

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 18 MAY 2014 EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: 146:6

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 63:2

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 73:10

Scripture reading: Hebrews 7

Scripture text: Catechism Sunday 6: Hebrews 7:25-28

25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;

27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

28 For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.

(Hebrews 7: 25 – 28)

The more seriously we treat our religion, the more we realise how often we sin and how weak we are before God. But, what joy to know that, despite our sins, we are sure of our salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ!

Today we focus on the following aspects regarding our Mediator:

1. The human nature of the Mediator
2. The divine nature of the Mediator
3. How does it affect us?

1. The human nature of the Mediator

Many believers, Luther amongst others, have seriously struggled with the issue of how man, who is so sinful, can be saved from God's righteous judgment. Is it possible?

- After serious consideration and Bible study over a long period of time (inter alia at the Synod of Dort 1618/19), believers found the answer to these questions and worded it as follows: We believe that we have no access to God except through the only Mediator and Advocate Jesus Christ the righteous (Belgic Confession, Article 26).

Throughout the Scriptures God demands that His justice be satisfied.:

- Salvation and forgiveness are only possible if God has punished someone/something to satisfy his justice.
- However, no man or animal can bear this judgment of the Lord's and therefore God Himself assigned a Mediator to save us from his judgment.

From Genesis 3:15 the Lord had revealed that the assigned Deliverer would be a true and righteous man (Question 16).

- This is how it should be as God's counsel demands that the One who saves us has to be a human being because human beings daily sin against the will and sanctity of God.
- In 1 Timothy 2:5, amongst other Scripture texts, we read about the Deliverer's human nature:

For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,
(1 Timothy 2:5)

Deliverer is very well defined:

- He was true God,
- but He was also a true man.
- This is why the Bible calls Him the man Christ Jesus in the verse quoted above.

Long before the Deliverer came to earth his work was symbolized by, amongst others, the offerings that had to be brought over many centuries.

- These offerings were actually prophecies.
 - They could not forgive any sins, but they pointed to the perfect offering that was on its way.
- These offerings were also not perfect.
 - The priests, who brought the offerings, were sinners, and the animals that had to be offered were also part of the creation that had been cursed by the Lord.
- On the other hand, the Lord required that the offering for the forgiveness of our sins had to be a human being so that one of the same kind would pay for man's sins.

- This man had to be perfect.

Much more contributed to the fact that the Deliverer had to be a human being. Let's consider a few of these:

- The fact that the fall and destruction of man was caused by a man, required that a human being also had to restore it.
- This was one of the many things the Lord Jesus accomplished through his redeeming sacrifice:
 - He uplifted his faithful people and saved them from the rule of Satan that was caused by the first man – Adam.
- It was a man (Adam) who was defeated by Satan
 - and therefore it a man (as a man) had to defeat Satan and release us from the snares of death so that we can break asunder the bonds of death on the day of resurrection.
- The Deliverer had to be subjected to the same nature (human nature) as us in order to restore this nature's relationship of obedience with the Creator.
- Also, the Deliverer had to be a human priest so that He could bring an offering to God in the official capacity as a High Priest.

The Mediator had to be more than just a man.

- He had to be entirely blameless – otherwise things would just get worse.
 - No man who is a sinner himself can pay for the sins of others.
- God can never be a sinner, because it is in total conflict with his holiness.
- It is also important to realise that the Mediator also had to be God. God and sins are not reconcilable.

2. The divine nature of the Mediator

Hebrews 7 reveals the history of mankind.

- Shortly after the creation man fell in sin.
- Hence the Lord had to conclude a covenant of works with mankind. This is why He gave us his Ten Commandments.
- However, keeping the commandments failed, because the people could not keep them.

Hence the Lord took another oath – the covenant of grace.

- Verse 22 refers to it:
by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.
(Hebrews 7:22)
- Verse 25 follows on, revealing that everyone who comes to God through this High Priest will be saved completely.
Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.
(Hebrews 7:25)
- Verse 26 contains the motivation that in his human nature He was holy, innocent, blameless, unstained by sin and set apart from sinners.

