

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 25 MAY 2014 EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: Scripture Versification 1-1:7

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 9:1, 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 91:8

Scripture reading: 2 Thessalonians 2

Scripture text: 2 Thessalonians 2:10; Catechism Sunday 7.

...and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

(2 Thessalonians 2:10)

Can you imagine what the people of Thessalonica must have felt when this sermon was read to them?

- They are harsh words to be heard from a pulpit
- There are members of the congregation who are lost ***because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved***

Salvation is joined to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

- If you truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Redeemer and Savior, He does indeed redeem and save you unto eternal life
- Together with which our inner conversion and transformation
 - The one change is that we see ourselves as God sees us
 - We understand our infirmity, and honestly know our sin

- For exactly that reason we have this pressing desire for Jesus Christ to redeem and sanctify us unto children of God.

Let us together investigate this matter by paying attention to the following two things:

1. **Who all shares in this redemption?**
2. **What is faith?**

1. **Who all shares in this redemption?**

First we look at those who are redeemed. The first thing that happens to a convert is that the Holy Spirit works in his heart and mind.

How important is it that this conversion must take place?

Listen to the Lord's warning to us regarding the assault of our time:

3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

(2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4)

The devil comes to us with the Bible under his arm, and with things, which seem to us to be the Lord's will, but then – with doctrinal error – he estranges us from the Lord!

Over against this, God the Holy Spirit comes to us and He assures us that we have a part in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- He does so with the Gospel as revealed to us in the Word of God
- He assures us that the Lord Jesus does not save us as part of a cluster – the Lord died for me personally.
 - He knows me by name
 - One day He will hear me personally
 - And acquit me personally

One thing that is clear as day in the Lord Jesus' sermons: All people will not enter heaven.

- In for example Matthew 7:14 He says "**Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.**
- In Matthew 22:14, after He told the parable of the wedding celebration, Jesus says: **For many are called, but few are chosen.**

From these two passages we already start to get a picture of who the people are who are redeemed.

- Its sinners. Discouraged evildoers, who are all conceived and born in sin
- In other words: it is us, we are caught up in the power of sin, and every now and again we bend the knee before the devil and his wiles

Stated differently:

- The people, who will eventually be in heaven, are all people who, due to their evil deeds, deserve death.
- They are people who have a share in the perfect redemption that the Lord Jesus Christ provides for us, and that, in spite of their sin and unworthiness.

This is where election also fits in. In certain respects, election is very practical.

- The elect are the people who take their lives and faith seriously
- Those who are not of the elect, are in any case not sincerely concerned about this matter
- Which is why you will yourself know, if you are someone who has a sincere interest in salvation.

The Lord Jesus Christ died for only those who truly believe and who worship Him with sincerity.

- If He had died for all people, then all people would have to end up in heaven would they not – and we know that that is not the case.
- The Bible is quite clear on the fact that most people will go to hell

The Lord Jesus also does not pray for all people

- Once He said that He does not pray for the world (John 17:9)
- The world being the people who refuse to convert
- Those for whom He prays and died are those who truly do convert and believe when they are called

Our participation in eternal life already started in the time before the Lord created heaven and earth.

In Ephesians 1:4 the Lord says that in that time already **he had chosen us in Christ that we should be holy and without blame before him in love**

- In principle, our sins were therefore forgiven us in Christ before the creation of the world
- Which is why those people are converted and believe when they hear the Gospel in this life

2. What is faith?

What is faith then, and where does faith fit into this salvation of ours?

- First off, we must state that there are two major distinctions to be made: there is true faith and then there is false faith, which comes to expression in a variety of religions
- Think of the Lord's parable of the Sower (Matthew 13), and where all the seed fell, and all it achieved and did not achieve.

With true faith there is a combination of feeling and understanding. Our confession speaks of a sure knowledge and a firm confidence.

- A true faith allows one to stand in a living relationship with God

- In this relationship it is crucial that one would know who God is, and what He requires of one
- Resulting from this the Lord blesses and punishes. Thus true faith governs one's life.

