

## REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 4 AUGUST 2013 MORNING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 119:4

*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 103:3

**Confession of faith:** Apostolic

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.  
And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into Hell, the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, a holy universal Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting

**Amen.**

*After the reading of the Law we confess our guilt and pray for forgiveness and a new life before God with Psalm 19:7*

Law

Psalm: 19:7

**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 48:4

**Scripture reading:** 1 Peter 5

**Scripture text:** 1 Peter 5:8

**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.**

(! Peter 5:8)

Here we are dealing with one of the most difficult matters in life: The satan and his attacks on us.

- He attacks everywhere and in many various ways. We can say the satan has as many faces as there are opportunities in everybody's life.
- Sometimes he attacks us personally.
- Other times he is much slyer and then also uses people and circumstances and all sorts of matters like illness, stress and whatever there may be to try and damage the faith of people.

In this sermon we consider the following matters:

1. **Who made the devil bad?**
2. **The targets of the devil.**
3. **The devil and our life of faith.**

### 1. **Who made the devil bad?**

There are people having the opinion that the devil existed since eternity, but that is untrue.

- The only Being who existed since eternity is the Lord.
- The devil is also a creature just like us: the Lord also created him.
- The devil is an angel who was created very superior (with many great attributes)

But in some way or another he became bad and resisted God.

- The devil is a very complex and powerful creature causing a lot of damage amongst the people, the animals and in nature.
- He is somebody we must be very careful of because he not only tempts us into sin so that we dishonour and aggravate the Lord thereby.
- He also destroys us because he has no time for us.
- He is a type of person that wants to gain control over everything there is and then destroy it.

Come, let us consider a few passages in the Bible where judgements are made about the devil, because should we regard the devil as the Lord regards him we will push the works of the devil away from us because through the revelation of God we will be able to see that the works of the devil are completely devoid of any glory.

- It is so that the true religious person finds the works of the devil to be utterly repulsive.
- Automatically that will encourage us into serving the Lord in His glory and will help us to be better believers.

In the Bible we read for the first time about the devil when at the start of our history the devil approached Adam and Eve in the Paradise. He accosted the two people with the temptation of being disobedient to God.

- At the stage of the devil approaching Adam and Eve there was thus already problems between him and the Lord.
- The Bible never really tells what exactly was the problem between the devil and the Lord. There are good reasons for it.
  - The purpose of the Bible is not to teach us where all the miseries originated because the Bible is not a Book about sins.
  - The Bible is a revelation of the glory of God and of His redemption towards mankind.
  - The Bible teaches that God saves us in Christ and that He is almighty and will destroy the evil at the end of times.
- We at ant rate have a good idea what encompassed the Fall in the heaven because we read in John 8:44 that the devil is a murderer of people and a liar since the beginning.
  - He never tells the truth. He is also the father of all lies.
  - He thus stands directly against God. In 1John 3:8 it is also recorded that the devil sinned from the beginning.

On the strength of these passages in the Bible we know that the evil things that are in the devil was caused to himself because he became disloyal towards God.

- The Lord did not make him bad from the beginning. He became bad all by Himself.
- Because it is recorded in the Bible that the devil speaks out of himself when he lies, it means that he cannot hold the Lord accountable for his evilness.

We must carefully pay heed to this judgement of the Lord, because it is also true about us. When we sin. We cannot hold the Lord accountable for it.

- We cannot set about doing wrong and then claim that it is the will of the Lord because He planned everything as such.
- In His planning the Lord calls us to obedience and commands us to not do wrong things.

*The devil broke away from the truth himself and therefore he is bad. He is now in the delicate position of not being able to win back the truth. We must thus take care that we do not also follow this road!*

## **2. The targets of the devil.**

The target of the devil is very wide. He, in order of destroying it, aims at everything the Lord created.

- He is like a virus wanting to infect the entire body and kill it. Therefore he did not sin alone.
  - The fist group of creatures he aimed at was the angels. In his fall to sin he took a lot of angels with him.

