

REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 11 May 2008: MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 119:8

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 105:2

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 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 catholic* 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 32:4

Law

Psalm: 32:4

Prayer:

- **Doxology**
- **Worship**
- **Confession of sins**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Gratitude**
- **Prayer for the need of the congregation for 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 16:5

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10

Text: 1 Corinthians 10:11

“Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of world are come.”

Astonishing is the amount of trouble the Lord goes to in order to teach and prepare us for all the things that will happen at the end of time.

- The Lord is very concerned about the state of our religion and because of that, the Holy Spirit, long ago, caused happenings (as well as mistakes) from the lives of earlier believers to be written down for us in order that we do not repeat those same mistakes.

There is a reason for the Lord caring for us in such an exceptional way in this instance.

- We are living in the most important and dangerous times concerning the coming of the Lords' Kingdom.
- It is the time of the greatest distortion of faith.
- In our times the assault of the devil is at its fiercest.
- For those of us, having the ability to perceive the spiritual world, his work of destruction has become very clear.

One of the most devastating things that can happen to a believer is having a false assurance.

- The Lord here says: those thinking that they are standing, must be careful that they do not come to a fall.
- This means that we can become so complacent about our religious life that we could already be busy with wrongful things without realising it.

This matter may also have another result!

- We may be arrogant, thinking that we do know what is right, but because we do not always consider principles to the fullest extent, testing them to God's demands, we are often completely in the wrong.
- We think that we are capable of managing sin, but we are not really able to do so.

It sounds like the Bible is contradicting itself teaching that somebody, overestimating his own ability, may come to a fall because the predestination, in fact, teaches that we are saved in the Lord Jesus, no matter how sinful we are.

- The Bible is not contradicting itself as the Bible also teaches that there are people, not sanctified in Christ, finding themselves amongst the believers.
- This is where this chapter fits in.

Even if we receive incalculable mercy in Jesus Christ, it does not mean that we may recklessly storm ahead in life.

- Nowhere are we absolved from the responsibilities of our faith towards the Lord.
- Our lives, as well as our attitude towards life, should attest to, and prove that we are redeemed and that we appreciate this redemption.

Therefore this chapter teaches what people, who do not truly know God, look like.

- It describes how they conduct themselves so that we can understand why they, in fact, should be cast into hell.

- Also that we, in our turn, can be warned to steer clear from their way of life.

In verse 1 Paul starts telling the Greeks about who and what the church in the Old Testament was.

- The church was the Jewish community,
- They had the privilege to be God's own property and continually enjoy His grace and protection.

But some of them were stripped from these privileges.

- The reason: they were idolaters whilst they were in the church community.
- God thus had to sift his people in order to remove all those, who did not live a life of repentance, from His people.

In verse 2 the meaning of this is further explained – so that we can see exactly where we fit in (example)!

- They were baptised in the cloud and in the sea.
- They thus carried the mark that they were God's people and that they were following Him, just as we and our children, who are baptised, carry the same marking.

Here the Bible teaches something very important, namely that these people already were under the care of Jesus Christ.

- This is not described in Exodus but here in Corinthians.
- The rock that gave water told that Jesus would save them from death, just as the water saved them from dying of thirst.

The people must have known God very well because God often powerfully revealed Himself to them.

- Many times He saved them from certain death
- But they continued setting their own standards: every time something was not to their own liking they bitterly rose against God and wanted to kill Moses because he was the intermediary between them and the Lord.

Verse 6 reads:

“Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.”

We have to reform ourselves from such sins as we can now see what the Lord does to church people, who keep on complaining when life is not going according to their taste, and often as a result of their own sins, confront the church.

- Therefore the Lord commands us to live a life of repentance and to serve the Lord in times of prosperity and adversity.
- When affliction comes upon us it always has a result: it either strengthens your faith and you serve God better, or causes you to harden and rise against God.

The desire to break with what is right is living in all of us and it is often exactly that which causes us pain. This is why verse 6 says:

“Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.”

Look what happened to them because they desired things not befitting the people of God.

James 1:14-15 fits very well here:

“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

Let us look, for the sake of honesty, at what the Jews actually did to upset the Lord.

- They ate, drank and whored.
- Thus they did exactly what we are doing today.
- They did not commit any sins that in the meanwhile became outdated. We are also not committing any sins that did not exist in their times.

