

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 12 JANUARY 2014 EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 68:9

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: 42:1

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 25:7

Scripture reading: Matthew 15

Scripture text: Matthew 15:19; Catechism Sunday 40

"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

(Matthew 15:19)

The matters making man impure and those causing us trouble with the Lord emanates from our own hearts. The things we conceive in our minds and when we go about reflecting about it is many times the fountain bringing forth a stream of sins.

The Lord knows our hearts and He knows exactly what is taking place deep inside of us.

- Under the impression thereof we tonight consider the prohibition on killing.
- We consider it from three different angles, namely:

1. **The work of the killer.**
2. **The heart of the killer.**
3. **The conversion of the killer.**

1. **The work of the killer.**

There is certainly nothing else you can do that demonstrates more our inner evilness and our natural inclination of hating God than murder.

- It is a deed proving evil and hatred against God and our neighbor.
- A murderer mutilates God's highest work in creation: the life He awarded to mankind.

What makes this specific sin very serious is the fact that the person committing this transgression defiles his own royal image just as much as he destroys the royal image of the other by killing him.

- He taints his life with attributes belonging to hell, like blood tears, fear and suspicion of the community.
- You would be able to reason into both ways regarding this matter, but the answer will every time be that a murderer mirrors the image of the devil, because the Lord Jesus called the devil a killer of man.

There are many ways of committing murder.

- You do not just need to do something like shooting somebody or exterminating him by any other way.
- You could also commit a large amount of spiritual sins qualifying as murder – something like slandering somebody or doing him harm by something you plan.

We would possibly not easily believe it, but it is indeed so that the Lord regards all sorts of things we see as generally middle of the road, like deviousness, hatred and slandering or cursing somebody, in His council as murder.

- The Lord sees carelessness and recklessness by which you endanger your own life as resorting under this same heading.
- Also the Bible is very clear about it that the people committing such sins will be held responsible for it.
- There are many Bible passages you could consult for obtaining perspective. Examples are: Zechariah 8:17; Proverbs 12:18; Psalm 15:1; Psalm 55:22; Jeremiah 12:8; Leviticus 19:17; Leviticus 24:19 and Exodus 21:18, 19.

There are many examples of people from the Bible that pre-planned murder and were clearly not in favour with the Lord, per example:

- Cain
- Saul
- Absalom
- Herod

Because murder is a very serious matter to the eyes of the Lord the Lord prescribes a very clear punishment for this sin. The principle is that the Lord protects life with life, therefore at various places in the Bible the Lord commands that somebody who commits murder must be killed.

2. The heart of the killer.

This evening we must see how this lethal influence the devil has on man, played its part in the conviction and crucifixion of the Lord.

- The emotions of man ran away with them.
- Hatred and intolerance started taking place amongst them and resulted in it that all the inner sins so heaped up that it led to the physical crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The problem we sit with is that the Lord looks into our hearts and that even the darkest corners of our thoughts are completely clear to the Lord. In His omniscience the Lord knows what I lack in holiness.

We must always know that the Lord is very aware about our enmity towards other people.

- He knows about our thoughts of revenge against the people who have crossed us.
- Similarly He is also aware of the internal anger we sometimes bear against other people.

According to the Bible we are at a much earlier stage already a murderer than what we perceive from the outside.

- He does not wait until we have first physically killed somebody.
- He says that somebody who swears at his brother and tells him: "Raka!" must already be punished for it.

Is it not so that when we reflect about ourselves regarding this we sometimes are strangers to ourselves?

- We are sometimes surprised about all the bitterness we carry insides of us.
- Especially consider the measures it goes to in our thoughts.

During such times we must realise that we ourselves are the cause of all the bitterness and remorse we have insides of us.

- Because it is conceitedness that causes us to want revenge upon those who crossed us.
- Or cause us to hate people whilst the clear command of the Lord is that we must love.
- The point is just that we must realise that we come into conflict with the Lord when all sorts of thoughts about revenge, anger and hate gets established inside of us.

Especially in the events surrounding the crucifixion it was very clear that all these internal dissatisfactions were the cause of the people of the church losing their perspective upon the truth and killing the Son of God.

