

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 16 MARCH 2014 EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 49:1; Psalm 119:34

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: 103:1, 9

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 144:1

Scripture reading: Matthew 7

Scripture text: Matthew 7:21; Catechism Sunday 49

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

(Matthew 7:21)

In this chapter Jesus warns us against the deceit of false prophets.

- In verse 15 ff He warns us against prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep - people who do not produce good fruit but always ready to tear other people apart.
- But verse 21 ff contains a warning against one's own heart.
 - It's no good being on the alert against false prophets while we falsely confess God's gospel!
 - It is not only about unfaithful preachers in God's church; it's also about unfaithful members of the church.

In this sermon we focus on the following aspects:

- 1. Our confession and our deeds**
- 2. The power of God**

1. Our confession and our deeds

There is of course a close connection between this passage and the letter of James in which he discusses in detail that it is of no avail to say that one is a Christian while one's life lacks the deeds of a Christian.

- Such a person is basically an unbeliever.
- The same applies to many of us. We think: a reasonable try or lots of talking are satisfactory, while our human relations and many other things in our lives are evidence to the contrary!

Our Scripture text deals with our confession regarding the Name of the Triune God.

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven

Everyone who was listening to Jesus was brought to a standstill by these words. How then? Then He replies that our deeds and our confession should equal each other.

The decisive issue is whether they obey my Father in heaven.

- The Lord also mentions that He will condemn those who did miracles in his Name.
- He will even condemn people who cast out demons in the Name of the Lord.
- People who even revealed the powers of God in his Name.

Therefore it is so appropriate for us to pray:

Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

With regard to this petition we must first of all understand that God is slow to get angry.

- How long has the world been disobedient?
- Not a single person is obedient, and not a single person wishes or is able to live a perfect life.

Man's will has been contrary to God's will since the time of Adam.

- People's entire way of life bears testimony to contradicting/talking back and self-defense.
- Our inability/weakness on the one hand and our disobedience on the other often hinder us in living a truly Christian life.
- Our career often becomes a battlefield for the kingdom of the Lord, as this is where we often commit serious sins of many kinds.
- In short, there is no desire or fighting spirit to live according to the will of the Lord.

Yet the Lord spares and protects the world.

- The Lord allows time for repentance, and time for his church to grow.
- And during this time his Son came to teach us to pray to our Father in heaven to let his will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

In the same vein the apostle Paul urged Timothy (2:1 ff): Pray for all people so that we can live in godliness and dignity.

We should of course not keep aloof from these things.

- It applies to us personally. This prayer is also about our own congregation and us.
- How many of us confess the Lord with our lips, but our lives show that our hearts are far away from God.
- How sadly are we lacking in many ways - everyone in his own life.

Therefore the Scriptures rightly say that even the holiest among us have only a small beginning of this obedience - though sufficient to realise that we must pray and beg for forgiveness.

Part of being obedient is of course to pray. What should we pray? The Lord Jesus Christ gave as an ideal prayer and He inspires us to pray. Of course He does much more than that: He made propitiation for our sins and He gave us his Holy Spirit.

- In this regard the Holy Spirit guides us in getting to know ourselves.
 - In other words, to realise my own weakness and not to blame others or circumstances for the wrong I do.
 - And so that I can honestly confess my sins and to pray that I would act according to the will of my Father in heaven.
- So the Holy Spirit works in us a desire to be obedient. Hence also a desire to pray and to live a holy life, and to do the will of God in all respects.

2. The power of God

It stands to reason that we should now talk about the power of God. The question now is:

- How can I be brought to repentance and how can I now pray regularly?
- In other words, how can I do the will of God?

The answer is: God is so powerful that He can bring about spiritual renewal.

- He changes our hearts to serve Him.
- He teaches us to love.
- He teaches us to respect his Word.
- He teaches us to understand.
- He gives us the will and the power to conform to these requirements.

Let's match it with our Scripture text.

- The Lord enables us to confess his Name, in other words, to say with our lips, "Lord".
- But the Holy Spirit guides us to act according to what we confess.

Do we realise the consequence of what we've said? It means that we should preach the glory of God through what we say and what we do, and that we should never be silent or relax -be like the angels.

- The angels, who are still in heaven, after the devil led a third of them to fall in sin, never answer back.
- They are always willing to serve God vigorously.

- It is of course true that God's will shall be done with regard to the angels who sinned - those who followed Satan.
 - One example is when the devils in the land of the Gerasenes confessed that the Lord Jesus had come to torture them. This means that they are also subjected to the will of God.
- So it doesn't matter whether the angels are still holy or whether they have fallen in sin, they still know what God expects from them and they still obey Him.

The same happened when Christ came to earth as a human being. He did exactly what God wanted Him to do.

- He never committed any sin.
- Even though his life was sometimes in danger, He always stuck to the truth.
- He died because He obeyed the will of his Father in heaven.

And now we also pray to be obedient. We should obey God's will as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven.

- We want to serve the Lord in the way Christ served his Father.

Brothers and sisters, it is also God's will that the Second Coming is near. Maybe there's not much time left for us.

- Then let us listen to the will of God, and let us live like the angels in heaven: perfectly obedient and totally diligently.
- Let us live to the honour of the Lord as they do in heaven.

Let's read together what the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 49 says about this:

124. Q. What is the third petition?

A. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. That is: Grant that we and all men may deny our own will, and without any murmuring obey Thy will, for it alone is good.[1] Grant also that everyone may carry out the duties of his office and calling[2] as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven.[3]

[1] Matt. 7:21; 16:24-26; Luke 22:42; Rom. 12:1, 2; Tit. 2:11, 12. [2] I Cor. 7:17-24; Eph. 6:5-9.

[3] Ps. 103:20, 21.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 40:1, 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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