

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 14 OCTOBER 2012 EVENING SERVICE

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

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 73:12

Scripture reading: Matthew 7

Scripture text: Matthew 7:16,17: Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 32

16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?

17 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

The practising of our faith is a delicate and sensitive matter. One can easily go from the one extreme to the other.

- One could readily think that faith alone is important to the Lord and that one need not look to one's works (lifestyle).
- The other extreme is also possible and that one may believe that faith is not that important as long as your lifestyle (works) is of a high quality.

Both these extremes are wrong.

- The correct position consists of a blend of a living faith and good deeds.
- Your faith must spontaneously be demonstrated in your good deeds,
- The one cannot be without the other, and the one cannot be severed from the other.

1. **Good works and the Lord Jesus Christ**
2. **Good works and the people in my vicinity**
3. **Lack of good works is the road to hell.**

1. **Good works and the Lord Jesus Christ**

Should we want to understand good works and the proper relationship it stands to the faith then we will firstly have to consider the good works of the Lord Jesus Christ. *The good works of the Lord Jesus Christ were all aimed towards the glory of God and the redemption of the believers.*

In the Heidelberg Catechism there is a question which asks why, if we are already redeemed by God's grace, must we still do good works? Is it not so that when one knows that one has been redeemed by grace alone, one could perhaps think that one has been relieved of all responsibility?

The answer is NO.

- It is true that through the blood of Christ we were redeemed and liberated.
- But it is also true that the Spirit of God renewed us to His image.

If you have been renewed to the image of Christ it means that you are not indifferent to the redemption and that you will realize your responsibility towards your Redeemer. It means that you will follow the Lord Jesus also in doing good works.

Accordingly the Lord says that a good tree will bear good fruit.

- The good tree refers to the true believer and his good fruits are the good works flowing spontaneously from his faith in the Lord.
- Observe the image again because something is put very clearly - the good tree bears good fruit.

The good fruit is produced because the tree is good. - it is not that the tree is bad and bears good fruit so that it may become good.

- It is not that the tree wants to earn something.
- Its fruit are a reflection of what it is.
- In John 15:8 Jesus puts it clearly that God the Father is glorified by the fact that we bear fruit.

“ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” (John 15:8)

Through his good works and life Christ not only saved people.

- His sinless life was primarily for the glory of God.
- If Christ then with His life and His death - excepting the fact that He liberated us from our sins - glorified the Lord, then we must do the same, because it is through the good works of Christ that we are made able to do so.

2. Good works and the people in my vicinity

There is another side to good works - they are aimed at the people around me. With them we must win our brother for the Lord Jesus Christ. We can therefore say that the purpose of good works is twofold:

- Firstly to the glory of God.
- Secondly to the salvation of our neighbour.

We prove our faith with our works to other people.

The certainty of our belief is demonstrated in our good works.

- If you are in your heart convinced of your faith it will show spontaneously in your lifestyle.
- The Catechism says that a desire is aroused in you to obey the Commandments. You then experience a definite willingness to practice God's justice.
- This spontaneous desire to do what pleases the Lord is nothing but obedience.

This honest lifestyle is then used by the Holy Spirit to renew other people and to lead them to repentance.

- Our lives then become guides for a crooked and misguided generation.
- That is why we believe that our good works can also be evangelical because they can draw our neighbour to repentance.

3. Lack of good works is the road to hell.

The Bible in many places mentions idolaters, adulterers, misers, drunkards, slanderers, robbers and such like people who will meet the judgement of God.

- It is because these people with their lifestyle show that the true image of God is lacking in them.
- Their life as a thanksgiving to God shows a total lack of gratitude - in fact their lives show sin and rebellion.
- In Biblical language:
- they lack sanctification;
- their lives show that they have broken with God.

The true believer must notice these issues, so that it may improve his own life of thanksgiving.

- Therefore every believer should in examining himself ask the question: Do I truly believe?
- And if the answer is yes, then his life must prove it. Then his works must support his faith.

We are preparing to again celebrate Holy Communion.

- It is in line with this because we indeed attend Holy Communion so that we may anew discover that we are not perfect and that we desperately need a Redeemer.
- The Holy Communion again confirms that the Lord Jesus Christ in His atoning sacrifice atoned our sins with the wrath of God.
- It reconfirms to us that we have complete forgiveness for all our mistakes we make.

But Holy Communion also confirms that the Holy Spirit guides and rules us to be continually renewed to the image of Christ.

- That we thus anew will live a life of conversion wherein we break with the sins still remaining in us.
- And that we also will persevere with good works wherein we praise and thank the Lord for His continuance.

James says: show your faith by your deeds. **"But someone will say: "you have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do." (James 2:18.)**

Let us read together Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 32.

Q. 86.

Since then we are delivered from our misery, merely of grace, through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we still do good works?

A.

Because Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by his blood, also renews us by his Holy Spirit, after his own image; that so we may testify, by the whole of our conduct, our gratitude to God for his blessings, (a)

and that he may be praised by us; (b)

also, that every one may be assured in himself of his faith, (c)

by the fruits thereof; and that, by our godly conversation others may be gained to Christ. (d)

(a)

Rom.6:13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Rom.12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Rom.12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

1 Pet.2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

1 Pet.2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

1 Pet.2:10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. 1 Cor.6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

(b)

Matt.5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

1 Pet.2:12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

1 Pet.1:6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

1 Pet.1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

(c)

2 Pet.1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

Matt.7:17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

Gal.5:6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Gal.5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Gal.5:23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

(d)

1 Pet.3:1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

1 Pet.3:2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

Rom.14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Q. 87.

Cannot they then be saved, who, continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, are not converted to God?

A.

By no means; for the holy scripture declares that no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

(a)

(a)

1 Cor.6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

1 Cor.6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. Eph.5:5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor

covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
Eph.5:6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm 107:10

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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