

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 21 APRIL 2013 : MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 100:1

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 47:4

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 18:11

Law

Psalm: 18:11

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 20:2

Scripture reading: 1 Thessalonians 5

Scripture text: 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.
(! Thessalonians 5:11)

Is it not possibly true that many sins are due to people becoming lonely?

- In this passage the Lord underlines the relationship the holy have with each other.
- The crux lies in that we as believers must under all circumstances take each other's hands edifying each other and become positive.

We must pay attention to the following matters:

1. **What happens on the day of the Lord?**
2. **Will the believers be able to continue bearing the stress of waiting?**
3. **What must our congregation do?**

1. What happens on the day of the Lord?

There was a specific impatientness with the Christians of Thessalonians because they could not wait for the Lord to arrive. There were a few causes.

- One of the causes was the pressure of their persecution because they were Christians.
- The oppression was to them a heavy burden to live with. Therefore they wanted to see how the Lord would install their right against their persecutors.

Of course their focus on the day of the Lord is not right. Therefore the Lord corrects their viewpoint:

- The day of the Lord is not only a day of revenge. It is also a day the congregation of the Lord must live towards with joy.
- The congregation had to live as a unit in Christ towards this day.

It also was not a case that the congregation of the Thessalonians did not know it.

- From the Old Testament they well understood what would take place upon the arrival of the Lord.
- The Old Testament always calls this day **the day of the Lord**. Therefore it was specifically also called as such here. This is also what Paul referred to when he said that he does not need to write to them about the times and occasions. It is specifically the times and occasions prior to the Second Coming of the Lord.

What did they know about the day of the Lord?

- On this day the Lord will reveal His welfare and glory.
- Amongst others it will also happen that the Lord will execute His punishment over His (and His believer's) enemies.
- The day of the Lord also means that the people of the church will be sifted out so that the judgement of the Lord will also burn over them.
- Furthermore the Messiah will also appear on that day (Compare Amos 5:18; 8:4; Micah 4:6; 7:1; Joel 1:15; 2:1; Zephaniah 1:7)

In the New Testamental revelation it is revealed that the glory and majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ will come to the light.

The fact of the apostle writing that they do know very well shows that they had an exact knowledge.

- But it also shows that they had the faith-ability of not getting lost or decaying in all sorts of senseless matters like false doctrines or sectarians.
- Further it means that they could support each other in the faith by edifying one another.

2. Will the believers be able to continue bearing the stress of waiting?

The moment of the Second Coming is nerve-racking to those awaiting it.

- It comes unexpected like a thief.
- Therewith is also the notion that the arrival of that day could spell danger because it comes like an enemy.

Some of the believers will become dejected.

- Therefore it is of importance that we together take hands and edify each other because the true believers will certainly experience pressure and stress during the times. (compare Luke 12:35-48: Luke 16:27, 28 onwards, Matthew 24:36, 37, 42, 50)

The believers do not need to experience this anxiousness because the day of the Lord brings them peace and safety.

- This stands against the peace and security propagated by the false believers. (Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11; Luke 21:34; Psalm 48:6; Hosea 13:13; Micah 4: 9; Nahum 2:10: Isaiah 13:8, 21:3)
- The anxiousness and misery of the non-believers is described in verse 3, but is immediately followed with a sharp contrast describing the conditions of the believers. The true believers must continually remind one another that they do not, like the non-believers, live in the dark judgement of the Lord. They live in the light.

Note the series of words used as contrasts between each other:

- night/day
- dark/light
- awake/sleep
- intoxicated/sober

It is not without reason because thereby the Bible teaches the whole time which side of the Lord's council we stand.

- The Bible gives us the certain knowledge that we are saved so that we can live bravely and edify each other.
- The Lord edifies our members: Have no fear for the future because you know that your lives are not in the dark.

- You are living in the light. Differently put: Your lives are not in danger for the terror of the day of the Lord.

Together herewith there is a motivation:

Let us not be asleep...

Again it is the contrast coming to the foreground:

- The others are sleeping and are not on guard.
- We differ from them and we are on guard.
- We expect the Second Coming of the Lord and we edify one another in this process of waiting.

