

## REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 27 JANUARY 2013 MORNING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 68:8, 16

*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 145:1,4,12

**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 Psalm 98:1, 2*

Law

Psalm: 98:1, 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 138:1, 3

**Scripture reading:** Ezekiel 43**Scripture text:** Ezekiel 43:4, 7

**4 And the glory of the Lord came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east.**

Ezekiel 43:4

**7 And He said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever;...**

Ezekiel 43:7

To the people of the Old Testamental covenant Jerusalem, as well as the temple, was very important. They considered it indeed to be the capital city of the Lord. Therefore in Jeremiah 3:17 we read:

**"At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts.**

(Jeremiah 3:17)

Of course it is not so simple because we know, and they then already also knew, that God is omni-present.

- But what is true is that they lived in the times when the Lord symbolized them and their city as a nation in the history He chose as children for Himself and that eventually He would live amongst them on the new earth.
- Ages later the Book of Revelation puts it that on the New Earth there will be a city called Jerusalem which will be the city of God where He would be living amongst His chosen forever.
- What is also true in this thought is that it is very pure and correct to see God as the real King and Ruler of all people. A Ruler bestowing great grace to His people, that He purifies them from their impurities and then bathes with His holiness.

The background to this chapter already started in the times of king Solomon.

- It deals with the Lord expecting from these people to live spiritually and physically pure.
- Together herewith the Lord expected them to eventually prove it:
  - They must respect the temple as a building as well as everything in the vicinity of the temple.
  - Possibly herein is also a warning to us not to, like the Jews of those times, gauge the external matters of our worship too low.

Solomon then had his palace built on the southern side of the temple complex.

- There was only a wall separating the palace of the king and the church building.
- This matter did not really please the Lord.
- The reasons therefore were quite understandable!
  - You must keep in mind that not all the kings were believers. The pagan cults happening in the house of the king was literary in a deadly contrast with the temple of God.
  - There were some of the kings living in this palace who occupied themselves with many vanities.
  - During the event of parties the people did not restrict themselves to only the palace grounds but also stumbled around on the grounds of the temple.
  - That was shameful and unholy, the same as something like that is today still shameful and undesired.

This matter worsened further under kings like Ahaz who brought heathen idols into the temple itself.

The Lord uses in this chapter a collective word to describe all the sins committed by the people: fornication.

- Therefore His holiness abandoned the temple. This Ezekiel saw in a vision.
- The Lord Himself attests this to all the sins of the people.

So the judgement of God is depicted:

- The real King, together with His holiness, takes His leave of the people.
- His people are subjected to Babel and are punished.
  - They are exiled and must seemingly, devoid of God, be herded to a strange land. There is no protection for them.

But this does not only depict Israel only.

- It depicts the world history.
- It depicts the history of God-abandonment and lack of true worshipping.
- It depicts the glory of God abandoning His deserters.

But luckily it is not all that is written. ***God repairs His temple.***

- He makes a new heaven and a new earth where He lives with His children.
- Israel returns from Exile and now, with the blessings of the Lord, live in their land.
- A new temple is being built.
  - This temple is separated from all evil and impurities.

- Here God settles in with His Holiness. The shining glory of God comes from the East to the temple.
- Everything is so intense that Ezekiel could not remain standing, he fell to his face.

To him it is not unknown meeting in this way with the Lord.

- In chapters 8 – 11 he also saw the Lord coming, but then it was to destroy the city.
- Then the arrival of the Lord sounded like great waters falling into a deep abyss.
- Now everything is exactly the same – but with one very important difference:
  - Then the Lord came to judge.
  - Now he only sees the shining of God's glory radiating the earth: Only grace.
  - The Lord moves back in amongst His people!
    - It is the place of My throne!
    - It is the place of the soles of My feet!
    - Here I want to dwell forever!

As such the glory of the Lord under His people moves into His temple!

- The grace does not again pass on.
- It remains forever.
- It is unfathomable and eternal.
- It is so great that through the power of god's glory Ezekiel falls to his face!

**When the Lord moves in amongst His children the Lord changes them. Now they will never be able to again defile His Name.**

The Lord reminds Ezekiel about the sins of the past:

- They defiled the Name of the Lord
- They defiled the Name of the Lord with the dead bodies of their kings. – On the grounds of the temple, in the garden of the palace Manasseh and Ammon were buried and God took no liking to this.
- The Lord reproaches them that the house of the king is built right next-to His, and that they defiled everything by the abominations they practiced.

But what is important is that the Lord no longer reproaches because His wrath was finished

**...therefore I have consumed them in My anger.**

(Ezekiel 43:8)

**...and I will dwell in their midst forever.**

(Ezekiel 43:9)

It is the main point of history when we are united with God. Our derailments of the past are wiped out and God Himself makes sure that it cannot happen again.

Let us apply this section. What was their first mistake?

- The put the church and the world on the par by building the palace in such a way that the church was in the garden of the palace.

- The symbolic meaning thereof is that the leadership came from the house of the king and that the Lord could only exist by and under the grace and right of the earthly king!
- Guard against it. The demands of God may never be placed next to those of the world and may also not be measured against those of the rest of the world.

In practice it will only work in this way should we never relinquish our principles.

- The New Testament is very clear: the temple of God is your body!
- No matter how much advantage we get from life this side of the grave should we do it then the holiness of God abandons you in the life hereafter.
- In your entire life there must be a definite separation between what is holy to God and what is from the world.
- Then we will make none of the rest of the mistakes made by Israel.
- Then we will have no impure party whereby the temple of God would be damaged.

We can listen with great appreciation to this sermon because God has already, with the same glory, moved in with us.

- Firstly God atoned the punishment over us by punishing His Son, Jesus Christ, in our place.
  - We was born and had to live and eventually die.
  - He had to suffer great distress – like the Jews during Exile.
    - But their suffering was insufficient, because they could return to their land, due to the virtues of the redemptive sacrifice on the cross of Jesus Christ, which only would be later, this due to the power thereof previously made possible.
  - Eventually the Lord Jesus died on the cross so that our sins are completely atoned
  - He broke the wickedness of the Satan's workings over us so that God in His glory could move into us.

Thereafter the Holy Spirit descended - over the church.

- But there is a difference – this time the building is the believers, not again a building of stone.
- We are the church of the Lord.
  - In us the Holy Spirit lives and works forever.
  - He leads out steps until we face the throne of God in Jerusalem – the New Jerusalem.
  - Then the judgement of our text would be finally fulfilled.

Then verse 4 is also true for us:

**And the glory of the Lord came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east.**  
(Ezekiel 43:4)

Now He stands with the soles of His feet inside His Church.

Now He is forever living amongst us!

Brothers and sisters let us live in the power and the presence of the eternal God

- Who are going to prevent us should we want to serve God from the heart?
- Who can force us to become wrong and not to guard against the sins God warns us about?
- May our entire congregation – and also every one of us individually – worship and glorify God every moment. Because His glory is over us!

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Song: Scripture Versification 2-4:1-3

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