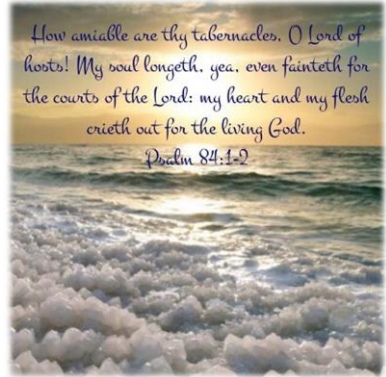


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“The Delight of Dwelling With & Worshipping God” Psalm 84: 1 – 12

*(A summary of the devotion by
Pastor Jack at the Prayer Meeting
on 22 Sep 2021)*

Pastor Jack welcomed the 12 attendees (deacon, members & regular friends and 4 overseas brethren, namely, Elder Loke TL from Melbourne, Pastor Babu @ New Covent BPC, India, Pastor Lazarus from Calvary Reformed Church and Preacher Mok @ New Life BPC, London).



We opened the Prayer Meeting with the hymn, “*Something For Thee*“. This is a hymn of our service, worship, praise and self-denial to God, especially in this difficult and trying time due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Thereafter, Pastor Jack led us in opening prayer. We then took turns to read God’s Word from Psalm 84:1-12 before Pastor Jack expounded the 3 salient points below.

A) The Blessing of Dwelling with God (v1–3)

The Psalmist in verse 1 was expressing his wish /hope in longing for something precious that he missed very much.

How about us? What do we miss most during this long-drawn pandemic? What is precious to us? What does our heart long for? Do we desire to worship God in church?

The Psalmist had a strong desire for a dwelling place (of a physical dimension) wherein to worship God. He missed the amiable (beautiful) tabernacles (of physical dimensions & structures).

The House of God (Tabernacle/church) is a dwelling place with a physical and spiritual dimension. It is also a place of refuge. Even common birds such as sparrows & swallows have found sanctuary in churches as their safe abodes & homes for nurturing their young/nestlings. Not even a Zoom

worship service can be a substitute for an actual worship service in the physical House of God (i.e. church/ sanctuary).

Do we have that yearning desire to worship God in church during the pandemic, albeit within the recommended safety precautions mandated by the local authorities?

B) The Blessing of Desiring after God (v 4 – 10)

v 4 ...Blessed are those who are found in the house of God (church). Whenever we come to worship in a church, our physical presence there has a spiritual dimension to our hearts as well.

This pandemic is not just a test of public health services, efficacy of vaccines, or status of our immune systems but also a physical test of our strength & conviction in our Christian faith, for it will either bring one closer to God or otherwise and also to test if we desire to come to church to worship God. Do we desire to come to church to worship God?



During this pandemic period, we must have this strong desire to worship God in a physical church, just as the Psalmist above has, otherwise it will foreshadow an unhealthy & unedifying attitude towards worship and the beginning of a downslide to the Christian faith and life.

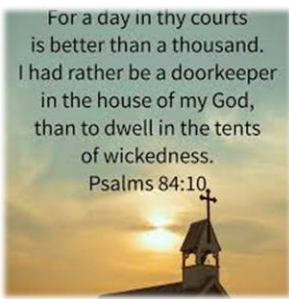
In verse 6, the valley of Baca (as mentioned in 2 Samuel & Judges) was not a nice place to be in. It was a bad, harsh, dry and barren place but then even Baca could become a good place when the people there had a strong desire to worship and seek God.

In verses 7 & 8, the people who came from strength to strength before God in Zion in Jerusalem must have wanted to pray for something important from God, so they earnestly appealed to God to hear their prayers.

The wailing wall in Jerusalem is the last remaining segment of the western wall of the Temple built by King Herod. It was taken back by Israel from Jordanian authorities in 1967 after the war. Thus, it is precious to the Jews. Most Jews go there to pray after that. This is the concept of human dimension being very real in a physical place. People want to come to the physical place of God.

Do not underestimate the physical dimension/ aspect of life, of worship, visiting the sick, praying for someone in need, Holy Communion or baptism. Worship cannot be displaced by modern technology.

In verse 9, the Psalmist desired to seek God's face as the Ark of the Covenant, which represents the presence of God, is in the Temple in Jerusalem.



