

## REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 20 JULY 2014 MORNING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 86:6

*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 43:3

**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 25:2*

Law

Psalm: 25:2

**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 19:5

**Scripture reading:** John 7

**Scripture text:** John 7:18

**"He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.**

(John 7:18)

How often does it not happen that we come near to the truth, but still remain so far from it! These people face the true Saviour of the people and He tells it to them, but they do not want to acknowledge or believe Him!

To be able to know why they made the mistake and to see to it that we do not make the same mistake, we consider the following matters in this sermon:

1. **Erudition or the will to believe.**
2. **Dishonesty and aggression.**
3. **Knowledge and honesty.**

### 1. **Erudition or the will to believe.**

The occasion is the Feast of Tabernacles. We read about this feast in Leviticus 23:36-43 and Deuteronomy 16:13-15.

- It was a big feast at the end of the harvest.
- It was totally seen as a feast of the Lord.

This feast had to take place in the seventh month. During this month the Jews had to live in tents.

- This feast is of special importance to the New Testament as it eventually took the place of the Passover as the most important feast to Israel – as we find it in John 7.

During this feast of thanks for the grace of God that He again blessed them with grain and fruit so that they could live, the Lord Jesus teaches in one of the forecourts of the temple.

- The most noteworthy is that He starts preaching to the people about the kingdom of the heavens.
- Thereby the prophecy of Malachi 3:1 goes into fulfillment without one of those present being able to recognize it.

Immediately there is a reaction to the preaching of Jesus. The first impression of the listeners is not one of sympathy or hate but of amazement.

- They question each other: Where did He obtain such erudition?
- The Jewish opposition sat with this burning question in their insides that somebody having so much knowledge must have studied somewhere and Jesus did not study anywhere.
- They thought that only people who, like them, have studied many years at the Rabbi schools, especially the one on Jerusalem, could have such knowledge.

Paul also once called upon this argument when he was in trouble and told the people that he was a Pharisee who studied under Gamaliel. (Compare Acts 22:3)

- The question about where Jesus obtained His erudition was possibly also amongst the people because everybody could see that Jesus did not wear the traditional clothing of the Scribes. (Compare Matthew 23:5 and Mark 12:38)

The Bible indicates that a lot of falsehood is in the argument that only people who had scientific schooling could possess knowledge or be worth something.

- As human Jesus did not study, but still his knowledge amazed the Sanhedrin.
- Later the same happened to Peter and John. (Acts 4:13)

On this point the Jews took on the Lord Jesus.

- By the word “Jews” John does not mean people with a Jewish nationality against per example the heathens.
- By this description he meant that these men were different to the ordinary people.
- He refers to the official representatives of the people, namely the Sanhedrin.

Jesus answers the astonished question of the Jews about His knowledge without Him having studied – in fact he answers the accusation hidden behind their words.

- They had an argument that only somebody who attended a Rabbi-school could call upon the authority of his teacher.
- There against somebody who did not attend the Rabbi-school carried his own teachings – they thus regarded such a man as devoid of authority and as conceited.

They believed it to be worthless listening to such a person.

- They tried applying it to Jesus: He must say who His teacher is so that they could judge the amount of authority He speaks with.
- Else He has to shut up and leave.

Now Jesus addresses this viewpoint:

- He answers that His teachings are in fact based upon a recognized authority: God the Father
- Their accusation that His teaching is in fact His own, fully human and unconsidered teaching is thus totally without grounds. Jesus’ teaching comes from the One who sent Him

It was indeed not something new Jesus told because in John 5:30 it is recorded that He said the following:

**"I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.**

(John 5:30)

(Also compare John 8:28; 12:49; 14:24)

The Lord Jesus then continues teaching the people.

- He does not prove that God is the Authority behind His teaching as He claimed.

- He only indicates the road to be taken so that His listeners could realise that His message is of Divine origin.

It is not an academic career that moves man to know and do the Will of God.

- The Holy Spirit installs the faith into a person.
- In John 5:40 and 42 the Lord adds to this also the will of man as a factor to this matter.
- There it is written that the people do not want to come to Jesus, and that they do not have the love of God inside of them.

