

REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 17 MAY 2009: EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 68:1

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 of praise: Hymn 1-2:1+2

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

Hymn 5-3:3

Scripture reading: 1 Corinthians 6

Scripture text: 1 Corinthians 6:20 and Heidelberg Catechism Lord's day 16.

You were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.

Corinth was a lively city, a place where people did much wrong.

- In this large city there was also a small Christian church.
- But this little congregation in the great city of Corinth did not remain pure in all they did.
- The apostle Paul saw how their lives had become darkened by sin.

The Lord does not reject them

- He causes this loving admonition to be written to them. In this admonition He again explains His saving grace,
- **He explains why it was necessary that Christ abase Himself unto death.**

The Lord pays a very high price for sinners so that they might become His property – property that may not again fall into the devil's hands. The price is the life of His Son!

They have all heard of people who were saved out of the most ugly sins, as they had all heard it in the preaching:

When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at His feet weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is – that she is a sinner." Jesus answered him. "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. "Two men owed money to a certain money-lender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he cancelled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt cancelled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. Then He turned towards the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven – for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." (Luke 7: 36-47)

Two issues stand out sharply:

- **Her many sins have been forgiven**

And

- **Now which of them will love him more? Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt cancelled."**

For people (therefore also congregations / churches) who are like this woman the Lord Jesus went to the cross. We are all bought at a very high price out of our sins into the limelight of grace of the Lord Jesus!

Consider first the absolute demand that God put in His Counsel – these are all matters we do not understand, but which we know because the Lord revealed them to us and which He requires of us to believe:

- His Son must die – nobody else!
- He must satisfy the justice of God – in other words:
 - He must bear the punishment for the sin of millions of sinners to the very end
 - He must be punished so that God might no longer be angry with not a single one of them!

Then consider for a moment the people who are redeemed with this high price. Who and what are they?

- By nature they are slaves. They are not people with a royal bearing.
- All of them are slaves of that great slave trader – the devil.
 - With filthy lies he inveigles them into his power
 - He makes them do what pleases them and what fits in with their sinful nature – all things that are demeaning to God and which do not provide lasting joy.

Someone who does not have an appreciation of his sinfulness cannot be saved.

- Someone who does not understand that every person in his sins is on the devil's slave market where he is sold from the one sin to the other, does not have a need to be freed therefrom.
- Every person must therefore decide for himself whether he has a slave mentality which causes him to be locked into sensual pleasures and attractions which do not pay any dividends beyond the grave.

A slave, who does not want to be one, endures terrible mental anguish because he is compelled to be what he does not want to be!

- So it is with someone who is caught up in sin and who wants to escape from it.
- His conscience is not smothered by the devil's way of thinking and doing.

It is to such people that the Lord sends His message of salvation:

- It is to such people that He causes the apostle to write: You were bought!
- You are no longer on the slave market of sin.
- You have been redeemed to walk free in God's eternal grace.

Only such people will understand the meaning of the word: **bought**, and only such people will be moved by it.

What did the price that was paid consist of? The true answer is: God's love.

God's love for us is the reason why His justice exacted vengeance for our sins on His Son.

- We confess it as follows: Because, by reason of the justice and truth of God, satisfaction for our sins could be made no otherwise than by the death of the Son of God.
- The Holy Spirit caused it to be written as follows: **For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,** (Romans 8:3)

It sounds so easy when said or read from the Bible. But consider what it encompasses:

- The Lord Jesus paid our debt with God
- He bore the weight of God's wrath
- He conquered sin and freed us from the shackles of sin
- He freed us from the slave shackles of the devil
- He reconciled us with God
- He opened the doors of the eternal life in God's kingdom for us.

Because God loves us, sinners, His Son had to pay this terrible price. He had to pay with His life - again simple to repeat because we have been saying this for centuries.

But reflect again on the meaning of these words: The Lord Jesus died for our sins.

- We all are afraid of pain. He was scourged and hit with the fist – cut by the blows.
- There was no medicine or anaesthetic. Everything was aimed at inflicting as much pain as possible.

