

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 28 APRIL 2013

MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 145:5

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 18:1

Confession of faith: Apostolic

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into Hell, the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, a holy universal Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting

Amen.

After the reading of the Law we confess our guilt and pray for forgiveness and a new life before God with Psalm 25:3

Law

Psalm: 25:3

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 119:7

Scripture reading: Genesis 49:8-12 and 49: 1 Samuel 8:1-7: 1 Samuel 9

Scripture text: 1 Samuel 9:15

Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear the day before Saul came, saying,
(1Samuel 9:15)

From early times the believers felt the need for a ruler who could rule over them with strength and in truth. At heart this was even then a seeking after and a calling for the true kingship of the Lord Jesus - the King of the Church.

In this sermon we consider the following matters:

1. **The Lord's preparation for the kingship.**
2. **Who is now the first king?**
3. **God prepares one for one's calling!**
4. **Application.**

1. **The Lord's preparation for the kingship**

If we look at the history of Israel, we see that the situation developed as follows:

- At Jacob's deathbed he blessed each of his sons.
- The blessing pronounced in respect of each son was intended as a prediction of the future of the tribe born of that son.
- In the blessing pronounced in respect of Judah, we hear that that tribe would rule:
 - The sceptre would not depart from Judah.
 - All the peoples would obey Him.

We know that these words were fulfilled when David and his descendants reigned over the people of Israel.

- We know that the Lord in these words prophesied more than just the kingship of David.
- With these words the Lord also prophesied that the Lord Jesus would be born of this tribe as the eternal King.

That brings us to the history we have just read: the prophecy now entered upon its fulfillment.

- The people were now in Canaan for many years and demanded a king!
- At heart, this was the desire for the true king, but with them it was wrongly manifested as a call for an earthly king.

An unbelieving person would think that the people of Israel arrived at this point quite "by chance".

- Yet the Bible states very clearly that everything happens precisely as God planned it.

- While they were still in the desert, the Lord told them that they should appoint a king to reign over them in Canaan:

"When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,' you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses, one from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman."

(Deuteronomy 17:14-15)

Up to this stage in the history of Israel which we have read together, God Himself reigned over His people.

- During this period the Lord used judges to rule the people and to deliver them.
- Samuel was the last of the judges.
- Samuel could no longer cope with all the work, so he appointed his two sons Joel and Abijah to assist him in his duties.

The two sons turned out badly, however, and their work as rulers ended in failure.

- They accepted bribes.
- Then the people came to Samuel: They wanted a king like all the heathen nations around them.

They did not want a king because they wished to carry out the Lord's earlier instruction to them.

- To Samuel this was quite wrong, because he realized that the Lord was King over Israel.
- Furthermore, Samuel took the matter very personally - probably because he was no longer as competent as formerly, because of his age, and because his sons had turned out so badly.
- The Lord consoled him by pointing out that the people had, by this decision, rejected not him, but the Lord.

The people had undervalued the privilege of having the Lord as their King, and demanded a king in the style of the heathen nations around them.

- That is why they wanted a king "like all the nations".
- Especially the words "like all the nations" were very hurtful to the Lord.
- Because of the manner in which they demanded the king, they did not, in the beginning, enjoy the favour of the Lord.

See how the Lord responded:

- Because of their wrong attitude, the Lord gave them at first a king who was like the earthly king they wanted: Saul.
- Eventually, when things went badly for them, the Lord would establish the rightful king on the throne: David, a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22)!

- After that, the kings would also become less and less effective, until the people were eventually carried away into exile.

In this history the weakness and transience of men as kings become manifest, but precisely these imperfections of theirs foretell the Kingship of Jesus Christ!

- Their imperfection forecast that, in contrast to their weakness, the true King would reign with flawless transcendence.
- The Messiah would not be limited by these weaknesses of sin and incompetence.
- He would reign with perfect insight and power.

The people thus got a king - it was in any event God's intention that an earthly king should eventually ascend the throne.

- The king would stand between the people and God as God's king: he would reign in the Name of God.
- Just as the priest mediated reconciliation between God and the people, the king would mediate the reign of God over His people.
- In this, the king would also be a type of the Kingship of Christ.

2. Who is now the first king?

On his deathbed Jacob predicted concerning Benjamin that he would be a ravaging wolf.

- His descendants would be out for plunder from morning till night.
- By these words the Lord depicted the Benjaminites as fierce warriors.
- We read frequently that special mention is made of how bravely the warriors of the tribe of Benjamin fought.

There was, however, a shadow to this development.

- The Benjaminites did not always have respect for life and honourableness.
- In Judges 19 we read that they practiced homosexuality, and when they could not have their way in that respect, they violated the man's concubine all night until she died.

All this was contained in Jacob's prophecy that Benjamin would be a wolf!

- For that reason the Lord did not choose the first king from the tribe of Judah - as He had prophesied.
- He chose him from the tribe of Benjamin.

The first king was a warrior who would bring the army to a pitch of armed readiness, and who would keep the Philistines in check, until the rightful king was ready to ascend the throne.

- But due to his savagery he would mainly be a king like the kings of the people!
- Saul was thus merely a transitional figure who had to prepare the way for David.
- He was, like John the Baptist, the one who prepared the way for the true king who was to come after him.

If one does not know these things - which God had already revealed by that stage - one would read the first part of Saul's history and think that he arrived before Samuel merely "by chance".

