

## REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 15 DECEMBER 2013 MORNING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 145:1, 8

*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 145:1

**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 38:1*

Law

Psalm: 38:1

**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

**Scripture reading:** 1Corinthians 2

**Scripture text:** 1Corinthians 2:5 & 9

**5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.**

**9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."**

(1Corinthians 2:5&9)

We are preparing to have communion with the Lord in a very special way during Christmas.

- The true believer experiences the communion with the Lord whilst the non-believer or false believer does not experience it.
- From His side the Lord uses various means to continually reveal Himself to true believers so that they may know Him truly.
- One of the matters He reveals to them is that they may know to their consolation that the Lord makes them fit for His kingdom.

Come let us observe how the Lord reveals Himself to us: Many people sometimes underrate the power vested into attending church and listening to a sermon.

- But should you quickly look again at verse 1 you will find something very touching: the main theme of the verse is that Paul came to preach the witness of God.
- Literary in the base text it is written that he came to proclaim the mysteries of God to them. The Bible in Basic English (1965) uses the words: "putting before you the secret of God."

This is what this passage deals with:

- The world of the Lord is too large and deep for human understanding.
- It is also a world that is, due to our human limitations, outside our grasp because we live in a creation where you can see and touch everything, but you cannot touch or see the Lord because He is Spirit.

But now the Lord does not leave us like this, He reveals Himself to us. And should we just quickly look at all the various things the Lord reveals by means of Paul's letters about Himself in Jesus Christ, we find the following:

- Jesus acts prophetically in word and deed.
- Jesus has absolute power over demons.
- Jesus rules over death and life and confirms it by His resurrection.
- He is elevated to Curios (a word describing Jesus in His reign of king)
- Then the Lord Jesus reveals Himself also in His glorious Second Coming.

The one matter bringing all this together – thus: the crux of the gospel – is the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. This Paul also records here. It is just what was preached through all the ages. Read how the letter to the Hebrews starts: First the Lord ministered via the prophets and now during the last days via His own Son. Thereafter it deals with the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Exactly that what Paul also says in the passage we have read.

Why?

- Because in the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus the unique attribute of the Godly rule of grace is a visible reality in a superfluous way.
- Jesus sunk into the depths of humiliation and pain and thereby indicated how great He is as King of Grace.
- On the cross the Lord Jesus revealed that He is not asking anything for Himself and that He is giving His life to His subjects so that they may live eternally.
- Here the Lord Jesus brought what is written in 2Corinthians 8:9 to the full truth, namely that He became poor to enrich us.

He suffered all these terrible horrors in aid of freeing His chosen from it forever.

And He did not go and do so somewhere in secret or in the world of the unseen. He did so on our earth and to our eyes.

- Paul, and after him every minister preach about these matters. But not because they are such good speakers to convince people about such matters.
- The just say it normally as it is recorded in verse 3 and 4:  
**3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.**  
**4 My speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,**

The minister is but poor in these matters but the Spirit of God is an Almighty and Working Person working inside the believers.

- He also goes out from the Crucified Jesus because Jesus sent Him.
- In this way the Lord Jesus rules and teaches His congregation through the Holy Spirit.
  - On His side the Holy Spirit makes uses of the ministering.
  - Therefore church attendance is of crucial importance to your growing in faith.

What Paul ministered is, is that the Lord Jesus is God doing great works of love amongst the believers. He has done all the determining acts on the cross, but He completes it by His Second Coming. He is the eternal ruling King Jesus Christ.

The person preaching (in our instance the reverend) is not the one working the change in the hearts. The Lord does it through His Spirit and by His power. The Lord works through the ministering of the gospel into the hearts of the people listening to it.

When dealing with a matter of this kind in the Bible we must always consider what the Bible has to say at other places about this matter.

- Here in 1Corinthians 2:4 is written: **My speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,**
- Now there are Scripture explainers claiming that it means that Paul has so much spiritual power that the Bible is here referring to him.
- The translation in the Bible in Basic English (1965) differs completely from this viewpoint and uses the words “**dependent on the power of the Spirit**”

This is indeed what the intention of the Bible is because in 1 Thessalonians 1:5 the Lord teaches: **our gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and with much assurance.** Should we read this together with 1 Corinthians 2 we cannot understand it differently than: the Spirit and power is the Spirit and power of God.

The Lord Himself grabs us with power and this He does through the work done by the Holy Spirit. The Lord lets simple words used by the minister fall into the depth of our soul, where conversion is born, so that we may arise from our sins into a new life.

Verse 5, our text of Scripture is thus a conclusion the Lord guides us to.

- Our faith does not exist in people, but in the power of God.
- Brothers and sisters this is a dynamic sentence! That what is written here means that our lives are continually fed and that it grows daily from the power of the Lord. This is a never-ending process!
- God Himself intervenes in your life by the ministering and He daily changes you in our conversion and in the growth of your faith. This is what happens to you when you are in church and listening to a sermon. Can grace be preached more clearly?

Verse six has a very important keyword that is difficult to translate.

- In the Modern King James Bible it says: **However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature**
- The Basic English Bible puts it: **But still we have wisdom for those who are complete in knowledge,**

The word the Lord uses in the original text normally means “**Those who are fit for the end**” in relation to the Second Coming. In the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) this word is used to translate two totally different Hebrew words.

- The one is used in describing animals with **no physical impairment** and fit to be offered as described in Deuteronomy 18:13
- The other word means **full, comprehensive, something that is completed,**

Should you put together all these matters then we find that the word used here in 1 Corinthians 2: 6 means that it is people acceptable to the Lord for His kingdom. Of course these people are made fit by Jesus Christ. But that is exactly the crux of this sermon.

In the faith-world many things happen to true believers not seen or felt by an outsider. Things the Lord only reveals to the believers.

- Should here per example a total non-believer stand he would see how you celebrate Holy Communion, what does he see and think? He sees how the reverent breaks a piece of bread and how people eat bread from a plate. Afterwards they all drink wine from a large and very old kind of wine mug. They read from a book, sing something and then take their leave.
- Or when a baby is baptized: What does he understand about the sign of the covenant of salvation and about the responsibility of man to, under guidance of the Holy Spirit, raise the baptized child to the glory of God?

You who are believers experience much more than that. Because the Lord reveals more than that to you.

- You experience the presence of Triune God Himself. You experience that the bread and wine are just elements opening an immense unseen world to your spiritual eye.
- You experience how the Lord Jesus bore the punishment for your sins from God the Father to reconcile you to His wrath.
- And thereby you experience how the Lord Jesus destroyed the forces of hell to free you from eternal death.

Then the words of 1Corinthians 2:9 face you and you understand what the Lord means when He says "What God prepared for those who love Him!"

Brothers and sisters, next week when we celebrate Christmas experience then the consolation of what the Lord teaches in 1Corinthians 2: 5: **that our faith might be based not on man's wisdom but on the power of God.**

We thus indeed experience matters that cannot be seen by the eye and not heard by the ear and did not come up in the heart of a human, and we know: These things God prepared for those who love Him.

Beloved, be deeply thankful and know that the Lord loves you and that you, through the power of His Word and Spirit, will be renewed to exist in His eternal Kingdom because He, in Jesus Christ, chose you thereto.

You are ruled by the eternal ruling King Jesus Christ.  
Therefore serve Him to the fullest with all you have.

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Song: Scripture Versification 2-4:1, 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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Scripture Modern King James Version