

# REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 21 OCTOBER 2012 EVENING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 18:1

*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: 119:51

**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 41:2

**Scripture reading:** 2 Chronicles 33

**Scripture text:** 2 Chronicles 33:12; Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 33

**Now when he was in affliction, he implored the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers,**

2 Chronicles 33:12

Manasseh is one of those who became converted when he was actuated by certain circumstances of life to repent.

Hezekiah was Manasseh's father. Hezekiah was a true believer and accomplished marked reforms among the people for the Lord.

Immediately Manasseh became king he started undoing his father's reforms.

- He used to be a very sinful man.
- The kind of person who should never have been a king, because he was not a man of sound character.

Consider a summation of all the sinful acts of Manasseh:

- He re-instituted worship of Baal.
- He rebuilt the high places.
- He also set up Asherah poles.
- In the Bible we find that Manasseh was the first person in the Bible who worshipped the sun, moon and all the astral bodies.
  - Today we know it as astrology.
  - Nowhere in the Bible we find that this ever happened before in the history of Judah.
- This idolatry was closely linked to fortune telling and witchcraft.
- Manasseh even offered his own son to Moloch.
- From what is taught in 1 Kings 16:31-33 about Ahab it is clear that Manasseh was just as evil.

**31 And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him.**

**32 Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.**

**33 And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.**

(1 Kings 16: 31-33)

The Lord uses the life of this man in revealing the greatness of His love towards us. Therefore the Lord has the conversion of this bad Manasseh written down for the future believers through the ages.

- Manasseh humbled himself greatly before the Lord and prayed to Him.
- He no longer offered to Moloch or worshipped heavenly bodies.
- He prayed to God in all sincerity.
- This is repentance. Differently put: Repentance is to sincerely regret the wrong we've done and to completely turn away from evil!

There's a lot to be said about conversion to God. In the first place conversion/repentance is imperative for everybody.

- There is no person who has never fallen away from God through his sins.
- Therefore John the Baptist started his preaching with the following words:  
**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.** (Matthew 3:2)
- Some time later Jesus Christ said exactly the same:

: **"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."** (Matthew 4:17)

These words became a refrain/chorus in the Christian church as the church developed. In Acts 2:38 we read that Peter also addressed the first converted people in similar fashion:

**And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."**

(Acts 2:38)

In his letter to the Corinthians Paul puts it in other words:

- He says that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God:

**Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,**

- This means that those who do not convert will have no access to the Kingdom of God.

Repentance is not a one-off event.

- It starts off by a once off event like when Manasseh turned away from idolatry and converting to God
  - Today we call this root-conversion.
- But further on it is a daily reviewing of our works.
  - Our confession calls it the dying of the old nature and the coming to life of the new.

Often people experience feelings of guilt should they have done something wrong and then think that returning to the Lord is impossible. The truth is this:

- As Manasseh was able to repent, everybody is able to repent through the grace of God.
- No matter how far we've gone astray, it is always possible to be converted. No matter how much we've sinned, the Lord's grace is sufficient to forgive us.
- The only condition is that you, like Manasseh, must repentfully face God on your knees.

Repentance should not be pretence. It must be sincere.

- Repentance should be internally and externally. In other words it must be in your heart and in your works.
- You must realize that an unrepentant person is a disgrace.
  - The disgrace lies in the inability of the sinner to uphold the Ten Commandments.

Repentance is breaking from everything evil and loving what is good and establishing justice. (Amos 5:15)

- Therefore true repentance must also encompass your entire life.  
**Hate evil, love good; Establish justice in the gate. It may be that the Lord God of hosts Will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph. (Amos 5:15)**

Don't we all wish to live like that?

- We all wish to do so and therefore we should try to live according to God's commandments with heart and soul.
- Therefore we should kneel down remorsefully and pray God to forgive our sins.
- But we also must wholeheartedly render God all praise and worship.

Have you ever considered the history of Manasseh? Did you think it was possible for Manasseh to be converted?

- No, but through God it was possible
- and that is why he was converted.

We live under the same grace of God.

- He is always considering His covenant with us.
- Let us then answer to the Lord's covenant of mercy with a life wherein we continually strive breaking more and more with all evil and at the same time growing in holiness.

Let's look at what our creeds say about this in Catechism Lord's Day 33:

**88 Q. What is the true repentance or conversion of man?**

**A.** It is the dying of the old nature and the coming to life of the new.[1]

[1] Rom. 6:1-11; I Cor. 5:7; II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:5-10.

**89. Q. What is the dying of the old nature?**

**A.** It is to grieve with heartfelt sorrow that we have offended God by our sin, and more and more to hate it and flee from it.[1]

[1] Ps. 51:3, 4, 17; Joel 2:12, 13; Rom. 8:12, 13; II Cor. 7:10.

**90. Q. What is the coming to life of the new nature?**

**A.** It is a heartfelt joy in God through Christ,[1] and a love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works.[2]

[1] Ps. 51:8, 12; Is. 57:15; Rom. 5:1; 14:17. [2] Rom. 6:10, 11; Gal. 2:20.

**91. Q. But what are good works?**

**A.** Only those which are done out of true faith,[1] in accordance with the law of God,[2] and to His glory,[3] and not those based on our own opinion or on precepts of men.[4]

[1] Joh. 15:5; Rom. 14:23; Heb. 11:6. [2] Lev. 18:4; I Sam. 15:22; Eph. 2:10. [3] I Cor. 10:31. [4] Deut. 12:32; Is. 29:13; Ezek. 20:18, 19; Matt. 15:7-9.

Amen.

Closing prayer

Closing hymn: Psalm 73:10, 12

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen.

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 73:10, 12

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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