- Peter and Jude (2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6) refer to this and teach that there are angels who abandoned their own principle God created them into. They are not saved. They also abandoned their dwelling.
- Therefore they are also forever rejected by God and can never be saved again.

It is important to look at all the different names the Bible calls the satan. At two places in the Bible the satan is called the god and chief of this world.

- This appears once in John 12:31 where the devil is called the chief of this world. This passage also teaches that the Lord will cast the satan to the outside when the world is judged.
- At the other place the devil is called the god of this world. I will now read from 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4:  
**3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,  
 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.**

Here it is written that the devil – the god of this world – makes it his aim to blind the people's mind so that they cannot understand the gospel and remain non-believers. He prevents them from seeing the glory of God.

The same is written in Ephesians 2:2:

**in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,**  
 (Ephesians 2:2)

- Here is only added that the devil is the chief of the power of the air and now works in the sons of disobedience.
- The devil this possesses a specific spiritual power he uses to attack the people and make them disobedient should they not be careful.

Therefore the apostle Paul writes that the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

- You must know that this attacker is very sly – he is intensely powerful and intelligent and very deceitful.
- He forges all revelations of God so that the weak believers and non-believers cannot distinguish it any longer from the true revelation!
- All his activities on earth are aimed at killing the church and it's members.

The devil is against all forms of justness.

- He contaminates human relationships.
- He causes marital tension and divorce.
- He destroys the education work of our parents.
- He tempts our children and us.
- He awakens lusts.
- He hobbles our sense of honesty.

Further on he also works with our faith.

- He is the one fouling up our relationship with God. He makes us into non-believers and lazy in our worship.
- He clouds our minds so that there are matters in the Word of God we do not want to accept.
- He also makes us spiritually dull so that we not always can and want to understand the revelation of God and then also come in opposition to the Lord.

It might sound to us like a very involved process taking place, but in fact, the devil is very simple.

- All he does is causing us to persevere in our sin.
- He makes you used to the wrong matters and lets us think up all sorts of arguments why you may continue doing the wrong things.
- He knows that in the long run the Lord will become dissatisfied with such a person.

The devil also uses the social circumstances within which we live:

- He lets people rebel against certain events so that they lose their common sense and do very foolish things.
- The devil lets people fall into such fear that they, out of despair, try to take the council of God into their own hands.
  - He causes us to later start believing in the ways of the devil that hatred and violence is the gospel of salvation and that murder and war is the only way to ensure our future.
  - The devil causes people to start doubting each other.
  - He also causes people to become so bad that they are no longer trustworthy.

These are the matters we in this congregation will need to tread for carefully and lightly.

- The devil wants to have all believers to scatter and fall apart. He wants the church of the Lord to fall to pieces.
- He does everything with and out of hatred. He cannot stand God and he cannot tolerate us either.
- Therefore he tries to influence our lusts, our thoughts and actions – virtually everything – into doing bad things.

Brothers and sisters we must guard through the blood of Jesus Christ! When we sin, we thereby damage the Will and the glory of the Lord.

- Those are the own works of the devil and should we persevere in sin we exchange the image of God's glory for the image of the devil.
- The image of the devil is monstrous, therefore our sins overtake us in the long run – even although sin sometimes seems to be advantageous in the short run. Eventually the results of sin are not very favourable!

### **3. The devil and our life of faith.**

Then there is another important matter that has to be warned against. The Book of Revelation warns that the political spirit is one of the most powerful weapons used by the anti-Christ at the

end of times. From the Bible we have examples where the Lord describes how satan also works in the politics. Do not try advocating political standpoints on the church of the Lord.

Should we do so then we are erring because then we begin with a wrong relationship towards the Lord.

- We should always be very careful with the way in which we make judgements as if the politics will determine the bliss of the world.
- Read in Revelation 13 where the Lord reveals this beast that looks like a lamb but speaks like a dragon.
- It is him that on earth had an image made and gave that image as spirit so that it could speak. It is this beast that has the same number of the man: six-hundred-and sixty-six.

