

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2013 EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: 119:27

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: 66:2

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 25:3

Scripture reading: 1 Peter 1: 1-10

Scripture text: 1 Peter 1:4; Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 47

**to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away,
reserved in heaven for you,
(1 Peter 1:4)**

We must never underestimate the power and meaning of the prayer. Especially in our times our entire life should be a prayer. Come let us consider the following three matters relevant to the prayer:

1. **The priest and prayer.**
2. **The revelation of the Lord and prayer.**
3. **The believer and prayer.**

1. **The priest and prayer.**

The Bible teaches that the priest of the Old Testament called out the Name of the Lord in his prayers.

- That means that his prayer had a clear focal point because the priest used the Name of the Lord in his prayers – and in such a way that it clearly showed to Whom the prayer was directed.

- Today we still do exactly the same, because we also call to the Name of the Lord when we pray, per example: **Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.** (Matthew 6:9)

This was so since the start of history. We do not read about Adam bringing offers but we do read about his children doing so.

- Seth was the first to call on the Name of the Lord. This he did when he offered and prayed.
- During the times of his son, Enos, the people started having worshipping services.
- In the same style Abraham was also a priest who always prayed and offered. Each place he arrived at he firstly built an altar for the Lord and offered there.

Later in history the Lord brought about a change, giving rise to the first worshipping services.

- At Sinai one tribe, namely the Levites, was selected to do the work of priests for the Lord.
- In their work they were the symbol that the children who one day will live in the heaven will all be priests communicating with God through prayer and worship.

The part we have read joins with this. It teaches that we must be a royal priesthood. This command does sound strange upon hearing it for the first time as the work of the priest is redundant in modern times. Why then do we have to be priests?

We must keep in mind that the priests had many functions in the synagogue.

- Amongst others they offered and saw to the worshipping services.
- Also important is that you must remember that the priests were the people who did the praying. This he mostly did when offering.
- But there were also times that he prayed together with people without being involved in offering – like the time when Eli, together with Hannah, prayed in the temple for a child.
- When you pray you approach the throne of the Lord like the priest did when he offered. Also when praying the “Our Father” you still are a priest, just a Christian-priest.
- We are Christian priests having free access through Jesus Christ to God’s throne of mercy.

Jesus Christ is the true High Priest of God.

- He was offered on the cross so that we all can have access to God in our personal priesthood when we pray.
- In Jesus Christ the duty to prayer became an advantage.
- Through Him we changed from rejected people into children of God.
- Children who may address the Almighty God of heaven and earth as “Our Father.”

What did the priest of the Old Testament pray for? What do we pray for?

- The priest prayed for the Name of the Lord to be hallowed. We pray for the same.

- Therewith we firstly pray for the Lord to teach us so that we can truly know Him because that is how we will hallow and praise the Name of the Lord.
- The fact is plainly that we can only know the Lord should He reveal Himself to us. We can only know the Lord if He Himself opens our eyes to see and understand His almight and wisdom.

2. The revelation of the Lord and prayer.

It is written in Romans that the Lord can, since the beginning, be sufficiently known by His works in nature.

- So much that nobody someday could bring up the excuse that he did not know God. (Romans 1:20)
- The relevant words in Romans even have relevance to people (heathens) who have never heard official Ministering.
- Even they will not be able to tell the Lord that they did not know Him.

Now we come to ourselves. We know these things but we do not always see it in the proper perspective.

- Therefore it is part of our prayer that the Lord should let us understand and open our eyes so that we may know Him in His works.
- The Lord reveals himself in nature and in the Scriptures, but that revelation can only be understood if the Lord grants you the ability to see and understand it.

Let us firstly look at the revelation of God in nature. In the works of the Lord, e.g. In nature, we immediately see the almight of God. Psalm 19 describes how nature is the works of God and reveals His glory to us:

1 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.

2 Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge.

From nature we must not only learn the almight of God, we must also, like nature, fully and with enthusiasm proclaim the praise and glory of God!

See even further:

- The seasons come and go. No human controls it. Clouds form and rain falls when the Lord so deems.
- New life continually comes in people and animals being born, also in the growing plants.
- A force far greater than man could have maintains and orders all these things. God's almight maintains it.
- But man cannot see and understand it if the Lord does not reveal to you that it is His almight working.

The Lord further reveals Himself by His Word.

- The bible starts with the revelation of God's almight. The creation takes place. Each time God only speaks a word and the things are there: Earth and water separates,

water separates from water the firmament is there. Light, plants and animals come into existence every time a command is given.

