

## REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2013 MORNING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 100:1-5

*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 119:11

**Confession of faith:** Nicene

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was Incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And we believe one holy universal and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

**Amen.**

*After the reading of the Law we confess our guilt and pray for forgiveness and a new life before God with Scripture Versification 9-1:11*

Law

Scripture Versification 9-1:11

**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 18:11

**Scripture reading:** Jonah 1 and Acts 27**Scripture text:** Jonah 1:12c; Acts 27:24

**... For I know that this great tempest is because of me."**

Jonah 1:12c

**'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.'**

Acts 27:24

In the sermon of last week we looked at Jonah who, through his reckless dereliction of his calling caused a large number of people to fall with him subject to the wrath of the Lord.

Today we look at the wrath of God that caught up with the soldiers' commanding officer because he did not take notice of God's revelation and so with him brought many people in confrontation with God.

This evening's sermon deals with Paul's conduct in these circumstances. The theme of this evening's sermon is:

A righteous man takes others with him into God's grace.

Note the following aspects:

1. **Responsibility and faith.**
  2. **Irresponsibility and accountability.**
  3. **Responsibility and confession of faith.**
1. **Responsibility and faith**

We must remember that the Lord was taking Paul to Rome where he had to testify of Jesus Christ before the emperor.

- The testimony of the Lord was not to be heard in Rome alone as if this were the only place where the Word was to be heard and preached.
- The Lord's grace was extended also over the people who traveled with Paul and those whom he met on the way.
- This is where this history of the storm and the loss of the ship fits in.

First the Bible explains that the people of that time all knew that sailing during the months of winter was very dangerous (Verses 9-12).

- Therefore the sailors during this period stayed in a safe harbour and continued their voyage during springtime.
- Verse 7 describes how Paul's voyage became more difficult until with great difficulty they reached Fair Havens.

On reading this passage one discerns that the Lord busied Himself with the crew and especially the commanders:

- So we read in verse 3 that Julius, the commander in whose charge Paul had been placed, permitted Paul to go to his friends. The question is why? In those days soldiers were not in the habit of doing this.
- Then we read that Paul tells them what God has revealed to him, namely that they must not go further because a great disaster awaits them.
  - They are going to suffer a loss of the ship and the cargo and their lives will be endangered.
  - The commander's clearly heeded this notice because they weighed up Paul's advice against that of the owner of the ship and the pilot.
  - One must not think that Paul's advice was ignored as carrying no weight.

It is striking that the word Paul uses (in the Greek language) when he says that harm will befall them is not the usual word for harm.

- It is a word that means that you will suffer harm because you willfully do the wrong thing.
- It would therefore appear that Paul addressed the men in strong words.
- Perhaps this explains why the centurion took umbrage and preferred to listen to the owner and the pilot.

## **2. Irresponsibility and accountability**

The wind started to blow favorably and this finally convinced the crew to continue the voyage. But, exactly as with Jonah, it happens here:

- The Lord awaits them.
- Suddenly a disastrous storm strikes them - Paul names it the Euroklidon (the "North Easter").
- They tried everything humanly possible to save themselves but all in vain.

Eventually they drift along totally lost because for days they had seen no stars.

- In those days the stars were the guide.
- This situation depicts man in his lostness when he refuses to obey the Lord.

At that moment the Lord in His love finds the ship and its passengers

- That night an angel of the Lord appears to Paul.
- He reveals to Paul the Lord's disposal of the ship and its passengers.

Note how Paul announces it.

- First Paul connects with what the Lord revealed to him before they left Crete.
  - Then they refused to follow his advice and now the harm against which he warned them has befallen them.
- Then follows the new revelation from God:
  - The men fully realized that Paul means that they are now in trouble because they refused to heed the Lord.
  - The Lord offers them a fresh opportunity to heed His word.
    - The grace of the Lord is clear.
    - Paul tells them that they must remain courageous because not one of them will die.
    - But they must know that the ship will be destroyed.

