

MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

31 December 2020

Watchnight Service

“Present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Colossians 1:28)

Address: 63 Cranwell Road, Singapore 509851

E-mail: maranatha.bpc@pacific.net.sg

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)**

WHAT IS A WELL-LIVED LIFE?

“God gave us the gift of life; it is up to us to give ourselves the gift of living well” (Voltaire).

If you were to ask ten people to define a well-lived life, you would probably get ten different answers. Everyone has a different definition of living a well-lived life. For some, it means having good relationships, making a contribution to saving planet earth from ecological disaster, earning a lot of money, contributing to charitable organizations, parachuting out of airplanes or running a marathon. For others, having a fulfilled married life, taking care of your family, doing a good job every day or getting the most out of life. For most of the people, it would be a combination of these above-mentioned elements.

Does the Bible have anything to say about living a well-lived life? Certainly. From eternity past, God has called and chosen us to be his children (Ephesians 1:4). In his appointed time, he saved us by sending his only begotten Son into the world to die for our sin (Romans 5:8). We are not only called to live a holy life (1 Thessalonians 4:3, 7), but also called to live a well-lived life.

What is a well-lived life? A well-lived life is a fruitful and profitable life. You and I are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ to do good works (Ephesians 2:8-10). We are to be zealous in good works (Titus 2:14). That is what Jesus said to his disciples, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit...” (John 15:16). Here lies the purpose of Jesus choosing us to be his disciples – in order that you and I would produce lasting fruit.

What is not a well-lived life? A wasted life is not a well-lived life. How can I tell that I am living a wasted life? As Paul urged the Corinthian Christians to examine themselves to see whether they are still in the Christian faith, allow me also to urge you to do likewise.

Unwise Living

A life that is not lived wisely is a life lived wasted. That is what Paul said to the Ephesian Christians. He told them to be very careful how they live because the world is watching them. Paul used the word

“circumspectly”, the same word is used by Luke in Acts 18:26 when Priscilla explained to Apollos the way of the Lord more accurately.

Paul warned them not to live like foolish people but as wise people. He urged them to make good use of every opportunity they have, trying to understand what God wants them to do because these are evil days (Ephesians 5:15-17).

When a Christian walks circumspectly, it means that he is very careful how he conducts himself. He will not act without first weighing up the risks or consequences. He would ask himself, how would God want me to behave myself? What is God’s will for me today? Let us walk circumspectly before God and man. And let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our heavenly Father (Matthew 5:16).

Living for Self-Glory

A life that is not lived to the glory of God is a life lived wasted. That is what Paul said to the Corinthian Christians. He told them to do all things to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31). That means, Christians are to do all things conscientiously and make sure nothing is done for self-glory, but for God’s glory.

Living for Self

A life that is not lived for Jesus is a life lived wasted. That is what Paul said to the Philippian Christians. He told them that as long as he lives, he lives for Christ and if he were to die, he loses nothing (Philippians 1:21a). Living for Christ is an investment to the kingdom of God, but living for self is wasteful just like the prodigal son who inherited his rightful inheritance and went to a far country and wasted it on a wild lifestyle. He wasted those precious years of his life. At the end of the day, he gained nothing.

Jesus aptly said, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). The reason is, “...for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15b). True life is not made up of the things you own, no matter how rich you may be. Therefore, you and I are to live a life with eternity value in view.

Living for One’s own Will

A life that is not doing God’s biddings is a life lived wasted. Jesus said whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin (John 8:34). Before you become a child of God, you were under the power of Satan (Acts 26:18). You were doing Satan’s biddings. But now you are free from the power of Satan by the power of the Gospel. Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). That is the power of Gospel unto salvation to everyone who believes (Romans 1:16). Jesus came to do His Father’s bidding (John 5:30; 17:4; Hebrews 10:7). Likewise, God saves you to do His biddings (Matthew 28:19, 20).

Living a Distracted Life

A life that is distracted by the things of the world is a life lived wasted. There are too many distractions to the Christian. Many of these distractions are physically, mentally, socially and spiritually harmful. One distraction is modern technology. I do not deny modern technology has improved our overall quality of life such as it has made us more efficient, added significant entertainment value and enhanced our means of communication. However, when it is used incorrectly, it results in untold consequences.

Having seen and read what modern technology (though it is beneficial in many ways) has done to people of all ages, I wonder is this one of Satan's tools to play havoc to the society. There is no doubt that modern technology interconnects people but it is also driving people apart. Its negative impact on society is beginning to be felt (or already has been felt) especially in the aspect of human relationship.

Nowadays, family members do not have meaningful conversation with each other. Everyone is busy doing his or her own things. No one is really talking because every one of them is busy doing something even at the dinner table. What is hindering them from holding a meaningful conversation? It is Satan's latest weapon – modern technology.

Modern technology is driving people apart. Over 58% of American adults own smartphones. According to a new Cross-Platform report from Nielsen, an average American adult spends 11 hours per day with electronic media which includes watching TV and listening to the Radio (Matthew Petronizio, 6 March, 2014).

Staying up-to-date on emails, social media and other means of online communication is a bigger time requirement than people may realize. New research has found that the average American user spends 23 hours a week emailing, texting and using social media and other forms of online communication (David Mielach, BusinessNewsDaily Staff Writer, July 02, 2013 12:14pm ET).

How about Singapore? The average number of hours youths in Singapore spend online daily has gone up from 4.8 hours in 2011 to 5.5 hours last year, a study by Singapore Polytechnic found (Fann Sim, Yahoo! Newsroom, Friday, Jan 11, 2013). I am not surprised that our youths are spending more hours now. A social networking website reported a teenager spent up to ten hours a day on the Internet. Doubtless to say, there are countless others who are addicted to it also. Are you one of them?

Where is the fundamental principle of a functioning society? There is a lack of sociability today and this is another type of human dysfunction in an already dysfunctional world.

The Industrial Revolution may have “brought about much psychological devastation and environmental destruction” (Mooney, 1998). Martin Heidegger, a 20th century German philosopher warns “against the possibility that man may be enslaved by technology” (Heidegger, 1977). The effects of technology can be more detrimental and have much more damaging consequences to mankind as we know it because it is de-stabilizing our societies and creating a world where machines dictate our way of life.

How can you tell that you are not living a well-lived life? I would say that anything that is not done with eternity value in view is not living a well-lived life.

Dearly beloved, as you begin 2021, let me remind you on how you build your foundation. Will you build it with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw? Remember whatever you use to build on it, it will be made visible by fire and that fire will determine the kind of work you have done, and you will be rewarded accordingly. However, if your work is burned up, you will suffer the loss, but you will be saved as if you had escaped through the fire (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). The choice is yours.

Wishing you a blessed New Year and a meaningful and fruitful year of labour for the Lord! Amen.

Pastor Colin Wong

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

**Rev Colin Wong speaking at the Combined Watchnight Service on
Life is a Pilgrimage (Genesis 47:9).
Interpreter : Elder Royce Yeo.**