

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : TUESDAY 31 DECEMBER 2013 EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 42:5

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: 145:1, 5, 7

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 103:1

Scripture reading: Isaiah 61:1-4 and Isaiah 62:1-5 and Revelation 14:1-10

Scripture text: Isaiah 62:2

The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, And all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, Which the mouth of the Lord will name.

(Isaiah 62:2))

In life it does not help much continually looking at the past. The Lord Himself teaches that a farmer plowing his land and looking behind him will not properly plow the field.

Therefore we today look forward in this sermon – far ahead. Where is the Lord going with us?

Is the greatest wish of all of us not that our lives be freed by the Lord from all the miseries of this life?

- These are matters like physical suffering and the difficulty life often brings around in our spiritual lives.
- Every time we reach an end of the year and we are allowed to proceed to the next year something about this also rings true.

- It is as if in every passing of the year we have something symbolic of that what will happen when we exit this life into eternal life.
- Through the forgiveness and power of the Lord Jesus Christ we exit this life into the eternal life with God.

Let us reflect upon the year that has passed.

- We were at a gravesite when the Lord fetched somebody amongst us to already assume service at His throne.
- We think about many members who experienced serious illnesses and were in our prayers.
- We are caught up in this world wide political and monetary crisis.

But that does not mean that we no longer live and have sunken away into an eternal darkness.

- We still live in the freedom and in the perfection of God's presence.
- Every time we arrive at a turning point - by example the going over of one year into another – we realize and experience the reality of the salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ.
- It is true that at this moment we do not yet finally experience the perfection of the new heaven and the new earth, because we only reach that perfection at the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus and our bodies are resurrected from death and reunited with our souls.
- But it is just as true that we anew realized that the caring hand of the Lord is still guiding and caring for us in this life.

Every closure of an old year and the entrance into a New Year reminds us about the Second Coming when the Lord will appear in the clouds.

- Then we will be glorified and installed by Him onto the New Earth.
- Here it is written in images of the Old Testament that that day will be a day upon which prisoners are freed and those in bondage will be released – this is of course us who will be freed from all the miseries of this life!
- That day is the day of the greatest grace, because on that day all the sorrows are consoled forever.

The Lord encourages us in the passages we have read together:

- Should we be bent in life by matters like financial stress and sometimes fearing for our security and even oppression of any kind, that day we who believe see the Lord in the full light of His righteousness.
- That day we are called up by the Lord to living together with Him in His Light – we and all who together with us have believed in the Lord when we still alive on earth.
- That day we all are together in the glory of a new life – the life where the Lord calls us by a new name.

The new name the Lord gives us describes in us the newness of the eternal life.

- Chapter 61 teaches that the Lord will grant on that day to all that are resurrected the oil of joy.

- It is a sign of unknown joy, because in the Old Testament oil was always used for celebrations. It was poured onto the guests of honor and lit in containers to supply light.

It still is a description pointing towards us receiving in the Lord Jesus Christ atonement of our sins.

- We also receive physical re-creation.
- As it is written in Zechariah, we enter the kingdom of God as guests of honor – and by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ new and free from taint.

We indeed read again about this prophecy, but then about the fulfillment thereof, because the apostle John sees 144 000 chosen together with the Lamb on the mount Zion.

- Everybody have the Name of the Son and of the Father written on their foreheads.
- They sing a new song that only they could learn.

The Bible prophecies about it in the passages we have read together from Isaiah:

- Rubble heaps will be rebuilt.
- Destroyed places of earlier times will be rebuilt.
- The bodies destroyed by death and decay will on the command of God be re-created.
- We will not relocate to heaven with only our souls. We will be there as full humans, complete with body and soul.

Here is written that the Lord will literary renew everything from generation to generation. It is just again a confirmation that all generations that lived through the ages, will be resurrected.

When that happens we enter a timeframe of timeless joy where there no longer will be any wear of sickness and death.

- There will also no longer be things like hi-jacking, abduction murder and burglary – nothing of this sort.
- There is only the peace of eternal life.
- As such will our lives be there where the Lord calls us by a new name. We will be a crown in the hand of the Lord.

These things have meaning for us who are gathered here this evening because it lets us realise that we already in principle experience these matters.

- We thus have the consolation of faith that we may enter the year 2014 in the peace of the Lord.
- There will be heartache on our road – else the Lord would have no need to console us!
- Many of us are going to experience death and pain. That experience will be all but pleasant.
- The truth is that a day will arrive for each of us to die.

How do we take this year and what do we do with it?

- The first answer is that we must be and remain positive and believing.
- We all must keep in mind that matters do not grind to a halt by hi-jacking, burglary, ill treatment and death.
- The Lord Jesus changed death into a door we pass through to exit from this life into the eternal life with God.

A day will arrive when the Lord gives the command to the earth to return all the dead buried in it.

- That day He takes those He glorified up in His glory.
- The disposition and deeds of the first group to be resurrected does not include planning of robberies, setting bombs and all sorts of evil deeds.
- That is our consolation.

Let us persevere fully with reliability in this faith – like the Lord asks from all of us. Than we will be able to live freely as is recorded in Isaiah 61:10:

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

(Isaiah 61:10)

Then we can enter 2014 with great trust.

We also hear in this something taught by the book of Revelation, namely that the Bride is readied for the Bridegroom.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 48:5

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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 Scripture Modern King James Version