

## REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 21 APRIL 2013 EVENING SERVICE

**Sing before:** 99:5

*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: 9:9, 10

**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 25:9

**Scripture reading:** Isaiah 1

**Scripture text:** Isaiah 1:27; Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 5

**Zion shall be redeemed with justice, And her penitents with righteousness.**  
(Isaiah 1:27)

The salvation will come through punishment over Zion and to those who return the salvation comes through righteousness.

- Here the Bible mentions the biggest lawsuit ever in history
- We of course have to keep in mind that the verse as written here carries a double meaning of time.
  - Firstly it refers to Israel who will be judged by God and the punishment that will be executed over them is the exile they will be sent into.
  - But this punishment also refers to the end of times. To the day when the entire world will be judged by God and the punishment of the hell and the eternal death will be executed over the disobedient.

It is clear to us that grace is promised by very definite words.

- By the grace of God salvation is possible.
- Everybody is not just flatly condemned!

Here it deals with the word *justness*.

- We will be saved BY justness TO justness.
- By righteousness because we are saved from our sins through the righteousness of God in Christ  
Colossians 1:14  
**...in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.**
- And also to the righteousness because God taught Zion in living to the righteousness of God.

**Salvation and justness touch each other on three points:**

- 1. We are saved according to the justness of God.**
- 2. We are not saved by our own justness**
- 3. Our salvation is on the strength of bail-justness.**

When we consider the judgement day it always is with fear and the thought of destruction.

- This is why we call it “judgement day”.
- It is because we see the action wherein God condemns the disobedient and cast them into hell as the strongest.

That is basically also why we all fear death.

- We fear the judgement of the Lord because we in fact all realize how covered in sin our lives are.
- Because we realize that at that moment it would be impossible to lie to God.

Now our confession comes up with the good!

- Salvation is possible! It is untrue that all people will be condemned and cast into hell.
- The righteousness of God will allow some of us to inherit the eternal life.

There is a way we can sidestep the punishment and be reconciled to God.

- This is also the meaning of the word “*gospel*” – it means the glad or good message.
- From God there is a joyous message that the chosen will be exempted from His punishment!

The way to God is not permanently locked by the sin – but it can only be unlocked by paying the heavy burden of guilt to God.

- Indeed it is written that God wants compliance to His righteousness. God's righteousness entails His entire being.
- It deals with the holiness of God.
  - It deals with the truth and everything God considers as true and just.
  - It even entails the majesty of the Lord.
  - It deals with the glory of God.

*God, in fact determined right and righteousness to therewith display and execute His holiness against all forms of evil and even the works of the satan trying to damage the holiness of God.*

The glory of the Lord would have declined should He just have accepted back the sinners.

- The entire matter of truth with *God* would then expire.
- What use would it have been having a standard of truth but still accepting sinners, who do not acknowledge God's demand for truth, in your kingdom!
- Such a god would at any rate not be worth any glory!

Therefore God had no choice. He must punish the unjustness when it takes place. In Isaiah 5:16 we read:

**But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, And God who is holy shall be hallowed in righteousness.**

We can thus only get into heaven when justice is done to the right of God that was damaged.

The problem is that God's righteousness demands that, because righteousness is part of God's being, in no way any deviation from His right may take place.

- The righteousness thus demands that every transgressor of God's law be punished.
- The righteousness demands total obedience from everybody.

The only way of salvation for the sinful man is to comply with God's righteousness. It must be paid in full.

- With thanks to God the law luckily does not exclude the possibility that it could be paid by another!
- It is indeed the fruit of God's goodness that a Saviour could be supplied!

Romans 3:15, 26 teaches that the Lord Jesus was indeed presented by God in His blood as atonement through the faith.

- And that He indeed proved the justness of God because the sins committed under patience of God were punished onto Him.
- Therein He justifies those believing in Jesus Christ.

Or 2 Corinthians 5:21 where it is written that God supplied a Bail for us.

- He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

In the second place this Catechism Sunday deals with our own justness.

- It is put clearly and without the shadow of a doubt that justness from our side is totally impossible to the eyes of God.
- We cannot work justness with God – we only daily compound our guilt.

It is in fact a sore point mentioned here.

- Because all of us possess a measure of haughtiness and therefore dislike our own justness being broken down to the ground in this way.

- We would rather believe that we in fact are capable of the good and that we can do things that count with God.

The extreme case of such own justness was found with the Jews during the times of Christ.

- They took the Ten Commandments and added a few thousand of homemade laws.
- So many that they believed that should they keep their own added laws, the Ten Commandments would be kept unbroken.
- But in this way they completely forgot the Ten Commandments and only remembered their own laws.

Therefore they could not accept or deal with it that Jesus belittled them as whitewashed tombs.

- They could just not believe that they could not build their road to heaven with their own good deeds.
- Because by the preaching of the law by Jesus their own good works that was so important to them fell apart.

The Lord condemns self-righteousness in His church because it eats away the faith of the child of God.

- It causes us to believe more about ourselves than what we are capable of.
- Job already realized this truth when he exclaimed:  
**Truly I know it is so, But how can a man be righteous before God?**  
(Job 9:2)

Then Job tells that we cannot even move a mountain nor extinguish the sun.

