In these hours, you are to watch and be ready. How do you get ready for the Lord's coming? The bridegroom is coming. The bride, which is the church, the people of God, is to be blameless and spotless. You are to put on Christ, put on the new self, put off the old man. Put on the readiness. Preach the gospel of peace. Put on the love of God. Put on the breast plate of faith and love and helmet of salvation (Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:24, 6:14-15; Col 3:10, 14; 1 Thessalonians 5:8).

Simply put – have faith in God, and speak and walk as holy vessels of God, testifying to the glorious hope you have in Christ. In the midst of tribulation, you can be witness for the Lord.

Have you seen the picture of a Christian in Wuhan, the earliest epicenter of the Covid-19 outbreak, in full body protection gear, giving out gospel tracts as well as face masks to passers-by? This tells us that strong faith can survive and bring forth the work of the gospel of Christ. Will your faith be strong? Will you respond in obedience to the call of the Great Commission even though there is still danger from the Covid-19 or other pestilences? If yes, then your faith is strong and can stand the test of the last days.

This is a good time to share the gospel when death is everywhere, when many are worry about the future. Many hearts are primed to hear the good news. Let us do our part and bring the Gospel to those who are frightened, distressed and worried. That they may find peace and salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We read about the many plagues that almost wiped out Europe in the earlier centuries and how many

Christians ran toward these plagues and stayed in the afflicted cities when others – leaders and physicians, fled. Why these Christians did what they did? Well, the answer of Stephen Rowden, who volunteered for Doctors Without Borders in Monrovia, Liberia during the Ebola outbreak, tells us that it was their strong faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God that caused them to reach out to those in need instead of fleeing. Doctor Stephen Rowden said, “No (my faith is not tested). I am, Yes, I am a practicing Christian. I got great strength from my faith and the support of my family.” This is a display of strong faith in God. This is a living and vibrant faith. I pray that all of us have faith like this.

Thirdly, do you see the world events happening around us with your physical eyes or do you view it through the eyes of faith? Does God have a message for you through these events? What is the status of your faith in the Lord in these days as the pandemic spreads and also, increasingly, daily bad news goes around the world? If you see the way the world sees, then you are no different from the world. Such devastating events do not happen without the knowledge of God. They happened for a reason.

For Christians, God wants to draw believers’ attention away from this world and back to the feet of Jesus. To help Christians learn to depend on God in times of need and to call upon God for mercy. The ‘no church services’ during the recent lockdown prepares our hearts to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Here, we learned that nothing can keep us from worshipping our God. We can approach God not via a physical location but by the Lord Jesus Christ.

In addition, to help the people of God to realize that true joy is in Christ, not in material things, but in our personal relationship with our Lord Jesus. Let us read Habakkuk 3:17-19 and be like Habakkuk. Let our joy be in the Lord Himself.

“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.”

At the same time, it is to rebuke the people of the world for their sin of idolatry, their open rebellion to God and unbelief, and to turn them from idols to the living and true God (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

I pray that as Christians, we do not just pray for protection for our loved ones, families, and ourselves from this Covid-19 pandemic or from unemployment. Instead, we should pray that unbelievers and fearful hearts would turn to God and come to the saving knowledge of Christ.

We pray that God will have mercy on those who have suffered and are afflicted by the ongoing pandemic and recession. We are to intercede for the world out there. We are to weep with the afflicted and unsaved people. Let us call on the Lord of Harvest to send forth workers to the whitened field. For this reason, we are to see all these events with the eyes of faith and understand them by the word of God. We shall base our faith, our confidence and our peace during such times on God’s words and nothing else. This calls for strong faith in God.

## **Conclusion**

Charles Spurgeon said, “It is a poor faith which can only trust God when friends are true, the body full of health, and the business profitable; but that is true faith which holds by the Lord’s faithfulness when friends are gone, when the body is sick, when the spirits are depressed, and the light of our Father’s

countenance is hidden. A faith which can say, in the worst trouble, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him,” is heaven-born faith.”

Brothers and sisters in Christ, is yours a heaven-born faith?

Can you say despite the scourge of this Covid-19 “that though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him”? (Job 13:15) Should the inevitable happen to our loved ones resulting in the loss of their lives, will you be able to say as Job said in Job 1:21, “Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” In all these, Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. (Job 1:22) What if when you are to contract Covid-19? Can you say as Job said, “What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?”

Like Paul in Philippians 4:12-13, can you say despite being affected by this great economic downturn, I can make do with whatever the Lord sees fit to bestow me – whether little or none at all?

“I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me.”

If you can, this is true worship. This reveals a strong faith in God, our heavenly Father.

Beloved, what is the health status of your faith? Is it rock solid and immovable? Is it like wax, when heated, it melts away? A strong faith can withstand all kinds of tribulation - ravage of sickness and diseases, loss of loved ones, loss of wealth and health. A strong faith hopes beyond hope in God and never doubt the loving kindness and mercy of God. Such a strong faith is precious in the sight of God and rewards await all who have faith in God. “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Hebrew 11:6)

When we have a strong faith in God, we live our lives in a manner that will glorify God despite our sufferings and our afflictions. Though the cloud of doom assails us, we shall not stay down for long because Jesus is with us. Life storms may rage against us, we are not afraid. We can carry on because He is our strength. For our help comes from the Lord. Our Lord will never leave us nor forsake us. That is our Christian's joy and hope. Hallelujah!

Pray and ask for a strong faith in God. Remember, our Lord Jesus is in the boat with us in the midst of this terrible storm. Be of good courage. Be of good cheer. Do not be like the disciples in the boat who were terrified and panicked, that the Lord asked them, “Where is your faith?”

May God empower us such that we have strong faith in God, and are able to withstand all tests, tribulations, afflictions and difficulties. Amen.

*Elder Daniel Tau*

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**Theme for the Quarter :**  
**FREE IN CHRIST**  
**(An Exposition on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians)**

**English Worship Service :**  
**Rev Colin Wong speaks on *From Persecutor to Preacher to Persecuted* (Galatians 1:16a-24),**