

# MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

28 March 2021

## English Worship Service

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

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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)**

## THE WORD OF GOD IS RIGHTEOUS (Psalm 119:137-144)

### **Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments (137).**

What a declaration! The LORD (i.e., Jehovah God) is right and just. In his prayer of confession, Ezra said, "O LORD God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped [i.e., for we are left a remnant that has escaped], as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this" (Ezra 9:15; Jeremiah 12:1; Daniel 9:7). Nehemiah acknowledged God had been righteous in his dealing with them because he dealt with them faithfully and they had acted wickedly (Nehemiah 9:33).

Our God is not only righteous in his character but he is also righteous in his action and dealing with us. A good case study is God's sovereign choice on election in Romans 9. God told Rebecca even before her children were born that the older [i.e., Esau] would serve the younger [i.e., Jacob] (12). He even said to her that he loved Jacob and hated Esau. Now this is the Hebrew way of saying that I love someone more than another. So here God is saying that he loved Jacob more than Esau. I can hear some of us murmuring in your heart, "Unfair, unfair." What shall we say then? Was God unjust? Was his action unfair? Absolutely not!

What is God's answer to his unfairness? He said, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Romans 9:15). In other words, it is up to him. He is God. He has the prerogative. Moreover, his decision was not based on what Esau or Jacob had done. In fact, they had done nothing for they were still in their mother's womb.

If you still insist that God is unfair, then he will say to you, "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" (Romans 9:20, 21) Our God is

righteous both in his character and dealing with us. He cannot be unjust lest he cannot be our God (Acts 10:34).

Because God is righteous; his Word is also righteous – “...and upright are thy judgments.” God cannot contradict himself. His character must correspond with his Word. The judgments of God are transcripts of his character. Similarly, if you profess to be a Christian, then your character and action must correspond with God’s Word (1 John 3:9; 2:6).

**Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful (138).**

God’s Word is marked by justice and faithfulness. The counsel given is clear. There is no unclear command. His Word reveals his will for us. His will is found in his Word. His Word, indeed, is like a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105). Therefore, you can trust his Word and walk by it. There is no other safe rule of righteousness than his Word.

**My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words (139).**

What is the meaning of “My zeal hath consumed me?” Zeal is a high degree of love; and when the object of that love is ill-treated, it venteth itself in a mixture of grief and indignation which are sufficient to wear and “consume” the heart (George Horne).

Jesus went up to Jerusalem at the Passover. He found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves and the changers of money sitting. He made a scourge of small cords and drove them all out of the temple - the sheep, the oxen, the changers’ money and overthrew the tables. And to those who sold doves, he said, “Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise.” Later, his disciples remembered that it was written, “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up” (John 2:13-17; Psalm 69:9). The zeal of these people had dried up the very marrow of Christ.

There are several kinds of zeal – there is a zeal of the world, there is a zeal of the flesh, there is a zeal of false religion, the zeal of heresy and there is a zeal of the Word of God.

The zeal of the world makes men work day and night to get a transitory thing. Jesus said, “Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15). The zeal of the flesh only gives momentary pleasure (1 John 2:16; Hebrews 11:25). The zeal of heresy makes men travel far and wide to spread their opinion (Matthew 23:15; John 16:2). The zeal of the Word of God refreshes and nourishes our soul (Psalm 19:7).

Every man is eaten up with some kind of zeal. The drunkard is consumed with drunkenness. The prostitute is spent with his prostitution. The heretic is eaten with heresies. What has eaten up your zeal for the Lord? (Mark 4:19)

What caused David to vanish away? The reason was “...because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.” Who were the authors of his distress and trouble? His enemies. David’s heart was broken because his enemies have forgotten God’s Word (Psalm 119:136).

Who were David's foes? Were they his own people who know the Law? If his enemies were God's people, then it is going to be a sad case. How could God's people attack their own? The answer to this question is that they have abandoned God's Word.

When Christians abandon God's Word (like disobeying 2 Corinthians 6:14), which is our rule of righteousness, they will become lawless Christians. They do not care what God's Word teaches. What they want is to achieve what they plan for, regardless of the means. This is tragic!

**Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it (140).**

God's Word is righteous and faithful, and here it is very pure. God's Word does not need to go through a process of purification. No treatment is needed. When God speaks, it comes forth his mouth as pure and unadulterated Word. That is why the Psalmist said, "...therefore thy servant loveth it." Elsewhere he said that he delighted in it (Psalm 119:16, 24, 35, 47, 70, 77, 174).

**I am small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts (141).**

"Small" may not be used as an expressive of age, but of state, condition and circumstances. Though the Psalmist was "small" (insignificant) and "despised" in the sight of men, he did not, like his despiser, abandon God's Word.

You may be young in faith, inexperience in Christian ministry or insignificant before men, yet you remain faithful to the Word, and that is what pleases God.

**Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth (142).**

God's Word is forever settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89). Because his Word is forever settled in heaven, there is no mixture of mistake, falsehood or fiction in his Word. Psalm 19:7 says, "The law of the LORD is perfect... the commandment of the LORD is pure." Therefore, you can put your whole heart in it. The Word never fails.

**Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments are my delights (143).**

Nothing can shake the steadfastness of the Psalmist from delighting in the Word. Trouble, affliction, anguish, anxiety, poverty, failure, sickness or disappointment may suppress his spirit, but none of these would keep him from delighting in the Word.

In the midst of suffering, are you able to rejoice and remain steadfast in the Word? Suffering should draw us closer to God and his Word. Job was a good example. In the midst of his suffering, he said, "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). Suffering should not be a hindrance to our spiritual development. It should draw us all the more to the reading of God's Word because it is only from it that his will is revealed to us.

**The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live (144).**

Human law seems good and appears to work well for a season. However, certain laws need to be changed or modified because of faultiness or obsolescence over the years. But the principles in God's Word are right and just and unchangeable.

Knowing the wonderfulness of God's Word, let us pray for understanding to apply his Word so that we may live by it. God says keeping his commandments is good for us (Deuteronomy 10:13). Amen.

*Pastor Colin Wong*

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

**Elder Peter Ong speaking at the English Service on  
The King of Glory shall come in  
(Psalm 24:1-10)**