In verse 10, we learn of the concept of a fulltime Levite as a doorkeeper who is responsible for checking and locking up the temple premises at night.

This service and responsibility of a doorkeeper will reflect his love for God and desire to uphold his duties in that role. Thus, the Psalmist in verse 10 professed his desire to do likewise, even though that role is considered a menial job.

C) The Blessing of Depending on God (v11–12)

In verse 11, the Psalmist suggested that God is the sun that gives warmth and protection, as well as grace and glory to those who live righteously and follow His commandments faithfully.

In verse 12, Dependence on God starts when we trust in God. When a person trusts in God, he will be blessed and will not feel fear or evil. A person who truly knows God and goes through the valley of Baca and the valley of the shadow of death will have no fear and will be able to do what God wants him/her to do. This is the faith of a Christian that allows us to do what God wants us to do.

When you go through a crisis, the way you respond to it shows us if you dwell with God, desire for God and depend on God.

Going through a crisis with trust and faith in God would really show up who you really are, as well as your true mettle.



Conclusion:

Who are we looking up to? Who are we dependent on during this Covid 19 pandemic? Is it on ourselves or vaccines? Is it safety precautions, procedures or the government? Through this pandemic crisis, what extent is its effect on the Christian life and how much of it is based on trusting God? Do we miss the fellowship with God and His people? We need to get our principles and priorities right before the Lord.

Something for us to ponder on.

Amen.

Han Kin Hoong

A Biblical Paradigm for Triumphant Christian Service

Lord's Day Programme
October – December 2021

OCTOBER

- 3 A Love for God and the Brethren (Neh 1:1-11)
- 10* A Heart of Prayer and Action (Neh 2:1-20)
- 17 How to Renew & Repair our Lives (Neh 3:1-10)
- 24 The Elements of Healthy Church Life (Neh 4:1-9, 16-23)
- 31 **REFORMATION SUNDAY**
The Call & Convictions of the Reformers (Phil 1:12-27)

NOVEMBER

- 7 Dealing with Opposition Wisely (Neh 5:1-19)
- 14* When the Enemy Closes in (Neh 6:1-15)
- 21 Lesson from the Genealogy (Neh 7:1-6, 73)
- 28 Awakenings from the Word (Neh 8:1-18)

DECEMBER

- 5 The Exemplary Fervent Intercession (Neh 9:1-21,35-38)
- 12* Why we Need to Keep the Covenants (Neh 10:28-39)
- 19 Serving with Accountable Stewardship (Neh 12:31-47)
- 24 **CHRISTMAS EVE GOSPEL SERVICE**
When God became Man (1 Tim 3:16)
- 26 Biblical Separation Learnt & Practiced (Neh 13:1-31)
- 31 **WATCHNIGHT COMBINED SERVICE**
A Better Heavenly Place (John 14:1-6)

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Summary of Messages from Webinar organized by Grace Reformed Evangelical Church, Hong Kong 1 Oct 2021

The speaker began after Eld Joseph Chan of the Hong Kong Grace Reformed Evangelical Church (GREC) led us in the opening hymn with 45 participants in attendance from different countries. The speaker reminded us of beginning of the coronavirus epidemic outbreak in Wuhan, China at the end of 2019. (He and his wife were overseas and he was preaching in a conference in Chile in Jan 2020 when he heard it.)

In March 2020, the epidemic spread to Singapore and then later all over the world, and no country is immune. As of 30 Sep 2020, about 220 million worldwide have been infected with 5 million deaths and still counting and a total of about 100,000 people have been infected in Singapore.

In understanding the biblical doctrine of God's sovereignty, it means that the almighty and omnipotent God is in full control in the ruling and management of the world and He does not have to be accountable to any people. He also touched on the common and special providence of God and the teaching of Theism and not Deism or open Theism which is the false teaching that God is not omnipotent or omniscient.