- But the Lord wanted the believing reader to see and know that there is no such thing as "chance" or "coincidence".
- For that reason our text says that the Lord had already revealed to Samuel the day before that Saul was on his way.

The Lord reveals His omnipotence in this passage of history: He has planned for ages the kingship and now He executes His council.

- The Israelites asked for a king - and the Lord granted their request.
- Then the Lord arranged matters so the one who was to become king had to leave his tribal lands to search far and wide for a couple of donkey mares which had strayed.
- His search took him so far afield that he came upon Samuel, where he was anointed as king over the Lord's people.

3. God prepares one for one's calling!

For that reason the anointing also makes such a particularly strong impression on one: Samuel took the flask of oil, poured it on his head, kissed him and said:

Has not the Lord anointed you a ruler over His inheritance?

The question is put so strongly in the original that Saul had no option but to answer "Yes". Thereby he realized that he:

- Had been anointed **by God**;
- And had been anointed as ruler over **God's people**, who are God's inheritance.

By this the Lord made it quite clear that Israel was not just another ordinary people.

- They had their sins, and as human beings they were rather shortsighted in this matter relating to the kingship, but they were not just another people among the nations of the world.
- Israel is the inheritance, the possession, the property of the Lord.
- Saul was to assume the kingship over this property of the Lord as the Lord's representative.

Saul's spirit was not as great as his body. Spiritually Saul did not rise above the rest of the people.

- For instance, he did not even know about the seer. His servant had to tell him about him.
- After his anointing he went into hiding. He therefore did not have strong qualities of leadership.
- But the Lord prepared him for his calling!

The Lord also made it quite clear that Saul was appointed king in response to the prayers of the people:

"For I have regarded My people, because their cry has come to me!"

God wished to deliver His people from the oppression under the yoke of the Philistines, and therefore Saul became the man who was to undertake this liberation of his people.

The Lord began immediately to prepare Saul for his task. That evening he went home with Samuel.

- Samuel immediately took him on to the roof of his house. There Samuel instructed Saul regarding God's concern for His people.
- He also instructed the future ruler regarding the way in which the people of God should be ruled: **The future ruler should rule the people by continually turning to God, both he himself and his people, in repentance for their sins.**

The next morning the servant was sent ahead. Samuel wished to be alone with Saul when he anointed him.

- In the anointing one finds clearly the symbol confirming that God prepares the person whom He calls.
- The oil dripping from his head and shoulders symbolises how the Spirit of God inundates the one who is called, so that he may know that the Lord guides and preserves him.
- The perfume of the oil symbolises that he will, in exercising his calling, spread the odour of God's kingship.

4. Application

In this passage some things become clear:

- The first is that God is the same from all eternity. He has planned everything, and throughout the centuries everything happens as God had in mind from the beginning.
 - For that reason it is shown that Jacob's blessing was fulfilled centuries later in the kingship of Israel.
 - We may know that it will be fulfilled eventually in the hereafter in Christ Jesus, the God and King of the believers.
 - In other words, this passage is of comfort to the true believer: nothing happens purely by chance. Things happen as God has planned.
- The second matter is that God also calls every person to a specific task in life.
 - This task is related to specific responsibilities.
 - Samuel was called to be the last judge over Israel, but he was also called to anoint the first two kings over Israel.
 - In this way Saul was called to check the Philistines, and to bring into being an army in Israel.

In his calling it was made clear to him from the beginning that he had to do what God wished him to do. He could not proceed in his office without any control.

- The third matter is that you must examine yourself: How responsible am I towards the Lord?
 - Your calling is also defined within specific limits: Saul had to reign as king over a people which he could never possess - it was the Lord's property.
 - He had only to carry out the Lord's directions.

- When he eventually no longer recognised this calling for what it was, the Lord removed him from this position without honour.
- The fact is simply that man cannot live a self-willed and self-determined life. You are required to do every moment what God wishes of you. Where do you and I stand?
- The last matter is that you will have no excuse for any irresponsibility before the Lord, because the Lord prepares us and makes us competent to fulfil the task He sets us.
 - In our specific case it happened that the kingship of which Saul was a preliminary example, later became fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
 - He was sent by God and anointed to be King over those who were saved.

In carrying out His responsibilities as King, He suffered many hardships, much mockery and even death.

- He was one hundred per cent faithful to His mission.
- The result of this was that He vanquished all the forces that opposed God and heaven.
- The effect of this is that we are delivered from enslavement to the devil and able to be obedient to God in all respects of our entire life. We are free in our King, Jesus Christ the Lord.
- We are all the more free from irresponsibility because the Holy Spirit furthermore guides us to recognize that which is wrongful, and to prevail over evil when we meet up with it.

We thus bear a weighty responsibility.

- But then you must always remember this as your consolation, for it is part of our preparation for the responsibility we bear: The Lord does not forget what He has planned, and His decisions are unchangeable.
- As one of the elect you will always enjoy the nearness of the Holy Spirit, and always be preserved by what our Lord accomplished on the cross.

What is the proof?

- The proof lies in the fact that the Lord reveals beforehand where He is going with us, and that He never departs from this plan.
 - So the Lord revealed to Samuel the previous day that the man who was to become king of Israel would come to him.
 - And it was so.
- In the same way the Lord reveals to us the redemption in Jesus Christ.
 - But we bear the responsibility to avail ourselves fully of the grace which this redemption offers us.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 118:13

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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