

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 1 JUNE 2014 MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 145:1, 5, 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 149:1, 2

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 40:4

Law

Psalm: 40:4

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 147:4

Scripture reading: Zechariah 13

Scripture text: Zechariah 13:4, 9

"And it shall be in that day that every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies; they will not wear a robe of coarse hair to deceive.

(Zechariah 13:4)

I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The Lord is my God.' "

(Zechariah 13:9)

The church on earth shall experience a time when hypocrites in the guise of humility and truth will despise God.

- It is prophesied that there will be times when the church falls into decay.

But there will also be times when the Lord will purify His church.

- A day will come when a false prophet's own mother will kill him for telling lies in the Name of the Lord.

Such things will happen because it is not just anybody who can stand before God and say that he will preach the Lord's Counsel.

- This can occur only when the Lord calls somebody to do so.
- When the Lord says: "They are my people!"
- Only then can we say: "The Lord, my God!"

This passage also makes it clear that the unrighteous have no hope of surviving the judgment of God.

We shall consider this revelation from three sides:

1. **Present day idolatry**
2. **The church repents.**
3. **Where do we fit in?**

1. **Present day idolatry**

The church that became sinful shall be made perfect again.

- Hence verse 1 predicts a day of grace.
- There will be an open fountain.

The meaning of this prophecy is that all sin will be removed.

To us, as believers of the New Testament, the preaching of Christ already starts with these words for no salvation can come about without the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Although it is written in the Old Testament the Lord says there that this process of cleansing of sin shall be done by the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Read again chapter 12 verse 10 where the Lord predicts that He will pour out on the house of David His Spirit of grace and that they will look on Me, the one they have pierced.

The fountain that will be opened in Jerusalem predicts the Lord Jesus.

- He will cleanse the house of David of its sins
- This is a pointer to the baptism with water.
- It also ties in with the conversation the Lord Jesus Christ had with the Samaritan woman when He tells her that He gives living water that will ensure that she will never be thirsty again unto eternity.

This passage in the Old Testament speaks of the ministry of salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ until His Second Coming.

In this chapter the Lord warns especially against idolatry and false prophets.

- This does not mean only that we may not kneel down before wooden statues and images.
- It also means that we may not practice any modern form of it – that is to replace the true faith with a false one.
- We may never twist the truth in the Name of the Lord or add things to our religion that the Lord excluded.

Present day idolatry is to put yourself above God.

- We sin because we refuse to do what God demands of us.
- It is also idolatry to worship and glorify ourselves.
- Arrogance is idolatry because an arrogant person is his own god!

Verse 2 goes further:

"It shall be in that day," says the Lord of hosts, "that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land.
(Zechariah 13:2)

- The Lord says that on that day He will remove the names of the idols from the land.
- Together with the idols the false prophets will be taken away.
- The false prophets are the people who teach the people a false religion.

- They are also called the prophets of the impure spirit.

The impure spirit is the opposite of the Spirit of God that the Lord will pour out on His people.

- The Spirit of God works in the hearts of His people.
- The Spirit moves them to expel the impure spirit and all its works.

It is put here in the language of the Old Testament but that is what happened when Jesus was crucified.

- After His ascension He sent us the Holy Spirit to guide us in truth and righteousness.
- What else is this than the expulsion of the impure spirit out of the life of each true believer and out of the church?

Listen now how earnestly the Lord warns His church.

- We should not accept that every prophet is a true prophet of the Lord.
- The Lord warns us here that there are prophets who only use the office of prophet as a means of spreading lies and practicing impurities.

2. The church repents

It would appear here that the spirit of God had left all the prophets in those days.

In Jeremiah 5:30+31 a similar situation is described;

**30 "An astonishing and horrible thing Has been committed in the land:
31 The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?
(Jeremiah 5:30-310**

Apparently no true prophet could be found in those days.

In verse 3 we read of a change:

**"It shall come to pass that if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who begot him will say to him, 'You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of the Lord.' And his father and mother who begot him shall thrust him through when he prophesies.
(Zechariah 13:3)**

Here the Lord tells us that a time will come when the church returns to the right road.

- This will not occur without much sorrow for those believers who want to return to the Lord.
- The fight for the Lord's glory may be very painful.
- You may have to fight those who are dearest to you – your own children.
 - We read here that if someone wants to prophesy his own parents will forbid him to do so
 - And if he does prophesy they will kill him because he told lies in the Name of the Lord
 - He may speak only the truth about the Lord.

Clearly this can only occur after the Lord has driven out all lies.

The false prophets will be ashamed of their lies. We must understand what is meant their being ashamed.

- The Bible does not mean that they repent and are ashamed.
- No, they will remain silent because of fear because in those days the truth only may be spoken.