We are never forsaken by the Lord.

- No matter how poor or sick we might be – even when we die – the Lord is always with us. No matter how much stress we endure – He cares for us and carries us through all those trials.
- But with the Lord Jesus it was very different at the moment of purchase! **About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachtani?” – which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”**
(Matthew 27:46)
- Nobody can comprehend this moment for we are never forsaken by God. No one of us was ever in a position where there was no presence or grace of God – but the Lord Jesus was!

Mercifully for us there came a moment when God was satisfied that there was suffered enough – He forgives us all our sins: the high price has been paid in full.

Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” (John 19:28)

When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:30)

It is finished. The high price was paid in full!

To confirm the truth of the payment the Lord Jesus was entombed in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. The grave – a place of decay and consumption – was his place of rest. He was truly dead.

Three days later that tomb was empty, because the Lord Jesus had arisen – so that all those for whom He had paid that high price would follow Him out of death into the life eternal.

- With it the future of us, for whom this high price was paid, is shown: **Before long, the world will not see Me any more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will also live.** (John 14:19)

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him.
(Romans 6:8)

These words do not mean that on earth we shall not die.

- Of course we all die here.
- But we do not die the eternal death.
- And while we live the devil and sin no longer have unlimited power over us.
- Our future in a greater and more perfect life after this one is assured by this high price.

The church in Corinth had forgotten the very high price that was paid for them.

- They fell back into the life that is offered on the devil’s slave market for those who want to enslave themselves to wrong things.
- This means the people who chose temporal pleasure above perfection and eternity. They had to be admonished.

Has the Lord paid a lower price for us in this congregation?

Why, then, shall we not repent – or why shall we persist in any sin?

Let us read together what we confess about these matters in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's day 16:

Q. 40.

Why was it necessary for Christ to humble himself even "**unto death**"?

A.

Because with respect to the justice and truth of God, (a) satisfaction for our sins could be made no otherwise, than by the death of the Son of God. (b)

(a)

Gen.2:17: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

(b)

Rom.8:3: For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Rom.8:4: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Heb.2:9: But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Heb.2:14: Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

Heb.2:15: And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Q. 41.

Why was he also "**buried**"?

A.

Thereby to prove that he was really dead. (a)

(a)

Matt.27:59: And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

Matt.27:60: And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

Luke 23:52: This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

Luke 23:53: And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.

John 19:38: And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.

John 19:39: And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

John 19:40: Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

John 19:41: Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

John 19:42: There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

Acts 13:29: And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

Q. 42.

Since then Christ died for us, why must we also die?

A.

Our death is not a satisfaction for our sins, (a) but only an abolishing of sin, and a passage into eternal life. (b)

(a)

Mark 8:37: Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Ps.49:7: None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

(b)

John 5:24: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Philip.1:23: For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

Rom.7:24: O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Q. 43.

What further benefit do we receive from the sacrifice and death of Christ on the cross?

A.

That by virtue thereof, our old man is crucified, dead and buried with him; (a) that so the corrupt inclinations of the flesh may no more reign in us; (b) but that we may offer ourselves unto him a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

(c)

(a)

Rom.6:6: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

(b)

Rom.6:6: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Rom.6:7: For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Rom.6:8: Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

Rom.6:11: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rom.6:12: Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Col.2:12: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

(c)

Rom.12:1: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Q. 44.

Why is there added, "**he descended into hell**"?

A.

That in my greatest temptations, I may be assured, and wholly comfort myself in this, that my Lord Jesus Christ, by his inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors, and hellish agonies, in which he was plunged during all his sufferings, (a) but especially on the cross, has delivered me from the anguish and torments of hell. (b)

(a)
Ps.18:5: The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.

Ps.18:6: In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.

Ps.116:3: The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

Matt.26:38: Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

Heb.5:7: Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

Isa.53:10: Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Matt.27:46: And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

(b)
Isa.53:5: But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 33:6.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Amen

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Scripture: New International Version