The Lord uses more descriptions to confirm this. As an example consider the line the words sober and drunk draw.

- The believers are indeed called out of these matters.

With the other image (night/light etc) here now arrives a new one: get dressed!

- Do not go about naked.
- Put on the breastplate and wear a helmet
- We must not dress but not in ordinary clothes – we must dress in battle dress

The fact of us having to dress in battle dress means that we are aware of the battle.

- But immediately the community of the holy comes into sight.
- One man alone cannot wage war – he needs many men fighting together with him.

This just brings us back to our verse of text namely that we must encourage one another.

- The Lord points out to us all these matters we are part of are in fact have the positive effect that we must dress up in the breastplate of faith and love.
- It entails also mutual encouragement of believers towards each other.

As a fact it means that we face the Lord as a group because one soldier alone does not dress in battle gear and go to war alone.

- The entire community is thus sharpened to, with conviction and in hope, fight against the devil's attacks on us.
- Take note of the clothing prescribed by the Lord: The helmet of hope on the salvation (compare this passage with Ephesians 6:13 and onwards where the full battle dress is described.)

This means that the Second Coming of Christ holds for us the promise of full salvation.

- We thus await the day of the Lord because it also holds the resurrection of the body in store.
- We must also continually tell this to each other because entrenched in these matters is the solidness we build on to survive every day.

The great matter all this deals with is the destination we are going to. That is what we must fight for, hope upon and be sober.

- To the non-believers the day of the Lord is a day of fear and terror.
- But the believers must always keep in mind that they are not meant by the Lord for wrath but for salvation.

The matter it deals with is that the Lord confirms to us that we are His special property.

- The ground on which we are the property of the Lord lies is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- He died for us so that we.. may live with Him

Usually the resurrection of the Lord is named together with His death. (Compare 1 Thessalonians 4:4; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Romans 4:25; 6:3 onwards; 7:4)

- The purpose of the Lord's death and resurrection is thus that we will live with Him.
- Now, full time keep in mind the conception of the day of the Lord, namely that it will be a day of judgement and destruction.

The words whether we are awake or asleep are probably used in a transferable meaning, namely whether we live or are in our death sleep. (The same word for sleep is used in Mark 5:39; also compare Daniel 12:2; Psalm 88:6)

- The meaning of the fact that we in life and in life after death belong to God is of such cardinal importance that the believers are arisen to use it as a mutual motivation: edify each other.
- The believers must chastise and guide each other.

3. What must our congregation do?

Seen against 1 Thessalonians 5 it is essential for all of us to move closer to each other in the faith.

- The result can only be good because then we become available to each other to build up and encourage one another as it is written in our verse of text.
- The community of the holy is life-essential because any person can lose these things and then together therewith we lose our obedience and responsibility towards the Lord.
- It can so impoverish and downgrade is in the faith that we completely disappear from the circle of our fellow believers.

The question all of us must answer today is: What must I as member do to do what the Lord says here? How can I encourage others and also be encouraged myself?

- I must realize the full truth of my salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. And I must realize that one part thereof, namely the communion of the holy, already in the congregation I belong to, must be made true.
- I must be part of the fulfillment thereof.

All the wrong aspects able to distort this truth lie in the dark and disbelief and lack of need to live together with each other.

- Any one of us can so be caught up in ourselves that our communal realization and experience of that what it all is about may be lost.
- Eventually it could be totally lacking.

We must be awake – otherwise we are unaware of the fullness of the Second Coming.

- We can be so unaware that we are really asleep – whilst here the Lord tell us to keep each other awake.
- Not only must we be awake, we must keep the other believers awake also.

Literary in the Greek it is written that we must call upon each other and make at home in the salvation until we are a unit in Jesus Christ. Come let us strive thereafter.

Come let all of us look for ways to become more and more involved with each other as believers so that we can encourage one another to be a solid unity in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 98:4

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

Dr MJ Du Plessis
 Helping Reverend
 Reformed Church Clanwilliam
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