

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 7 OCTOBER 2012 MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 34:8

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 116:1, 10

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 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 on 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 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 51:5

Law

Psalm: 51:5

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 66:7

Scripture: Zechariah 4

Text: Zechariah 4:6

"So he said to me, "this is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit' ", says the Lord Almighty".

Every believer sometimes becomes despondent.

- Illness, stress, unemployment or uncertainty causes us to loose heart and fall into doubt.
- In the same way the church as a whole may become despondent because of coming under pressure.

The question then arises: What now? What must I do to escape this fear or stress? We often say that only a miracle can save us.

See how this night vision of Zechariah reveals the work of God the Holy Spirit in the church:

- 1. The Holy Spirit at work.**
- 2. The Holy Spirit works in me.**
- 3. The Holy Spirit changes the church.**

1. The Holy Spirit at work

In this passage we are told how the Lord works in His church through the Holy Spirit.

- The olive trees that supply a constant flow of oil symbolize the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus.
- It symbolizes especially how the work of the Holy Spirit flows forth from it.
- The never ending flow of golden oil that feeds the lamps symbolizes the presence and the working of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord does not build His kingdom through great miracles that cause amazement nor by might or power.

- He builds His church (that means the true believers) through His Spirit. The Holy Spirit works with our gifts and our responsibilities.
- Each of us must quietly continue his struggle against the devil and his temptations.
- We need not do spectacular things because we work with an inner strength that God gives us.
- We must resist evil by living the life of a redeemed person.

Zechariah is asked: "What do you see?" He sees a golden lampstand with a bowl feeding the flame. This lampstand has seven lights. To Zechariah this was not new. He knew it well.

- Such a lampstand stood in the tabernacle.
- In Solomon's temple there were ten of them.
- In the temple they were all lit each evening.
- It was the high priest's function to see to it that all remained alight through the night.

Next to the lampstand stood two olive trees. **They represent eternal light and life** because they feed the lamps. See Exodus 27:20:

"Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning."

In Zechariah's night vision the metaphor changes for in this vision there is no priest to keep the lamps supplied with oil. The lamp in the vision is fed by the trees.

The meaning is:

- The lampstand is the church.
 - The church is always represented by a lampstand.
 - In Revelation 1:20 it is written that the Lord Jesus has seven lampstands in His hand and these seven lampstands are the seven churches

A lampstand is made to give light – the church must therefore bring light.

- The church must thrive and spread the Gospel.
- This the church can do! This vision shows that the church is founded and lives on through the Spirit of the Lord

This brings us to the truth of the temple. The Spirit of the Lord is in the church.

- The Lord Himself carries us through time.
- The church has the Lord as its source and through the work of the Lord's Spirit the church continues.
- God's presence is symbolized by the number seven – the seven lamps of the lampstand.

Bear in mind that this prophecy deals with two eras.

- The first is the time of the temple in Jerusalem. The Spirit of the Lord compelled the Israelites to rebuild the temple.
 - Under Zechariah's leadership the temple was rebuilt in the sixth year of King Darius' reign. (Ezra 6)
 - Later, under Nehemiah, the Spirit of God moved the people to rebuilding the city wall within 52 days

- The second era is that of the New Jerusalem of which we all shall be part. The place where the Lord shall live over and with us: Revelation 1:12-13 **"I turned round to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash round his chest."**

The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches and the seven lampstands are the seven churches. To the angel of the church of Ephesus write: "These are the words of Him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands." (Revelation 1:20-2:1)

"Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place." (Revelation 2:5)

2. The Holy Spirit works in me

The Holy Spirit emphasizes the responsibility that each of us has in the church of the Lord.

- The Holy Spirit did not make the city walls of Jerusalem appear miraculously.
- He worked in the hearts of the people so that they rebuilt the walls

Let us for a moment reconsider the situation as it was then:

- The Israelites had stagnated – their religion had come to a halt.
- But through the prophet's preaching of the Word of the Lord – these night visions – the people were invigorated and spurred into action.
- The Samaritans tried to thwart the work but the Spirit of the Lord worked in the heart of the king and Cyrus commanded that the temple be rebuilt. (Ezra 6:3)
- In the heart of Tattenai the governor the Spirit worked circumspection so that he did not interfere with the building of God's church.