The prophet Isaiah reminds us of Monotheism in Isa 45:18, 21, 22 *"For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.....Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."*

God's sovereignty includes His absolute control over the natural phenomena, life and death in the world, even the rise and fall of nations,



MAKING SENSE OF THE
SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD
AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY IN A GLOBAL CATASTROPHE

Grace Reformed
Evangelical Church, HK
Online Special Meeting

October 1, 2021
10:00 to 16:00
(lunch break 12:30 to 14:30)

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Jack Sin, Pastor, Sovereign Hope BP Church

Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81831477101>
Meeting ID: 818 3147 7101

Topics:
1. The Sovereign God, Global Catastrophe and Human and Church Responsibility
2. Coping with Phobias and Anxiety in a Pandemic and Post-Pandemic World

light, darkness, peace, and disaster are in His hand. That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. (Isaiah 45:6,7) Even the heart of the king of a country is led or controlled by God as He wills. (Prov 21:1)

God's providence is His divine management and preservation of the world. God is interested in everything in the world, and God intervenes in our lives as He wills. Therefore, the coronavirus epidemic is under God who is sovereign and it is under God's power to allow it for his own purpose.

In the segment on the church responsibility and the coronavirus epidemic, the speaker said that the purpose of the church can be summarised in the acrostic (WIFE) which stands for:

- **W**orship of the God
- **I**nstruction of the Word of God
- **F**ellowship of the saints
- **E**vangelism and missions and discipleship

The church is to cooperate and submit to the state in temporal matters as they are appointed by God (Rom 13:1-7) and if they do not contradict the clear teachings of the Bible. In this



matter of the pandemic, the church should work closely with the authorities to curb the spread of it for the greater good of both Church and State

In the coronavirus epidemic, the responsibilities of believers include the lessons from Psa 37:3-7:

1. Trust or Believe in the Lord but do things actively too like safe measures.
2. Delight in God, take pleasure in fearing God, listen to the preaching of the Word, gather together in worship as a church, share the gospel.
3. Entrust big and small things to God and do not worry
4. Be still and take a good rest if necessary as in a lockdown and quarantine.
5. Wait patiently on the Lord for His leading.

We should rely on the Lord and to do good for God as well. Delight in the Lord always. He will give you what you want in your heart. Entrust your affairs to the Lord and rely on Him, and He will do it all. Trust in the Lord silently and wait patiently for Him. Do not be concerned with the evil conspiracy. Cease from anger and forsake wrath. Do not be unsound and cause evil. (Psalm 37:3-8)

The second session was on handling the fear and anxiety during the pandemic. The speaker quoted Isa 41:10 where the answer given is to focus on the fear of God instead. We are to grow in the reverence of God rather than man or circumstance for if we fear God, we have nothing to fear. We need to get our focus right on Christ and not be obsessed with the problem only but exercise prudence and caution and the proper trust and faith in God.

Conclusion:

The speaker ended with emphasis on the necessity of the fear of God as important and the things we ought to do and conclude with Eccl 12:13,14, *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”*

Thank God that Pastor Sin quoted a large number of Bible verses to remind and inspire brothers and sisters in the Lord to understand the pandemic in the right perspective and to keep God's teachings in our hearts, to cleanse the filthiness from our hearts as we sanitize our hands and keep safe and do our part responsibly as Col 3:22,23 tells us, *“ Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.”*



Kam Weng

Memory Verse

Neh 2:4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request?
So I prayed to the God of heaven.

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Worship Service! For our visitors, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave. We remember the Lord's Supper this morning at our worship service.
2. Pastor speaks today on "***A Heart of Prayer & Action***" (*Neh 2:1-20*), commencing the new quarterly theme of "***A Biblical Paradigm for Triumphant Christian Service***".
3. Pastor speaks next Sunday on "***How to Renew & Repair our Lives***" (*Neh 3:1-10*).
4. Sunday School classes continues after worship service:
 - WCF Shorter Catechism Class – Pastor Jack
 - Understanding Biblical Eschatology & related Topics – Joseph
 - Studies in Numbers – Dn Kwong Leen
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. Included in the programme is a study on Church History in China. Do join us for a time of profitable learning.
6. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The prayer list is available in church.
7. Neighbourhood Bible Class meets monthly on the first Friday of each month in church on the study of 2 Samuel.
8. The Pandemic book can be purchased through Dn Yue Kay (Hp: +65 97450311) or via email at sovereignhopebpc@gmail.com.
9. Do kindly observe the safety measures of the church and assist with the weekly cleaning of the premises.
10. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**
