

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2012 MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Scripture Versification 12-2:5

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 89:2

Confession of faith: Apostolic

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into Hell, the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, a holy universal Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting

Amen.

After the reading of the Law we confess our guilt and pray for forgiveness and a new life before God with Psalm 130:2

Law

Psalm: 130:2

Prayer:

35
17

Doxology

35
17

Worship

35
17

Confession of sins

35
17

Forgiveness

35
17

Gratitude

35
17

Prayer for the need of the congregation of the church, the authorities and the sinful world and appeal to God's promises

35
17

General prayer

35
17

Enlightenment from the Holy Spirit for the sake of the ministry of the Word.

Amen

Psalm 19:4

Scripture reading: Deuteronomy 30

Scripture text: Deuteronomy 30:14

But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

(Deuteronomy 39:14)

Many of us go about with a worrying conscience about our sins.

³⁵₁₇ Could I ever be acceptable to the Lord?

³⁵₁₇ Could somebody guilty of such horrible sins as I am ever be chosen?

³⁵₁₇ Could somebody as wanton and defiant as me someday walk the new earth?

The answer is: Most certainly! Of course there will be people like you and me in heaven.

³⁵₁₇ People guilty of the same sins are acceptable to God, because God does not only propagate judgement.

³⁵₁₇ He also does not damn without putting the matter to His grace.

³⁵₁₇ When the Lord refers to judgement then He always talks about grace and redemption accompanying it.

But now the Lord also sets specific demands.

³⁵₁₇ In the passage we have read the Lord promises to re-adopt us should we convert ourselves.

³⁵₁₇ He promises that He would save us by His great mercy when we repent our sins.

Put very practically: *Here the Lord promises to such guilty and damnable persons like us that He would forgive our sins and guilt so completely that should we have regrets about it we one day in the Hereafter will live with Him.*

But immediately we have to be careful!

³⁵₁₇ In this passage of scripture the Lord does not give us the power of determining our own salvation.

³⁵₁₇ It is not now in our power to decide that we will now repent our bad deeds and accept the Lord so that by this earning we can go to heaven!

In the previous chapter the Lord came to His people in aid of renewing His covenant with them. The contents of the covenant are recorded in chapter 29:13 onwards:

...that He may establish you today as a people for Himself, and that He may be God to you, just as He has spoken to you, and just as He has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The entire action in this agreement thus comes from God.

³⁵₁₇ He makes the Israelites His people and He Himself is their God.

³⁵₁₇ The covenant also means that God compiled an agreement – He alone decides upon the conditions and we are encompassed as the send party.

But from verse 19 onwards the matter changes.

³⁵₁₇ Now the Lord writes that the sins of those that hear these matters and know about the grace of God but still persevere in the evil, will be recorded in a book and this curse will go against him – such a person then goes to hell.

³⁵₁₇ This depicts a fairly hopeless condition to every person hearing these words, because who are there not realizing how hopeless his condition is?

³⁵₁₇ Nobody in his right mind will think that he is properly keeping to the Law of the Lord.

We all realize that the Lord makes us into His children, but we do not always conduct ourselves as children of God. Well, what now?

³⁵₁₇ When they again convert themselves the Lord will adopt them.

³⁵₁₇ Therewith He will also abundantly bless them as well.

³⁵₁₇ He will bring them back to their land where He will grant them prosperity.

The Lord will also bless them spiritually.

³⁵₁₇ He will spiritually mark them as His property – they will no longer only carry the mark of circumcision on their bodies.

³⁵₁₇ The Lord will circumcise their hearts. In their hearts they will carry the signs of loving the Lord.

Because the Word of the Lord is not far from them, in fact it is in their hearts, they will be able to do this.

³⁵₁₇ Therefore we do not convert ourselves.

- The Word of the Lord converts us from the insides, because He works in our heart and in our mouth.
- This is the meaning of the covenant.

³⁵₁₇ We belong to God and we are His children. His property. Therefore we can never become lost.

