

## REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 28 APRIL 2013 EVENING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 48:1

*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 of praise: Psalm 18:1

**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 9:10

**Scripture reading:** Romans 9:6-24

**Scripture text:** Romans 9:22 and Catechism Sunday 7

**What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,**  
(Romans 9:22)

God tolerated with great patience the objects of wrath prepared for the destruction! The Lord thus makes the people who will be going to hell and He tolerates them so that they can arrive there!

Matthew delivers two very important judgements in his gospel.

- The one judgement is that many people will go to hell and only a few will be saved. (Matthew 7:14 onwards)
  - The road to hell is wide and many people find the way.
  - But the gate leading to the life is narrow and only a few find it.  
**"Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 7:14)**

- Why do some find the way and others not? This answer is also supplied in the gospel of Matthew. There it is written that the Lord once said that many are called but few are chosen. (Matthew 22:14)
  - Salvation and eternal life is thus determined by a Person much greater than a human.
  - Should we want to discuss the salvation we must be aware that Christ worked our salvation.  
**"For many are called, but few are chosen."** (Matthew 22:14)

*We can sum up everything by saying that through grace we are included in the pre-destination of God. There is not one person who can claim that he himself worked his salvation or that he had to add something to his salvation by the virtues and effects of Christ's redemptive sacrifice on the cross.*

How does the grace of God work on the people? We examine the following:

1. **The grace of God is limited to certain people.**
2. **We receive the grace of God through the faith.**
3. **The grace of God is according to the gospel.**

#### 1. **The grace of God is limited to certain people.**

In chapter 1 John writes that the Lord Jesus empowered those who accepted Him to become children of God.

- There are thus people who did not accept Him and thus also did not receive salvation.
- The question is: Why did they not accept the Lord?
  - The Lord supplies the answer: It was not given to them to become children of God.
  - Thus the Lord Jesus Christ also did not grant them the eternal life.

When we read this together with Romans 9:9-16 we find that this choice to receive salvation in its deepest being cannot be made by a human being.

- This passage describes the conversation between the Lord and Rebecca.
- The lord told her that her eldest son would serve the youngest because the Lord hated the eldest and loved the youngest.

You could now consider this to be unfair because the children did nothing wrong, why would the Lord then reject the one? In verse 11 the Lord reveals the answer:

- He has complete freedom in deciding as He wants.
- He does not allow human considerations to lead Him in His decisions.

The exact words of the Bible are:

**(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls),** (Romans 9:11)

This passage clarifies one matter very well:

- Jacob and Esau did not decide about their salvation.
- Long before they were born the Lord decided about it.

Although during the first part of his life Jacob was fairly lax in his responsibilities towards the Lord the Lord still, by a true faith, inaugurated him into the death and salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ who was to arrive ages later.

The conduct of the Lord about How He saves or prepares people for the wrath is certainly the one most difficult matter to understand and accept in the entire Bible.

- There are two matters causing the problem:
  - The one is man's own haughtiness causing him to always want the right to decide and control over everything – even over his own salvation.
  - The second problem is that the Bible makes very difficult pronouncements about this, because some pronouncements seem to show that only the Lord decides, and others again as if man can decide about his salvation.
- Should you not bring and read all the pronouncements into context with each other this confusion appears.

There is thus a definite difference between the way we land into hell on the one side – and on the other side, the salvation worked by Jesus Christ

- Through Adam literary all people fell into sin.
- But not all are saved by the Lord Jesus.

Indeed it is logical, because should Jesus save all people, then the hell would not exist because who will be inside it?

Should we support the teaching (dogma) wherein we could choose or work our own salvation then we indeed violate the omnipotence of God.

Consider the words recorded in Titus 2:13-14:

**13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,**  
**14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.**

The fact that here is written that Jesus is preparing people for Him clearly indicates that He does not consider all people without exception as His people.

## **2. We receive the grace of God through the faith.**

There is a very strong connection between the grace of God we receive and our faith.

- The fact of the Lord Jesus choosing certain persons to share in His grace does not mean that we must now live under stress and wonder whether we belong to the chosen or not.
- There are people fearing that because the Lord did not choose them they will not reach eternal life.

Keep in mind what the Lord teaches in Ephesians 2:8, 9:

**8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,  
9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.**

You can know with certainty whether you are chosen or not.

- Your faith showy it to you.
- Therefore in our confession there is one part dealing with what true faith is.
  - A true faith is a grounded knowledge of everything written in the Word of God
  - And thereby also the solid trust that you as person are sharing in this promised grace and salvation.

Faith is also the grace you know in the vicinity of God.

- That you know God in His Trinity.
- But grace is also more than that.
  - It is letting the Bible live in your heart
  - It is accepting full responsibility for the matters God expects from you – as He also puts it in His Word.

