

## REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2013 MORNING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 130:1

*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 105:1

**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*

Law

Psalm: 130:2

**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 48:1

**Scripture reading:** Jonah 4

**Scripture text:** Jonah 4:4

**Then the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?"**  
(Jonah 4:4)

How often does this not happen in life – this matter that you are angry about the way in which God executes His Will?

In this passage we learn about the massive haughtiness of Israel.

- These children of God started considering themselves as the only people in the world that could lay claim to the love of God.
- In their understanding it was impossible for God to render love to other nations or people.
- Even worse, that other nations who are still heathens, could belong to the Lord.
- These people believed that only Israel could obtain the favour of the Lord.

The Lord sends Jonah to minister in the city of Nineveh.

- Everything inside Jonah came to a revolt.
- He was scared that Nineveh could possibly come to conversion and he (Jonah) did not want to co-operate in the conversion of heathens – especially not the conversion of Nineveh!
- Nineveh belonged to the kingdom of Assyria and therefore was the enemy of Israel. As long as Nineveh existed there would always be a danger to the people of Israel.

Nineveh was a large and powerful city.

- It was so large that it required three day-trips to cross the city.
- Furthermore there were a hundred and twenty people in the city not knowing the difference between their left and right hand.

These are children mentioned here – children still too small to know the difference between their left and right hand.

- This would mean that there must have been about a half a million adults in this city.
- It is a very large city containing many people.
- This is the where Jonah had to go and preach.

He definitely has a difficult job.

- He is to minister not to children of God
- He is to minister to heathens who partook in such evils that it rose to the face of the Lord.

Who of us would not shy away from doing this work?

- Firstly Jonah tried to flee. He was not prepared to help fulfilling this part of the council of God.

- Then God had to anew, through the suffering of three days inside a fish, remind him about his calling.
- Only thereafter was Jonah prepared to go and minister in Nineveh.

The Lord aided Jonah a lot.

- His preaching is easy. He needs only to go and tell the people what the Lord dictates to him when he arrives there.
- He does not even need to prepare himself to how or what he would be proclaiming the Word of God to these alien heathens. The Lord will do it all.

Jonah arrived in Nineveh and moved the distance of one day-trip into the city. There he preached to the people of Nineveh that the city would be destroyed within forty days.

- This sermon sinks home to the people.
- The entire city gets a fright about their sins and comes to conversion.

It happens so quickly that the people of Nineveh immediately believed in God and proclaimed a day of fasting.

- The king also covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes.
- But he also proclaimed and published a decree saying: **Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water.**
- Not the people and also not the animals.
- All the people had to wear sackcloth in testifying their repentance about their sins.

The king said that should they do this, who knows, possibly the Lord would be merciful and not destroy the city.

- The people of Nineveh thus relied in great earnest upon the grace of God – although Jonah just preaches judgement over them.
- Although Jonah does not mention a single word about the love and grace of God these people still prayed for it! Is this not remarkable?!

It is written in the meaningful words of chapter 3:10 that the Lord took note that they converted themselves from their evil works and did not bring the planned disaster over them.

- This angered Jonah.
- After his sermon of Judgement he exited the city and sat at the Eastside waiting for the Lord to destroy the city.
- When this did not happen he was so upset and angry because the Lord rendered grace to these people that he prayed to the Lord and asked to die.

He is very upset by the council and will of the Lord. He wants the Lord to bring about a different result.

- In the first instance he did not want to come to Nineveh.
- Because of the way the Lord compelled him to go he nearly died inside the big fish.
- Now the Lord disposes that these people he hates and cannot stand receives grace.
- Jonah could not forgive the Lord for this. He wants to rather die. Under such circumstances he did not want to live.

Then God has the word. He wants to know whether Jonah has any reason to be so angry.

- Jonah does not answer the Lord.
- Silence is also an answer.

But God also has mercy towards Jonah. More grace than for the people of Nineveh.

- Because the occupants of Nineveh showed remorse about their evil sins, the Lord rendered grace upon them.
- To Jonah the Lord renders the grace by teaching him in love whilst he is still upset with, and in revolt against the Lord.

Jonah sits in the shade of his shelter. The sun is hot and the east wind is warm. The man has a hard time!