True faith awakens in one the desire to have communion with God and to belong to Him.

- It causes one to know your shortcomings, and causes one to be grateful for the blessings, which God grants us, while it also causes one to flee to God and to beg His forgiveness.
- True faith is also to know without doubt that God loves me and does indeed forgive my sins.
- In short: to have a firm confidence in God Almighty.

True faith has another leg. The knowledge part.

- To have knowledge of the Bible.
- To be busy with God's revealed Word and to comprehend what it is that the Lord therein reveals to you.

Then the Holy Spirit drives our faith

- The Holy Spirit governs our minds so that we may understand what we read and hear
- It is not so that all people who read God's revelation, understands it. The Lord teaches that some people look without seeing, and hear without understanding, because He does not grant them the ability to see and understand.
- So that it is the Holy Spirit who makes you to see the hand of the Lord in your life – so that you may know the Lord's counsel, but also experience it in your life.

Then we must remember also the expectation, which the Holy Spirit awakens in us.

- The Holy Spirit makes us to expect and long for the eternal life in the Hereafter.
- He instructs us so that we realize that the Hereafter does not stand separate from this life – it is this life that goes over into eternal life. Which is why everything that I now do and believe, must be directed towards that life.

The consequences of this are that we must practice our faith in this life already.

- After all; the Apostle Paul instructs us to exercise our godliness as an athlete exercises his body.
- Your faith must thus also be fit and deliver the achievements befitting the true faith.

For the person who reads the Bible aright, there can be no reason for doubt in his faith.

- For many centuries God promised us salvation. Then He came.
- Before our very eyes He met death, and He rose from it. At this event, He allowed even the world of the angels to break through to us.
- We see the world of the spirits and we hear their witness: Jesus is no longer in the grave. He rose.

When He ascends the angle says: **This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.**" (Acts 1:11) Let us

walk along the same path as that of Acts 16:31 **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”**

Let us page to the Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 7 and see what our confession teaches about this:

Sunday 7

20. Q. Are all men, then, saved by Christ just as they perished through Adam?

A. No. Only those are saved who by a true faith are grafted into Christ and accept all His benefits.[1]

[1] Matt. 7:14; John 1:12; 3:16, 18, 36; Rom. 11:16-21.

21. Q. What is true faith?

A. True faith is a sure knowledge whereby I accept as true all that God has revealed to us in His Word.[1] At the same time it is a firm confidence[2] that not only to others, but also to me,[3] God has granted forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation,[4] out of mere grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits.[5] This faith the Holy Spirit works in my heart by the gospel.[6]

[1] John 17:3, 17; Heb. 11:1-3; James 2:19. [2] Rom. 4:18-21; 5:1; 10:10; Heb. 4:16. [3] Gal. 2:20. [4] Rom. 1:17; Heb. 10:10. [5] Rom.3:20-26; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-10. [6] Acts 16:14; Rom. 1:16; 10:17; I Cor. 1:21.

22. Q. What, then, must a Christian believe?

A. All that is promised us in the gospel,[1] which the articles of our catholic and undoubted Christian faith teach us in a summary.

[1] Matt. 28:19; John 20:30, 31.

23. Q. What are these articles?

A. III.1.I believe in God the Father almighty, III.1. Creator of heaven and earth. III.2.I believe in Jesus Christ, III.2.His only begotten Son, our Lord; III.3.He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, III.3.born of the virgin Mary; III.4.suffered under Pontius Pilate, III.4.was crucified, dead, and buried; III.4.He descended into hell; III.5.On the third day He arose from the dead; III.6.He ascended into heaven, III.6.and sits at the right hand III.6.of God the Father almighty; III.7.from there He will come to judge III.7.the living and the dead. III.8.I believe in the Holy Spirit; III.9.I believe a holy catholic Christian church, III.9.the communion of saints; III.10.the forgiveness of sins; III.11.the resurrection of the body; III.12.and the life everlasting.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: Psalm 81:1, 4, 12

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
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