

**Sing before the service:** Psalm 99:1

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 96:8

Prayer

Psalm 75:2

Scripture reading: 1 Peter 3

Scripture text: 1 Peter 3:22; Catechism Lord's Day 19

**. . . It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand— with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.**

(1 Peter 3:21-22 NIV-UK)

We do not always think about the almighty power of the Lord Jesus Christ and what it means to us. Therefore we are going to highlight a few thoughts that are closely connected to the content of this passage.

The Scripture text naturally refers to the exaltation of the Lord Jesus.

- And this exaltation of our Lord is described by these words: **and is at God's right hand.**

Man's right hand has always been very important and hence it also acquired a symbolic meaning.

- The average person's right hand is stronger than his left hand and therefore more important for work and defence.
- And so people started referring to the right hand as the image/symbol of power or display of strength.
- Hence, if a person was seated on the right-hand side of the king it symbolised the show of his power.

In this passage it therefore shows the power of the Lord Jesus Christ – power granted to Him by the Lord.

- Compare Hebrews 1:3 which tells that He *sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

The Bible also uses the right hand to indicate a mark of honour/grace/token of love, in contrast to the left hand that is the symbol of disgrace, rejection and even destruction.

- We find an example of this in Matthew 25:33 where sheep are put on his right (the elect) and the goats on the left (the lost).
- Also compare Psalm 16:11 which tells us that the Lord has *eternal pleasures at his right hand.*

But it comprises more than love and power; it also implies judicial authority.

- See Isaiah 16:5:  
**In love a throne will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it— one from the house of David— one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of righteousness.** (Isaiah 16:5 NIV-UK)
- This text does not imply that the one seated at the right hand has judicial power; in this passage it is revealed that the one who sits on the throne has judicial power.

- However, we must remember that the one sitting on the king's right hand is invested with the same powers as the one sitting on the throne.

*Hence the Lord Jesus is in fact the Great Judge of all on this side of death and beyond death – the living and the dead.*

Every Sunday we confess this, but do we really understand what it implies?

- It means that the Lord's judgement does not only cut through those who are inside the church and those outside of the church –
- his judgement cuts through the entire church.
- Inside the church judgement is also passed over life and death!

*The Lord Jesus does not rule the church through a favour granted to Him. He does it through his Divine power.*

With regard to the governance of the church, Father and Son are absolutely united.

We should however realise that in matters such as these we will come up against many unexplainable issues – issues completely beyond our human minds.

- This is clearly such a matter: The Lord Jesus Christ is one with God the Father, but He is also one with his church!
- Hence there is unity within the Holy Trinity and also between the Lord and his church.
- It is a union of authority and power, but also of tenderness and care.

Consider for a moment expressions we find in the Scriptures, such as the following:

- Christ is the Head and we are the parts that form the body.
- Christ is the Bridegroom and we are the Bride.

On the one hand God, as king, takes care of his subjects – on the other hand we find the loving care of a Father towards his children.

- Hence guidance from heaven leads us back into heaven!
- This power of the Lord Jesus Christ is also exercised by the Third Person of the Deity, namely God the Holy Spirit, whom we haven't mentioned in this sermon yet.

Note whom God the Holy Spirit approaches.

- Not everyone in the world – He goes to the elect.
  - The Lord Jesus grants his grace only to certain people, namely the members of his church.
- The guidance of the Holy Spirit is set against any potential enemy we might have.
- And the Holy Spirit can set Himself against any authority because He bears the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

From John 14:16 and 16:14 it is very clear that the Holy Spirit takes the place of the Lord Jesus Christ until He comes again.

**And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever—**  
(John 14:16 NIV-UK)

**He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.** (John 16:14 NIV-UK)

Let us now look at these facts together with today's Scripture text. We find the following:

- All powers in heaven and on earth are subjected to the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- And this power is the same power by which He governs and protects us through the Holy Spirit.

The comforting message of this passage is that we can live without having to fear. This is one of the direct results of the Lord Jesus Christ's current rule of us and of the world.

But judgement will also happen. Soon the Second Coming will take place and then all the irresponsible people will be judged and punished when the Lord finally pass judgement on the living and the dead

Let us then enjoy this gift of preservation and let it encourage us to live a truly religious life.

Let's read a summary of this sermon in Catechism Lord's Day 19.

**50. Q. Why is it added, And sits at the right hand of God?**

A. Christ ascended into heaven to manifest Himself there as Head of His Church,[1] through whom the Father governs all things.[2]

[1] Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:18. [2] Matt. 28:18; John 5:22, 23.

**51. Q. How does the glory of Christ, our Head, benefit us?**

A. First, by His Holy Spirit He pours out heavenly gifts upon us, His members.[1] Second, by His power He defends and preserves us against all enemies.[2]

[1] Acts 2:33; Eph. 4:7-12. [2] Ps. 2:9; 110:1, 2; John 10:27-30; Rev. 19: 11-16.

**52. Q. What comfort is it to you that Christ will come to judge the living and the dead?**

A. In all my sorrow and persecution I lift up my head and eagerly await as judge from heaven the very same person who before has submitted Himself to the judgment of God for my sake, and has removed all the curse from me.[1] He will cast all His and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but He will take me and all His chosen ones to Himself into heavenly joy and glory.

[2]

[1] Luke 21:28; Rom. 8:22-25; Phil. 3:20,21; Tit. 2: 13, 14. [2] Matt. 25:31-46; I Thess. 4:16, 17; II Thess. 1:6-10.

**Amen.**

Closing prayer

Scripture hymn 2-6:7 (54:7)

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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