

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2013 EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: 32:1

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 100:1-4

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 32:3

Scripture reading: Hebrews 13

Scripture text: Hebrews 13:20, 21; Catechism Lord's Day 30

**20 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,
21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.**

(Hebrews 13:20-21)

Nobody is able to believe and to continue believing if the Lord has not put this faith in his heart and also confirmed it.

- We cannot believe for another person
- But we can pray for one another.

This is exactly what happens in this passage.

- The author prays for the faith of the congregation to be strengthened.
- How and through what their faith is to be strengthened is remarkable: the God of peace must do it, and He does it through the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ.

The believers respond to it by doing the following:

- They do good works that are acceptable for God;
- And they glorify Jesus Christ.

All these matters are of course relevant to the Holy Communion because it is fitting that we come in prayer to the Lord and also in prayer for each other to the Holy Communion. It is of course so that our own lives must fit to our prayers.

- 1. What do we believe regarding the sacrifice of Christ?**
- 2. How does soul-searching fit in with the sacrifice of Christ?**

1. What do we believe regarding the sacrifice of Christ?

The Lord Jesus died on the cross to save all the people who believe in Him.

- These people are also those on whom He poured out his Holy Spirit so that they can live a life of prayer and, guided by his Spirit, also worship and honour Him.
- We are these people.

One of the means He gave us to understand his redemptive sacrifice on the cross is the celebration of his Holy Supper.

- He instituted it as a meal, not as a continuous offering, such as the offerings in the Old Testament, which had to be repeated regularly.
- In Hebrews 7:27, 28 we read that the Son of God was the true High Priest who only brought one offering – when He offered Himself.

The Holy Communion is a reminder to this event.

- The meal at the Lord's Supper focuses our faith on the sacrifice of Christ.
- This meal testifies to us that we have complete forgiveness of all our sins through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- The sacrament is a visible sign that we share in the redemptive ministry of the Lord Jesus.

Fact is that when the bread is broken and the cup is taken Jesus Himself states that He made complete expiation for our sins. It means the following

- This means that his expiation for us is absolutely perfect.
- This means that we need not contribute anything for our salvation, as his contribution is complete.
- This also means that we need not (and also cannot) seek help from anybody or anything else.

Hence the meaning of this meal is to fill us with great and intense inner joy.

- It also means that the believer who sits down at the Lord's Supper and who really knows the Lord Jesus will experience that he/she is grafted into Christ in a living and eternal communion with Jesus Christ.

- At the Lord's Supper the true believer will again experience the peace that nothing and nobody can ever estrange him from God.

2. How does soul-searching fit in with the sacrifice of Christ?

At the Lord's Supper we deal with the important fact that it is a blessing for us if we partake of it in the right way, but if it is not done in the right way it is a sin.

- For the people who experience with a true faith their partnership in the covenant, the Lord's Supper is a blessing because it is a visible sign and pledge that they and others share in the redemptive communion with the Lord.

It's not that anybody can be in a relation of communion with the Lord.

- Hence every communicant should carefully search his soul before he partakes of the Lord's Supper.
- Soul-searching as such doesn't help much if nothing comes of it. You should feel guilty and bad about all the wrong you find in yourself.

The knowledge we gain about our sins should make us realise that our sins are against the holiness of God, and also against the holiness He established in us through the redemptive death of his Son Jesus Christ.

- The gospel promises that he, who repents, receives complete forgiveness of his sins.

Knowing all these things should again make us rejoice in our sanctification.

- Hence soul-searching leads to self-knowledge followed by a life in which you break with your sins.
- Soul-searching, together with deep regret and repentance, always strengthens faith.
- Anyone who takes an honest look at himself notices signs of death – not only in his sins, but also in his own attitude to his sins.

Every true believer's regret is based on two things:

- First, he knows that he profanes the holiness of God.
- Second, he also realises that God does not have communion with people who will not accept and serve Him in true faith.

Hence the Lord instructs the church in no uncertain terms that those who do not want to repent simply cannot be allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper.

- Exclusion from the Lord's Supper should make their conscience speak to them so that they would break with their sins.

But in this respect the Lord's Supper acts in a strengthening way.

- There are people who sin but do not persevere in it.- they resist but often lose against the sin
- The Lord's Supper teaches these people that God also forgives.
- So much so that He let his Son die to punish the sins of the sinners so that they would not be destroyed through his judgment because of their sins.

- But it is still required that such people must really, sincerely and fully fight against sin.

The comfort of the Lord's Supper lets us get up again through the power of Christ, and also makes us want to listen to Him again.

- Then we have courage to go ahead in life.
- At the Lord's Supper we experience the kindness and gentleness of God's love
- Also the joy because of his grace.

May the God of peace that brought our Lord Jesus Christ through the blood of the eternal testament back from the dead also fill us in every good work.

May He guide us by His Holy Spirit to do His will and that we serve the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom the glory belongs in eternity, with our entire lives.

Let's read together what the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's 30 teaches us about this:

80. Q. What difference is there between the Lord's supper and the papal mass?

A. The Lord's supper testifies to us, first, that we have complete forgiveness of all our sins through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which He Himself accomplished on the cross once for all;^[1] and, second, that through the Holy Spirit we are grafted into Christ,^[2] who with His true body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father,^[3] and this is where He wants to be worshipped.^[4] But the mass teaches, first, that the living and the dead do not have forgiveness of sins through the suffering of Christ unless He is still offered for them daily by the priests; and, second, that Christ is bodily present in the form of bread and wine, and there is to be worshipped. Therefore the mass is basically nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry.

[1] Matt. 26:28; John 19:30; Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 25, 26; 10:10-18. [2] I Cor. 6:17; 10:16, 17. [3] Joh. 20:17; Acts 7:55, 56; Heb. 1:3; 8:1. [4] John 4:21-24; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:1; I Thess. 1:10.

81. Q. Who are to come to the table of the Lord?

A. Those who are truly displeased with themselves because of their sins and yet trust that these are forgiven them and that their remaining weakness is covered by the suffering and death of Christ, and who also desire more and more to strengthen their faith and amend their life. But hypocrites and those who do not repent eat and drink judgment upon themselves.^[1]

[1] I Cor. 10:19-22; 11:26-32.

82. Q. Are those also to be admitted to the Lord's supper who by their confession and life show that they are unbelieving and ungodly?

A. No, for then the covenant of God would be profaned and His wrath kindled against the whole congregation.^[1] Therefore, according to the command of Christ and His apostles, the Christian church is duty-bound to exclude such persons by the keys of the kingdom of heaven, until they amend their lives.

[1] Ps. 50:16; Is. 1:11-17; I Cor. 11:17-34.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 48:5

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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