- Genesis 1 and 2 reveal that God works effortlessly and with almight. Almight means more than being just powerful.
- Bit indeed it is not good enough that we just know god's almight. We must also know the wisdom, goodness, justness and kindheartedness of the Lord.
- To be able to reach it that we know all these things from the works of the Lord we need faith and insight. These are things the Holy Spirit works inside our hearts.

Let us involve that in the prayer. We therewith pray for the Lord to enrich and broaden us with faith and insight so that it comes within our reach to fully know Him from His works.

- It is not unimportant should we pray like that because the non-believers also live like us.
- The grace of God also brings rain over them, just like over us.
- But they do not have the ability to understand it as the blessings of the Lord.
- They also do not know the grace of the Lord.
- Therefore in Romans 1:20 it is written that the Lord will punish them because it was possible for them to distinguish Him by His works, but they did not do so.

That underlines the necessity of us praying this prayer without stopping!

- It would not be possible for us to hallow and praise God the Lord should we not first pray that we might know Him.
- We pray "Hollowed be Thy Name" whereby we in essence actually pray that we may be schooled and taught by the Lord.
- In Psalm 25:8 David also did it:
Good and upright is the Lord; Therefore He teaches sinners in the way!

Also consider verse 4 where he prays that the Lord would show him His ways and teach him the ways of God. These are different words but the contents are the same: Hallowed be Thy Name.

Our prayer for knowledge of God is of course at the same time also a prayer wherein be beg for the residency of the Holy Spirit.

- We cannot know the Lord if the Holy Spirit does not guide us to rebirth and conversion.
- We can also not understand the glory of God should we not firstly have the principles of holiness and glory in our hearts.
- The Holy Spirit guides us by the Word of God to understand and know the revelations of God.
- When we pray: Hallowed be Thy Name then we pray to the Lord to reveal all these matters to us and make it our own.

Just a prayer for knowledge is of course not enough.

- You can have all the knowledge of the world but should you not have the power to live out your convictions then it is worthless.

- Just think about the Satan.
 - He knows a lot more about the Lord than we do.
 - He even knows the Bible by heart.
 - And still with all his knowledge he sinned against the Lord – so that in the hereafter he will be in hell.

Therefore we also pray that the Lord confirms His Godly powers over us.

- As an example we read in Isaiah 65 that the Lord allows Himself to be found by the people – even those who did not ask after Him.
- If He lets Himself to be found, He grants new hearts to these people.
- Ezekiel 36:27
I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you;
- **NB: "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."**

The Lord causes us to walk in His institutions. That sounds like music in our ears.

- It means that not only will the Lord hallow His Name in such a way that we know all the great matters of God.
- It means that God Himself will come to live inside our hearts and that by His power He sees to it that we lead the proper life.

3. The believer and prayer.

Now we look at the prayer in practice. Apart from the nature and the Word of God the glory of God is revealed in Jesus Christ.

- He dies to carry our punishment for sin on His body. When He died it became dark, rocks shattered and the death arose from the graves.
- This is a revelation of very great grace of love. Love grace that can only be realized by Somebody having almight to, out of love, bear the violence of God's wrath

Thereafter the revelation of God's almight and glory still goes further:

- He is buried, but arose from His grave and from death. Glorified He ascended to heaven.
- With His unlimited power He now prepares place in heaven to receive His chosen there.

We are busy preparing to, by Holy Communion, again celebrate the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

- Therefore think about it that the crucifixion and resurrection reveals the Name of the Lord in its full power.
- Let yourself thus be guided by this realization so that you display the perseverance to under no circumstances give up your principles.
- Believe in the grace of the Lord because the crucifixion of the Lord undoubtedly assures you of His love.
- Be strengthened so that you may live without hesitation to the glory of God.

Come let us read together what we confess in the Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 47.

Q. 122.**Which is the first petition?****A.**

"Hallowed be thy name"; that is, grant us, first, rightly to know thee, (a)

and to sanctify, glorify and praise thee, (b)

in all thy works, in which thy power, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy and truth, are clearly displayed; and further also, that we may so order and direct our whole lives, our thoughts, words and actions, that thy name may never be blasphemed, but rather honoured and praised on our account. (c)

(a)

John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Jer.9:24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

Jer.31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jer.31:34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Matt.16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Ps.119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

(b)

Ps.119:137 Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments.

Luke 1:46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

Luke 1:47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Luke 1:68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

Luke 1:69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

Rom.11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

Rom.11:34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

Rom.11:35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

Rom.11:36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever.

Amen.

(c)

Ps.71:8 Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.

Ps.115:1 Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 84:1, 2, 4

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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10 February 2013
Scripture Modern King James Version