

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 17 MARCH 2013 EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: 25:3

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: 25:1

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 25:5

Scripture reading: Psalm 25

Scripture text: Psalm 25; Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 1

Here it deals with consolation.

- It deals with the most important matter in our daily lives.
- The question: What is your **sole consolation**? Meaning: What is worth the most to you in your life?

This is a very difficult question. To answer such a question honestly and properly there are many things we first have to properly understand.

- Per example we must understand that here it does not deal with what each of us consider as the most important or greatest consolation.
- It will be a matter we will, without a doubt, argue about.

Here it deals with what God gives as our greatest consolation.

- There is not even an inkling of other matters we could place on the same line as this one.
- It only deals with the greatest truth having the most influence in our lives.

This consolation is that we, by body and soul, completely belong to Christ.

- At all times He looks after us.
- Throughout our lives He gives the best for us under the specific conditions.

But now the question is whether we realise the full implications of this confession?

- It is true that we all in some way confess that we who confess this matter often want to lose our faith when we are involved in a battle!
- It is as if we forget what it really means to be saved by Christ when we come under pressure!

Therefore our confession says that there is firstly something else we have to know before we can really understand and own this consolation. I must firstly determine exactly what my condition is.

- I must first know how large my sin and misery is.
- The moment I realise it I will also understand what powerful deed it is that I was saved by Christ from all these miseries and that I belong to Him.

It goes without saying that we then will render the proper amount of thankfulness to the Lord.

- Because we then will have the need of exercising our faith as good as possible,
- Because we will then realise what would become of us should God not have granted us this grace of salvation.

We can also put it differently:

- There is only one truth about this condition we live in – it is that we daily sin against God.
- It is that we in fact deserve to one day be cast into hell.

We must all know this truth. All other viewpoints are lies.

There is also only one salvation.

- It is to be saved from this condition by the Godly power and the meritorious fruits of Christ's atonement on the cross.
- There is no other way out at all. In no other way can we reach and enter heaven!

There is also only one way in which you can prove your thankfulness – It is by thanking God and living properly.

- Words only do not say much. What does matter is how you live out your words.
- There is also not really another way (except through prayer) whereby you can truly in practice prove your appreciation to God! Only by living painfully correct!

Should, congregation of the Lord Jesus, we want a faith that is worthwhile, then we will have to demarcate the lines properly.

- We must then clearly distinguish in all matters of our lives between what is wrong and what is right.

- We must be wise with these matters. Paul teaches that there are many things he is allowed to do, but that will not be useful should he do it and therefore he rather leaves it undone.

In church business and matters of faith we only must believe in the Word of God. We must forget our own importance.

- Therefore it is very normal that people looking for consolation with the Lord stand alone – and often get enemies in the world.
- But it is not of importance to get on with absolutely everybody. It is of greater importance that your relationship with God is right.

In your faith and in the church we cannot argue matters as we feel about it.

- It is a matter of God commanding and we must listen because our relationship with God is that of a sinner towards an almighty God!

Should we want to be consoled we must first listen properly to what is sin and misery.

- Let us start with the question: what is misery?
- We will immediately concur that it is all our bother, worries and difficulties.
- Misery is also resultant from transgressing the commandments of the Lord.

But up to here this answer does not do us much good.

- It is of no use being able to say what exactly is wrong when we cannot realise that we have a part in it!
- We must be able to see and understand that we have many sins and that our miseries are caused thereby – else we continue with the main mistake of our lives.

We, in our hearts, must all test our lives to the law of the Lord.

- And should we then be honest with ourselves, we will have to admit that there are many matters wrong.
- That in many instances we live superficially!

Possibly we would not want to believe it – and we are certainly not all equally guilty!

- But the haughty disposition to regard yourself in too high esteem is present with all of us!
- Less with some and more with the other.

We by example all pray for the forgiveness of our sins. But with many of us these are only words from the lips because deep in the heart every person believes him or herself to be good and wonderful.

Then the two matters do not match.

We Reformed often say all sorts of dogmatic things and then we like to say: *All people fell in sin and we are born and received in sin.*

- But now approach somebody and tell him that he is bad and filled with sin and immediately you have an enemy.
- This is because we think that only other people are sinful, and can sometimes not see our own wickedness!
- We dislike hearing that we ourselves are bad, filled with sin and lacking!

These things prove that we just do not always realise the grave seriousness of our sins.

- Especially us who cannot afford it.
- We especially do not realise the state of emergency we are in!

The truth is: Together with Adam we all fell into sin.

- This fact works into the lives of each of us –
 - Unnoticed mankind wandered further and further from God.
 - Until, in the times prior to the Flood, mankind became wicked.
- After the Fall sin again started growing.

Now the Bible teaches that at the end of the days it will be so bad that God, through His grace, will shorten the days for the sakes of the believers.

- These things are not so distant as we think, because we live in these last days that the Bible tells will be so terrible.
- On what will we grasp when all these miseries descend upon us? What is our consolation?

Is it not possibly the reason why people in general are often becoming tense?