This accents that the believers must also practice responsibility when it comes to faith.

- The Lord then shows them in another way the Divine origin of His mission through the Lord:  
**...but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.**  
 (John 7:18)

God has no unrighteousness in Him and He also does not tolerate it.

- Therefore the true believer must exercise a proper judgement of faith by which they also judge righteously like the Lord.
- If the people who surrounded Jesus that day did it they would not have falsely blamed Jesus of having a teaching of His own.

As long as we just keep in mind that what the Lord Jesus says is not only applicable to our judgement of His teachings.

- It applies to our judgement of the teachings brought forward by anybody,
- We must be able to test by God's righteousness and insight whether the person is true or false.

## 2. Dishonesty and aggression.

At that stage hereafter the Lord Jesus knew for about 18 months that the Jews were planning to kill Him. The decision to kill Jesus is already recorded in John 5:17, 18.

Therefore the Lord Jesus changes His style in verse 19. No longer does He defend – suddenly He attacks the Jews.

- The Jews know very well that the law of Moses must be complied with.
- Moses is somebody they regard very highly as a source of authority – he thus rendered a lot of authority to the law but yet, none of them kept the law up.
- They boast about the external upkeep of the law, but never complied with the spiritual demands of the law.

Because the Lord Jesus knew that the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem had big plans of having Him arrested and then convicted to death He came with this very sharp admonishment.

- It was aimed thereon that they must take care, they wanted to charge Jesus with non-compliance to the law (5:16), *but they themselves did not comply with the law.*

- By what right and authority could they blame Jesus of breaking the law? He is totally free from any contradictions of the law. (compare John 8:46)

Seemingly the members of the Sanhedrin relented at that stage because in verse 20 there are suddenly new people speaking.

- It is no longer the Sanhedrin having the word.
- It is the people who stood together and listened. It was mainly festivity pilgrims who came from other places to Jerusalem for the festival.

*To understand their exclamation that Jesus must be possessed by the devil should He think that somebody wants to kill Him, we must keep in mind that they, quite possibly, were unaware of all the plans the Sanhedrin made in Jerusalem to kill Jesus as they resided just outside of Jerusalem.*

Further it could have been possible that they, due to their ignorance, believed that Jesus, the young Rabbi was to rash in His judgements towards the stately old men of the Sanhedrin.

- To the traditional Jew of those times it really sounded like possession by the devil to blame the honorable spiritual leaders of planning a murder.

At any rate, Jesus indeed knew better than the crowd of alien festival attendees what took place a year and a half ago in Jerusalem.

- Then the Lord Jesus healed a lame man – and there the conflict started.
- Already during that time the Sanhedrin already took the official decision to kill Jesus. (John 5:16)

From then onwards more and more things took place sharpening the conflict.

- But the Lord Jesus now refers specifically to that what happened on that day.
- He refers to the one work He performed.

The fact of the Lord Jesus referring to the **one** work He did is at the same time a revelation of what the people spoke about during the feast.

- They especially discussed the healing of the lame man.
- Therefore the Sanhedrin went forth and used this event as a very handy accusation against Jesus.

Although the festival attendees from outside Jerusalem might have considered the words of Jesus as strange, the Sanhedrin knew very well what he was referring to.

- As defense against the healing on the Sabbath of that day Jesus calls upon the circumcision.
- Moses commander that it must be done on the eighth day.

Indeed the command of the circumcision is much older than Moses because the Lord already issued this command to Abraham in Genesis 17:10.

- To the Jews it legally meant at any rate that the law by Moses was recorded and therefore they are bound to him.
- They, due to their force to uphold one law, contravened another law:

- They rather circumcised a child on the Sabbath and thereby contravened the law prohibiting them to work on the Sabbath, than they circumcised the child on a weekday instead of on a Sabbath.

It is so that the Jews made all sorts of laws to limit work to the minimum on the Sabbath, but this does not take away that the circumcision on a Sabbath is work that is being done.

- According to the viewpoint of the Rabbis the Sabbath-law had to stand aside for the law of circumcision.
- The Lord than points out that they are unnecessarily angry because He healed somebody on the Sabbath as they also work on days of the Sabbath.
- The expression to be **angry about** is rather noteworthy as it in fact means that their gall was brimming.

