

## REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2013 EVENING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 146:8

*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 19:1

**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 43:1, 4

**Scripture reading:** 2Peter 1:1-15

**Scripture text:** 2Peter 1:10; Catechism Sunday 32

**Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;**  
(2Peter 1:10)

There are three matters linked inextricably.

They are:

Misery

Redemption

Gratitude

Living piously can only be born out of deep gratitude for our salvation in Jesus Christ and gratitude is again only possible if we realize how rich the grace of God is because we are in deep miseries.

This is why it happens that a person, who is intently aware of his misery, does good works.

- He is not trying to be deserving of eternal life through it. Christ already earned it for him.

- He is just trying to be grateful. This is why he is doing good works. He tries to obey and live out God's commandments so closely to show thereby how deep his gratitude lies.
- Our good works are done for the sake of the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed for us.

Just consider from what Christ delivered us. It is quite easy to say that He delivered us from our sins. But think again:

- It is not just a matter of being delivered from our sins. We are completely unacceptable before God.
- We wallow in sin and if we righteously get what we deserve we should go straight to hell.
- None of us deserve by any means to be accepted in heaven.

Why would God allow us into heaven?

- Only He knows why, because He decided to love us.
- Therefore He let His Son die for our sins, so that we would be acquitted when we face God on Judgement Day.

Why did Christ die for us? There are three reasons

- Firstly, God's love for us
  - We cannot explain it. God in His supreme wisdom decided that He loves us and therefore Christ died for us.
- The second reason is that God wants to keep us.
  - The Lord wants to preserve us forever.
  - He does not want us to eventually become the property of Satan, although we deserve it.
- The third reason for our salvation is that God wants us to praise Him

We are saved so we can be obedient. Thus to live in gratitude to the glory of God.

Consider how the Lord Jesus saved us.

- He became poor to make us rich.
- The Lord who reigns over life and death died in order to save us.
- God, who is resident in heaven, descended to earth to be humiliated like this.

It is unthinkable, because none of us would have done something like that.

We don't even like to be scolded, and Jesus Himself became a curse in order to sanctify us!

- We should continually jubilate – like the slaves of ancient times when they were released.
- Because we were Satan's slaves and have been redeemed through Jesus Christ!

We cannot be but moved by this.

- Gratitude should be permanently present so that it can never again be lost.

- Then, of course, we must live a life of gratitude.

Let us examine this matter a little closer.

- Christ not only did something FOR us:
- He also did something INSIDE us – He granted us a new heart and a new life. A new life in Christ!

The Holy Spirit of God lives and works inside of us.

- He changes our disposition.
- He builds our faith.
- He admonishes us when we transgress.
- It simply means that God the Holy Spirit teaches us to live in gratitude and to repent when we sin.

This is a new life and a new gratitude. Of course our Heavenly Father only wants to live in pure hearts, and own irreproachable believers.

The Spirit of God renews us to the image of God. He grants us insight and justness to experience the work of Christ and execute it in practice.

- This means that we spiritually obtain a complete new image.
- We no longer appear like children belonging to the Satan and on their way to hell.
- We now look like heavenly beings – people living with joy and jubilation. We look like people who know God and therefore, in their daily lives, do things befitting God.

Gratitude is like it is stated at another place:

- New people in Christ, created to good works.
- Good trees bearing good fruit in gratitude to their Creator who made them into good trees.

Against this backdrop we must again consider ourselves.

- We know for sure that if it depended upon us we would not have dared to appear before God's judgement throne.
- Because we know that the judgement would be very bad.

But this does not mean that we should have doubts about what is going to happen to us. We have the full surety of our redemption.

- A converted person knows for sure that he will enter the kingdom of heaven because of Christ's redemptive death on the cross.
- This is not a guess. It is sure knowledge.
  - The Lord Jesus Christ already opened the gates to heaven for me.
  - He has locked me inside the heaven.
  - No one and nothing can take me away from my salvation through Him.

This is what firmness of faith is.

But then our life must prove this firmness of faith!

- Any person, who says that he is chosen and that God is reconciled to him through Jesus Christ but is living like an angel of Satan, has reason for distress.
- He should repent. Because his life shows that he is not redeemed.

A redeemed person is so thankful that it boils over.

- He cannot do enough to praise and thank God for the fact that he has been delivered from the powers of Satan and hell.
- Therefore he does good works. His entire life is a song of jubilation and gratitude.

Now the good works have a total different meaning. The value the Roman Church attaches to good works, namely that you can earn your salvation through them, is completely null and void.

- In fact, gratitude is in direct opposition to merit!
- We are now grateful because Christ delivered us and gave us eternal life.
- We are grateful because we have been plucked out of hell. Therefore good works!

Although we do not and cannot earn our salvation through good works, it does not relieve us from any responsibility.

- Gratitude is also a responsibility!
- Gratitude is not a kind of label you can use when it fits you or when you want.

Gratitude is a duty by which you have to prove something!

- In our daily lives it proves that we had a good upbringing.
- In our religious life it proves that we are redeemed and truly children of God.

Now you must guard against reasoning as such: You cannot blame your weaknesses for the sins you commit.

- In other words we are in any case too weak to hold our own against Satan and his temptations and therefore we just sin
- With such an argument we cannot appeal to our redemption through Jesus Christ!
- Our redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ increases our responsibility to do good works.

In simple terms: a person plodding along in sin is not a chosen one.

- He serves the devil by being too slack in the fight against evil.
- At the same time he dishonors the Lord Jesus Christ.

Further this: We cannot say that we resist the sin but lose every battle.

- We must fight hard enough to be victorious.
- Many times we do not do good works because we only resist the evil enough to silence our conscience.
- When we have made some way with a good deed then we feel satisfied that we have done our part and we then gladly hand over to the evil! We must guard against this!

We should, like the Lord Jesus Christ, rather abandon all worldly pleasures and focus on a lifestyle regarded by God as perfect and good.

- Then you prove thereby that you have an eternal life with God: Something the people who do not do good deeds should be jealous about.
- Minister by your good works your redemption and gratitude towards God in such a way that you give direction to life!

Do it in such a way that in every terrain you move, you take faith-leadership.

- Encourage those who become weak.
- Do good works with joy and great pleasure!
- Thereby awaken the hope in everybody!

Let your good works be the voice calling everybody in your vicinity to the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Then your life does good to everybody; encourages all the faithful and at the same time puts the unbelievers to shame.
- Then you are an example to Christ and the church of God.

Let us read Catechism Lord's Day 32:

**86. Q. Since we have been delivered from our misery by grace alone through Christ, without any merit of our own, why must we yet do good works?**

**A.** Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit to be His image, so that with our whole life we may show ourselves thankful to God for His benefits,[1] and He may be praised by us.[2] Further, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by its fruits,[3] and that by our godly walk of life we may win our neighbours for Christ.[4]

[1] Rom. 6:13; 12:1, 2; 1 Pet. 2:5-10. [2] Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. [3] Matt. 7:17, 18; Gal. 5:22-24; 1 Pet. 1:10, 11. [4] Matt. 5:14-16; Rom. 14:17-19; 1 Pet. 2:12; 3:1, 2.

**87. Q. Can those be saved who do not turn to God from their ungrateful and impenitent walk of life?**

**A.** By no means. Scripture says that no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, greedy person, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or the like shall inherit the kingdom of God.[1]

[1] 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5, 6; 1 John 3:14.

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 31:1, 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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