

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2014 EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 145:1, 12

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 133

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 40:4

Scripture reading: Titus 3

Scripture text: Catechism Sunday 40; Titus 3:3

For in the past we were foolish, hard in heart, turned from the true way, servants of evil desires and pleasures, living in bad feeling and envy, hated and hating one another.

(Titus 3:3)

A person whose relationship with his God is wrong displays all sorts of horrible attitudes towards other people.

- No person can boast in the grace of the Almighty God should he allow the sin to rule him.
- No person can serve God should he be of the opinion that he can rectify everything in life with hatred and fighting!
- No person can lay claim to the love of God should he not be able to tolerate the worst person and even look for something good in him.

Let us do soul searching and per example consider the remarks we sometimes hear like:

“ I hope something happens to him”

“I hate that person.”

“I cannot stand such and such a person.”

Remarks like this kind are born from the heart of somebody who do not understand the love of the Lord and whose heart has not completely grown into the love of God.

Such remarks are family members who know the Bible as hate and hatred. Such remarks also do not take into account the revenging judgement of the Lord over us.

- You and me are not the only image bearers of God. All people are. Also these people that we cannot stomach.
- You and me must search for the image of God in him, and we must join thereto because this is what we have in common with him.
- His joy could possibly be very distorted by sin, but God remains his Creator – as He is also our Creator.

Is the opposite not possibly true? Amongst people there often are certain members who are angry and nasty towards each other. Is that not possibly because our own image of God is distorted that we cross each other who could possibly look after his imagery with greater holiness than me?

- Paul writes here that people who have not yet seen the kind-heartedness of God are unable to do good works.
- They are people who slander each other.
- They are people who are unfriendly.
- An unconverted person is always pugnacious.

It is not me claiming this, it is recorded here in the Bible.

The Lord writes it because He indeed wants us to convert ourselves from our contentiousness. We must learn the kind-heartedness of our God Jesus Christ, otherwise we work with the death. We commit murder and lose our own life.

This is truly so!

- Hatred is the work of the satan. It is the direct opposition to the love of God. And this hatred is part of the ruse of the devil to tempt us into fighting and thereby display the image of the hell.
- Hatred means that we reject God and His love.
- Hatred simply means that God will judge us to the eternal death.
- Hatred against your neighbour supposes that you already have the root of killing inside of you.
 - In Romans 1:29 we read that all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; being full of envy, murder, quarrels, deceit, and evil habits are on the same level.
 - Enmity is in essence hatred.
 - Verse 30 also refers to the haters of God!

I read to you from 1 John 3:15:

Anyone who has hate for his brother is a taker of life, and you may be certain that no taker of life has eternal life in him.

We deduce from this that a murderer could be a member of the church. Possibly even a good member. But somebody who does not inherit the eternal life because he continues hating his neighbour and gains the death. His possession of the eternal life is not lasting!

This causes a danger light burning for everyone of us.

- We sometimes are very intolerant towards each other.
- Intolerance and enmity is nothing else than hatred.
- To the eyes of the Lord it is murder.

Somebody who is deeply religious constantly struggles with his own sin facing God.

- He repents it and implores for forgiveness and conversion.
- He sort of sees the Hades because he realises that should the Lord not grant him forgiveness of his sins, he can never share in the eternal life.
- Such a believer knows what the life is. Therefore he does not hate. He cannot hate anybody whilst his sins are so many and big.

Those of us who are so intolerant towards the sins of others must reflect upon this, because we must not expect perfection from others whilst we ourselves are not striving for it.

We read in Ephesians 1 that the Lord chose prior to the grounding of the world people for Himself. We are those people.

- He also pre-determined that He would adopt us as His children through Jesus Christ.
- God's love thus determines that we belong to Him, and that it is absolutely impossible for us to become estranged from Him.

You remember well how it happened:

- Jesus Christ descended to the earth.
- He came with the love of God. Therefore He gives His life for us, so that we could also have the eternal life.
- This love of God is the same as the justness of God. It thus goes to the very essence of God.
 - But now the **love of God for Jesus Christ** determines that those who do not accept and worship Him will be lost.
 - God's justice determines that Christ died for us, but for the angels there is no reconciliation possible.
 - His justness determines that all that are non-believers or are untrue in their faith, will be punished.