### 3. Knowledge and honesty.

The Lord indicates a very important principle of life that we must exercise:

- We must never judge something as it appears on the surface and than have our gall brimming about it, because we could be wrong in our judgement as it does not really address the matter at hand.
- This is what happened to the gall brimming of the Pharisees.
  - They had so much hate towards Jesus that they did the same things as He did, but they declared Jesus alone guilty.

It is clear that the Jews then stopped with their arguments because this answer of the Lord in public put them entirely in their place.

- We indeed hear that the people who lived in Jerusalem and knew about the plans of the Sanhedrin were surprised that they did nothing to the Lord whilst they knew that the Sanhedrin was looking for Him to kill Him.
- They even did not prohibit Him to continue preaching in the temple.

The conduct of the Jewish Council suddenly confused the people.

- They thought that the Sanhedrin suddenly had a change of heart and now also believed Jesus to be the Messiah (Christ)
- Even the people were not so convinced that Jesus was the Messiah because their argument was that they thought they knew where Jesus came from.
- There against the Jewish lore stated that the true Messiah would, after His birth, live in secret in Bethlehem and then suddenly appear in Jerusalem. As far as they knew this was not the case with Jesus.

This comment of the people resulted in the Lord Jesus again solemnly testifying in the temple about Who sent Him.

- He points out to the Jews that they only know about his external origin, but know nothing about His full origin.
- Therefore their negative conclusion about Him is totally wrong.

He did not come out of Himself. God sent Him.

- But it is clear that their faith has a serious lacking – because they do not know this Sender – the Lord.
- Therefore they can also not recognize Jesus. The Lord Jesus knows this Sender. Therefore He can close this matter in a short way with the words:  
**But I know Him, because I come from Him and He sent Me.**

About the people of that day you can really say:

- So close to the truth – and still so far from it!
- But what about ourselves? How close and how far are we from the truth?

The history of that day makes you really ill at ease in various matters.

- The first matter bothering is that the leaders of the day did not have the insight of reading their times.
- Then they accused the Lord of it that He does not understand the Will of God – so bad that they are prepared to kill Him to thereby let only their own viewpoint survive.

In the history of our own times this matter of aggression towards those who do not concur with you also appears.

- Now learn from this passage in the Bible how wrong it is.
- The only One who had the truth in His possession was Jesus Christ.
- With great calmness He presented His case, and He did not want to kill anyone. On the contrary: Later He died Himself so that this lot of aggressive wanderers could be saved for the eternal life.

The further matter that causes worry is that the feast attendees knew the traditions very well, but did not know the Bible itself.

- Saying this might possibly be very harsh, but the Lord Jesus Himself said that they did not know God, therefore they did not know Him either.
- Do we know the contents of our Bibles better than these people knew it? This is a great problem because should we only here and there know a verse of Scripture, then we could also, like them, get lost between the truth and the lie. We are no better than they are.

This is very important because you must be able to judge over all officials ministering the Word of the Lord to you whether they are ministering the Word of God or whether they are ministering all sorts of wisdom out of themselves.

- As examples of believers who did it I am naming the couple Aquila and Priscilla
- They heard Apollos preaching and then realized that his ministering was not on standard.
- They then took Him into their house and taught him until he had sufficient knowledge and then let him continue.

Can we also be like Aquila and his wife?

- Yes, we can because they indeed so sharp because they made the grace of the Lord Jesus' cross-death their own and because they went to great lengths to know and worship the Lord.

- They clothed their entire lives in the way the Holy Spirit led them to do. They were always bubbling with life – and sometimes they experienced great difficulties as once the Caesar banned them from Rome.

We must carefully remember the words of the Lord Jesus and then carefully listen and believe. The Lord gave us a very clear guideline.

**"He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.**

(John 7:18)

Come, let us just follow the Bible.

- We only judge according to the Bible.
- We live for the promises of the kingdom of the heavens and our Saviour Jesus who will come on the clouds to fetch us.

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm 89:3

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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