

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 6 OCTOBER 2013 MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 1:4

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 of praise: Psalm 33:5

Confession of faith: Nicene

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was Incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And we believe one holy universal and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

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 38:17

Scripture reading: 2Kings 13**Scripture text:** 2Kings 13:21

..when the man touched the bones of Elisha he revived and stood up on his feet.
(2Kings 13:21)

There are no limits to restrict the power of God. Not even the limits imposed by a grave or those of death itself.

- 1. The testimony from Elisha's grave**
- 2. The testimony proceeding from our own lives.**

1. The testimony from Elisha's grave.

We are told, concisely and directly, that Elisha died.

- According to Biblical exegetes Elisha must have been at least 85 years old when he died.
- It seems that he died in Samaria and was buried in Abel-Meholah.
- The day Elijah called Elisha as his successor Elisha was plowing with twelve teams of oxen.

The circumstances under which the Israelites lived at the time of Elisha's death were very difficult.

- In the few years before the death of Joash, and for a couple of years afterwards, the empire of Israel was greatly weakened.
- As a result, the Ammonites and Moabites conducted repeated raids on the Israelites.

One day, while the Israelites were burying someone, one of these raiding parties arrived in the vicinity.

- The funeral group was in a very difficult position, because they were forced to flee from the danger threatening them.
- They were concerned about the corpse, because, if they fled, there would be no opportunity of putting him into his own grave and he would then have to be left unburied.
- In those days it was unthinkable that one should be left unburied.

Apparently Elisha's grave was nearer to them than the grave in which they intended to bury the dead man. They hurriedly rolled away the stone from the entrance to Elisha's grave, pushed the corpse inside, and fled.

The Lord then performed a miracle.

- The moment the corpse touched the bones of Elisha, he revived.
- The Bible records that he stood up on his feet.

What is the significance of this event? To cast more light upon it, it would be useful to look again at the deaths of both Elijah and Elisha.

- Elijah did not die - he was carried off to heaven by the Lord in a chariot of fire drawn by horses of fire. (2 Kings 2:11,12)
- It is true that Elisha died and was buried, but it was in his grave that this miracle occurred, namely that the dead man revived when his body touched Elisha's bones.
- The Lord uses these two events to reveal to His faithful servants that death has been overcome.

The final word said about those who serve the Lord sincerely is not a word of death, but a word of life.

- And on both occasions we see Jesus Christ in the background.
- Elijah did not need to die, because there was Someone else who underwent death on his behalf.
- You should not now think that Elijah was the only believer who experienced such a great manifestation of grace, because he was not the only one to bypass death. Another who did so was Enoch.

In Hebrews 11:5 it is said of Enoch:

By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

All of us will no doubt concede that what happened in the case of Enoch and Elijah was exceptional and unusual.

- Yet the event which occurred in Elisha's grave was no less exceptional.
- Elisha died and was buried. But if we bear in mind the words of John 11:25, then it becomes clear that Elisha's grave was a prophecy of life and resurrection.

In John 11 we read of the resurrection of Lazarus. In verse 25 Jesus tells Martha:

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live."

Together with this we should read the statements of Jesus in Matthew 22:32 and Mark 12:27:
"He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

The same applies in the case of Luke 20:38 where Jesus also said:

"For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him."

2. The testimony proceeding from our own lives.

Our almighty and eternal God reveals His unlimited power over time and eternity in many ways.

- Through the resurrection of this dead man who was thrown into Elisha's grave, the Lord reveals already in the Old Testament that death does not hold unlimited sway - not even in graves!
- Later, in the New Testament, the Lord established the reality and truth of this matter in the victory of our Lord Jesus over death.

Paul writes of this in 2 Timothy 1:10, where he teaches that Jesus Christ abolished death.

- He brought life and immortality to light.
- At the time when it occurred, the incident in 2 Kings 13:21 was prophetic in signifying that the Lord Jesus would destroy in every respect the bounds of death.

All these things did not take place without consequences for ourselves and for our testimony.

- Do we truly still realize the boundless omnipotence of God?
- Let each of you examine yourselves to see whether any testimony proceeds from you with regard to the Lord, bearing and leaving the marks of life - as was the case with Elijah and Elisha.

Brothers and sisters do you know the unlimited omnipotence of the Lord?

- You must truly and sincerely know that He destroyed for us, too, the bounds of the grave and of death when He rose from the grave of Joseph of Arimathea on that Sunday morning.
- The fact remains that He did so.

Does our testimony leave the marks of life?

- There is some cause for concern, because, when we look around, we see so many wrongful things.
- In our time not merely the marks of death but indeed a path of death is being laid down.

The road of believers who live in accordance with the testimony of obedience to and worship of the Supreme God is decreasing by the day.

- And all around us the heritage grows of people who have scant respect for the God who broke asunder the bounds of death.

If we consider all the damage done to the creation, and how our earth has in many ways deteriorated rather than improved, we need to consider whether this is how a heritage should

appear, which is to be left to succeeding generations by believers who know and testify to the boundless grace of God.

- Somewhere there is something amiss.
- The redemption won in Jesus Christ, our Lord, is no longer experienced and manifested in all our lives.
- That is why there is so much apostasy and deterioration of faith.

We must all once more consider incidents such as this, where a dead man was resurrected when he merely touched a prophet's bones. This must move us to a true faith in the Lord, and with that, to honest repentance.

In the years to come, you who are today still young will have to take the church of the Lord further on its way.

- They will be called upon by the Lord to fill the offices in the church and to be the future leaders in our country in every field.
- If we neglect teaching them about the life powers of God our descendants will no longer find themselves inside the circle of believers.
- Then we will also not have them with us in the hereafter, in the Kingdom of God.

In this episode of the dead man who was resurrected, we have something of this:

- The Moabites and the Ammonites, whose raids plundered the Israelites in those times, were the descendants of believers.
- They were descended from Lot, Abraham's nephew.

Terah, Lot's grandfather, was a believer - he was the tenth patriarch from the Flood.

- But the faith of Lot was no longer on the standard of his grandfather.
- After Lot fled from Sodom, his daughters took turns to make him drunk and commit incest with him. He fathered a child with each. (Gen. 19:30-38)

From those two children (Moab and Ben-Ammi) were descended the heathen nations from whom the Israelites had to flee when they went to bury this man. This means that our responsibility with regard to our faith will in this respect largely determine whether those who live after us will persevere in the true faith and confession of almighty God.

We must all realize anew that the Lord is almighty. Nothing can stand in the way of His counsel or His will.

- Our obedience to Him and our worship before His throne must bear testimony of this.
- The Lord Jesus made us more than conquerors over death and sin through the atonement He accomplished on the cross.
- In His power there are no bonds that can bind us: not even death - how much less, then, the other troubles that afflict us in our lifetimes.

Come, let us confess the Lord as the Only One and as the Almighty. And let us live so faithfully in accordance with this confession that we may also, like the prophets before us, proclaim to the entire world that our God gives life to all that believe in Him.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 107:10

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