

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2014

MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 84:4

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 119:1

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 us men and 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 at 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 in 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 81:9

Law

Psalm: 81:9

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 36:1

Scripture reading: Nehemiah 6

Scripture text: Nehemiah 6:11

And I said, "Should such a man as I flee? And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!"

(Nehemiah 6:11)

Fear is one of satan's most powerful weapons he uses in attempting to destroy the kingdom of God.

- Fear of death is known to all of us.
- Fear of war.
- Fear of pain.

But even under threat of all these things we always must see ourselves facing the Lord.

- Each one of us receives a life-calling from Him and He protects us so that we can execute this calling.
- We need not every time back off due to the threats of people.
- As long as we can answer towards the Lord we must continue, no matter what the people think or say about us.

Nehemiah was in this difficult position.

- He was a chief cupbearer to the king in the land where they were in exile.
- Here he received the message that the Jews who accompanied Ezra back to Jerusalem have not yet done anything towards rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah was so upset about this that the king thought him to be ill and asked after his health.

- After Nehemiah told the king what was bothering him, he obtained letters authorising him to go and do the work.
- He even obtained horsemen and a letter to the royal wood supplier in Judah to be given all the wood needed for the repairs.

This task of Nehemiah is a divine task.

- Not only to satisfy his own mind does he repair the walls of Jerusalem.
- He does it because Jerusalem is the city of his God and also because this city has to be kept in good repair to the glory of the Lord.

The satan was still the same and therefore terribly upset by this matter.

- These people and their city is in the Old Testament the symbol of the church of God.
- The repair of the city walls of Jerusalem thus means to the satan that the church is being repaired!
- Should the church be repaired it means the repairing of faith amongst the people.

There is nothing else that is such a threat to satan than when, amongst the people, their faith improves and their service to God improves.

The satan regards growth in faith and a threat towards his work of destruction.

- Therefore he attacks the believers and tries to break down their faith.
- The satan again selects amongst the believers, especially those who are leaders in matters of faith.

The best example is of course the temptations of the satan towards Jesus Christ.

- The Lord Jesus was the most important of all people and therefore the attacks against Him were the most severe of all times.

Nehemiah is here in a similar position than the Lord Jesus Christ.

- By this conduct he also is a similar style-type than the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Therefore the satan wants to eliminate him – Nehemiah had to be removed out of his way.

The Bible especially describes the work method of the satan so that we could recognise it wherever we come across it.

- The satan works tension and fear in aid of breaking down your faith.
- He does it by causing tension in human relations.
- He also obtains the permission of the Lord to wreck other matters, per example our money and heath matters.
- But his strongpoint is working through human relationships and the matters pertaining thereto.

Immediately Nehemiah has enemies.

- Not just simple people – they are co-rulers appointed by the Persian government as governors.
- They are thus very dangerous people should they bear stories to the king. And this is exactly what is now taking place here.

The devil is very upset because Nehemiah is back in Jerusalem.

- He (the devil) managed that the hostile disposition of the people around Jerusalem prevented Ezra from doing anything.
- Now the Lord supplied another to continue with the work – somebody with a greater mind and organisational ability than Ezra.

Only one way out remained to the devil:

- He had to get rid of Nehemiah.

- He had to neutralise him.

Then Sanballat and Geshem sent a message to Nehemiah:

- Come, let us meet together in the villages in the plain of Ono.
- They wanted to conduct discussions.
- It sounds like the politics of our times because the approach is exactly the same.

But now it is also that there are times and occasions in life that you do not conduct discussions. Those are times when you face the almighty God of heaven and earth bearing a very specific command.

- You then cannot, via discussions, submit to people, because you and me cannot change the commands of God.
- This is also Nehemiah's viewpoint of the matter.
- He is facing God.
 - He owes his responsibility to the Lord.
 - He has nothing to say to Sanballat and Geshem.

What shows that these two enemies were not planning to conduct discussions is the fact that the Bible teaches that they were planning to harm Nehemiah.

- They planned to have an accident happen on the way to the discussions in which Nehemiah would then have been killed.
- Nobody would suspect them as they were so peaceful and just wanted to conduct discussions!

Because his priorities were sound Nehemiah was able to see through their evil. Very politely he put his case: He, because his work was at that stage the most important, could not attend.

- The work in Jerusalem demands his presence.
- Let us put it more understandable: He sent them a message that he was unable to come because at that stage the Lord wanted him to be in Jerusalem and that he rather obeys God, to him this was the most important.

But the satan has a lot of stamina.

- Four times he messages for Nehemiah to attend.
- By this persistence he pretends to be worried about the good name of Nehemiah.
- What would the king of Persia say should he hear that the people say that you are busy revolting against him?

The truth is that Sanballat himself started this rumor. The other people did not say so. (2:19)

Then there are also the co-operators of satan inside the church as well.

- The false prophets come to Nehemiah.
- Here where he suspects it in the least.

The attack also comes very enticingly. Shemaiah tells Nehemiah how vital he is at this stage because without him the repairs to the walls could not continue.

- But Nehemiah must keep in mind that at night killers may arrive to put him to death.
- He suggests that the two of them, at night take refuge in the temple.

Should somebody publicly sent by the Lord now hide in secret? How does that work? , "Should such a man as I flee? And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life?

Thereby Nehemiah confessed that there are certain boundaries in life you do not cross.

- He belonged just as little in the temple than in the plain of Ono.
- He immediately realised that should he went with to the temple a charge of trespassing would be levied against him.
- That carried one punishment only: the death penalty. There was also no other way out.

The satan works like that.

- Should he first have you scared then he would want you to do things causing your guilt of sin to multiply.
- Should you not be careful he causes you to make a transgressor out of yourself!

Somebody like me must build the wall.

- Somebody like me must publicly work and testify. Somebody like me here points to all of us!
- We must not hide in the church when God expects us to act.
- We may also not keep silent about our faith when the Lord wants us to speak out.

Indeed the Lord calls us to strong actions.

- You never submit to wrong things or discuss it in order of reaching a compromise somewhere between right and wrong.
- Facing God you only forward His interest.

The Example hereof is Jesus Christ.

- He never compromises sin with justness.
- This then is indeed the reason why He was murdered.

He supports the interests of God so strongly that the people hate Him.

- Also not all of them, only those who do not love the truth very much.
- Fur His justness they crucify Him to death.

But a lot more than what we saw with the eyes took place.

- He also always denied giving in to the satan, because the satan always wanted something to happen to Him, so that He could not fulfil the salvation work God sent Him to do.
- Therefore the satan offered Christ kingship over the entire world should Jesus worship him. He wants Jesus to jump from the roof of the temple.

But Jesus never falters.

- He loves the poor.
- He attempts helping the sinners who want to improve.

But the Lord Jesus never reconciled Himself with the sin.

- Somebody like Him did not hide from murderers in the temple.
- Somebody like Him rather makes a whip and beats all the sinners out of the temple.
- Somebody like Him rather dies for the truth.
 - He also dies so that people like us may do what God asks from us.
 - Because He strengthens us with the power and the presence of God the Holy Spirit!

Beloved, let us thus live out our faith and stand steadfast for the truth like people who do not hide from the satan and his attackers.

Let us live like people who do not budge to the wrong. Like people who overcome the evil.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 119:11

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

Dr MJ Du Plessis
 Helping Reverend
 Reformed Church Clanwilliam
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 Scripture: Modern King James Version