- How can we justify ourselves to God because He caused the mountains to exist where they are and He made the sun and looks after it.
- Out of ourselves we have no power against the wrath of God!

The matter is even worse! As a matter of fact we work negatively.

- We are unable to save ourselves, but each day we enlarge our guilt of sin.
- The Catechism teaches that *daily we increase our guilt*. Christ Himself also asked: Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

With our own righteousness we can never reach full obedience to God!

- We cannot help ourselves; we are our own stumbling block.
- Our tears and our sacrifices and offers to the Lord do not work our righteousness. But should we not bring offers then we work our own condemnation!

*Actually matters are very logical because were we able to save ourselves we, ourselves would have been God. Then hell, at any rate, never posed us any threat!*

Therefore the third question that teaches that there indeed is a way where there is justification for us at God.

- Somebody just has to be found that will, for our sakes, bear the punishment for our sins.
- Isaiah writes in chapter 63:1 that he sees a Saviour dressed in blood red clothes coming whom is God and whom is powerful enough to save.

- The blood red clothing immediately teaches about the blood of Christ that would flow.

Now you must first take note of the great demands set to this Saviour

- In the first instance He has to be a human because God does not punish another nature than the one that sinned. This is recorded in Hebrews 10:4
  - For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.
- And in verse 5 that the Lord prepared a body where to the sin could be punished.
  - The offers were only reminders about the sins and prophecies that eventually somebody would pay for it.

This is the simple reason why an angel could not come to be punished for our sakes – they are beings of a different kind.

- This is also why no forgiveness of sin is possible for them – Christ died as a human and not as an angel!
- An angel is also not born under the law and the One that was supposed to atone us to God had to be born under the law!

Logically the Saviour had to be a human repairing by law-upkeep the favour of God.

- It would be of little use should the Saviour only be a good human because a human cannot conquer death.
- To let a good person pay for the other would practically have meant that a good person is removed from life because he could still not overcome death.

A human only can also not save the other guilty because the person that has to do the salvation must indeed conquer death. There is a reason for it.

- Death is indeed a curse instituted by God – if was the punishment for sin.
- It is the symbol of that God rejected us for being disobedient.

Somebody must come to take the curse out of death. In other words, somebody who had to bear the curse Himself.

- If that should happen then the death would no longer have hell as the first result, but death would become a doorway through which we exit this world into the world hereafter.

The Saviour had to have another attribute.

- He has to have the power to ensure that the bail he supplied was acceptable to God.
- Therefore Christ was born – the Son of God. Or as John puts it: The Word of God became flesh and dwelt amongst us. (John 1:14)

Therefore our salvation realizes so well in Christ.

- He died as a human. But He, as God, also guarantees the salvation. Because he returned from death back to life.
- Even some of the graves in the vicinity of Jerusalem broke open and some of the people arose from death and appeared to the people in the town.

- Therewith Jesus immediately supplied the proof that He will also bring us back out of death.

*The further proof of the certainty whereby God saves us by this Intercessor is the fact that the Spirit of God returned after His ascension to live inside of us. Then with the purpose of realizing the salvation in our hearts and minds.*

How do we then come into heaven? In Romans 1:16, 17 Paul answers: Only through the faith in this Jesus Christ.

Let us read what the Heidelberg Catechism teaches about all these matters:

## 5. Lord's Day

### Q. 12.

Since then, by the righteous judgment of God, we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, is there no way by which we may escape that punishment, and be again received into favour?

### A.

God will have his justice satisfied: (a)

and therefore we must make this full satisfaction, either by ourselves, or by another. (b)

#### (a)

Gen.2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Exod.20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

Exod.23:7 Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.

Ezek.18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

Matt.5:26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

2 Thess.1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

Luke 16:2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

#### (b)

Rom.8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Rom.8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

### Q. 13.

Can we ourselves then make this satisfaction?

### A.

By no means; but on the contrary we daily increase our debt. (a)

(a)

Job 9:2 I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?

Job 9:3 If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.

Job 15:15 Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.

Job 15:16 How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?

Job 4:18 Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly:

Job 4:19 How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?

Ps.130:3 If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

Matt.6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Matt.18:25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

Matt.16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

**Q. 14.**

Can there be found anywhere, one, who is a mere creature, able to satisfy for us?

**A.**

None; for, first, God will not punish any other creature for the sin which man has committed; (a) and further, no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin, so as to deliver others from it. (b)

(a)

Ezek.18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

Gen.3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

Heb.2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

Heb.2:15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Heb.2:16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

Heb.2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

(b)

Nah.1:6 Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.

Ps.130:3 If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

**Q. 15.**

What sort of a mediator and deliverer then must we seek for?

**A.**

For one who is very man, and perfectly (a) righteous; (b)

and yet more powerful than all creatures; that is, one who is also very God. (c)

(a)

1 Cor.15:21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

Jer.33:16 In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.

Isa.53:9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

2 Cor.5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

(b)

Heb.7:26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

Heb.7:16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

(c)

Isa.7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isa.9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Rom.9:5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Jer.23:5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

Jer.23:6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Luke 11:22 But when a stronger than he (a strong man armed) shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 66:9

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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