This is a remarkable announcement because it was this ship on which they had relied after having consulted with the owner and the pilot which had decided them to continue the voyage.

- This is the thing the Lord now takes from them.
- The ship is to be destroyed because the Lord has the power to save people from the sea without a ship.

Paul tells them that an angel of the Lord was with him, But then he reveals God to them:

- "The God whose I am and whom I serve".
- Immediately the men will ask "What does an angel of God want in this terrible storm?".
- Paul answers "Do not fear because the Lord will see to it that I stand before the emperor. But He also says that all of you on this ship are given to me."

These last words have a double meaning. Paul knew this.

- Firstly, it meant that not one of them would drown.
- Secondly, it meant that all of them on the ship would obey the Lord.

With this the purpose of this voyage is made plain.

- Paul teaches that the Lord is taking him to the emperor.
- There is no need to fear, because Paul is to be saved, everybody with him is to be saved as well.

### **3. Responsibility and confession of faith**

Note Paul's devoutness because it is important to take note of it.

- After he has told them all that the Lord revealed to him he confesses his faith before all present.
- This must have impressed them deeply, because the wind is howling and the waves crash over them and it is dark - as far as any human can see there is no hope of rescue any more.
- Yet they all hear Paul saying: I believe that it will be as God has told me.

Now you see the difference between Paul and Jonah.

- Jonah says, throw me overboard if you wish to be saved.
- Paul says, as God says, so it will be and God said that my life and your lives would be saved.

*Paul's example shows that you do not for one moment desert your calling when the Lord calls you. You believe rocklike in God and His promises - no matter how fierce the storm around you may be.*

The Lord did not immediately after making His second set of promises make the storm subside.

- Paul mentions that only after the 14th night did the soldiers sense that they were approaching land.
- It shows that a test was set to see whether the men would hold onto their faith.
- The sailors still tried to escape with the lifeboat and leave the soldiers and the prisoners to drown.
- But on Paul's command the soldiers prevented this. They cut the lifeboat loose so that everyone was obliged to remain on the ship.

Thereafter Paul took bread and after having given thanks to the Lord he broke it and ate it (verse 35-36)

- He strengthens his body so that he can be serviceable when the Lord saves them.
- All took heart and ate with him.

Then there was the last attempt on Paul's life when the soldiers wanted to kill all the prisoners.

- But the centurion stopped them - it was because the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life.
- Thereafter some swam and others floated out with pieces of wreckage but all 276 passengers were saved.

*So the Lord keeps His promises - because of His apostle Paul who must preach the gospel before the emperor He saves every man. But we must not overlook Paul's steadfastness in his faith.*

Eventually Paul's position is different from that of Jonah:

- Jonah's shipmates become believers but without him.
- Paul and his men together thank God while the storm is still raging and then they stand together on the beach round the fire warming them all.

Likewise Jesus Christ preceded His church in their redemption. But with a tremendous difference if measured to Paul's experience.

- Paul was saved, Christ was not.
- Jesus had to die - so that Paul and all that persevered in the faith like him could be saved.
- There was no grace for Jesus that He could remain alive to continue His calling.
- He had to die so that later, after His death and resurrection, He could prepare a place for us in Heaven.
- And also so that after His ascension He could pray for us to His Heavenly Father.
- For us all of this is immeasurably great grace, but for Christ it meant that He had to die in order to give this to us.

Jesus' perseverance was for the salvation of all of us who fearlessly and without doubting remain steadfast in believing in Him.

- It is demonstrated in this history with Paul who was able to strengthen everyone with him through his faith in the promises of the Lord.
- So much so that because of his piety the Lord also saved the others.

You must now remember that this Jesus of the cross hosted us all last Sunday at His table where He again re-inforced our faith.

- Therefore you and I have a duty through the power of this faith to be faithful to the Lord so that from us a testimony will go out to other people.
- So that, if the Lord wills it, through our perseverance and honesty other people around us may be saved when they follow us in worship of and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 68:10

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 November 2013  
 Scripture: Modern King James Version