The Spirit of the Lord worked quietly.

- No crashing of thunder or earthquakes.
- A heathen reading these chronicles would not see the almight of God the Holy Spirit at work.

This passage refers not only to Zechariah and his time. The Holy Spirit is still at work – in our congregation too. And He still works as mightily as then!

We must therefore test ourselves in the light of the working of the Holy Spirit and what He expects of us.

We must start with ourselves.

- The Lord reveals that during the last days the church will become totally worldly.
- We who live in these days must guard against submitting more to the pressures of the world than being obedient to the commands of God's love.
- We shall do wrong only if we fail to listen to the Holy Spirit when He is at work in our hearts.

Every true believer will admit frankly that our sins are an expression of our resistance to the working of the Holy Spirit in us.

- Here we do not stand alone for that is exactly as it was with the Jews when Zechariah preached his sermons to them.
- But the fact that Zechariah preached these sermons is proof that God forgives these sins when we show remorse and repent.

The Lord shows us the way of overcoming our depression.

- We must listen to what God tells us and do what He asks of us.
- The Holy Spirit teaches us certain things and when we obey Him our lives and that of the church will be correct.

There will be a real transformation in us. There will not be might and power that will show the transformation in us to other people.

- We shall only pray and study the Bible more often.
- We shall voluntarily attend church services to worship God and receive His blessing.
- We shall think more deeply about the purpose of our life.
- We shall put the glory of God first in our life and thought.
- We shall not resist the demands the Lord makes on us and not refuse to listen to our conscience

The people also thought that they could rebuild the temple by fighting – and they could not do anything – aggression does not go with the responsibility that is born from our love for the Lord.

Hence the Lord's message:

"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty".

3. The Lord changes the church

That brings us to our church – our congregation. Ask yourself the question – are we truly church in all that the Lord expects of us?

Are we truly church? The answer is yes, we still are a church although we have deteriorated in some respects.

- The Lord will not correct those aspects where we have deteriorated with miracles and mighty revelations – the Lord works quietly through His Holy Spirit.
- We must only listen to the Voice of the Holy Spirit
 - Everybody will then know what he/she must do and we shall know how to pray and praise the Lord – not only as a family at home but all together as a congregation.
 - Every church member must do his duty towards the Lord. That is all.

The Holy Spirit works with and in the church.

- The Holy Spirit works with people – you and I – because Christ died for people.
- The death of Jesus Christ assures us of our salvation
 - This gives us our responsibility because by Jesus Christ's death on the cross the Holy Spirit was given to us.
 - The Holy Spirit makes us responsible in our faith.

In this night vision Zechariah sees the capstone being brought out to shouts of "**God bless it! God bless it!**"

- This capstone is Jesus Christ and His work. The capstone keeps open the door leading to the inside of the temple.
- The Lord Jesus opens the way to the kingdom of God for us and the Holy Spirit leads us through the door to God's sanctuary.

The Holy Spirit is the oil that keeps the flame of our faith and worship alive.

- That is why the Lord Jesus calls Him the other comforter.
- The Holy Spirit keeps us from despair. He teaches us the purpose of our life.
- He explains to us why we must suffer. He also guides us through our suffering.

But this is not all. The Lord Jesus also tells us that the Holy Spirit will **guide us in all truth.**

- This is a warning to all believers – it means that we have no excuse for sinning – we know what we do because we have the truth of the Holy Spirit in us.
- The Holy Spirit also lets us rise up out of the sins we do.
- He enables us to live on despite the wrongs in our past because we know that the Lord has forgiven us.

If we all have this attitude our church will be better. Therefore our lives must show plainly that the Holy Spirit is the Driving Force in our life.

- To testify to this my life must be good.
- Then my spiritual life will thrive.

Remember, daily repentance and daily regeneration is not a process that is done in a day.

- It is a process that the Holy Spirit works in us our whole life.
- But the longer the Holy Spirit works in us the brighter the flame of our faith and of our testimony shall burn.

Amen

Closing Prayer

Closing Psalm: 33:3

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be merciful to you.

The Lord turn His countenance to you and give you peace.

Amen

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Scripture NIV