

## REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 26 MAY 2013 MORNING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 33:2

*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 150:1

**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 9:1, 7, 9*

Law

Psalm: 9:1, 7, 9

**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 16:3

**Scripture reading:** 1 Chronicles 16

**Scripture text:** 1 Chronicles 16:9

**Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; Talk of all His wondrous works!**

(1 Chronicles 16:9)

Praise the Lord with music! Music is often present when the Lord reveals Himself to us in His glory.

- Remember the angels singing when Jesus was born.
- Think about the angels in heaven facing God's throne and singing one hallelujah after the other.
- The music and song during our assembly is a prelude to these occurrences in heaven.

Therefore we sing during assembly.

Let us consider the following aspects around the first time that "Praise the Lord" was sung:

1. **Why was the liturgy ordained at the ark?**
2. **The fulfillment of the praise to God in the birth of the Lord Jesus.**

### 1. **Why was the liturgy ordained at the ark?**

The public worship of God in Jerusalem was instituted with the sole purpose of praising the Lord. After the ark arrived at its destination the procedure of the public worship was laid down.

- It is striking that the Levites ministered at the ark in Jerusalem were instructed to only make music.
- Whereas the priests at the tabernacle at Gibeon were instructed to present offerings only. (Verse 39 onwards)

The purpose for which the choir and the musicians were appointed in Jerusalem was to petition, to give thanks and to praise the Lord. (Verses 4b-5) The question arises:

- How much freedom were the Levites allowed?
- What were they allowed to sing and play?
- Could they make music as it pleased them?

The answer appears to be "No". David, as king of the Lord instructed Asaph and his brothers to sing "Praise the Lord" From the title of this song it is clear that the purpose of the song and the contents of the worship was to glorify the God of the Covenant. (LORD=JHWH)

The entire liturgy was prescribed.

- Nothing was left to the discretion of the priests.
- The Psalm, "Praise the Lord" in fact consisted out of a cycle of songs made up out of a number of psalms written by David.
- These were Psalm 105(v.1-15), Psalm 96(v.1b-13a) and Psalm 106(v.1, 47 onwards)

The song was sung as an antiphony.

- The first part was sung by Asaph and the other priests only.
- Whilst they were singing the people moved closer to the altar.
- When the people were gathered around the altar Asaph repeated the first words of the song "Praise the Lord" and the people then joined in with the priests singing a song of praise to the Lord.

A prayer followed this song of praise. This prayer had two prominent elements.

- One was a confession by the people of the Covenant that they looked up to the Lord for their salvation.
- The second was a petition that the Lord should reveal His power and gather and save them so that they might praise the Name of the Lord and glorify Him.
- Then the song was finished with Amen, Hallelujah.

The purpose of the occasion was therefore to move the people to glorifying and praising the Lord.

- They were to praise not only the Lord but also the great deeds He did for and to His people.
- They also were to pray for salvation.

Note the division of the song.

- The first part (V.8-13) extols the wonderful deeds of the Lord.
  - There is a reason for the praising of these wonderful deeds. It is an exhibition of the Lord's covenanted mercy to those He loves.
  - What is important is that the other nations, who did not know the Lord, will through the witness of the faithful learn about the omnipotence of the Lord.
  - The words of our chosen text teach that the people must reflect on the works of the Lord and then joyfully sing His praises from the depth of their hearts.
- In the next part of the song of praise to the Lord it is David who leads the people in singing the praise and glory and rule of God to the Lord.
  - Nobody can withdraw from the rule of the Lord and His judgements (v.14)
  - To the believers the judgements of the Lord are an assurance because they have the Covenant. (v.15)
  - The Lord instituted a covenant for a thousand generations. The covenanted grace of the Lord is a protecting power around the believers.

The singing of the temple choir with the people following them in singing the praises to the greatness of God's power and love must have been very beautiful.

- In verse 23 all the earth is called upon to sing and proclaim all the spiritual gifts received from God.
- This has to be done day by day,

The incomparable greatness of the Lord compels the faithful to spontaneously sing:

**For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;  
He is to be feared above all gods.**

**For all the gods of the nations are idols,  
But the Lord made the heavens.**

- By these words the believers sing of the powerlessness of all who do not serve the Lord
- At the same time they confess that all was made by God and is being maintained by Him.

The all-encompassing majesty of the Lord is praised with a description of His dwelling. He resides in a heavenly temple and there He rules as King.

- All those who move around His throne are spiritual powers who are bearers of His regal majesty. (v.17)

Thereafter the call goes out to all who gather at the temple of the Lord. (v.28):

- Glorify the Lord!
- Adore the Highest God!
- Bow in humility to the highest and only God.

**2. The fulfillment of the praise to God in the birth of the Lord Jesus.**

In this part of the Psalm, verses 28-30, we find a strong allusion to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ because there is something like an allusion to the wise men from the East who came bearing their gifts to kneel before the Christ-child, the Highest God

The next part of the song reminds us of the angels who, in the dark night, appeared to the shepherds in the fields of Ephrata announcing in song the birth of Jesus. Listen to verse 31:

**Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;  
Let them say amongst the nations: "The Lord reigns!"**

That which the Lord's people longed for with untold longing became reality.

- The Lord God was born as man and He conquered death.
- He ascended to heaven where He sits on His throne as the highest and eternal King.

The first covenant the Lord made with us was then fulfilled. The first covenant already taught that the Lord made a covenant of grace with us to last a thousand generations.

**but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.** (Exodus 20:6)

The covenanted grace of the Lord became a reality in the birth and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. The conciliation He worked for us stands impenetrably around the believers.

- The contents of the Lord's covenant was from its inception that He Himself would effect salvation for us and make His covenant of grace for us.
- This happened in the life and death on the cross of Jesus Christ. He went through fear and pain and even death for our sake because He bore God's punishment for the transgressions of each one of us.

Because He was perfect, He did not need to be reconciled with God.

- Still He submitted to this punishment because through it He confirmed God's love for us.
- With His resurrection He opened the doors of the realm of the death for us into the eternal life.
- Thereby He confirmed that He is a King whose reign will last forever.

This was a kingship that did not come easily!

- We must always keep in mind that the kingship of Jesus Christ was confirmed by His birth as man and His victory over the powers of hell and His resurrection from death. This is how we became the people of His Kingdom because through His humiliation we received reconciliation and glorification.
- Furthermore it is an eternal fact that nobody can escape the reign of the Lord.
  - To the faithful the rule of the Lord is to their salvation and the eternal life.
  - For the unbelievers it is impossible to run away or to be excused from the Lord's judgements.

The throne of the Lord is also before us and therefore we must serve Him as it befits His people who are before His throne to serve – as do the angels who are now before His throne. Before His throne are millions of angels who praise Him by the highest praise in the most beautiful heavenly choirs – as do the words of David's song:

**Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good;  
His love endures forever.  
Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,  
From everlasting to everlasting.  
Amen, Hallelujah. (V.34, 36)**

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 89:1, 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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