

## REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 18 AUGUST 2013 MORNING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 32:1

*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 25:1, 2

**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 99:4, 5*

Law

Psalm: 99:4, 5

**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 100:2, 3, 4

**Scripture reading:** 1Kings 2

**Scripture text:** 1Kings 2:32

**"So the Lord will return his blood on his head..."**  
(1Kings 2:32)

Every person wanting to ride upon the grace of Christ and provoking God by willful disobedience will encounter problems.

- It is so that we must never underestimate the grace of the Lord. He forgives our sins. That is true
- The Lord also forgives us our very course sins. But that certainly does not mean that we may overestimate the grace of the Lord.
- When a person is continually willfully disobedient then the Lord brings your sins upon you because no person may hide behind the goodness and love of God to continue sinning.

This we learn in this passage of history.

According to the traditions of Israel Adonijah had to become the new king.

- David was already very old. In fact he was in bed and powerless.
- He was so old that he could no longer maintain his own body temperature and the people selected a young maiden to nurse him and at night sleep with him so that he could become warm.
- Now it was the time that the new king had to be selected.

The logical choice is the son of David Adonijah, but Adonijah was internally rotten.

- He is scared that his father would ignore him and crown one of his other brothers as king.
- Maybe he was aware of the promise David made to Bathsheba that their son Solomon would become king after him, who knows?

He then planned a coup d'état. In order for his plan to be successful he needed influential persons at his side.

- He finds such influential supporters in the priest Abiathar and Joab, the head of David's army.
- They planned that the coup d'état would take place during a meal.

The entire planning was extremely underhanded because David was not invited.

- Neither the prophet Nathan.
- Also none of David's heroes.
- They had be kept in the dark and then accosted and overpowered.

This is high treason. Such acts are punishable by death.

- This matter was leaked.

- With great haste, before the coup d'état could be brought about, David had Solomon anointed as king.
- Whilst the meal of Adonijah was in progress messengers brought the news that Solomon was anointed as king.

Suddenly the position of these three people was very precarious.

- They were Adonijah and his two accomplices, Abiathar and Joab.
- Should there be no clemency all three would receive the death penalty.
- Then we see how the Lord brings about His grace.

Adonijah flees to the altar and clings to the ram's horns. This is a symbolic deed. In Exodus 21:14 we read that the Lord dedicated the altar as a refuge.

- To touch the altar, especially the horns, means that that person places himself under the atoning grace of God.
- Now you need not be a theologian to understand that in the language of the Old Testament reference is here drawn upon Christ! In Him the atoning grace of God is revealed.

Solomon then granted Adonijah clemency.

- In him Adonijah and his two accomplices receive clemency because Solomon is here a kind of Christ and he complies with the command of Christ.
- He grants clemency to who is imploring for it at the altar – the place of atonement.

But now you must note that grace is not granted without reservations.

- Solomon grants grace, but then Adonijah must in future display himself as a reliable person.
- And together with him and on the same conditions the grace is also relevant to his accomplices – as like we must answer in faith and with obedience to the salvation we have in Christ.

Here it does not deal with holiness on work. It deals with purely with grace.

- Adonijah and his supporters did nothing to earn the grace they received.
- But should we now receive forgiveness of sin without earning it, it does not mean that we may unconditionally continue sinning and every time count upon the forgiveness because we receive it without deserving it.

Adonijah understood grace in a different way. He regarded grace as a way to continue with his evil.

- Therefore he approached Bathsheba.
  - At that stage Solomon was about 18 to 20 years old.
  - Adonijah reasoned that Solomon would definitely heed his mother's advice.
- He asked her permission to take Abishag as his wife. Bathsheba finds nothing wrong with the request and she informs Solomon as such.

But the Lord opens Solomon's eyes to the danger.

- He immediately realises that a large part of the people, due to the tradition, would like to see Adonijah as king.
- He knows that Adonijah has support amongst the influential people, by example Joab and Abiathar.

Should Adonijah now take Abishag as his wife it logically would mean that the people would reject Solomon and accept Adonijah as king because he has inherited the wife of the previous king.

- He realises how Adonijah is misusing his grace in dethroning him.
- Thus Adonijah perceives grace as a weakness. It is typical of the sinner to perceive grace as a weakness and then take another step into sin.

Therefore Solomon takes an oath that Adonijah asked for Abishag on the cost of his own life.

- His grace for his brother now ran out because his brother did not honour their agreement of clemency.
- He, by his treason, has previously already earned the death and now he again tries to commit treason. Therefore the death sentence is now executed. On the command of Solomon Benaiah executed Adonijah.

The Bible teaches us more. By our sins we drag others with us into ruin.

