

## REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE : SUNDAY 2 JANUARY 2011 MORNING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 18:9

*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 33:2

**Confession of faith:** Apostolic

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into Hell, the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, a holy universal Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting

**Amen.**

*After the reading of the Law we confess our guilt and pray for forgiveness and a new life before God with Psalm 119:62*

Law

Psalm: 119:62

**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 145:3, 8

**Scripture reading:** 2 Chronicles 20

**Scripture text:** 2 Chronicles 20:15c

**'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.** (2 Chronicles 20:15c)

We must realize the great mercy of the Lord over us, namely that we ourselves have lost the battle against sin and all the works of the devil, but still we are redeemed and saved because Somebody Else completed this matter for us.

- It is because God made this matter of our salvation His own.
- Therefore the Lord Jesus Christ was born, died and arose from the death and ascended to heaven.

The Lord sent us into a New Year to live and work for His glory. We approach our calling for the next year based upon the events around the invasion of Judah and the reaction of Jehoshaphat thereto:

1. **Through the history the Lord gives us examples of how the church history appears in it's entirety.**
  2. **The Lord reveals our total dependency upon Him.**
  3. **The Lord reveals the greatness of His personal redemption over us.**
1. **Through the history the Lord gives us examples of how the church history appears in it's entirety.**

From the circumstances surrounding Jehoshaphat and his people we get back something about the believing mankind who were attacked and threatened by Satan and the forces of hell

- On the one hand the people mirror the believers in their battle against the dark forces,
- but furthermore Jehoshaphat, in his actions, depicts the attitude and conduct of true believers during such times.

The Ammonites, Moabites and people living in the mountains of Seir attacked Jehoshaphat and his people.

- During the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, Moses had them bypassing the land of these people and prevented the Israelites from destroying them.
- These attackers were a rare combination as they themselves were people who had earlier ties with the Lord.
- They were descendants of Lot, the cousin of Abraham.

These nations also had something in common with the devil, because he also had close ties to God.

- The devil was not always evil. He was a highly created angel, who, out of his own, rebelled against God and turned evil.

- He became so evil that following his defeat in heaven, he, in aid of bringing them to rebellion and disobedience to God, attacked the people on earth.

Jehoshaphat became very scared when these forces amassed against him.

- Do we not also become scared of the forces threatening our lives and faith?
- In his fear Jehoshaphat approached the Lord in prayer.

Jehoshaphat started off by confessing the omnipotence of the Lord. He prayed: **O Jehovah, the God of our Fathers...**

- JEHOVAH is the covenant name of the Lord. It is the crux of Jehoshaphat' prayer.
- It is very important for us to remember that the covenant name of the Lord underlines His sovereignty, because His covenant, in fact, is the confirmation of His predestination and of His absolute dispensation over all people.

*Jehoshaphat confesses the power and strength of the Lord, but in such a way that firstly he confesses the everlastingness thereof: Are You not God in Heaven? And do You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations?*

God rules over all people and literary over all nations.

- It is very clear from the prayer of this man that he believes that the Lord can save him at any place and time,
- also, because the power of the Lord is unstoppable, from the large hostile force gathering against him.

It is important for us, in our times, to again consider this confession. Because it could just be possible that the certainty of this immensely serious confession of God's greatness and everlasting power-ability has passed us by and that we no longer realize its importance.

Thereafter Jehoshaphat brings the confession of Gods everlasting omnipotence closer to his people when he refers to the personal ties between the Lord and these people.

- In Jehoshaphat' prayer these matters clearly come to the foreground: The Lord placed Himself in a special relationship towards the Israeli (Judah) believers' predecessors.
- Therefore Jehoshaphat calls the Lord "our God" and his people and himself "Your people" (v.7&12)
- Therewith he confesses that he truly believes that it was the Lord who gave them the land of Canaan.
- Further he also confesses (v.7) that it was the Lord who drove away, in order that the descendants of Abraham could occupy the land, the previous inhabitants of Canaan.

In this prayer of him Jehoshaphat repeats certain matters from the prayer by Solomon when the temple he built was inaugurated.

As an example, in verse 8, Jehoshaphat refers to it that the people of this land, given to them by the Lord, built a sanctuary to the glory of His Name.

Jehoshaphat prayed in full faith.

- He is very convinced that the Lord will help these people because he makes the statement that the Name of Lord is resident in this temple built by Solomon.
- He knows that the Lord will save the people when they gather in front of that temple – no matter be it war, punishment, pestilence or famine threatening them.

It is an interesting list compiled by Jehoshaphat about all the things that possibly could happen to them, because

- there are external matters like war,
- but there are also internal matters like, for example, punishment by the Lord.

What is of great importance is that the solution and escape from all these matters is to be found at exactly the same place, namely at the Lord:

**“...we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.’**

We no longer have a temple where, because the Lord is resident there, we go to, but we have much more grace:

- We are permitted to, due to the virtues and effects of Jesus Christ, pray from wherever we want, because through His virtues and effects we may face the throne of God the Father.
- We may also know that due to His atonement on the cross, our prayers will be answered. The birth of Jesus is already the proof thereto!

## **2. The Lord reveals our total dependency upon Him.**

Humanly seen, Jehoshaphat faced a force of massive superiority.

- On their own steam he and his soldiers could never render military resistance or be victorious – this he also confessed, because he complains to the Lord that these people from Ammon and Moab want to take away the possessions, given to Israel by the Lord.
- He also complains that they have **“no power against this great multitude”** that were coming against them
- This is also why he became so frightened, as his fear lay in the realization that he and he people would be overpowered and destroyed and that they would lose their land.

