

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 6 APRIL 2014 EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: Scripture Versification 11-1:1; Scripture Versification 12-2:4

Let us commence this meeting with God by declaring openly to one another and to God:

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Beloved grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, through the mighty working of God the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Psalm of praise: Psalm 146:3

Prayer:

- **Doxology**
- **Worship**
- **Confession of sins**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Gratitude**
- **Prayer for the need of the congregation of the church, the authorities and the sinful world and appeal to God's promises**
- **General prayer**
- **Enlightenment from the Holy Spirit for the sake of the ministry of the Word.**

Amen

Psalm 89:6

Scripture reading: 1Corinthians 3

Scripture text: 1Corinthians 3:23: Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 1

And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

(1Corinthians 3:23)

Is it of any importance to you that the Bible says this about you? You belong to Christ. Are you touched by it, or are you indifferent to it?

Let's look at two questions:

- 1. Do you know Christ?**
- 2. Are you a careless person?**

1. Do you know Christ?

“. . . and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's." This sentence in the Bible puts you in a tight spot.

- You need to reply to it before you can move on.
 - Is it true that you belong to Christ?
 - Why do our lives so often not show it?

- You know, it's so easy for any one of us to get up and say we know that we belong to Christ, because our parents have told us so since our early childhood.

But remember, this sentence follows a serious warning in verse 18:

Let no one deceive himself.

Every one of us here can easily deceive him or herself with all kinds of claptrap.

- The unfaithful think they can get along without Jesus Christ.
- Among the faithful in church are many people who do not believe – they just pretend.
 - Deep down they miss the consolation of firmness of faith and fellowship with the Lord God.

In our congregation it is also like that. Those among us, who sometimes complain about outward issues that annoy them, should consider whether their attitude is not perhaps a reflection of their poor relationship with the Lord.

- People who get annoyed when the elder admonishes them, are maybe angry about the fact that they realise that they do not have a living relationship with Christ and now feel threatened when the elder encourages them to change?
- Now they feel threatened if they are admonished to come into a living relationship with the living God.

Only those who really know the Triune God, and who live by Him, are truly happy.

- Such people experience spiritual peace because they understand God's pledge that they will live forever with God when they die because they belong to Christ.
- That is why they already live in true fellowship with Christ.

Belonging to Christ is no simple issue. It is a powerful issue, especially when we consider the consequences mentioned by Paul:

- It gives you power over the world, over life and over death.
- It even gives you power over the present time and times to come.
- However, not power to you as an individual; here the Lord speaks of his Church.
- The Church of the Lord controls everything through Jesus Christ.

To understand this more clearly we should consider that the Book of Revelation teaches that the Church is the Bride of Jesus Christ. Of course the Bridegroom will let his Bride partake in all the glory He achieved through his death on the cross.

Therefore all the faithful should test and examine themselves regarding this matter.

- Do you honestly confess that you belong to Jesus,
- or does your confession consist of idle words?

There is a huge difference between idle words and words from one's heart.

- The difference is: You can tell everybody that you believe in a holy Christian church.
- We all confess this.

- But do you live in this church and do you have a positive relationship with God?

The Lord calls us, as a congregation, to the church services because He has a living relationship with us.

- We belong to Christ, because He reconciled God with us.
- Therefore we should live up to this knowledge and faithfully partake in public worship.
- Several members regularly stay away from our church services for no good reason
 - How can we claim to belong to the Lord Jesus if we simply ignore the opportunity of having fellowship with Him and, especially, be blessed by the Triune God?

Let's put the old argument, namely "I only go to church when I feel like going", to right.

- Everybody (including you and me) are so riddled with sin that Satan has long ago already smothered our desire to serve God.
- When our "feel like going" or our "need" to go to church vanishes, it's the first proof that we are on the wrong way.
- Our lack of "desire" and "need" are sure signs that we are being attacked by Satan because he doesn't want us to belong to Jesus. *Therefore he attacks my desire for the fellowship of the members of the church of Jesus.*

Those who truly belong to Christ are usually known for the following:

- When they are put to the test they usually have courage.
- When the devil tries to defile their relationship with God, they will fight hard against the work of the devil in their lives.

They know their names appear in God's book of life and that the Lord provided for them in his counsel.

- Therefore they never reproach the Lord when things are not going the right way in their lives.
- On the contrary, unbelievers and people who do not really repent, rebel against the Lord.

2. Are we careless people?

One of the most telling differences between true and false confessors is reflected in their actions when they have sinned.

