

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : FRIDAY 18 APRIL 2014 GOOD FRIDAY

Sing before: Psalm 116:4, 7

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 100:2, 3

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 66:6

Scripture reading: Haggai 2

Scripture text: Haggai 2:9

'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the Lord of hosts.

(Haggai 2:9)

Crucifixion Friday is in a certain sense a day of fulfillment.

- We can say that the wobbly matters of this world came to an end on that day.
- On that day our Saviour gained a very solid victory over death and everything relevant to destruction.
- The crucifixion made the kingdom of God a reality for us.

In this passage we read from Haggai we see a disheartened Jewish people.

- Then the Lord comes to them and encourages them.
- They must rebuild the temple
- The rebuilt temple is to them the symbol of the reality of God's promises for their future.

Their responsibility is not erased by the promise.

- Nothing will just fall out of the sky.
- The Lord's command is that they must work hard and take heart because He is with them. (Haggai 1:13)

These words refer back to an age old promise, because at Sinai the Lord made a covenant with them and said: **'You are My people and I am your God'**.

- There they also received a sign that the Lord dwelled among them because they were His people.
- The tabernacle of the Lord was put up in their midst.
- Later, after they had moved into the Promised Land, the time of the tabernacle was past and the temple became the symbol of God's presence.

In the meanwhile the people's worship had deteriorated and they received a symbol of this.

- Their temple was destroyed and they were taken to Babylon.
- The symbol of God's presence was destroyed.

In this condition we find the people in their former capital city.

- With consternation they realized that they lived in a world of uncertainty – everything was loose and changing.
- Of their former capital nothing remained
- Kingdoms had come and gone.

But then the comfort: The Lord is with them again!

- The proof thereof is that the temple is being rebuilt.
- However, the temple has lost its former meaning.
- Now it is a prophecy of what is to be fulfilled.

It becomes the symbol of a New Kingdom in which matters will not be so changeable and unstable. In the end it points to the kingdom of the hereafter.

Hence the Lord says in verse 5:

'And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.'

- With this the Lord confirms His personal care of His people. - He will lead and rule them with His Spirit.
- For the small number of Jews among the ruins of Jerusalem it contained the promise that the Lord would through His Spirit give them the strength and enthusiasm to rebuild the temple.

The prophecy builds up to a climax.

- Before this new kingdom of God arrives the Lord is first going to shake the present heaven and earth.

- Everything that is earthly will be shaken until it falls.

Then comes a new creation. A new heaven and a new earth.

- The temple they are to build is the symbol of this.
- As the destroyed temple is rebuilt, likewise God will create a new earth after the old one.

We know that this recreation is guaranteed in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- We saw some of the signs the day of the crucifixion when there
 - was an earthquake and the rocks were split
 - and people who were dead were raised to life.
 - In broad daylight the sun lost its power to shine.

In verse 22 the Lord tells more of what shall precede the Messiah's holy kingdom:

“I will overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms.”

The Lord predicts that the world is to become unstable – which in fact is a direct result of the merit on the cross of the Lord Jesus.

- That is why kingdom after kingdom arises and falls.
- The Lord takes the throne away from them because they are heathen kingdoms who despite their show of power cannot stand up to God's rule.

That is what is predicted here.

Take note of the grace being revealed here

- The unbelievers will never be able to found an enduring power on earth.
- The grace is that Jesus died and was resurrected so that the power of the world would always crumble until the kingdom of God finally comes and is settled at his coming.
- His crucifixion was the beginning of the shattering of all power that tried to stand up to God because Jesus' death was the final victory over the devil and his empire.

The crucifixion of the Lord Jesus occurred so that with his death he could guarantee the coming of an unshakable kingdom.

- A kingdom where God Almighty rules in eternal peace.
- A Kingdom that shall never fall.

We are often anxious because matters keep on going wrong.

- And when discussing the future we do so with a dark frame of mind.
- We say that all appears to be wrong.

But that is how it should be!

- The fact that the world is in this condition shows that God's plan with the world is coming to fruition.

- With it God tells us that the victory achieved by Jesus with his crucifixion and resurrection is now coming to fulfillment.
- When the Lord Jesus comes on the clouds He will take away all the people's power because in the Kingdom of God there is place for only one throne: *It is the throne God is now busy installing according to His promises.*

This is where the richness is to be found in the crucifixion.

- The crucifixion occurred so that the Lord Jesus could bear before God the punishment for our sins so that we would not together with the world be shattered before the wrath of God.
- The crucifixion of the Lord Jesus occurred so that we could be part of those who can worship on the new earth.

Haggai teaches that God comes to dwell among His people.

- These sounds impossible, because we are all mortal and sinful, how can God who is eternal come to dwell among us?
- Again it is the crucifixion which made this possible because through it Jesus conquered death for us.
- Put differently – *He gave us life everlasting so that we live eternally with God when He dwells with us.*

The crucifixion further fulfilled the promises of God dwelling among us because the Holy Spirit was poured out over the church.

- God is so close to us that He rules us with His spirit to persevere in the true faith and to reach out to the life everlasting with Him.

Crucifixion Friday is the day of grace and reconciliation.

- Grace because God's promises of salvation come true in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.
- By His death he bore God's wrath over our sins so that we would not be destroyed in His judgment.
- Grace because His death saved us from death.

The meaning of the death on the cross stands out clear when we listen to the words of Haggai: **'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the Lord of hosts.**

- Not only because Christ is in it.
- Also because the new temple and its inhabitants are recreated by the blood of Christ into perfection.
- And also recreated to be a temple and a people where God lives and rules.

Through the death on the cross we have become a kingly priesthood who await the coming of our Redeemer.

- The second time the Lord Jesus Christ comes He does not come to die so that we may live as the first time.
- The second time He comes to judge.

- The second time the Lord Jesus Christ comes to take into his unshakable Kingdom those who have piously accepted to their redemption his death.
- The second time the Lord Jesus Christ comes to destroy those who do not expect their redemption through His death and resurrection and do not have a part in His eternal kingdom.

This lets us understand why the Apostle Peter calls us not only a royal priesthood but also a Holy nation. (1 Peter 2:9)

- We become all of this because the Lord was crucified for us, and the acknowledgment of debt for our sins was nailed to His cross – as Paul puts it.
- He died so that we may live in holy perfection forever.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Song: Scripture versification 9:1,5

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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