

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 10 MARCH 2013 EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: 51:3

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: 32:1

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 25:9

Scripture reading: Psalm 32

Scripture text: Psalm 32:1: Catechism Sunday 51

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.

(Psalm 32:1)

The fifth petition of the "Our Father" is:

- And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
- This sermon deals only with the first part of the petition namely: forgive us our debts.

1. **Who forgives sins?**
2. **What do we really look like?**

1. **Who forgives sins?**

The Psalm sings that the person whose sins are forgiven is blessed.

- The accent falls onto "Forgiven"
- Have you noticed that there is no Psalm or any other scripture in the Bible saying that somebody is blessed who has paid his own debts to the Lord?

Why not? It is because payment can only occur the moment right has been done to the contravened sin.

- Only the law and the right of God determine this.
- No man can deliver any input to it or change anything about it.
- No ordinary person can pay – therefore there is no man who could work his own salvation by means of his own payment.

Still it is a fact that we do get absolution for our sins. Psalm 32 sings about it. How do we get absolution?

- Forgiveness of our sin is only through the grace by the blood of Jesus Christ.
- Therefore God only gets all the praise for our salvation because only He decides about it through the grace of Jesus Christ.

When we consider the matter in this way we realise that this part of our prayer namely **forgive us our debts** is extremely important.

- Therefore it is in the Our Father directly next to **give us this day our daily bread**.
- Just like we need food and clothing for existence we also need the forgiveness of our sins to exist, especially in the hereafter.

But we must clearly understand that this part of our prayer is not just a sort of hit and miss prayer.

- It is a prayer standing solidly with its feet in living hope.
- It is written in John 1:16 that we receive grace from the abundance of Jesus Christ.

2. What do we really look like?

It is not nice to be honest with yourself about who and what you really are.

- But should we in our salvation from death want to make progress you must have bravery and look at yourself in the way you really appear to the Lord.
- Then you can do something about it from yourself.

There is not a person who can call himself a perfect holy man.

- Out of ourselves we are poor sinners – poor in justness and perfection.
- We are poor in obedience. From ourselves we have nothing else than a large guilt of sin to pay.

The entire matter is actually a very large problem because it is not so that you have done lot of wrong in your past and now the entire matter has stabilised – as it you only have matters about long ago to bear with you.

- No our problem increases daily because we daily do more wrong things.
- We are thus sitting with increasing poverty because our account of sin to the Lord grows by the day.
- No person can have a greater problem than that. This is why Psalm 32 says that (only) a persons whose sins are forgiven is truly blessed!

What do people make about this whole situation? They react in two ways.

- The non-believers (including the half-believer and false believers) just do not worry themselves about it or they, for themselves, assemble a redemption dogma befitting them.
 - The unconverted usually forgets very quickly about all his sins.
- The believer reacts in exactly the opposite way.
 - The matter about his sins bothers him.
 - This is also why the true believer continually implores the Lord to forgive him this massive guilt of sin.

The true believer has real repentance and sorrow about his sins.

- He experiences sorrow because he cannot always remain standing against the onslaught of the sin.
- Such a person feels how his sins are getting him down. It is as if you experience wanting to fall to the feet of the Lord and beg for mercy, just like the people of the Biblical times did.

The fact is just that no man can deny his sin.

- Consider the multitude sins like pride, greed, hard-heartedness, lust, lies and slander often occurring.
- Not one does the Lord think up a sin for us, they are all matters we make ourselves guilty of.

But there is a way out of this situation.

- It is the road of forgiveness of sin.
- Together with that go faith and conversion through the great mercy of God.

Every person who really knows the Lord wants to live holy.

- He seeks his way in the light of the holiness and the way of God.
- This also is not such an unattainable road because the Lord in the atonement of the blood of Jesus Christ Himself opened this road for us.
- He made us His children in Jesus Christ.

Therefore there is still blessings in our situation because every person truly confessing his guilt to the Lord is a child of God.

- Every person shamed by his spiritual poverty and because of that is driven in prayer to God may know for sure that with God he gets absolution from his sins.

When you consider king David you see this entire matter very clearly.

- David lied, committed adultery, shammed and killed people.
- But still the Lord says it is a person to His heart because every time David returned on his knees with remorse and conversion to God.
- Paul calls these wrong matters happening to mankind the works of the old man.

We are no longer old sinful people because in the Lord Jesus Christ the old man was dethroned. But the old man is still alive.

- Therefore we must make it our purpose to, as new people in Christ, break away from the lifestyle of the old man.
- In this way through conversion and rebirth, we can rob the old sinful man from his rule over our lives

This just re-underlines the fact that every day of our lives we have to live awake and praying.

David, with all his sins, was a beloved person to the Lord.

- This is also our consolation because David could be it in the earnings of the Messiah of whom he so many times prophesise in his Psalms.
- The Messiah is the Christ who moved in between us and the Lord – He bore the full wrath and punishment of the Lord for our sins and poverty in faith.
- God punished Him until He died so that the Lord could forgive us our sins.

Now it is forgiven. Now we are re-created in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Live with the consolation that the Lord truly forgave you your sins and then you live as Christians like the people Christ now made you into: people cleansed by His blood, adopted as children of the almighty God.

Let us read together what is recorded in our Confession Sunday 51 Heidelberg Catechism.

Q. 126.

Which is the fifth petition?

A.

"And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"; that is, be pleased for the sake of Christ's blood, not to impute to us poor sinners, our transgressions, nor that depravity, which always cleaves to us; (a)

even as we feel this evidence of thy grace in us, that it is our firm resolution from the heart to forgive our neighbour. (b)

(a)

Ps.51:1 <<To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.>> Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Ps.51:2 Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

Ps.51:3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

Ps.51:4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Ps.51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Ps.51:6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

Ps.51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Ps.143:2 And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

1 John 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

1 John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Rom.8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

(b)

Matt.6:14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

Matt.6:15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 65:2

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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Scripture Modern King James Version