- Then suddenly the Lord had a plant come up giving shade to Jonah. And Jonah was glad about it.
- But just as quickly the Lord removed the plant.

The next day the sun is again just as hot.

- The east wind is baking down on Jonah where he is sitting.
- He is still hoping for the Lord to destroy the city because he is sitting there to see what will happen to the city.

Then the sun drains all his power and he wishes to die. He claims that it is better to die than to live.

- Again the Lord asks him whether he has reason to be so aggravated.
- This time he answers the Lord. "Yes", he says. **"It is right for me to be angry, even to death!"**

It is as if Jonah, in his anger, wants to call God to accountability.

- Jonah wants to know nothing about a relationship with God and obedience to the will of God.
- In his sin he is angry that the will of God differs from his human will.

This prophet has not got the insight to see the matters he has to be thankful for.

- He does not even appreciate the fact of God blessing his sermon so that he could bring the entire city within one day to repentance.
- He preached with the purpose of the people not coming to conversion.

He appreciates the wonder plant.

- It gave him shade.
- And he is also angry with God for removing it.

Then by some very sharp words God teaches Jonah how foolish he is.

- The Lord clarifies to Jonah that he is worried about the wonder plant God caused to grow over him.
- Jonah did not have anything to do with the caring for the plant.

Should Jonah then feel as such about a plant he spent nothing on, how must God feel about the half million inhabitants of Nineveh?

- He put them there. And God gave them life and daily cared for them.
- And God is not only worried about the people He spent a lot of bother on, He says that He is even worried about the cattle.
- Why may the Lord not keep the large city with its people and animals alive?

The crux of this sermon from the book of Jonah is that the Lord already predicted here in the Old Testament that the salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ would not remain limited only to the people of Israel.

- He also cares about the salvation of the heathen nations outside of Israel.

The Council of God follows its own ways. Ways that are not always acceptable to us humans. Therefore we also find ourselves back in Jonah.

- How many previous times were we dissatisfied with and rebellious against the way in which the Lord executes His Will?
- We would not admit it but carefully reflect. Is it not possible anger in our heart that causes our disillusionment when our plans go wrong?
- We so easily become disillusioned about anything in life because we in fact feel powerless because we cannot change the Will of God – like Jonah.

*Sometimes we rebel openly. How many of us have not already openly told somebody that at times it is difficult to believe (have faith)?*

Do we have a reason to be aggravated? No, Just like Jonah we have no reason.

- Just like him we are sent and we have the calling to comply with the will of God.
- And just as him we ought to be satisfied with the disposals of the Will of God, even should it collide with our small human planning.

Our salvation also lies with this question: do you have reason to be aggravated?

- We have no reason to be upset, but God has.
- God has the right to anger because we have betrayed and abandoned our Creator – and because we still daily do it by our life dissatisfaction and rebelliousness.
- He has right to wrath because we continually are in resistance towards Him and His disposals over us.

Therefore God burst into wrath over our sins and rebellion – but luckily not against us personally!

- The Lord Jesus Christ bore the full wrath of God for all our injustices, so that we also may face God in righteousness.
- Even more, because as the Lord teaches Jonah here the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ did not remain limited to Israel only, it also went to the heathens. To us.
- Therefore God today asks you whether you really have reason to be upset about His disposals over you. Do you truly have reason for revolt?

Then so much more than Jonah must we stand in shame.

- Because we have received so much more grace. We are those who are outside, who, without any earnings from our side, received part in Jesus Christ and His effects. Every day we experience the love of God in the greatest of measures. God still cares even although we are in revolt because His Will differs from our will.

Beloved, listen to all the Grace God bestows upon us.

- We must then now improve and also come to full conversion.
- Let us always have peace wit God because we have no reason for anger due to all the things He disposes over us – even if it seems to us that the fulfillment of God's Council over our land or public life or over whatever is not good.

Believe and listen to what the Holy Spirit of God wants us to do under the specific circumstances.

- The grace of God and love is so great that it cannot be measured.
- If He could save Nineveh when they repented, how much more not us as well, as we have Christ and they did on even have Him.

Do we have reason for anger? No, only reason to the greatest thankfulness.

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 146:1

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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