

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 28 JUNE 2013 MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 40:6

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 68:1

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 130:4

Law

Psalm: 130:4

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 73:6

Scripture reading: 2 Timothy 4

Scripture text: 2 Timothy 4:7

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.
(2Timothy 4:7)

The kind of competition referred to by Paul has certain attributes that no person can miss.

The attributes are:

- That the person who is in this race must constantly proclaim the glory of God;
- but also that the one competing in this race will be subjected to extreme stress;
- and then there is the matter of perseverance.

When writing this letter Paul was already very old.

- We know that Paul was twice a prisoner in Rome.
- The first time was when he called onto the Caesar and was then taken through storms to Rome.

We all know that part of the history.

- The Bible does not tell it, but Paul was released and undertook more voyages.
- We also know that during those times he undertook a voyage to Spain.
- He was arrested again and later died in Rome as a very old and sick man.

During those times Paul wrote this letter to Timothy (actually God wrote this letter to all of us!) In this letter all the experiences and pain Paul had in his life comes to the foreground.

In the part of the letter we read the focus is on verse 3:

Preach the Word!

But it deals with how you do it – **and** therefore also with how you minister the Word.

Raul wrote to Timothy that the people would not like his sermons.

- Therefore the words that he constantly will have to convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.
- Also the addition that Timothy will have to be longsuffering, in other words patient.

It will require a lot from him to continue believing in the proper way.

- He will be so tested that it would take the utmost from him and then he would still have to maintain courage and patiently carry on with his ministering of faith.
- Consider verse 5. Consider the verse in total because all the matters are relevant to each other:

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

First something about the words: ...**be watchful**

- Watchfulness here has the meaning that Timothy must always keep the relevant matter in mind.
- He must always keep in mind that his entire life – and in the case of Timothy also the way in which he is a preacher – must be to the glory of God.
- But then he must specifically keep in mind that the Lord Himself said that it would not be easy because there will always be factors wanting to prevent him from this.

Therefore now something about the words: **endure afflictions**

- The matters that will come between you and your execution of your task will not necessarily always be small hurdles.
- There will be moments/times/occasions that these hurdles will block your body and soul in such a way as to cause you a lot of pain.

The satan will really persecute you.

- He will go to the utmost to break you so that you abandon your calling.
- Listen with great care to the word “afflictions”

All the suffering worked over us is aimed at suppressing the truth.

- The result thereof is that we will be completely oppressed as long as we are hand in hand with the truth.
- The matter of oppression of course supposes that the devil will let off the moment we abandon the truth!

This is where our verse of text fits in. Paul’s life stood in the token of a lot of suffering.

- Many times he was flogged and cast into jail.
- Even stoned and left for dead.

Especially during the times of his second letter to Timothy he had very hard times, as he was old and sickly and still prisoner in a jail awaiting the death sentence.

- He thus knows what he is talking about when he says that he fought a hard fight throughout his life.
- He knows that the battle of faith is the sign of suffering!

What is the “good” fight? Everybody from time to time has some adversity in life.

- But that is no good fight should you work through everything in life with a lot of complaints.
- It is also no good fight should you always be dissatisfied because you could have had it differently.
- It is neither a good fight should all your complaints, everybody has to hear about full time, underline your dissatisfaction with life.

Think carefully: Such a life is a reproach against God the Lord.

- It is maybe highly covered and even hidden so deeply inside your mind that you yourself do not believe it, but to go through life with such an attitude and the battle therein you do not serve the glory of God at all.

Consider the Lord Jesus. A large part of His life is the token of battling and suffering.

- He lives under the hatred and jealousy of the people of His times.
- Not hatred grounded upon something the Lord Jesus did wrong.
- He is hated because He is God and because everything He does is done correctly.

Later the hatred (battle) became so intense that the important people became sly and underhanded towards Him and then planned His death and destruction – we can thus also expect such measures against ourselves.

Eventually the Lord Jesus dies – but certainly not because He was too weak.

- He does not die like a mere mortal.
- He laid down His life because He wanted to use the death in giving us power.

It sounds unusual, but consider the facts:

- He dies so that the death can get its hands on Him.
- Thereby the Lord comes into the position where He can do battle with the powers of death, to overcome death.

We do speak about the death, but the person who totally lost the battle as far as the death and resurrection of the Lord goes is the devil.

- The moment he was defeated all the power was removed from his planning and attacks on the lives of us humans.

Thus the Lord places us in such a position where we can battle against the works of the devil.

- A position from where we can fight and continue fighting, but with the initiative of the battle in our hands – we fight to overcome.

Our verse of text is a mere fact: Paul had difficult times in his life but he remained positive and continued believing and eventually died as a believer with a very rich inheritance for the church.

To us this text is more than just a fact because it contains a specific command or encouragement we have to comply with.

- But much more than that: It depicts to us the power of God we stand in.
- We live to overcome.
- We receive the grace to, under the greatest pressure and heaviest pain, still continue.

Do you realize that the power of the Lord in us is so great that the devil, with his worst and most cruel attacks, cannot overcome or deplete our abilities to carry on?

We must realize why we are daily involved in battle.

- Our life is like a long and tedious road you have to travel, footsore and with bodily pains and all sorts of adversities – but we continue following this road because this road leads to God.
- Fight this battle until our life face the throne of God – finished on earth because one day we will die, but forever in heaven.

There is an alternative. This is what the devil would like to accomplish.

- It is to give up and thereby abandon our calling.
- It is to stop moving forward on the road of your calling.
- Should we fall into that then we have given up everything and lost it all.

We do not follow this road.

- We proclaim the Word that we, through the Lord, are saved and redeemed from all sins.
- We fight the good fight.
- We finish the race.
- We keep the faith.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Song Scripture Versification 2-4:3

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