- Even should I become dejected, still the Lord does not lift His covenant towards me!
- I do not need to be perfect, because it is due to the fact that we never can be perfect that the Lord sends the Intercessor to be punished for my sins.
- All the Lord asks from me is repentance for my sins – true repentance.

Repentance has a specific meaning. It is not the same as to regret and also not the same as to be sorry.

³⁵₁₇ Let us observe a few examples from the Bible.

- After Cain had slain Abel he fled due to fear, but he did not repent it.
- Judas hung himself, but he also had no repentance. He has regrets and he realizes what he has done, and then goes and commits a deed nearly as bad as the first!

Repentance is having a very deep sorrow about the evil you do. A massive heartache.

³⁵₁₇ But together therewith also an experience of sincerity and honesty.

- Should you then repent your sins you do not flee or commit suicide.
 - You repair what you have wronged!
- ³⁵₁₇ Repentance thus means you having heartache about what you have done to God by your pigheadedness and now you part from this disobedience.
- You try our best to improve.
 - Every time you try weighing your own will against the will of God and you adapt your planning to the will of God.

Now already this passage explains itself in this regard. The salvation promised by God is only received by conversion – by no other way.

Conversion and faith is also joined to each other. But it is important to keep in mind that conversion is the gift of God's covenant with us. This we read in Jeremiah 31:33:

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

(Jeremiah 31:33)

This is how the gift of conversion is granted to us

- ³⁵₁₇ God writes it into our innards.
- ³⁵₁₇ He is our God, even when we reject Him.
- ³⁵₁₇ He also makes us His people again.

Now the congregation faces God. Everybody damnable.

- ³⁵₁₇ Some of us sometimes with great doubt in our hearts.
- ³⁵₁₇ Some even pigheaded and not prepared to come to conversion by repenting their sins.
- ³⁵₁₇ And facing this are the promises of God.

Firstly this revelation of God is relevant to Israel. .

- ³⁵₁₇ They will again experience prosperity the moment they repent their sins.
- ³⁵₁₇ But the church of the New Testament also comes into sight when the Lord promises both physical and spiritual blessings.
- ³⁵₁₇ We even hear the words used to describe the baptism in the New Testament: Circumcision of the heart.

This part is joined to the Lord Jesus Christ.

- ³⁵₁₇ In this life none of us could be perfectly obedient to God – therefore the Lord Jesus Christ arrived to be that for us.
- ³⁵₁₇ He becomes heart broken about Jerusalem who did not want to listen. He says with so much heartache as if He repents instead of Jerusalem: **How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!** (Matthew 23:37)

When the Lord Jesus Christ then dies and arises from death He does two things making this verse of scripture into greater truth for us:

³⁵₁₇ Firstly He sends the Holy Spirit back as our Counselor. He is our Guide. The Advocate of God's Word in our innards. Now it is already true:
But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it!

We no longer have any excuse should we not repent our sins.

Secondly something else happens: The Holy Spirit completes another command.

³⁵₁₇ Since the earliest times God chooses people to write down His Will and history.
³⁵₁₇ The Holy Spirit leads these people's minds and thoughts. In this way the entire Bible gets written.

After the Lord Jesus Christ had the Holy Spirit descend onto His apostles the entire New Testament comes to being in a very short time. Now we have the Word even closer.

³⁵₁₇ In my heart and mind, because the Holy Spirit indeed gave it in hand to me so that I may read and study it.

³⁵₁₇ So that I cannot have any excuse should I do not want to listen.

From the entire Word of God, which is so close to us, two matters are clear:

³⁵₁₇ God will damn somebody who does not want to listen to God.

³⁵₁₇ But somebody who indeed listens receives grace – mercifully it is like that because nobody is perfect.

This renders us consolation.

³⁵₁₇ Even although my conscience bothers me because of the sins I have committed, all of them are forgiven me when I repent.

³⁵₁₇ I need not feel cast out. Through His Spirit God converts me.

I am sending you another Counselor who will guide you in all truth!

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 71:14

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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