

## REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2011 EVENING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 105:22

*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: 107:4

**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 107:2

**Scripture reading:** 1 Corinthians 11

**Scripture text:** 1 Corinthians 11: 23 – 26; Catechism Sunday 28

**23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;**

**24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."**

**25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."**

**26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.**

(1 Corinthians 11: 23 – 26)

Many of us do not have the proper impression about Holy Communion.

- ◆ We, per example, differentiate in value between the Baptism and Holy Communion.
- ◆ Then certain people come to the conclusion that having an un-baptized child is a greater scandal than not participating in Holy Communion.

Or we come to such a wrong decision in judging that we can participate in Holy Communion every three months but need not attend all the worshipping services between Holy Communion.

- ◆ In practice it means that we can irregularly arrive for every appointment the Lord makes with us, but when He invites us to supper, then we regularly attend.

Such ideas are a false appreciation of the gospel of redemption in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- ◆ There is no difference of importance between the Baptism and Holy Communion. The value is equal to both.
- ◆ And you can barely use any sacrament should you not attend the worshipping services and ministering of the Word – because during Word ministering you are taught the promises confirmed to you and your child during Holy Communion and Baptism.

By such wrong views of the sacraments and the poor attendance to worshipping services we commit self-fraud because such conduct is in fact based upon disbelief and ignorance.

Let us therefore again investigate the institution of the Holy Communion.

- ◆ First and foremost it is a command of the Lord.
- ◆ The sacrament of the Holy Communion developed in the same way as the Baptism.
  - Just as the circumcision was a command of the Lord and was later replaced by Baptism,
  - so did the Lord give a command in the Old Testament that the Passover had to be celebrated and maintained – and then the Lord Jesus Christ Himself replaced it with the Holy Communion.

This took place at the celebration of the last Passover

- ◆ The Lord ate the unleavened bread of the Passover and also used the cup of the Passover.
- ◆ Thereafter He commanded them in future to eat the unleavened bread and use the drinking cup to His remembrance.
- ◆ Thereby the Passover was fulfilled. The Passover taught that the Lord Jesus would arrive and be crucified.

Now the Lord Jesus Christ changed it into the Holy Communion, because the Holy Communion teaches that the Messiah/Christ of the promises has already done His work.

- ◆ The Passover is no longer needed to prophesy the arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ◆ He has already completed His work. Therefore the Holy Communion is a meal of remembrance.

To the disciples this command was holy.

- ◆ Of course because the Passover was holy since the Old Testament and may not be neglected.

- ◆ The Lord Jesus confirms this command in the New Testament when He teaches the disciples that those who belong to Him must heed His Word. And at another place that those who love Him must keep His commandments.

The maintenance of the Holy Communion is both:

- ◆ The preservation of both the Word of Christ as well as the commandment of the Lord.
- ◆ In truth this is practical Word-ministering!
- ◆ Therefore this command of the Lord to the congregation is in fact an advantage to comply with.

The Holy Communion was also instituted by the wisdom of the Lord.

- ◆ As the Passover prepared the Israelites to the arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ
- ◆ So the Holy Communion prepares us to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The evening of the first Holy Communion the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus Christ was imminent. He, by means of the Holy Communion that evening, also wanted to prepare His disciples for the events of the following day.

- ◆ The first Holy Communion had to be to the disciples the preparation of Jesus Christ's' godly and unselfish love.
- ◆ The love wherein He would be killed.
- ◆ A love wherein He would suffer extreme derision and affliction to thereby bear the wrath of God for all our sins.

It had to guarantee the disciples about the loyalty of the Lord Jesus Christ towards those who belong to Him.

- ◆ They were to have full faith and trust in this Surety of Jesus.
- ◆ When His death confirms the Holy Communion they must bear this witness into the congregations.

But the evening of the institution of the Holy Communion also included a promise: The Lord Jesus said: **...till I come...**

- ◆ In this regard the Holy Communion is a sign of peace to us who believe.
- ◆ The peace we have in believing that we belong to God and that Christ, by His death and resurrection also conquered the death for us.
- ◆ And of course also ensured the resurrection from death.

This Lord Jesus is the King sending us out till His Second Coming to win the world and satan for Him.

- ◆ It is thus imperative that we continually be strengthened about these facts and promises.
- ◆ Therefore the Holy Communion is spiritual food and drink to us!

This then is the reason Holy Communion was instituted. Namely that thereby we get to know the Lord and also to continually strengthen is in our faith.

- ◆ It grants us the joy and bliss of God's care.
- ◆ It serves the purpose for us to persevere in the battle and eventually be victorious by the power of Christ.

The power of Holy Communion also comes out in that which is preached by the Holy Communion. Do you understand what the Holy Communion preaches? Visibly the gospel of the cross is spread.

- ◆ The body of the Lord Jesus is broken so that there could be forgiveness of sin.
- ◆ He arose from death and promised resurrecting us in the same way from death.
- ◆ Therefore we expect His Second Coming, because then this promise will go into fulfillment.

That is the crux of the entire teaching of Holy Communion.

