

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 11 AUGUST 2013 HOLY COMMUNION

Sing before: Psalm 150:1

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: Psalm 66:1

Confession of faith: Nicene

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was Incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And we believe one holy universal and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

After the reading of the Law we confess our guilt and pray for forgiveness and a new life before God with Psalm 51:7

Law

Psalm: 51:7

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 68:9

Scripture reading: Psalm 15 and Psalm 24

Scripture text: Psalm 24:3

Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place?

(Psalm 24:3)

There are quite a few places in the Bible where these words – the hill of the Lord – are written. Noteworthy is that all these passages look forward to the return of the Lord and the eternal life.

- The first time is when we read about it in the history of Abraham and Isaac.
 - Abraham was instructed to sacrifice Isaac. Then the Lord a ram to be sacrificed instead of Isaac.
 - Then Abraham called the place "The Lord will provide" and to this day it is still said "on the mountain of the Lord it will be provided" (Genesis 22:14)
- Years later the Israelites received the Lord's Commandments on the mountain of the Lord. (Numbers 10:33)
 - In other words here on the mountain of the Lord, they received the revelation of the Will of the Lord and from that day on we were bound to obey it.
- In a vision Isaiah saw many people saying: **"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.** (Isaiah 2:3)
- Micah prophesized it as well (Micah 4:2)

Isaiah received a revelation of the rejoicing there one day in the New Jerusalem and told the people: **You shall have a song As in the night when a holy festival is kept, And gladness of heart as when one goes with a flute, To come into the mountain of the Lord, To the Mighty One of Israel.** (Isaiah 30:29)

The Lord also promised that He Himself will be with us when these moments arrive Again reference is made to the mountain of the Lord: **Thus says the Lord: 'I will return to Zion, And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the Lord of hosts, The Holy Mountain.** (Zechariah 8:3)

Our celebration of Holy Communion this morning together with the Lord is a prelude to this arrival and eternal joy that shall come when the Lord and His Children gather in His Kingdom (on His mountain) Who may stand in the holy place of the Lord to worship Him?

Psalm 24 must be read together with Psalm 51:1 because the contents of the two verses are the same. It is only the succession in the verses that is changed: **Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?**

(Psalm 15:1)

Against

Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place?

(Psalm 24:3)

The image used by David is that of somebody arriving as a guest. With this in mind he poses the question:

- **Who may stand in His holy place?**
And
- **Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord?**

Who may as a guest of the Lord enter His sanctuary?

- The mere fact that this question is written in the Bible means that not anyone is welcome to enter there.
- We should also read it against the backdrop of Psalm 24:1 and 2 in which the Lord is described as the owner of the universe.

This is not a theoretical discussion about the greatness of God as the Creator.

- It is intended as a revelation to let the reader of this psalm realise afresh who the Lord is to whom you go when you come and sit at His table!
- We must stand in awe of the greatness of God when we contemplate the oceans and land of the earth and realise that all this was brought about by the Hand of God and that He still maintains it – and that He concerns Himself with you while you are only a speck of dust in His creation.

When you realise how small you are before the Lord then you will also know that before this Almighty God you merit nothing and that you cannot appear before Him as if you are His equal.

Who may then enter the sanctuary? The Bible provides the answer:

- He who has clean hands.
- And a pure heart.
- Who does not lift up his soul to an idol.
- Or swears falsely.

He who has clean hands is according to Isaiah1: 15:

- Someone who does not have blood on his hands
- And someone who has not taken bribes.
- And who has not done any evil deeds.

Someone who has a pure heart is according to Psalm 19:

- Someone who listens to the commands of the Lord
- Someone who walks the path of righteousness in his worship and life.
- The Bible does not mean a person who does not sin at all, but has in mind a person who, when he has sinned, turns remorsefully to the Lord in prayer.

Someone who does not lift his soul to an idol is:

- Someone who does not worship idols or is an unbeliever.
 - All these have no value and are empty.

Someone who does not swear falsely is:

- Someone who in every way honours the Lord.
- Someone who does not live with lies.

Someone who is like this is someone who may ascend the hill of the Lord and who may enter His sanctuary.

In a certain sense this revelation is worrying for who of us can satisfy it? Remember that our defects no longer close the door to us.

- Psalm 24 verse 6 teaches that those who seek the Lord shall enter. They are the same people referred to above.
- We now see that verse 4 does not demand perfection but sincere worship.

The Psalm continues that the eternal gates must open.

- This command will definitely be obeyed so that someone may pass – that Person is the King of Glory.
- The Lord has claimed entry through the gate of Zion.

The day this Psalm was sung for the first time it happened as such:

- David was coming to Jerusalem with the Ark of the Covenant.
- He walked in front of the people singing joyfully.
- Behind him came the Ark.
- The Ark was the symbol of the Triune God dwelling amongst His people.
- When they came to the gates of Jerusalem the ancient doors were opened to allow the Ark of the Lord passage into Jerusalem.

The description shows that all human norms are too small to accommodate the entry of the Eternal King, the Lord of Hosts.

The Lord enters and He is strong and mighty, mighty in battle. Now you ask:

- What battle?
 - Because all the time the Psalm only spoke about the Lord's majesty as Creator and the insignificance of man and the care with which he may enter the sanctuary of the Lord.
 - Now suddenly the Lord is a Lord of war.

- It is true.
 - The gates open to give entry to the God who also defeated the powers of hell in a mighty battle.
 - That battle was aimed at destroying everything that prevented us from serving God with all our heart.

This procession when David the king of war brought the Ark to Jerusalem was a symbolic procession:

- It symbolized the return of the Lord Jesus when the true King, Jesus, together with His rejoicing multitude enters the gates of the New Jerusalem.
- It tells of the moment when the eternal gates open and the Lord Jesus who has defeated the devil and his forces in a mighty battle majestically leads the redeemed into the Kingdom of God.

The first fulfillment of this Psalm happened long after this Psalm was written.

- This Psalm was the prophecy that the Lord Jesus would come to give Himself for the battle.
- He is the King of Glory who flung Himself with power and almight into the battle to:
- Destroy the powers of hell.
- And to reconcile us with God.

Who may enter the sanctuary of the Lord?

- They who seek the Lord
- They who enter the sanctuary of God in the Name of the King of Glory.

Do not be discouraged if your life of faith is not perfect in every way.

- But do not cease to be remorseful about your sins.
- Do not cease to repent daily.
- Keep on seeking the Lord.

May this Holy Communion bear witness thereto that our church may also follow the King of Glory entering the eternal gates.

Amen.

Prayer

Psalm 89:1

Formulary

Psalm 47:1, 3

To the table:

During Holy Communion: Psalm 118

Closing Prayer

Closing Psalm 134:4

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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