We can know that God will forgive us should we due to our weakness err, because in Psalm 103 it is written that the Lord looks after His children like a Father.

- There is a long list of matters relevant to our faith, per example that the Lord forgives us our injustices.
- He lets us share, without earning it, in His grace through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is the power of this faith?

- This, that you can, without the shadow of a doubt, trust yourself to God.
- It is true that your own earnings are unworthy to the face of the Lord, just like you are yourself.
- Therefore there is no possibility of you relying upon yourself.
- But the fact that you are by the full grace of God, inaugurated to Christ opens the doors of heaven for you.

In this way the faith brings light into your life because there is something to live for.

### **3. The grace of God is according to the gospel.**

What must I now believe? Where do I start? You start with the Bible and you believe everything promised in the Bible, exactly as it is recorded there!

The contents of the gospel bind us as believers together in this true faith.

- Therewith the Lord reveals that we already may mostly know who all will share with us in this eternal life: They are those who, together with us, confess the contents of the gospel.

Always realize that when we are gathered in a worshipping service that there are various matters binding us together from now till eternity.

- One of these matters is our communal confession that our entire salvation rests on the Jesus Christ the Lord.
- We are a group of people experiencing our human weaknesses in the same way.
- We all often experience the sin breaking us down.

But notwithstanding all that the Lord gathers us as true believers through the ages from mankind and brings us together in the unity of His Church.

Therefore we start preparing together to be with Him in His eternal Kingdom.

- Our preparation consists out of a longing that the Lord always strengthens our faith by the preaching and use of the sacraments.
- We want to always experience that the body of the Lord was broken and His blood spilled to the full atonement of all our sins.
- We want to know that our sins are washed away by His blood – whereby we gain access to the eternal life.

But you must realize that you cannot gain salvation through your own powers.

- You also do not make the choice of being saved.
- The Lord commands you to live blissful because He in Christ removed all your sins – except should you be a sinner not wanting to be obedient to Him.

We must realize our guilt.

- But we must also realize the grace and love of God.
- God the Holy Spirit lets us believe that we are inaugurated into the grace of Jesus Christ.
- Listen to Him, because indeed we are part of God's council of love saving people to the eternal life!

Thus live a life befitting to such a faith,

- Let it be visible to all that the Lord has made you into His property.
- Not because you are capable by yourself to the eternal life but because God has long ago already ordained you thereto and it now comes to the foreground in our lifestyle.

Come let us together read Catechism Sunday 7.

**Q. 20.**

**Are all men then, as they perished in Adam, saved by Christ?**

**A.**

No; (a)

only those who are ingrafted into him, and, receive all his benefits, by a true faith. (b)

(a)

Matt.7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Matt.22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

(b)

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Isa.53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Ps.2:12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Rom.11:17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

Rom.11:19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

Rom.11:20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

Rom.3:22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

Heb.4:2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Heb.4:3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

Heb.5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

Heb.10:39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Heb.11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

## **Q. 21.**

**What is true faith?**

**A.**

True faith is not only a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his word, (a)

but also an assured confidence, (b)

which the Holy Ghost (c)

works by the gospel in my heart; (d)

that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness and salvation, (e)  
are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits. (f)

(a)

James 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

(b)

2 Cor.4:13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

Eph.2:7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Eph.2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Eph.2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Eph.3:12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

Gal.2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Heb.11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Heb.11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Heb.11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

Heb.11:9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

Heb.11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Heb.4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

Matt.16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Philip.1:19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

Rom.4:17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

Rom.4:21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Rom.5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Rom.1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Rom.10:10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Rom.10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Rom.4:16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

Rom.4:18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

Rom.4:19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:

Rom.4:20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

Rom.3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Rom.3:25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

(c)

Gal.5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Matt.16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

2 Cor.4:13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

John 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Eph.2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Philip.1:19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

Acts 16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

(d)

Rom.1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Rom.10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

1 Cor.1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Acts 10:44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

Acts 16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

(e)

Rom.1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Gal.3:11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

Heb.10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Heb.10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

Gal.2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

(f)

Eph.2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Rom.3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Rom.5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Luke 1:77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,

Luke 1:78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,

## **Q. 22.**

**What is then necessary for a christian to believe?**

**A.**

All things promised us in the gospel, (a)

which the articles of our catholic undoubted christian faith briefly teach us.

(a)

John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Matt.28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

## **Q. 23.**

**What are these articles?**

**A.**

1. I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

2. And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord:

3. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary:

4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell:

5. The third day he rose again from the dead:

6. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty:

7. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:

8. I believe in the Holy Ghost:

9. I believe a holy catholic church: the communion of saints:

10. The forgiveness of sins:

11. The resurrection of the body:
12. And the life everlasting.

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: Psalm 4:2

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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