

REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 20 JUNE 2010: EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 16:2

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: Scripture Versification 1-1:7 [Ephesians 1:1-14]

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 2:4

Scripture reading: 1 Peter 1

Scripture text: 1 Peter 1:5-7 & Catechism Sunday 22

5 Who, by the power of God are kept, through faith, for that salvation, which will be seen at the last day.

6 You have cause for great joy in this, though it may have been necessary for you to be troubled for a little time, being tested in all sorts of ways,

7 So that the true metal of your faith, being of much greater value than gold (which, though it comes to an end, is tested by fire), may come to light in praise and glory and honour, at the revelation of Jesus Christ:

The apostle Peter wrote this letter to strangers.

- They are strangers because they are not home to this world.
- They are home to the Lord, therefore the world is unable to understand their way of thinking and doing – despising and rejecting them.

Still the full truth is that the Lord, due to wars and the persecution of the Christians, had them scattered all over the world.

- But, although they were strangers scattered all over, they also were chosen, having a living hope within them – a hope much greater and higher than the persecutions and pains of this life.
- They are children of God having the living hope that they would receive an inheritance from the Lord.

It is so that the omnipotent God grants His good gifts to all people.

- As an example He causes rain to fall onto the believers as well as onto the unbelievers.
- But His inheritance is only granted to His chosen children!
- It is this inheritance the scattered strangers and all believers (we as well) are focussing their hope onto.

As of yet we do not physically have possession of this inheritance. We will only fully acquire it on the day when the Lord returns to complete the end of history. Therefore let us consider this inheritance granted to us, the same as granted to the believers Paul is writing to.

- 1. The Lord preserves us in order that some day we may receive the inheritance.**
- 2. Every true believer will, some day, inherit from God.**

1. The Lord preserves us in order that some day we may receive the inheritance.

Why would the Lord preserve us? What would be His motivation?

- The Lord protects us so that we may come into possession of the inheritance, earned for us by the virtues and effects of Christ's redemptive sacrifice on the cross.
- Because we, as beneficiaries to this inheritance from the Lord, have no rights, the Lord protects us by His mercy.

The protection by the Lord is not just something we talk about. The Lord protects us by His omnipotence.

- This means that we can never be destroyed. The omnipotent mercy of the Lord prevents that even one single believer may become apostate and fall from His mercy.
- This conservation by the Lord entails two facets of our existence: It deals with the physical part of our lives, but also deals with our faith-life.
- Should we not have had this protection by the Lord, no child of God would have been conserved.

We may sum up the lord's conservation as such: We are preserved till death, in death and after death. A lot has already been said and written about when, or how long after our death, we arrive at God.

- The Bible teaches that after death we are immediately with God.
- No time of any kind first have to run out at all.
- We are also not stored somewhere till the Second Coming.

Luke 16 and Thessalonians 4 teach that immediately we die, we are taken up in heaven with the Lord.

- At that moment we already receive our spiritual inheritance – even if it is in principle only, because we only receive the full inheritance once our bodies are resurrected and reunited with our soul.
- The Bible teaches that the resurrection of our bodies happens when the Lord appears during the Second Coming. (1 Thessalonians 4 and Corinthians 15)

From a human viewpoint this sounds completely impossible because most bodies decay to dust.

- There, in fact, is nothing left of it – but with God all things impossible to us are still possible.
- The Lord promises that not only will our bodies be resurrected – they will be glorified as well.

The Bible tells us that then we shall be like Him. In Scripture Versification 2-4:2 [1 John 3:2] we sing about it as well. {**Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 1 John 3:2**}

2. Every true believer will, some day, inherit from God.

These matters are an anticipation and a joy unknown to the world.

- One day the believers will, in full relationship, be in the presence of God.
- To the unbelievers it is a time of fear and darkness.

Of course there are many works of the devil aimed at causing us doubt about this. Very often he tries to disrupt, through adversity and all sorts of things, our expectations of life.

- But this is exactly why the Lord reveals these matters to us – so that we may look beyond the devil's defilement!
- Already the Lord grants us eternal life as a rudiment to sustain us through the worst battle and darkness.

The inheritance we obtain is a mercy-right attained by the Lord Jesus Christ for us. By the grace of God this everlasting inheritance is granted and preserved for us until we, in His time, will take it into our possession.

- It is not an inheritance we have any natural rights to – in fact, by our sins, we have parted with it in a natural way!
- But the Lord mercifully, through the virtues and effects of Christ's redemptive sacrifice on the cross, returns it to us.
- All we need to do is, with a sacred faith, accept these promises and persevere in obedience to our Saviour.

Humanly seen we might still have a difficult road to follow before arriving there. The reason for that lies in God's revelation:

- The last book of the Bible teaches that the Lord will still have the earth go up in wars, earthquakes and flames.
- We will have to pass through this with a firm trust in these promises of God.

The reason for all these matters taking place in this way is that we may, when the Lord comes, see clearly the contrast between the works of the devil and the judgement of God, going hand in hand with it!

- Against the black ashes of the old world, God creates a new perfect world for us. Then we will again be in the perfect creation where Adam and Eve used to be.
- Against the old world where shortcomings, drought, death and destruction used to be a new world, free from taint and destruction arises!

We receive this inheritance from our Saviour. The book of Revelation (1:5) teaches the following about Him:

...Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood...

- This supreme God and King with His supreme rule humbled Himself to the utmost.
- He loves dirty sinners – people not fitting to His high holiness.
- Then He redeemed them from the matters standing between His throne and them. He, in His blood, washes our dirty sins away!

As cleansed people God pardons us from the taint of sin and draped in glory we are installed into our inheritance.

Let us read together in the Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 22 everything we confess about this:

Q. 57.

What comfort does the "resurrection of the body" afford thee?

A.

That not only my soul after this life shall be immediately taken up to Christ its head; (a) but also, that this my body, being raised by the power of Christ, shall be reunited with my soul, and made like unto the glorious body of Christ. (b)

(a)

Luke 16:22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

Luke 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Philip.1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

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:

(b)

1 Cor.15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

1 Cor.15:54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Job 19:25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

Job 19:26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Philip.3:21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Q. 58.

What comfort takest thou from the article of "life everlasting"?

A.

That since I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy, (a) after this life, I shall inherit perfect salvation, which "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man" to conceive, and that to praise God therein for ever.

(b)

(a)

2 Cor.5:2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

2 Cor.5:3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

(b)

1 Cor.2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 33:6

The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

Amen

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20 June 2010
Scripture Modern King James Version