- Joab and Abiathar were in fact involved together with Adonijah in the illegal matter the previous time, but this time they definitely bore no knowledge about it. It is written in the Bible:  
**Then news came to Joab...**(1Kings 2:28)

Literary it is written that the news sought out Joab.

- Abiathar, the priest, is placed, due to the second transgression of Adonijah, under house arrest.
- Upon hearing the news Joab fled to the temple like Adonijah did the first time.

**But the conditions for the preservation of his life have now expired.**

You might now question why Joab acted so strangely.

- The answer is that his conscience declared his guilt. It is also written here that he supported Adonijah. Adonijah was his choice for this kingship.
- Although he did not partake into this last planned treason of Adonijah the attitude in his heart towards the king appointed by God was not right.

Here it is written that the news sort of searched out Joab – the Holy Spirit also works in the same way.

- The Gospel of Jesus Christ also searches for you.
- You know about all the evil in your heart, although nobody else knows about it.
- When death approaches it is your guilt first of all facing you. Therefore Joab immediately fled to the altar.

*What Joab forgot about is that the grace of the altar is not applicable to murderers.*

- Here the great faith in which Joab clings to the altar is not as true as it seems. He is just putting up a big show.
- He only wanted the people to see what a bad and cruel king this Solomon is should he have him stabbed to death whilst clinging to the altar.
- He wanted to demonstrate to the people that Solomon does not keep to the laws of the Lord.

He wanted to bring the people under the impression that the law of the Lord stipulates that somebody clinging to the altar must be granted clemency and now Solomon is not granting him any asylum.

Should Solomon have granted him grace he would have considered it as a weakness and have misused Solomon's goodness towards him.

This specific insight by Solomon shows that he then already knew the history of his people better than Joab.

- In the first instance this grace of God is not applicable to murderers.
- Furthermore he knew that Joab murdered two innocent people. He innocently and underhandedly murdered Abner and Amasa so that he could have their positions.

David was not even aware of the fact that Joab would have murdered them. He only discovered some time afterwards what took place. This Solomon also says here.

- Therefore he sent Benaiah to stab Joab to death where he clung to the horns of the altar.
- He is also buried – away from the king and his residence – so that the taint of the murders and his other evil is removed.

Let his blood come down upon his own head. We know these words in nearly the same way in the New Testament – but in an inverted situation.

- The Lord Jesus stood trial. He is found not guilty.
- But then the people demanded His death. They are prepared bearing the responsibility for the murder of the Son of God - although He was found innocent. Then they shouted:

**"His blood be on us and on our children."**

(Matthew 27:25)

The sins of the sinners come onto their own heads.

- This is also part of the work Jesus completed.
- He worked grace for those whose sins would have destroyed them but worship Him as their Saviour.

The Lord Jesus works grace for those who believe.

- For those who repent.
- For those who truly fight against sin and transgressions – those clinging onto the altar of His salvation.

- He works grace for those who want to obey God with all their might, who do not regard grace as an opportunity to sin again.

But Jesus also works judgement over the people who continually persevere in sin.

- They are held responsible for what they do.
- This is what it means when the Lord lets their own blood come onto their own heads.

This also joins to the Second Coming – then Jesus comes on the clouds to judge over the living and the dead.

- To many people the question is: Should all His work was only grace, why must He come to judge?
- Then everybody should go to heaven! The principle is the same as what was relevant to Adonijah and Joab.

Come let us now apply the principle of Adonijah and Joab to our own lives. It is clear that this passage of history reveals something about people who always lie.

- There are people having a lot of difficulty in always telling the pure truth. There must always be an element of untruth somewhere, Why?
- God will punish such people because they cannot with continual dishonesty lay claim to the grace, as they do not appreciate the grace of the Lord.

The same is relevant to people who continually look for evil in the words and acts of other people.

- People who act like this is just an Adonijah who wants to work evil where there is no evil!
- Do not always slander and rob your neighbour of his glory.

Such people will, like Adonijah and Joab pay for it with their lives.

- When the evil seeker is in the violence of hell it will be too late to be sorry about the times he harmed God and his neighbour.

What then are we to do? We must love – like Solomon.

- He at first spared their lives – but later when it became clear that there was no other way he took steps.
- Therefore we must distinguish between what is true and false. A Christian cannot just continually love and forgive.
  - Jesus told His disciples to shake the dust from their feet should the cities not want to pay heed.
  - Solomon killed Adonijah and Joab because they clearly proved that they could not serve the truth.

We must thus distinguish – as it is also written in Philippians 1. **Approve the things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offense to the day of Christ;**

(Philippians 1:10)

- Forgive the trespasses and render love in the Name of the Lord.
- But also break with the evil – in the Name of the Lord.

- Those who violate God, their blood must come upon their own heads.

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 128:1

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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