

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2013 EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 4:3

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 18:1, 11

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 71:1, 3

Scripture reading: 1 Thessalonians 5

Scripture text: 1 Thessalonians 5:24; Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 46

He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

(1 Thessalonians 5:24)

This very short verse contains so much comfort. God's grace is of such magnitude! The apostle wants the congregation to focus on God's grace.

- In verse 17 the congregation is told to pray continually
- The Lord will hear their prayers because He is faithful.

We look at three aspects of this verse:

- 1. What do these words reveal to us?**
- 2. These words create confidence in our hearts.**
- 3. These words teach you to know God.**

1. What do these words reveal to us?

God will hear our prayer, and He will keep us in faith and protect us against everything that could be harmful. This is true, because God rules over everything in heaven and on earth.

- Think about it: He rules over the stellar vault (Ps. 33:6); the seasons; the coming and going of winds; rain and drought – everything.
- That is why He has the power to rule over hearing our prayers.

These words also reveal to us that we should not think of the Lord in earthly terms. This is currently a problem, because many religions, in their attempts to teach about God's soft heart and love, make of Him a partner or a close friend.

- The omnipotence of God and the fear of the Lord that should exist are then lost.
- It is therefore reasonable that people with such kind of faith easily fall away again.

Although there is distance between God and us because we are insignificant while He is the eternal and omnipotent God, He is also close to us and protects and embraces us in his eternal counsel.

- He provides for our clothes and food every day.
- He takes care that we retain our faith and grow in it.
- He gives us salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. These words create confidence in our hearts.

Consider your feelings when you read these words in faith. What kind of feeling do these words evoke in us? The answer is: childlike faith.

- God Almighty remains faithful.
- He also stays close to me at all times.

With these words the Lord reveals to us that there is a bond between us that He will never allow to perish. The reason is that God really became our Father through Jesus Christ.

- And that is why we then start our prayer with these words: Our Father.
- When the Lord Jesus taught us to start our prayer with the words "Our Father" He implied that the Lord shows us the same kind of love that a father has for his children.

Our prayers are grounded on the fact that God Almighty takes care of us and, right at the beginning of our prayer, we show that we trust in Him to hear our prayer.

- We do not have to doubt the Lord's answer to prayer, because in Psalm 145:18 and 19 He promises that He hears the prayers of those who fear Him and who call on Him sincerely and in truth.

3. These words teach you to know God.

What do we pray for? We pray for all our physical and spiritual needs.

- Every supplication is also linked to the promise that you will be heard – otherwise it is senseless and futile to pray!
- Go pray with confidence. Go to God with all your prayers, because your Holy Father will bless you.
- We must of course take care not to pray flippantly, because we often pray for things we should not pray for.

When we think of the “Our Father” we specifically start our prayer with the, “Our Father who is in heaven”.

- The words “who is in heaven” certainly evoke a feeling of holiness and devotion in us.
- And rightly so: holiness and seriousness should be present whenever we pray.
- Even when we joyfully praise and thank God for his blessings, we still do it in holy earnest.

How do all the above fit into our prayers?

- If God were changeable, our prayers would be futile.
- And if God did not keep his promises, it would have been useless to pray.
- But now you know: God remains faithful.
 - All his promises stand: He does not break any of them
 - He revealed in his Word that he is our Father through Jesus Christ.
 - He still is our Father and always will be.

Pray to your heavenly Father for all your needs, and He will answer your prayers because you became his child through his Son, and because He calls you through his Holy Spirit to approach Him through prayer.

Let’s read together Catechism Lord’s Day 46:

120. Why has Christ commanded us to address God as Our Father?

To awaken in us at the very beginning of our prayer that childlike reverence and trust toward God which should be basic to our prayer: God has become our Father through Christ and will much less deny us what we ask of Him in faith than our fathers would refuse us earthly things.[1] [1] Matt. 7:9-11; Luke 11:11-13.

121. Why is there added, Who art in heaven?

These words teach us not to think of God's heavenly majesty in an earthly manner,[1] and to expect from His almighty power all things we need for body and soul.[2]
[1] Jer. 23:23, 24; Acts 17:24, 25. [2] Matt. 6:25-34; Rom. 8:31, 32.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Psalm 90:2, 8

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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