- The truly faithful person experiences deep regret.
- He tries his utmost to repent with regard to what he realizes is wrong in his life.
- He understands that Christ redeemed him, and this knowledge makes him literally flee from whatever could defile him.

There is, therefore, a striking difference in the way believers and unbelievers experience the consequences of redemption.

- Believers experience it sober-mindedly
- and consciously break with sins.

In this part of his letter, Paul warns against the wisdom of the worldling. This doesn't mean that those who belong to Christ should not have wisdom and knowledge.

- The difference is that the worldling seeks his redemption in knowledge, while the truly faithful seek it in Christ.
- The Christian also doesn't dominate people with his knowledge; he uses it for their benefit and salvation.

The question of redemption is most important, because we are all going to die. What then?

- If you belong to Christ, you will undoubtedly know that Jesus Christ has provided for you.
- Jesus' power is unlimited. The day will come when He returns to the earth.
 - The Book of Revelation (14:14 ff) says that He will then reap the harvest.
 - Everyone belonging to Him will – like a sheaf of corn – be put away in His barn.
 - Those who belong to Him on his arrival will experience the perfect tenderness of his love.

The Second Coming is not an easy moment for unbelievers. At that moment the Lord ends all time.

- This is a moment of crisis and a moment of violence and terror for unbelievers.
- After that moment all the redeemed will live on in heaven while those not redeemed will live on in hell.
- What is going to happen to you and me at that moment?
 - Those who have been dishonest in their confession and repentance will enter the anguish and torment of the eternal realm of the dead.
 - Those who belong to Christ will live with Him where he has prepared a place for us in the kingdom of his Father.

This doctrine of “belonging to Christ” does not produce careless people. Only false believers become careless and surrender to evil.

- The faithful person who sincerely knows the Lord Jesus – to whom he belongs – does not live recklessly.
- He focuses on conscientiousness. He aims to be conscientious to the best of his ability.
- He makes proper use of opportunities the Lord offers him to live correctly and to oppose sin to the honour of God.

In the present time it is especially important that you experience the consolation of belonging to Christ. Anything can happen, but it will not cause you any damage, because Jesus protects you.

- Belonging to Jesus does not mean that we will be free of physical pain or torture.
- It could still happen, but at that moment Christ will give you the strength to endure it.

Remember that the Lord once said that the hairs of our heads are numbered and not even a sparrow will fall to the ground without his Father's will.

- Your belonging to Jesus Christ is part of this dispensation of Providence, and God's counsel is such that nothing will happen to you that will exceed your strength.

You, with body and soul, belong to your Saviour Jesus Christ.

- In life and in death you also belong to Him. You need not be afraid of his judgement because Christ paid for all your sins in full.
- He rescued you completely from the power of the devil. He protects you so that nothing will happen to you outside the will of God our heavenly Father.
- Therefore He also sent his Holy Spirit to you to make you heartily willing and ready to live unto Him.

Obey the Lord and strive not to do wrong, because you belong to Christ.

Let's read together Catechism Lord's Day 1.

Sunday 1

1. Q. What is your only comfort in life and death?

A. That I am not my own,[1] but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death,[2] to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.[3] He has fully paid for all my sins with His precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil.[5] He also preserves me in such a way[6] that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head;[7] indeed, all things must work together for my salvation.[8] Therefore, by His Holy Spirit He also assures me of eternal life[9] and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for Him.[10]

[1] I Cor. 6:19, 20 [2] Rom. 14:7-9. [3] I Cor. 3:23; Tit. 2:14. [4] I Pet. 1:18, 19; I John 1:7; 2:2. [5] John 8:34-36; Heb. 2:14, 15; I John 3:8. [6] John 6:39, 40; 10:27-30; II Thess. 3:3; I Pet. 1:5. [7] Matt. 10:29-31; Luke 21:16-18. [8] Rom. 8:28. [9] Rom. 8:15, 16; II Cor. 1:21, 22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13, 14. [10] Rom. 8:14.

2. Q. What do you need to know in order to live and die in the joy of this comfort?

A. First, how great my sins and misery are;[1] second, how I am delivered from all my sins and misery;[2] third, how I am to be thankful to God for such deliverance.[3]

[1] Rom. 3:9, 10; I John 1:10. [2] John 17:3; Acts 4:12; 10:43. [3] Matt. 5:16; Rom. 6:13; Eph. 5:8-10; I Pet. 2:9, 10.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 84:3

The Lord bless and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you, the Lord turn His countenance to you and give peace.

Amen

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Scripture Modern King James Version