This all encompasses the matter of hatred and murder.

- You must chastise somebody in love should he harm you.
- With so much love that you, by your chastising, guide him back to Jesus Christ.
- Then you also are following the example of Christ.

- Should your actions and disposition towards your neighbour be driven by the love of God it is impossible for you to be nasty towards him or another person. Or even worse: For you to be able to hate him!

We read in Titus 3:5 that God

- saved us through His kind-heartedness,
- and that He cause us to be born again,
- and that He renews us through the Holy Spirit.

Now consider by yourself how somebody who has received all these gifts from God will act. Does he damage his neighbour by thoughts, words or deeds? Listen what our Lord Jesus says in Matthew 5:22:

But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be in danger of being judged; and he who says to his brother, Raca, will be in danger from the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, You foolish one, will be in danger of the hell of fire.
(Matthew 5:22)

- You may not be angry with somebody without reason
- You also may not be angry without you attempting to rectify the matter.
- You may not swear at your neighbour.
- Not even think something bad!

During the arrest of Jesus Peter just wanted to fight. Then Jesus told him to rather sheath his sword, because somebody who takes up the sword will die by the sword. The best way of conduct is through love and self-control.

Jesus teaches us by the following words:

Come to an agreement quickly with him who has a cause against you at law, while you are with him on the way...
(Matthew 5:25)

Jesus teaches something similar when He tells about the merciless accountant that was heavily punished by his boss until he paid all the debts he owed. Matthew 18:35 teaches:

So will my Father in heaven do to you, if you do not everyone, from your hearts, give forgiveness to his brother.
(Matthew 18:35)

Beloved, according to what the Lord says here you cannot love your neighbour should you go about slandering him.

- Or should we just continually go about criticising!
- Especially not when it is within our ability to help straightening out the matters we are criticising!

How must we thus conduct ourselves towards our neighbour? Romans 13:14 supplies the answer:

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not give thought to the flesh to do its desires.

(Romans 13:14)

We may not give the evil a foothold.

- Live in love, and forgive in love.
- This is also what the Holy Spirit preaches to us: Do not let the sun set over your anger!
- The Holy Spirit preaches that we must protect the honour of our neighbour in love. Thus: He says that we may not hate and kill.

This is also what Christ died for.

- So that we can in His power forgive and bear in love.
- So that we can live as we let live;
- And forgive as we are forgiven.

Everything revolves around the sixth commandment It is the commandment we so easily transgress, but listen what the Heidelberg Catechism teaches about this: Read questions 105, 106 and 107.

Sunday 40

105. Q. What does God require in the sixth commandment?

A. I am not to dishonour, hate, injure, or kill my neighbour by thoughts, words, or gestures, and much less by deeds, whether personally or through another;[1] rather, I am to put away all desire of revenge.[2] Moreover, I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself.[3] Therefore, also, the government bears the sword to prevent murder.[4]

[1] Gen. 9:6; Lev. 19:17, 18; Matt. 5:21, 22; 26:52. [2] Prov. 25:21, 22; Matt. 18:35; Rom. 12:19; Eph. 4:26. [3] Matt. 4:7; 26:52; Rom. 13:11-14. [4] Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:14; Rom. 13:4.

106. Q. But does this commandment speak only of killing?

A. By forbidding murder God teaches us that He hates the root of murder, such as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge,[1] and that He regards all these as murder.[2]

[1] Prov. 14:30; Rom. 1:29; 12:19; Gal. 5:19-21; James 1:20; I John 2:9-11. [2] I John 3:15.

107. Q. Is it enough, then, that we do not kill our neighbour in any such way?

A. No. When God condemns envy, hatred, and anger, He commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves,[1] to show patience, peace, gentleness, mercy, and friendliness toward him,[2] to protect him from harm as much as we can, and to do good even to our enemies.[3]

[1] Matt. 7:12; 22:39; Rom. 12:10. [2] Matt. 5:5; Luke 6:36; Rom. 12:10, 18; Gal. 6:1, 2; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; IPet. 3:8. [3] Ex. 23:4, 5; Matt. 5:44, 45; Rom. 12:20.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 128:1

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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