It was expected from the people to live a hundred percent honourable life and to show with a good life that they belonged to God.

- This is the exact same demand set to us as well.

We know that the happening referred to is specifically the history of Exodus 32.

- The same words appearing here are also written there.
- They made a calf out of gold and afterwards sat down to eat, drink and got up to indulge in revelry.
- Part of this revelry was possibly the fertility rituals of the heathendom.
- God took a very grave view about this matter: He says that they were worshipping the golden calf.

Look at what the principle is: If we do the wrong things, knowing that it is wrong, we are turning our backs on God.

- The Lord does not ignore that.
- That is why he caused the death of three thousand Israelites on that day.

The people fell into a wrong attitude of having confidence in their own insight and smothered in it.

- But, in His omnipresence, God is aware of what we are doing – it does not cause Him to change His expectations about us.
- We often forget that the Lord sees what we are doing and that He shall punish us should we persist in our wrongdoing.

This is the nub of this sermon:

- It angers the Lord very much when we do scandalous things.
- He does not approve of us doing dishonourable deeds – especially when we try to justify those things.
- It not only angers the Lord because a sinner is turning a deaf ear, for should there be no repentance, God will destroy such a person.

Many people are of the opinion that the Lord cannot do anything to us at present – He has to wait for the advent of Christ before He can punish us.

This is untrue! God can exterminate us in this life if He so wants – the same as he smote three thousand Israelites to death on that day.

Look at the meaning of that piece of history forming the background of this sermon.

- Israel is en-route from Egypt to the Promised Land
- Symbolically they are being led by the Lord Jesus Christ out of a world flourishing in sin and disobedience to the perfect Kingdom of God.
 - But there is also the point of comparison in that the obedience or disobedience of these people determines that they are on their way to a certain address.

- The person that rebels against God can never expect a better life where God is not present – that is in the hell.

Verse 10 tells that later when they had to enter the Promised Land they sent out spies.

- Only two spies reported that they could enter by the power of God.
- The other spies not only reported that they could not enter the land, they also spread a bad rumour about the land.
- Numbers 14 tells that the Lord, in a plague, swept them away from His countenance.

Suddenly the apostle is even graver than before.

- We are living at the end of time –
 - close to the final arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ and the establishment of his kingdom.
 - Close to heaven– but also close to hell.

What do we make of this?

**“Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of world are come.”
(1 Corinthians 10:11)**

Be warned: the end is here!

This passage sets out the judgement and mercy very, very sharply.

- The people of ancient times have already been redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ
- And the disobedient have already collided with Him!
- Seeing that, prior to the coming, they have already gone to hell because they thought that God is blind and unable to punish sin, how much worse are they due to collide with God after He, through His cross, openly confirmed his power over sin and death.

The same stands true about mercy. Those that were redeemed were not without sin, but their faithfulness to their religion brought them, at the end, the love of God.

Now God is standing in front of us. His message is: You are living close to the Advent! Be careful that you do not fall!

- The Lord is not threatening, He is underlining His mercy: He is trusting us to the extent that we, during this important hour, may serve his Kingdom simply by being obedient and proving it by living a clean life.
- We can thus vindicate the glory of God.

It is written in verse 13:

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able;

This is the power and mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ wherein all of us are standing. We are receiving great power and we have to make use of it – look at the example of ancient Israel!

The verse continues:

“but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye be able to bear it.”

See how we still stand guilty before His mercy.

- Through Jesus Christ we have the power to live righteously.

- In Jesus Christ the kingdom of God also belongs to us, as that will be our place of residence.
- This is our real consolation in our life or death (or whenever we are experiencing the death of our beloved ones)

This example is not only written down to demonstrate the wrath of God.

- Read it properly and you will find that it is also written down to demonstrate God's mercy towards us, in aid of strengthening us, so that we must continue with the righteous life, demanded from us by Jesus Christ.
- The Lord is requesting this from us especially as we are living at the end of times – a time wherein God is asking for strong people, who understand, and are serving Him with all their power and understanding.

Amen.

Closing prayer

Closing Psalm: 86:2

The Lord bless and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you, the Lord turn his countenance to you and give you peace.

Amen

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11 May 2008 (morning)
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