You could even say that it is the way in which the gospel goes through the eye to the heart.

- ◆ We can almost see how the Lord Jesus had to die in aid of gaining eternal bliss for us.
- ◆ It is in other words a sermon to faith that our sins are forgiven.
- ◆ It is a sermon that we no longer need to fear the wrath of God.

What then does the Holy Communion render to us? The Catechism says that it is a sign and a seal.

- ◆ But in fact it is even more, because it indeed gives us the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.
- ◆ In a spiritual way the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is present at the table of Holy Communion. He is the Host. There He Himself guards over His holiness.

Article 35 of the Belgic Confession couples the physical use of the bread to the spiritual communion with the death and the promises by the Lord Jesus Christ.

- ◆ Our confession calls the Lord Jesus Christ "...a living bread that came down from heaven..."
- ◆ But this is bread that has to be spiritually received and made yours.

*Therefore reference is made to "...heavenly food and drink". Spiritually, at the table of Holy Communion, we have real communion with Christ.*

All the Lord Jesus' charitable deeds and consolation is a deepest mystery – still God the Holy Spirit thereby works spiritual life in our sinful and dead hearts.

- ◆ This we cannot understand or explain it with our minds.
- ◆ As long as we just receive the power to believe that we commemorate the death of Christ and therewith our own life with God in eternity.

Then we return to everyday life.

- ◆ It is supposed that we daily do soul searching.
- ◆ That every day we must look to see whether we live a life befitting the Holy Communion.

- ◆ No true believer can without soul searching and longing for communion with God, join the table of Holy Communion. Then you eat and drink a judgement over yourself.

*Soul searching is extremely important because thereby the Holy Spirit lets us realize that only one salvation is possible – it is by the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Soul searching is vital because it lets me see myself in the proper perspective.*

Soul searching will let you realize whether you are one who truly love Christ and guard His Word.

- ◆ It will also let you realize whether the Holy Communion at its inception already had relevance to you.
- ◆ Do you know God as such that through the ministering you have a need to share in the death of Christ?

Of course we experience many weaknesses and have many leaks in our lives of faith.

- ◆ We also find places where our obedience to the commands of God is badly lacking.
- ◆ But it is for the sakes of those sins and shortcomings that we partake in Holy Communion. So that Christ assures us that these matters remaining against our will in our lives are forgiven by His death.
- ◆ We must be of those who guard the Word of the Lord. Those who love Him. Those having the desire of practicing communion with Him.

Let our life expectation then be marked by a longing for God and His Kingdom. A longing to live the Word of God. And a desire of celebrating Holy Community in the proper persuasion.

Let us together read the Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 28:

**Q. 75.**

**How art thou admonished and assured in the Lord's Supper, that thou art a partaker of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross, and of all his benefits?**

**A.**

Thus: That Christ has commanded me and all believers, to eat of this broken bread, and to drink of this cup, in remembrance of him, adding these promises: (a) first, that his body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and his blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes, the bread of the Lord broken for me, and the cup communicated to me; and further, that he feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, with his crucified body and shed blood, as assuredly as I receive from the hands of the minister, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ.

(a)

Matt.26:26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

Matt.26:27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

Matt.26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Mark 14:22 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

Mark 14:23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.

Mark 14:24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

Luke 22:19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

Luke 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

1 Cor.10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

1 Cor.10:17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

1 Cor.11:23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

1 Cor.11:24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

1 Cor.11:25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

1 Cor.12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

#### **Q. 76.**

**What is it then to eat the crucified body, and drink the shed blood of Christ?**

**A.**

It is not only to embrace with believing heart all the sufferings and death of Christ and thereby to obtain the pardon of sin, and life eternal; (a)

but also, besides that, to become more and more united to his sacred body, (b) by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in us;

so that we, though Christ is in heaven (c)

and we on earth, are notwithstanding "flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone" (d)

and that we live, and are governed forever by one spirit, (e)

as members of the same body are by one soul.

(a)

John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

John 6:48 I am that bread of life.

John 6:49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

John 6:50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

John 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

John 6:52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

John 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

John 6:54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

(b)

John 6:55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

John 6:56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

(c)

Col.3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Acts 3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

1 Cor.11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

(d)

Eph.3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

Eph.5:29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

Eph.5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

Eph.5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

1 Cor.6:15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

1 Cor.6:17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

1 Cor.6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

1 John 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

1 John 4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

(e)

John 6:56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

John 6:57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

John 6:58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

John 15:2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

John 15:3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

John 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

John 15:6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

Eph.4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Eph.4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

#### **Q. 77.**

**Where has Christ promised that he will as certainly feed and nourish believers with his body and bleed, as they eat of this broken bread, and drink of this cup?**

#### **A.**

In the institution of the supper, which is thus expressed: (a)

"The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said: eat, this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying: this cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For, as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

1 Cor.11:23-26. This promise is repeated by the holy apostle Paul, where he says "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."

1 Cor.10:16,17.

#### (a)

1 Cor.11:23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

1 Cor.11:24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

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1 Cor.10:17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Scripture Versification 28B

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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