- Because we do not recognize the consolation in our lives because we do not come as far as humbling ourselves and looking where we sin.
- Who of us can with full earnest and conviction sing – and when we sing or pray then also therewith realize that this state of emergency is due to our own sin:

**Out of the depths of sadness, O Lord I
cried to Thee: Thou who canst fill with gladness,
Lend now thy ear to me. O fountain of con-
solation, Attend unto my cry, Hear thou
my supplication And to my help draw nigh.**

(Psalm 130: 1 [Anglo-Genevan Psalter Canadian Reformed Churches])

Our hard times are just the symptoms. The real disease is my sins.

We must have such regret about this that each one of us can confess with a hurting feeling of guilt towards God that we sometimes are lack in our church obligations – and then do something about it!

- Or: I wrong in my conduct towards my spouse and I apologize and see to it that I do not misbehave again.
- Or: my social commitments are on the wrong level, I will have to forego certain things and fix up others!

This is the realization of the misery enveloping me!

It is like David opening wide his heart in Psalm 25:

Look on my affliction and my pain, And forgive all my sins.
(Psalm 25:18)

In his anguish he grabs back at the cause of his misery. Because he prays: Lord forgive me my sins because then my anguish will pass by! He prays as personally as can be done.

Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; According to Your mercy remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O Lord.
(Psalm 25:7)

See how he confesses his sins to the Lord. He does not refer to his sins in learned words of dogmatic language. He does not use any difficult theological words.

- No, he prays simple and personally to God. He erred in many things during his youth.
- He also has other transgressions. He realizes that the things were horrible to the eyes of the Lord.

Therefore David knew what salvation meant!

On the tracks of the Bible Catechism Sunday 1 teaches that the consolation is we knowing how large our sins and miseries are because it lets us realize how large our emergency is because of our sins.

- Therefore we know what the real joy is to get rid through Jesus Christ of these matters.
- Therefore we know what it is to physically and spiritually belong to the Lord Jesus Christ and to be freed from the sins.

Understand very well: This salvation is not just a salvation from the eternal doom after death.

- It does not mean that I have to spend my entire life in misery to be, some day after my death, saved and live in the heaven
- It is not something vague for the hereafter but my life falls outside of it.
- No, even in this life not a hair will fall from my head without the Father disposing it.
- The fulfillment is when we are also during this time freed by body and soul.

All these things do not mean that we will not suffer (experience difficult times) during our lives.

- It only means that the Lord provides every time when we have worries.
- It also does not mean that we will not experience nervousness or stress in life. We of course remain just human beings.

David complained that at night his bed swims due to him struggling. He cried as he struggled to overcome the sins in his life.

- But this is our consolation: We will reach the other side because my body and soul belong to the Lord and He will not let me go under!
- It is to our consolation that the Lord said that He would dry the tears from our eyes. Through all that may come in life over us we know: We are saved!

Then gratitude just comes by itself.

- Pray and obey the law to the best of your ability.
- Not to earn sanctification thereby but out of gratitude for what the Lord Jesus Christ has already earned!
- Serve the Lord every moment. Glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Heed to the voice of God the Holy Spirit because the sole consolation God granted mankind also belongs to you!

Come let us read what our confession teaches about consolation in the Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 1.

Question 1.

What is thy only comfort in life and death?

Answer.

That I with body and soul, both in life and death, (a)
 am not my own, (b)
 but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ; (c)
 who, with his precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins, (d)
 and delivered me from all the power of the devil; (e)
 and so preserves me (f)
 that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; (g)
 yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, (h)
 and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, (i)
 and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him. (j)

(a)

Rom.14:7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

Rom.14:8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

(b)

1 Cor.6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

(c)

1 Cor.3:23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Tit.2:14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

(d)

1 Pet.1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

1 Pet.1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

1 John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 2:12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

(e)

Heb.2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

1 John 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

John 8:35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

John 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

(f)

John 6:39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

John 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

2 Thess.3:3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.

1 Pet.1:5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

(g)

Matt.10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

Matt.10:30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Matt.10:31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Luke 21:18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

(h)

Rom.8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

(i)

2 Cor.1:20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

2 Cor.1:21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;

2 Cor.1:22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

2 Cor.5:5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

Eph.1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

Eph.1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Rom.8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

(j)

Rom.8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
 1 John 3:3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Q. 2.

**How many things are necessary for thee to know,
 that thou, enjoying this comfort,
 mayest live and die happily?**

A.

Three; (a)
 the first, how great my sins and miseries are; (b)
 the second, how I may be delivered from all my sins and miseries; (c)
 the third, how I shall express my gratitude to God for such deliverance. (d)

(a)

Matt.11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
 Matt.11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
 Matt.11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.
 Luke 24:46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:
 Luke 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
 Luke 24:48 And ye are witnesses of these things.
 1 Cor.6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.
 Tit.3:3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.
 Tit.3:4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,
 Tit.3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;
 Tit.3:6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;
 Tit.3:7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

(b)

John 9:41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.
 John 15:22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.

(c)

John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.
 Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.
 Acts 10:43 To him (Jesus) give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

(d)

Eph.5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

Eph.5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

Eph.5:10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

Eph.5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

1 Pet.2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

1 Pet.2:10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Rom.6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

Rom.6:2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Rom.6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Rom.6:13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: Psalm 25:6,7

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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Helping Reverend

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Scripture Modern King James Version