

## REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 12 MAY 2013 EVENING SERVICE

**Sing before:** 27:5

*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: 89:1, 11

**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 4:3

**Scripture reading:** Job 36

**Scripture text:** Job36: 26; Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 8

**Behold, God is great, and we do not know Him; Nor can the number of His years be discovered.**

(Job36: 26)

Who can ever appreciate the greatness of the Lord?

- Can any of us ever understand that He has lived in eternity and will live forever without having been born or ever growing older?
- Who can comprehend that there are three persons in God but that He is one single Essence?

We speak of the Lord according to the way in which He has revealed Himself in His Word. We confess what He has told us about Himself, although our minds cannot always understand what we confess because of the Lord's immense greatness.

We discuss the Essence of God Almighty from various viewpoints.

1. **The Essence of God is a great mystery.**
2. **The Holy Scriptures of God reveals to us the oneness of the Lord, but the Bible also reveals that the Lord distinguishes Himself in three Persons.**
3. **We also testify that the three Persons of God are but one single Essence and who are not like us and do not exist and work like we do.**

1. **The Essence of God is a great mystery.**

Job uses the word “Unsearchable” **(American Standard Version 1901)**

- There are things about the Lord which no investigation or any scientific experiment or research can ever discover.
- Yet we know the relevant things about Him.
- How do we know these? Because we believe what He reveals to us.

Faith is given to us by God through the working of the Holy Spirit. He makes it happen.

- He gives us knowledge about things and lets us hold on to things many other people do not know about, because the Holy Spirit of God has not given them this insight in their hearts and minds.
- Hence they reject these.

God reveals Himself as an indivisible God. He is one single Essence.

Where do we find this in the Bible?

- The truth is that there is no single text saying that God is one Essence – distinguished in three Persons.
- We believe it, because there are many things we have to consider collectively and understand collectively to obtain this knowledge.

Through his suffering and his very personal relationship with God, Job started realizing these things about the Lord, namely that the Lord is great and that we cannot understand Him.

- We cannot investigate and find out who He is, because our minds cannot grasp his greatness.
- Our minds are as limited and incomprehensible as Job’s.
- We read and study God’s Word, and eventually we put together what is revealed to us and draft a confession in respect of it, for example the Belgic Confession Article 8.

**According to this truth and this Word of God, we believe in one only God, who is one single essence, in which are three persons, really, truly, and eternally distinct according to their incommunicable properties; namely the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.**

Hence God's existence is an impenetrable mystery to us.

- It is a mystery the Lord reveals to us.
- There simply are certain things we'll never understand but then we should just trust like small children. Look at what Job came up against.

**7 "Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?"**

**8 They are higher than heaven-what can you do? Deeper than Sheol-what can you know?"**

**9 Their measure is longer than the earth And broader than the sea.**

(Job 11:7-9)

**2. The Holy Scriptures of God reveals to us the oneness of the Lord, but the Bible also reveals that the Lord distinguishes Himself in three Persons.**

In the following quotations from the Bible (and there are more than these) the Lord uses names in the plural form for Himself.

- Although we cannot in all cases recognize it in the English translation it is true.
- The Lord reveals Himself with names in the plural form because He is more than one Person.

**Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens." (Genesis 1:20)**

**Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?"**

**Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."**

(Isaiah 6:8)

This matter gets even more complicated when the Bible reveals that the distinguished Persons of God work together and testify of one another and that the One is also the other One.

**You love what is right and hate what is wrong. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you, pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else. (Psalms 45:7)**

**But someone else is also testifying about me, and I can assure you that everything he says about me is true. (John 5:32)**

**The Father and I are one. (John 10:30)**

Then there are also passages where the Lord clearly reveals that the One God has three different Names. In one instance it is **the Word of the Lord and the breath of his mouth** (his Holy Spirit).

**By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all their host by the breath of His mouth.** (Psalms 33:6 The Amplified Bible)

The Lord also calls Himself **I am**, but **I am** sends with His **Spirit**. The **Spirit** is also **He** and is **God** and guides the prophet.

**Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; From the time that it was, I was there. And now the Lord God and His Spirit Have sent Me.**

(Isaiah 48:16)

**The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;**

(Isaiah 61:1)

The apostle Peter mentions all three Persons of God in relation to the work they do. **Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.**

(1 Peter 1:2)

At the close of his letter the apostle Paul blessed the assembly with the Lord's blessing. The Holy Spirit guides him to do it in such a way that each Person of God is depicted according to his particular blessing for his church.

**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.**

(2 Corinthians 13:13)

These three Persons of God are the same in their Divine Essence and nature. Amongst others the Lord Jesus Christ made the following statement:

**"I and My Father are one."**

(John 10:30)

What do we – according to the Word of God – confess in respect of the three Persons of God? We confess the following (Belgic Confession Art 8):

- **The Father is the cause, origin, and beginning of all things visible and invisible**
- **The Son is the Word, the wisdom, and the image of the Father.**
- **The Holy Spirit is the eternal power and might who proceeds from the Father and the Son.**

**3. We also testify that the three Persons of God are but one single Essence and who are not like us and do not exist and work like we do.**

We can distinguish between the three Persons of God, but we may never separate them because they are one and the same Essence. We confess this as follows (Belgic Confession Art 8):

- **Nevertheless, God is not by this distinction divided into three, since the Holy Scriptures teach us that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each has His personal existence, distinguished by their properties; but in such a way that these three persons are but one only God.**
- **It is therefore evident that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, and like wise the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son.**
- **Nevertheless, these persons thus distinguished are not divided, nor intermixed.**
  - **For the Father has not assumed our flesh and blood, neither has the Holy Spirit, but the Son only.**
  - **The Father has never been without His Son, or without His Holy Spirit. For these three, in one and the same essence, are equal in eternity.**
  - **There is neither first nor last; for They are all three one, in truth, in power, in goodness, and in mercy.**

Why is it important to know all these things? Because it is imperative to know that the eternal God Almighty, who is beyond the limits of all existence, has determined our entire life and what is happening to us. He cannot be restricted or hampered by any power.

- He loves every one of us because He is our Father.
- The Son has saved us from our sins and intercedes for every one of us by name.
- The Holy Spirit leads each of us personally in the truth of God's will and He ensures us of our salvation and that our prayers are being heard.

This is how the eternal Triune God will receive us in his kingdom.

Let's read together question and answer 25 of the Heidelberg Catechism:

**25. Q. Since there is only one God,[1] why do you speak of three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?**

A. Because God has so revealed Himself in His Word[2] that these three distinct persons are the one, true, eternal God.

**[1] Deut. 6:4; Is. 44:6; 45:5; I Cor. 8:4, 6. [2] Gen. 1:2, 3; Is. 61:1; 63:8-10; Matt. 3:16, 17; 28:18, 19; Luke 4:18; John 14:26; 15:26; II Cor. 13:14; Gal. 4:6; Tit. 3:5, 6.**

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 2:4, 6

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 except where stated differently**