

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2013

MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 121:4

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 138:4

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 40:4

Law

Psalm: 40:4

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 36:3

Scripture reading: 2 Samuel 21

Scripture text: 2 Samuel 21:10

Now Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until the late rains poured on them from heaven. And she did not allow the birds of the air to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night.

(2 Samuel 21:10)

So often we wonder what happens to the dead. Are they cared for there where they are?

- Because it is not possible for somebody to return from there to us the Lord teaches in this passage that we are safe in death.
- He also teaches that those who are believers are in heaven, no matter how large their sins!

It is a very lonely mother sitting with the bodies of her dead sons.

- She guards that their bodies are not brought to shame by the birds of the air or by the beasts of the field.
- She does this without any rebellion – in complete acceptance of the will of God.

We read that the Lord disposed a famine of three years over the Israelites.

- During this time David was king of the people.
- He sought the face of the Lord in order to determine the cause of the disaster.

The Lord answered him as such:

"It is because of Saul and his bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites."

(2 Samuel 21:1)

Nowhere in the Bible do we read about the history of Saul regarding this matter. We only read that he did it in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah.

Hereby Saul committed a double sin.

- Firstly he sinned against the holy Name of the Lord because Israel had a pact with these Gibeonites.
- It is true that the Gibeonites were in fact Amorites of whom the Lord commanded Israel that all of them should be killed by the sword should they take possession of the land.

But we also read in Joshua 9 about Joshua entering into a pact with these Gibeonites.

- This means that they, in the Name of the Lord, swear an oath of non-destruction to the Gibeonites.
 - Because Saul now killed an amount of these people he, according to the Lord, broke this oath and accordingly transgressed.

- In the days of Joshua the Lord was called as a witness that this oath would not be broken and now the Lord was a witness of Saul breaking the oath.
- In the second instance Saul bloodied himself and his house by killing innocent people.

This is the very serious situation king David now had to face – and under which the people suffered.

- The holiness of the Name and blood of innocent people was calling for revenge.
- The revenge of God was in such a measure that the future of the people was threatened by a famine.

Symbolically this is the position every person and every nation face God in our sins.

- The severity of it comes out in that this guilt cannot be removed by money.
- Seven men from the house of Saul – seven of his sons – are to be hung according to the demand of the Gibeonites.

These men had to die the most shameful death of those times.

- They are killed and hung on poles – not necessarily crosses.
- The poles are to be stuck into their stomachs and then planted.
- The idea was that the birds of the skies and the beasts of the field should eat their flesh off their bones.
- The symbol of this was that those people were to be destroyed where they died.

David complied with this cruel demand in order of thereby ensuring that the Gibeonites again bless the inheritance of the Lord.

- From this we deduct that the Gibeonites put a curse over Israel because they were innocently killed.
- David tells the Gibeonites: I will give them.
 - He did not really have much of a choice because the revenge of the Lord is merciless.
 - Two of Saul's own sons are given – the sons of Rizpah. The other five are grandsons of Saul.

Together with this the Passover starts.

- It is the beginning of harvest.
- The seven men hang dead on the poles.
- It is the most disrespectful way of being buried because in fact there is no funeral and the bones of the people lie scattered around by the animals.

But with the case of these seven men it is not normal. This case is different.

- Their mother guards over their bodies.
- By unbelievable perseverance she keeps the animals at bay – even after their death she prevents the shame of being executed over them and that their bodies are maimed.
- Herein she is a symbol of Jesus Christ looking honourably after us in death.

Rizpah is also successful in her calling because the end of the matter is David giving these people an honorable funeral. *From the month of April until October Rizpah guarded the seven men.*

Many years afterwards, in the same land and in the same time of the year another similar event, worthy of attention, takes place.

- The Lord Jesus Christ is crucified during the same times.
 - He also dies like these men
 - He also dies for the same people – and for all other people as well – in order to nullify the curse of God over them.

The cross-death was for the revenge of God because of you and me, because we so often change the glory of God into shame.

- Just as the death of the seven sons of Saul prevent the curse over Israel and the Lord again grants them rain in the same way the death of Christ prevents the judgement of God over us.
- We are literary plucked out of the curse in hell into the eternal life in the heaven.

In this meaning Rizpah is a type of Christ – by guarding the dead and preventing the execution of the shame of destruction by animals to them.

- He cares for them and looks after their glory.
- The symbolism of it is that after our death we are not in the Satan's house of shame.
 - We are honourably taken into the house of God.
 - The same as she protected the bodies against the beasts, the same Christ protects us from the eager grabbing hands of the Satan.

Later a mother again stands with her dying Son. He hangs from a wooden cross.

- Mary stands at this cross and sees the life bleeding out of the Son.
- Her mother eyes see how His eyes break as death approaches. A lonely figure – like Rizpah.

These first things suddenly came to an end.

- The Lord Jesus is suddenly no longer the son of an earthly mother.
- He is the God that powerfully fights against the death and even here on the cross breaks the works of Satan.
- He looks after this lonely woman. He dedicates her to John. *Mary receives John to further look after her but the deeper meaning is that after the cross death, all of us are cared for like this.*

The sons of Saul could only preach the half of the truth.

- Their death preached that we, after death, are cared for.
- Christ is endlessly more than they are, therefore He preaches that He cares for us in this life and in the one after this.

Every day of our lives we experience the protection of the Lord.

- Very seldom do we consider it that it is a very great grace.

- Such a great grace that the Father only blesses us because the death of the Lord Jesus entitles us to it.

In the number seven at the revenge over the house of Saul we see that all the human earnings are insufficient and that provision would be made further.

- Seven is the number of God. It is the number of perfection.
- Therefore the Lord Jesus Christ can, in this life and the eternal life, provide for us.
- The example of His care for Mary: Woman there is your son. Somebody to look after you.
- For us He prepares place in heaven and He breaks the power of the satan.

What do we do?

- Often we accept these things as normal and when things do not go our way we become rebellious.
- Others start doubting: Is the Lord aware of me? Why must I in particular suffer so much? What is the purpose of our tribulations?

With many there is the terrible fear of death. To many of us it is a day we rather not experience – if possible!

Now the Lord teaches here that there is no reason to fear. Christ looks after you in this life and also thereafter.

We of course must battle in this earthly life.

- It is about our injustices, but it is also to the glory of God.
- This is why the seven sons of Saul and Jesus Christ also died.

There against is the grace we receive in life after death so great that our best moments in this life is but a poor reflection of how it would be there.

- Here we still bend under the assaults of the Satan.
- But in the life hereafter there is no work or presence of the devil.

From this passage we must realize two matters:

- The first is that the Lord Jesus guarantees your life in heaven.
- But then, secondly, we must comply with our responsibilities.

We must not like Saul, mar God's covenant with us.

Do not say that you believe and then do so that you must be punished by the revenge of God because you are to His shame.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 86:1

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**