For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;
(Hebrews 7: 26)

In 1 Timothy 2:5 we read that the Deliverer also had to be God, and this He was indeed. Let's look at a number of the reasons why the Deliverer had to be God:

- Man will never be able to understand how vehement and devastating the Lord's wrath is.
 - The Mediator had to be God to be able to bear the burden of this wrath without being destroyed.
- The Mediator also had to be true God so that He could change God's death sentence over mankind.
 - It would've been of no avail if our sins had been forgiven but we still had to die.
 - The Mediator had to be able to restore life to us.
- He also had to be God in order to be able to prepare and offer eternal life to us
 - This is what He means by saying that He is going to prepare a place for us in his Father's eternal home.
- Also, He had to be God to be able to save and deliver everyone involved from being punished for his/her sins.
 - The Lord Jesus does this by continually pleading for us before the Father.
 - Every time we commit a sin, He pleads for us before the Father – every moment, to this day.
- Hence we can live and die in the living hope that the Mediator will return – and then not as a human being but then as the Judge of eternity.
 - He will then gather all his children on the new earth.

Article 20 of the Belgic Confession reads:
“Out of a most perfect love He gave his Son to die for us and He raised Him for our justification that through Him we might obtain immortality and life eternal.”

3. How does it affect us?

You should realise that in the hereafter we will be totally different from what we are in this life.

- The Scriptures say that the Mediator will grant us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and salvation.
- This means that we will be perfect.

This, however, makes certain demands on us that we have to comply with in this life:

- This salvation enables us to distinguish between truth and deceit.
- It enables us to turn away from evil and to do good. Hence our entire life can change.
- Part of being able to distinguish between good and evil is that we can discover our own sins. We have to really know how great our sins are in order to truly realise how we are delivered from these sins.

Hebrews 7 fully reveals how this High Priest lived and died. It tells how He guaranteed the salvation of the world.

This brings home to us the immense magnitude of God's grace.

- No matter how great our sins, I will never perish.
- Jesus Christ does not look at my sins – He regards me as saved and renewed through his blood.
- This is why the Holy Spirit gathered us here tonight to listen to tell us about his grace.

Believe it and go out and live by the power of his grace.

Let's read together Catechism Lord's Day 6:

16. Q. Why must He be a true and righteous man?

A. He must be a true man because the justice of God requires that the same human nature which has sinned should pay for sin.[1] He must be a righteous man because one who himself is a sinner cannot pay for others.[2]

[1] Rom: 5:12, 15; I Cor. 15:21; Heb. 2:14-16. [2] Heb. 7:26, 27; I Pet. 3:18.

17. Q. Why must He at the same time be true God?

A. He must be true God so that by the power of His divine nature[1] He might bear in His human nature the burden of God's wrath,[2] and might obtain for us and restore to us righteousness and life.[3]

[1] Is. 9:5. [2] Deut. 4:24; Nah. 1:6; Ps. 130:3. [3] Is. 53:5, 11; John 3:16; II Cor. 5:21.

18. Q. But who is that Mediator who at the same time is true God and a true and righteous man?

A. Our Lord Jesus Christ,[1] whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption (I Corinthians 1:30).

[1] Matt. 1:21-23; Luke 2:11; I Tim. 2:5; 3:16.

19. Q. From where do you know this?

A. From the holy gospel, which God Himself first revealed in Paradise.[1] Later, He had it proclaimed by the patriarchs[2] and prophets,[3] and foreshadowed by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law.[4] Finally, He had it fulfilled through His only Son.[5]

[1] Gen. 3:15. [2] Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 49:10. [3] Is. 53; Jer. 23:5, 6; Mic. 7:18-20; Acts 10:43; Heb. 1:1. [4] Lev. 1:7; John 5:46; Heb. 10:1-10. [5] Rom. 10:4; Gal. 4:4, 5; Col. 2:17.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 150:1

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

Dr MJ Du Plessis
Helping Reverend
Reformed Church Clanwilliam
18 May 2014
Scripture Modern King James Version