

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 5 MAY 2013 MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 133:1

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 31:17

Confession of faith: Nicene

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was Incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And we believe one holy universal and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

After the reading of the Law we confess our guilt and pray for forgiveness and a new life before God with Psalm 40:4

Law

Psalm: 40:4

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

Scripture Versification 2-4

Scripture reading: 1 John 4

Scripture text: 1 John 4:8

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

(1 John 4:8)

There is a large difference between living with people and pretending that you love them and true love.

- True love arises from your relationship and communion with God.
- Therefore true love is always conservative.

People with true love in them can overcome more or less any shock or resistance and again repair the broken relationships with their neighbour and continue in a relationship with people liked by the Lord.

The passage we read together puts two important facts:

1. *You must have knowledge about God and have a relationship with God to be able to truly love.*
2. *Nobody who is not born-again can love. True love is coupled to the conservation of life granted by God to all that are born-again so that they in their relationships of love may enjoy His grace.*

The apostle John is preaching here by typical Greek style of argument the case of love. As verse of text he has John 3:16 (The gospel that he recorded):

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

(John 3:16)

This verse clearly refers to love, but the judgement is also detectable in the background.

- There are people who will be lost, namely all of those the Son did not come for.
- The same elements, namely judgement and love (grace) is now dealt with in the passage of 1 John 4.

Consider the first six verses. Here John already starts with the matter because he writes that the congregation should test the spirits.

- They must listen to the way the people preach. Should they not confess Jesus' physical appearance, then they are false preachers.
- It is also relevant to the love, because a preacher preaching false doctrine can under no circumstances lay claim to it that he loves his congregation because he knows that he is dishonest in what he teaches and he knows very well that he is sending his congregation to hell should they accept his false preaching.

Therefore it is clearly written in verse three that a preacher who changes the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ has the spirit of the Antichrist in him.

- But now you must realize that the people to whom this letter was addressed could very easily think that the spirit of the antichrist infected the preachers only and that they (as members of the congregation) are thus safe and sound.

This is where the passage about mutual love fits in. Everybody can now test for himself:

- Should his relationships of love not comply with the demands set to it, then his love is not out of God.
- God Himself is love. He is the Worker and Giver of love.
- Should you thus have true love, you can only find it with Him – nowhere is there true love to be found with anybody else.

Love and faith are joined together by this text. Note the words: ...**born out of God** ...

- This supposes the rebirth – in other words to be renewed by God.
- Any form of love you have outside of God is thus not love – at the most it is some kind of other incorrect copy thereof.

Immediately you face the question: Has your neighborly love all sorts of limitations or conditions or can you love unconditionally? Can you love as God loves?

- Keep in mind we all are people who literally betrayed Him and in our disobedience followed the devil.
- We daily anger the Lord with our sins – even though we are under the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Every day God the Holy Spirit guides us.

And still God does not reject us.

- He, in His love, remains patient with us – even though we have it against Him.
- He never changes His plan of having us with Him in heaven – and in heaven we will be.

Do we have this love of God? An absolute and unchangeable love.

Test it to our marriage-life because there thus love ought to show its fruit the easiest.

- How do you as husband treat your wife?

- How often are you bitter against her and how often must she also suffer under your demands and unreasonability?
- Would you, with a clear conscience, couple this love to the love of God?

The wife faces the exact same situation.

- How often is there gossiping to family and friends about bad husbands – to then just have more problems than before.
- Is it a love that is coupled to the holiness of God and to the knowledge of Him and His Word and the hereafter?

We cannot expect to come to church preaching about congregational relationships and specifically about love relationships we should be living in together with each other in the congregation, should, in some of our dwellings, love is not in the way God wants it to be.

Again consider the very important matter mentioned here: Should you not love properly then you also do not know the Lord.

- Should you love incorrectly – thus in any other way different to how God loves – then you miss the communion with God.
- Then your relationship with the Lord is wrong and you definitely are not on your way to heaven.

This is clearly written here. This text forces you to soul-searching.

We can easily test ourselves to this passage, it is not so difficult.

- Where is the problem in your weak relationship with certain people: Is it your temperament or your own ego or stinginess?
- It has to be something like this causing you to impress yourself onto others and then landing into an argument should matters not turn out according to your own will.
- Then you miss the serving love of and to God. Which means that you cannot love the Lord because you simply do not know Him.

The true knowledge starts with what you know about God. The true love thus starts out of respect and fear of God, but also out of thankfulness for His love He grants us.

The moment you know who God is you would immediately realize that God's love is always tightly fastened to:

- His wisdom,
- His justness,
- His omnipotence and
- His regarding of the truth.

This just means that your way of loving must follow these tracks.

- True rendering of love is then to also carry forward the communion you practice and experience with God.

Should your life not be exactly on the par with this, then you have the wrong love.

- There is also never a better time to start fixing this matter than doing it at once.
- The conversion of the true Christian indeed consists out of you dying off the old person (his sins) and continue living as a new person (with as little sins as possible)

The love of God was as such that He gave His Son to die for our sakes.

- Place yourself into the position God placed Himself.
- You have only one child, but you let that child you love so much, be killed so that the person who hates you could be your friend.
- This is what God did for you!

Therefore the cross-death of the Lord Jesus Christ places you not only inside the circle of God's grace, but also inside the circle of those who have to obey Him and do what He wants.

Thus test your love to your knowledge about God – or would it possibly be more true saying:

- Test your knowledge about your God to your love, the way you live it out to the face of all people.
- But do not be despondent before you start, you are a sinner, but God granted you His love and everything connected thereto: faith, spiritual power, atonement of your sins to God (thus also forgiveness of sins) and the eternal life.

Listen, with the aim of learning and to be converted, to the Word of God and to the guidance of His Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 73:10

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