The devil is not now working for the first time. In the Old Testament he was already active:

- He was the evil spirit that possessed Saul.
- Psalm 78:43 – 49 also teaches that the Lord executed the plagues of Egypt through bad angels. They are called “angels of evil” (1901 American Standard Version and disease-carrying angels in “the Message Bible”) They contaminate everything by their evilness!
- A messenger is indeed an angel (a messenger carries) The devil and his angels are indeed used by the Lord to ravage an entire non-believing nation rebelling against Him.

The satan puts himself directly opposite Christ.

- As Christ is the Head of the church so is satan the head of the evil forces of hell.
- In 1 John 3:8 it is written that these two are in opposition towards each other.
- The devil sinned right from the beginning and therefore the Son of God appeared so that He could demolish the works of the devil.

The satan also enters the church! And he introduces himself as Jesus Christ.

- He uses the Name of the Lord Jesus for himself and he uses the Bible to have people sinking into false doctrine so that God becomes angry with them and punishes them.
- As proof for this we only need to reflect on the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in Mark 13. He warns us that these things are coming and that we have to be wake-up for it.

In our text of Scripture it is written that the devil is hunting like a roaring lion!

- But immediately the warning accompanies it: be sober, be vigilant!
- The Lord repeats the age-old command that He also gave to Adam: Beware! Take care!
- Adam could not. Now the Lord reveals to us who the devil is and how he works. And then the Lord tells us to be sober. That means that we must think and distinguish. We must not just blindly do things.

The revolt of the devil against God is deeply grounded in his own arrogance.

- He thought more about himself and his viewpoints than of the will and commands of the Lord. The end result is the hell with all the miseries caught into it.
- Therefore the Lord writes to us in Ephesians 6:12 that our battle is not against flesh and blood but against the authorities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of the darkness of this age, against the evil spirits in the sky.

We must never be at ease and think that the devil has been conquered and is now permanently out of the way.

- The devil is extremely sly and therefore he uses every moment to stalk us.
- There is no opportunity he considers too small. Every chance there is he will fully apply in moving us to feeling for the wrong things and sinning.

Now we need not fall into panic because we are equipped to handle the devil.

- The birth of our Lord Jesus, His life and death, His crucifixion and resurrection and ascension to heaven was all to tackle the devil in his own place and to beat him.
- The Lord Jesus Christ lived an entire life of battle against the devil so that He could, for our sakes, beat the devil. And that is exactly what He did!
  - During the tempting in the desert He, under no circumstances gave way to the temptations and false arguments of the devil.
  - He broke the power of the death because He arose with His body by His Godly almight from the death. The death was the biggest weapon the devil had in his arsenal.
  - After the resurrection of Jesus the devil no longer have this weapon because through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus this weapon was rendered useless.

After the Ascension the Lord sent His Holy Spirit back to us so that the Holy Spirit can warn us not to heed to the devil.

- The work of the Holy Spirit is totally against that of the devil. The devil wants to destroy us by his hatred. The Holy Spirit wants to save us by His love.
- The Holy Spirit keeps us watchful.
  - He supports our ability to differentiate so that we can recognize the works of the devil.
  - He grants us insight to see where the devil falsifies God's revelation.
  - And then He again confirms the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the power of God to us so that we can be victorious over the attacks of the devil.

Brothers and sisters, be aware every moment of the things the devil brings onto our way. We are now living in the times about which the Lord says that the devil goes around like a roaring lion to devour and destroy everything he can lay his hands onto.

- Also keep in mind that his main target is the church – the believers – of the Lord.
- It is us he wants to lay his hands on.
- Even should the sin appear so enticing – know that therewith the devil is seeking our death.
- *Be aware that every seeming advantage the sin offers us on this earth is part of our destruction in the hereafter should we pursue it.*

But also be aware that we Christians are victors in Jesus Christ the Lord.

- Live then as victors because you are not losers against the hell and its leader!
- We bear the Name of our Lord: property of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 41:3

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 unless differently stated