- It was a clear demonstration of the devilishness caught into these sins.
- That event also clearly showed that we are not fully capable of curbing anger and hatred – therefore there is only one honorable way open to us: we must cut out such thoughts and sins from us and avoid it.

In the unchangeable justness of the Lord these sins of murder and all its relatives like hatred and fighting and arguing will be punished.

3. The conversion of the killer.

It is extremely necessary for all us to deeply and seriously do soul searching about what this commandment teaches that we may not kill. Should we not reflect about this commandment we will never be converted from this sin and we will continue living in our multiple sins.

You must always keep in mind that it is possible to also come to conversion from this sin and also that somebody who have committed murder could receive forgiveness from the Lord.

- An example is the history described in Genesis 34:7, 25:
 - Shechem raped Dinah
 - After a covenant was reached with them Simeon and Levi returned and beat all the men to death.
 - This embittered Jacob but the forgiveness is clearly shown in it that the tribe of Levi was still pronounced by the Lord as priests having to serve His grace to His children.

The grace is indeed that we are daily renewed by the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit to come to conversion.

- The Lord grants us life – everlasting life.
- To make this our own we must bear the attributes of the eternal life, amongst others to do precisely the opposite to murder, namely to live in harmony and love with God and our neighbor.

Conversion is possible because through the cross-death we live under the guidance and leadership of God the Holy Spirit.

- He lets us see how hatred and enmity upsets people.
- God the Holy Spirit teaches us to therefore rather leave the evil and do the good.
- Indeed this is not an impossible demand – it just requires a very honest soul search and a very strong will towards conversion.

This is where the Holy Communion that we are again preparing for, fits in.

- By this sacrament the Lord Jesus strengthens us to carry on in our battle against this sin.
- We must advance in life by His love and friendliness.

Let us put it differently: Our conversion must be visible.

- We must be visibly different than the world.
- Outside hatred and revenge is at the order of the day.
- Such people do not elevate themselves into the grace of the Lord. They sink out into the scum of the hell.

We must not look or live like that. The Lord Jesus Christ assures us that we are repaired through Him to be able to comply with the command of love.

It is of course not easy to do this commandment because the devil attacks us in these times more dedicated than before as he realizes that his days are numbered.

- But we must not be brought from track by it.
- We must continually force back into the Word of the Lord and follow Him.

Consider the words of Romans 12:18 –21:

18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

(Romans 12:18-21)

Come let us read together Catechism Sunday 40:

105. Q. What does God require in the sixth commandment?

A. I am not to dishonour, hate, injure, or kill my neighbour by thoughts, words, or gestures, and much less by deeds, whether personally or through another;[1] rather, I am to put away all desire of revenge.[2] Moreover, I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself.[3] Therefore, also, the government bears the sword to prevent murder.[4]

[1] Gen. 9:6; Lev. 19:17, 18; Matt. 5:21, 22; 26:52. [2] Prov. 25:21, 22; Matt. 18:35; Rom. 12:19; Eph. 4:26. [3] Matt. 4:7; 26:52; Rom. 13:11-14. [4] Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:14; Rom. 13:4.

106. Q. But does this commandment speak only of killing?

A. By forbidding murder God teaches us that He hates the root of murder, such as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge,[1] and that He regards all these as murder.[2]

[1] Prov. 14:30; Rom. 1:29; 12:19; Gal. 5:19-21; James 1:20; I John 2:9-11. [2] I John 3:15.

107. Q. Is it enough, then, that we do not kill our neighbour in any such way?

A. No. When God condemns envy, hatred, and anger, He commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves,[1] to show patience, peace, gentleness, mercy, and friendliness toward him,[2] to protect him from harm as much as we can, and to do good even to our enemies.[3]

[1] Matt. 7:12; 22:39; Rom. 12:10. [2] Matt. 5:5; Luke 6:36; Rom. 12:10, 18; Gal. 6:1, 2; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; IPet. 3:8. [3] Ex. 23:4, 5; Matt. 5:44, 45; Rom. 12:20.

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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