What does a person do and say under such circumstances?

- Jehoshaphat pleaded with the Lord to take over the battle against the enemy: **“O our God, will You not judge them?”**
- His very deep dependency of the Lord is highlighted even more when he motivates why the Lord should do their battle against the enemy: **“Nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You.”**

Here something else also comes to the foreground, and that is that Jehoshaphat feels that the enemy is in fact sinning against the Lord.

- The unlawful deed of land-robbery done by the disbelievers is in essence a transgression against God Himself.

- Due to the fact that the children of the covenant (i.e. Jehoshaphat and his people) are unable to rectify the matter to how it should be, he now requests the Lord to do it Himself.
- This is in fact a matter for the Lord because His glory is being threatened and therefore he prays that the Lord should intervene.

The dependency on the Lord is not confessed by Jehoshaphat alone

- All the people gathered at the temple and in their masses formed a unit, facing the Lord.
- Listen to verse 13:  
**Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the Lord.**

Thus all the people together with Jehoshaphat intended the same when he confessed in his prayer: **"our eyes are upon You."**

- Why did they look up to the Lord?
- Because the Lord is powerful – in contrast to their own weakness.

There is something more in that the people went to the temple. **All of them** gathered at the temple.

- All of them went to confess their dependency on the Lord.
- Every household was there – not just some of the household:
  - Every man saw to it that his wife and every child belonging to him went to the temple, facing the Lord.
  - A confession of total dependency and submission to the Lord

### . 3. **The Lord reveals the greatness of His personal redemption over us.**

While all the people were gathered at the service the Lord revealed Himself to them. Jahaziel started to prophesy.

**'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.**

The next day the people had to only move out against the enemy.

- They were explicitly forbidden to fight.
- The only had to stand there and see how the Lord saved them.

What then took place was that during the night the enemy divided into three groups, set up ambushes and waited on the Israelites.

- The movements of the three groups somewhere became confused and they set upon each other destroying themselves.
- The Basic English Bible states that *everyone helped to destroy another*.

The Bible is very clear that the people of Judah did not partake in the battle and as such nobody could ever state that they were victorious over the enemy.

- In verse 24 the Lord had it recorded that when the people of Judah arrived the next morning at the watch tower they saw that there were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and there were none that escaped.
- This was quite serious as the Bible tells that not even one survived.

Where did this deliverance start? At the valley covered in dead people who, because the Lord confused their plans, murdered each other?

- No – that was the result of the deliverance by the Lord.
- It started when the Holy Spirit said: **“Do not be afraid nor dismayed”**

Years later the Lord sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth to see a young virgin named Mary. When he greeted her she also became very scared and he also said: **“Don’t be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.”**

In her perplexity she heard the message that the salvation of mankind has arrived.

- From her, the Son of the Almighty would be born and she had to name Him Jesus.
- The angel said that He would be King till eternity and that there would be no end to His Kingdom. (Luke 1:26-35)

The night when the Lord Jesus was born an angel appeared to the shepherds and also said: **“Don’t be afraid”** when he announced that Christ the Lord was born.

- Just like Jehoshaphat and his people these shepherds sat and saw the signs of victory:  
**And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.** (Luke 2:13+14)

What was the reaction of the shepherds?

- Immediately the Lord brought them to movement.
- They did not just remain sitting there wondering about everything.
- They rose immediately, set of searching for the born Savior and they glorified and praised God.
- Their faith brought their bodies into action praising and glorifying God.

The same happened to Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah.

- We read that Jehoshaphat and all the people stood facing the Lord. (v.13)
- But after the Holy Spirit, through the prophet, revealed the saving and deliverance Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before Yahweh, worshipping Yahweh.
- The New Afrikaans translation describes this in different words. A free translation thereof would be that Jehoshaphat kneeled and that the people bowed to the Lord, honouring Him.

Verse 3 explicitly states that Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

- Come, let us also start this new year with true remorse and self-abnegation about all our sins, but especially also with confirmation of our faith in and trust on the Lord – like Jehoshaphat.
- Like Jehoshaphat, we confess the Lord, but because we received a fuller revelation from the Lord than he did, we confess God Triune.
- In this change of year we especially confess God the Son who came to redeem us from all our sins and to supply us with an everlasting perfect life. We confess Him as the sovereign God till all eternity.

With the change of year we remember that the Lord made our salvation His matter.

- To the Almighty God we confess our sin and our own inability to conquer the devil.
- We confess that we greatly fear the suffering of the hell.

But we thank the Lord that He considered us fit enough to be allowed living another year to His glory.

- We, facing the Lord, undertake that we will make it our concern confessing by word and deed His Name and glory to all people.
- Facing the Almighty God we confess that we know Him as the God of absolute truth – and we undertake to worship and serve Him in this year by lives of honesty.

Above all we thank God that His Son was born to, in the place of each one of us, bow to the massive wrath of God for our sins.

- We thank God that this specific deed of His grace has changed us so that we may abhor the evil in life and push it away from us, and so that we want to follow our Lord in His holiness.
- May the Grace of God carry us in this faith and works of faith to life eternal.

We confess to Him our deep dependency to His grace and the salvation He achieved for us.

- We thank Him for consoling our sins to God so that we may know that the message of not to fear is also valid for us.
- We thank the Lord that we may, like Jehoshaphat and his people, be victors, because our battle against the devil and all his works is the concern of God.

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Song: Scripture Versification 2-2:1 [Isaiah 45:5-11]

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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Scripture Modern King James Version