

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 29 JULY 2012 EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 65:2

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 33:1

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 25:2, 6

Scripture reading: 2 Corinthians 5

Scripture text: 2 Corinthians 5:20, 21 and Catechism Sunday 23

20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Be reconciled to God! These are very serious words. Do you realize that is it verifiable whether you are reconciled to God or not?

- People can see from your life whether you are complying with these words of the Lord or not, because the works of people who are hypocrites do not conform to what they pretend to confess.
- No matter whether you are a reverend, an elder, a deacon or a member – others can see the depth of your faith through your lifestyle.

In this sermon we pay attention to the following two matters:

- 1. Faith and lifestyle**
- 2. Faith and acquittal**

1. Faith and lifestyle

Double standards in our own faith life cause a lot of damage to the faith-life of others.

- Because your faith is testable by your life you sometimes hear members saying that they do not believe the sermons of reverent so and so because the reverend himself is not convinced by what he preaches.
 - Then the members motivate by saying that he does things not conforming to what he preaches.
- In the same way members sometimes hesitantly speak about an elder or a deacon where this official's life shows signs of everything not properly inline with his faith.
 - This official does his work with them, but they are doubtful, because the things that he does are not inline with his portfolio and the things he expects from them.

Therefore everybody confessing the Lord must render attention to this matter.

- Is your faith and your life on the par with each other? You cannot talk about your faith should you, yourself not believe in what you say and also live it yourself.
- We must immediately state that faith is personally orientated, in other words you and me must confess that we are involved in everything we confess, else our faith is completely empty.

Indeed it deals with conversion.

- Do we really break with the sin?
- Do we really want to be different and grow better, and in this way be an ambassador of Jesus Christ?
- Or do we want to continue living by the wrong ways and only use the Name of Jesus Christ as a sort of shield?

In the passage of Scripture we have read together it is written that we must act as ambassadors for Christ.

- An ambassador is somebody who is sent with a message that he has to convey.
- It means that we must tell something to other people, in other words we must by our words and by our entire life testify about something of Christ. That something is our faith.

What must we tell about ourselves and about Christ in whom we so steadfastly believe? In other words what do we believe about Christ? And what do we believe about ourselves?

Our confession and our life have a specific direction.

- We do not live lost and in fear because we do not know what will become of us in future.
- 2 Corinthians 5:15 states that we no longer live for ourselves but for the Lord Jesus who died and arose for us.

We all, because of our sin, stood under the judgement of God but now we can confess that the Lord Jesus died for us.

But how do we confess that?

- By means of a straight face? Devoid of emotion? In such a way that we really want to say that it is just one of those things?
- Or do our eyes and heart join in our words, in other words is the joy the Holy Spirit works in our voice and in our faith?
- Our confession of our salvation must be like the passage recorded in Psalm 28:7:
The Lord is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, And with my song I will praise Him.
(Psalm 28:7)

David's confession is not spoken – it is a shout of joy. It is like the truth thereof is too great for him! Is it also the same for us?

2. Faith and acquittal

In verse 17 of the passage we read together is written that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; and all things have become new.

- That means that our sins also pass away in the virtues and effects of Jesus Christ's sacrifice because He makes us holy.
- Therefore it means without saying that the Lord will also not judge us when we come under the judgement, because we have the acquittal of the Lord Jesus Christ in our favour.

We confess the same matter, just by other words:

- We say that God will not convict us – he will acquit us.
- Because we do not face God as doomed sinners – we face Him as people who are all His children.
- We stand there with the status of being His child, acquired by the testament of our Lord Jesus Christ: Unearned – but rich in grace.

Again consider our text of Scripture, because this is how everything came about:

- The Lord Jesus Christ never committed any sin. But God held Him guilty of sin.
- He simply had to die for our sins. Therewith it had to be a death accursed by God.
- After that happened God's anger was pacified because all the dishonour we caused Him by our sins was punished.
- This is the ground on which God declared us to be just again.

The death of Jesus Christ thus puts us as justified to the eyes of God.

Now it is easy telling all these matters in this sermon – but that is not what it is all about! It deals with how we experience this redemption! Note how Psalm 146 starts:

1 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!

2 While I live I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

(Psalm 146:1, 2)

You see, to the true believer this confession is a shout of joy bursting every time before anything else from his lips.

Let us now shortly consider everything we, as the witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ, confess:

- We are redeemed and thus have thus the knowledge of the future of never being in hell or under the judgement of God!
- During the judgement I will face God as if I have never committed any sins.
- I will be declared just from all my sins; in place of the death of sin that I deserve, I will be receiving the eternal life.
- God grants us the eternal life through Jesus Christ the Lord!

God the Holy Spirit resides inside me and He leads me and teaches me to believe all these matters and to pray for it!

What does it now matter knowing that we are saved? Let us read Catechism Sunday 23 where all these matters are confessed:

Q. 59.

But what does it profit thee now that thou believest all this?

A.

That I am righteous in Christ, before God, and an heir of eternal life. (a)

(a)

Hab.2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Rom.1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Q. 60.

How are thou righteous before God?

A.

Only by a true faith in Jesus Christ; (a)

so that, though my conscience accuse me, that I have grossly transgressed all the commandments of God, and kept none of them, (b)

and am still inclined to all evil; (c)

notwithstanding, God, without any merit of mine, (d)

but only of mere grace, (e)

grants and imputes to me, (f)

the perfect satisfaction, (g)

righteousness and holiness of Christ; (h)

even so, as if I never had had, nor committed any sin: yea, as if I had fully accomplished all that obedience which Christ has accomplished for me; (i)

inasmuch as I embrace such benefit with a believing heart. (j)

(a)

Rom.3:21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

Rom.3:22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

Rom.3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Rom.3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Rom.3:25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Rom.3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Rom.5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Rom.5:2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Gal.2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Eph.2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Eph.2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Philip.3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

(b)

Rom.3:9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

(c)

Rom.7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

(d)

Tit.3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Deut.9:6 Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people.

Ezek.36:22 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went.

(e)

Rom.3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Eph.2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

(f)

Rom.4:4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

Rom.4:5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

2 Cor.5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

(g)

1 John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

(h)

1 John 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

(i)

2 Cor.5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

(j)

Rom.3:22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Q. 61.

**Why sayest thou,
that thou art righteous by faith only?**

A.

Not that I am acceptable to God, on account of the worthiness of my faith; but because only the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, is my righteousness before God;

(a)

and that I cannot receive and apply the same to myself any other way than by faith only. (b)

(a)

1 Cor.1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

1 Cor.2:2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

(b)

1 John 5:10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Scripture Versification 33:1, 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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