Verse 3 refers to Deuteronomy 18:20 and 13:6 where the Lord says that any prophet who dares to speak falsely in the Name of the Lord must be put to death.

'But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.'

(Deuteronomy 18:20)

"If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, secretly entices you, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers,

(Deuteronomy 13:6)

Verse 3 says that they shall not put on a prophet's garment of hair in order to deceive.

- The prophets wore robes of hair when they prophesied in the Name of the Lord.
 - We read in 2 Kings 1:8 that Elijah wore a garment of hair when he prophesied to the messengers sent by Ahaziah.
 - In the Gospel of Matthew we read that John the Baptist also wore garments of camel's hair.
- The text simply says that no false prophet will be able to disguise himself as a messenger from the Lord to preach in the Name of the Lord false lies to the people.
- The text accepts that there were such people who proclaimed falsely and they were part of the church.
- But a day shall arrive when they will be exposed.
 - The Spirit of the Lord will make them feel so uncomfortable in the church that they will deny having prophesied.
 - They will deny it and say that they are farmers.

But the wounds on their bodies will expose them

- In those days the prophets inflicted wounds on themselves to prove their religious fervor.
- An example we find in the history of the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel
 - who slashed themselves with swords and spears. (1 Kings 18:28)

We see from this passage that the servants of the Lord can also err and become like the idolaters.

- They can become lost in darkness because of the impure spirit – so badly that they bear the marks of the false prophets.

- The evil will also enter the lives and work of the leaders of the church.

Against this we must be watchful! We must be part of the church that is brought to repentance by God.

Thereafter the Lord tells us how He is going to purify His church.

- There will be a Shepherd for His flock but the sword of the Lord will strike him down.
- These words describe the suffering of Jesus Christ.

What is the meaning of the words: "**Awake, O sword**"?

- It is an expression used by the prophets to show that God's Counsel determines their conduct.
- But it also means that God's Counsel determines that they must kill.

It is clearly a pronouncement of judgment.

- The church's repentance does not come with glory but with judgment.
- Evil will be destroyed.
- The sheep will be scattered and two thirds will perish.

This ties in with the earlier prophecy that the Spirit of God will be poured out over the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

- The Holy Spirit together with the judgment of God, will destroy all evil in the church.

This happens in two ways:

- Until the Second Coming God uses members of the church to remove from His church those who scorn Him.
- At the Second Coming God Himself will execute the last judgment and then punishment and salvation shall occur in the Name of Jesus Christ.

3. Where do we fit in?

Those members of the church who are truly guided by the Holy Spirit are concerned about the glory of God.

- Look at the matter as described in the passage we have read. It must be a matter of great importance that moves a father and a mother to kill a child because of his false religion.
- The last verse tells us that the purifying process goes through the church like a fire.
 - As when gold and silver is purified in a hot oven.

All those who pass the test are addressed by God with the words:

- **"They are my people!"**
- Those are the people who are justified by God and may stand before Him.

This passage also preaches predestination.

See what is written.

- It is not written that the people will first call on God and that He then named them His people.

- No, God first names them His people and they then answer "The Lord is our God".

Let us now look at the implementing of this passage: We are chosen.

- That is why we are gathered in church.
- That is why we must all answer God's call and say that we are His people.
- We must not answer with words only.
 - Our life must be a continual proclamation that we know and worship the Triune God in our life.
 - All we do must accord with what the Bible teaches us.

Seeing that this passage refers to parents and children, let us aim our implementing at that.

- Do we as parents wear the garment of God's true prophet when we teach our children?
- Are we truly honest with them?
- Or do we commit all sorts of sins in which our children will follow us in our footsteps.

We shall stand before the Lord for what we taught our children – not for what they became, but what we taught them while in our home.

- Do we lovingly discipline our children when they do wrong as the Bible expects of us?
- Or do we just leave them to carry on because we wish to keep the peace.
 - We always hear arguments that times have changed and that children today live differently and this we should accept.
 - Yes, there are things that we can accept, but do we accept things that God demands of us to reject?

Children, how do you justify your lifestyle before the Lord?

- Are you sure that the Lord would be satisfied with the friends you keep and that he is happy with the way they live and the influence they have?
- If not, then we are like the people spoken of in this passage who put on the prophets garment of hair to tell lies so that they may be believed.

A day will come when we all stand before the Lord

- Then He will judge all these things.
- That day we shall stand naked in our sins.
- We shall not be able to hide anything nor ourselves.
- What will then happen to us?

What does this chapter in the Bible ask of us?

- We must rebuke and discipline everyone.
- We must banish all false religion out of the church.
- The Holy Spirit guides and drives us to do so.
- We must also sincerely faithfully serve and worship the Lord.

Let us do so earnestly because with His death Jesus sanctified and purified our lives.

Let us keep it that way

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 150:1

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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