

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 26 MAY 2013 EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: 33:6

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: 65:7, 8

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 62:4

Scripture reading: Job 12:7-25

Scripture text: Catechism Sunday 10

There is one great truth in life: The Lord rules literally over everything. He rules over everything that exists and over the entire nature and, eventually, literally over everything in time and eternity.

Why does the Lord send us to nature to see and hear all these things again – while the true believer knows this?

- He wants us to notice the great comfort in the fact that He created and maintain everything, and then realise that He provides for us in the same manner.
- We call it providence.
 - This is why Job, at a time when the Lord seemed to have forgotten about him, refers us to the animals so that they can teach us.
 - This is why Job refers us to the birds of the air so that they can inform us about the plan of God.
 - He sends us to the earth itself, and to the sea and the fish, so that they can tell us that all these things were made by the hand of the Lord, and that the hand of the Lord still maintains it every day.

Be honest, considering it, it certainly must be strengthening your faith, because it is such a great comfort to know that we are in the merciful hands of the Lord God every moment of our lives.

The Lord reveals himself in the providence as the Father of all who believes in Him.

- 1. What exactly is providence?**
- 2. God's omnipotence and wisdom**
- 3. Where do we fit in?**

1. What exactly is providence?

In the first place it means that God provides. In other words: He provides where there is a need.

- It further means that He has a plan that rules over everything and every being in the creation.
- That is what the Lord Jesus meant when He said that the history of every hair on my head was determined in the finest detail.
 - Jesus once said that not a hair from your head would fall without the Will of the heavenly Father.
 - The Lord Jesus also teaches that not even a sparrow will die if the Father had not determined it to happen. An insignificant little bird, but his life is determined up to the moment of his death.

Now think about it: if the Lord does this with a hair and for a sparrow, would He not do much more for you who believe in Him and worship Him?

Predestination is also part of God's plan.

- When Paul wrote to the Romans that God had visited the mother of Jacob and Esau, before they were born, and told her that He loved her one child but hated the other, we discover that the lives of all people (predestination) go according to a plan
- In that same passage of the Bible it is written that things happen in such a way that God's plan is firmly based on his election.
 - It is therefore part of his providence.

The comfort this passage offers is that the Lord, after the Fall, did not leave the earth or us to ourselves.

- The Lord still maintains everything and everyone.
- He manages everything in such a way that history since creation will end up in the redemption of the believers.
- At the same time, of course, it is a plan of disaster for non-believers.

Just remember that God is almighty and in his power also omnipresent.

- The moment we forget about this and think that the Lord is a human being limited by space, we'll start wondering how all these things can happen.

- But as long as we remember how great God's power and his omnipresence are we, as true believers, will understand how easily the Lord can do all of this.

2. God's omnipotence and wisdom

According to the Bible we should learn about God's omnipotence and wisdom from history. What else but God's omnipotence could have maintained the earth and everything in it up to now? Definitely not the power and abilities of men.

- The fact that we are referred to nature indicates that God rules over all in nature
 - . Therefore, also over rain, drought, fruitful and barren years, etc.
 - There are numerous examples of this in the Bible, but we also read about it in verse 15:
**If He withholds the waters, they dry up;
 If He sends them out, they overwhelm the earth.**
 - In nature He plans all things such as floods, droughts and normal years.
 - Everything happens in obedience to God's commandments. Nothing happens by chance.

The Lord therefore governs everything as He wishes. That is why we do not talk about by chance or by accident.

- Chance is when there is no relation between cause and result, in other words something happens without somebody or something having prompted it.
- The Bible reveals that the Lord plans everything.
 - For people He plans repentance or impenitence.
 - Romans 9:17 says exactly that: God hardened Pharaoh so that He could show his power in Pharaoh.

On the other hand, He leads his children (believers) in his mercy. Read Psalm 145:16:

You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing.

and verse 15:

The eyes of all look expectantly to You, And You give them their food in due season.

If the Bible then sends us to the animals, the birds and the earth and sea so that they can bear witness of the Lord who provides everything in his mercy, how much more would He not provide for us.

- He reveals that, through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus He provides eternal life with Him.

3. Where do we fit in?

We are totally dependent on God for everything we do and say.

- We are physically and spiritually dependent on God.
- Even if we sometimes become rebellious when things don't go the way we wish, God governs our lives with his holiness.
- You can therefore live each day trusting that your life is safe because it is in the hands of God.
 - You never need to doubt about God's ability to protect you in a crisis.

- And also when you are seriously ill or oppressed.
- Or when you are threatened by poverty. In the greatest misfortune you can depend on God's omnipotence with the greatest confidence.
- He provides for everybody, especially those who believe in Him.

The plan of the Lord, or his providence, is clearly revealed to us in the Bible. It is not a complete secret or incomprehensible.

- The Lord reveals that He provides redemption for us in Jesus Christ.
- The Lord revealed his plan to Adam and Eve.
 - He told them that He would provide a Saviour.
 - And He did just that.
 - God's plan provided for Jesus to live as a human being among us.
 - God's plan provided for the Lord Jesus to resist the devil in all respects and conquer him.
 - God's plan provided for the Lord Jesus to die a cursed death to undergo God's chastisement.
 - God's plan provided for the Lord Jesus to conquer the devil by his death and resurrection.

All these things were previously revealed and happened as such so that God confirmed his plan and redemption on you.

- Now the devil cannot steal you away from God.
- Jesus' death does not mean something to us only when we appear before Him.
- He also died so that God's grace would hold good for us in this life, so that we would be provided for until He takes us into his sanctuary.

Following the ascension, Jesus Christ and God the Father sent us the Holy Spirit.

- In these difficult times, characteristic of the last days of the earth's existence, God the Holy Spirit is our Governor and Comforter.
- The Holy Spirit teaches us and assures us that, amidst all the stress and wars and oppression, we are still within the framework of God's grace and his plan.
- And as such we are still protected and led through life by God himself.

Let's read together Catechism Sunday 10.

27. Q. What do you understand by the providence of God?

A. God's providence is His almighty and ever present power,[1] whereby, as with His hand, He still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures,[2] and so governs them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty,[3] indeed, all things, come not by chance[4] but by His fatherly hand.[5]

[1] Jer. 23:23, 24; Acts 17:24-28. [2] Heb. 1:3. [3] Jer. 5:24; Acts 14:15-17; John 9:3; Prov. 22:2. [4] Prov. 16:33. [5] Matt. 10:29.

28. Q. What does it benefit us to know that God has created all things and still upholds them by His providence?

A. We can be patient in adversity,[1] thankful in prosperity,[2] and with a view to the future we can have a firm confidence in our faithful God and Father that no creature shall separate us

from His love;[3] for all creatures are so completely in His hand that without His will they cannot so much as move.[4]

[1] Job. 1:21, 22; Ps. 39:10; James 1:3. [2] Deut. 8:10; I Thess. 5:18. [3] Ps. 55:22; Rom. 5:3-5; 8:38, 39. [4] Job 1:12; 2:6; Prov. 21:1; Acts 17:24-28.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 33:10

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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26 May 2013
Scripture Modern King James Version