

REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2009: MORNING SERVICE

Opening reading

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. (John 4:23)

Sing before: Psalm 73:3,4

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 18:1, 19

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 1:1

Law

Psalm: 1:1

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 31:14

Scripture reading: Galatians 6

Scripture text: Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.
(Galatians 6:7)

Arrogance is one of the big deceptions of mankind – it entails doing whatever you want and every time justifying your sin.

- There are those amongst us who simply replace the rules of God with their own rules and regulations.
- In the face of such an outlook on life God asks from us obedience and a disposition of self-sacrifice because of our love for Him.

An arrogant person has no love for anybody.

- He does not feel up to any sacrifice towards anybody.
- The urge to save the lost is absent from such a person.

This disposition of haughtiness and repugnance against somebody committing a crime is not found with the Lord.

- In fact the Lord sends His Spirit to lead us in such a way that the desires of the flesh are prevented.
- In other words, so that we do not sin.

Therewith He, in the love of His Word, also warns us to not allow evil into our lives. (not to take the road of sin)

- He teaches us that we must love our neighbour.

It does happen that the believer stumbles.

- It does not matter whether we consider the transgression to be either small or large.
- Sin is sin to the Lord – everything not completely right is wrong.

Therefore this very stern warning to us in which the Lord teaches us how we must react towards somebody transgressing.

- The Lord wrote: if *a man* is overtaken in any trespass...
- *A man* means any person.

- In order for us to clearly understand that this deals with any person making a mistake, the Lord does not qualify this specific person any further.

We must listen with utmost attention to what the Lord is teaching here.

It is not about any reckless sinner!

- This passage of scripture is not relevant to the person continually provoking God and persisting in sin and unbelief.
- It is dealing with a believer who is not transgressing out of habit.
- It is dealing with the believer who is overtaken – we may say: unexpectedly overcome by sin.

We must read this together with chapter 5:15 onwards. Here the Lord is addressing the people of the church:

But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!
(Galatians 5:15)

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

We, who are spiritual, teaches the Lord, may not cast aside such a person.

- We do not have the right to reject him.
- We also must deal in an attitude of kindness with him.

We, at the same time, must take care that we do not also fall into temptation.

- The temptation is such that you could overrate yourself facing somebody who has fallen.
- It may happen that you deal too harshly with such a person – you may want to admonish him for being weak – and thereby, because of overrating yourself, you also fall.

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. (Galatians 5:16-18)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control... (Galatians 5:22-23)

The way we deal with such people must show clearly that we are acting in the power of God the Holy Spirit.

Living our Christian faith puts an even greater demand on us.

- Not only must we have patience towards the fallen
- We must also share each other's burden – in other words, we must pay attention to the matters resting heavily on our neighbour's mind.
- It might well be that the matters aggravating, pressurising and impeding his life are the causes of him falling in sin.

It is at any rate much easier to help somebody in his need than leaving him to be whisked away by sin.

In this way we fulfil the command of the Lord Jesus Christ – as taught by the Bible.

The law of the Lord Jesus Christ is that He, in order to save sinners in life, offered Himself to death. We read about this at many places in the Bible. One such a place is for example Galatians 1:4:

who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, (Galatians 1:4)

This underlines the fact that within us such a great love for our neighbour should be alive that we would gladly offer it to him.

- Unrestricted, because offering is supposed to be unconditional when helping our neighbour.
- Together with this good attitude must be the continual realisation of our weakness.
 - We must, during a moment of succour, realise that only by the grace of God are we able to do so.
 - Because when you are the stronger one rendering help to another, you may easily have a wrong opinion about yourself.

This warning is clearly put in verse 3:

For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. (Galatians 6:3)

- Here the Lord warns us that haughtiness tends to blind your eyes, causing us to be unaware of our own depravity!
- Then mankind becomes conceited and you come to the conclusion that you are something special.
- You overrate your spiritual abilities. Or your mental capability. You fall into snobbishness – this whilst, in the eyes of God, you are nothing! You have a high opinion of yourself, this while you have nothing to be proud of.

We then forget that the goodness we still have is only due to the grace of God:

For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

Here we think of the prayer of the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not like the tax-collector!

- He took pride in himself for keeping to the will of God.
- Because of his spiritual blindness it seemed to him as if he was successful.

We must use another yardstick.

- We must survey our lives and works according to the demands of God and not according to the people in our vicinity.
- Each one – as written in verse 4 – must examine his own work. Then we will have cause to have pride only as far as it concerns yourself.

The meaning of this is that should we compare ourselves to the other, it might appear that our lives and works are satisfactory.

- But should grey be whiter than black, it still does not mean that grey is white – this is taught here by the Bible.
- Should you appear better than other people it still does not mean, measured by the will of God, that you are good or perfect.

- Thus our own excellence does not mean much!
- Facing God there should be goodness and excellence. This is a warning that we should guard against the deception that is keeping our lives going!

The love part of this text is now completed. Therein the Lord stated that He cares for us with love tenderness and His Spirit and that He expects the same from us towards our neighbour.

Then comes the judgement.

- Get rid of your hypocrisy.
- Get rid of your own appreciation, which is too high.
- Weigh yourselves against My law if you do not want to be judged. Because everybody will bear his own burden!

This is the moment of absolute truth! The moment encompassing only us and the end result of God testing our works Himself.

- Everyone will receive the punishment measured according to his being.
- The holiness of God determines the outcome.
- The word "burden" means a weight that will be carried with difficulty. As such we will face God.

Now comes verse 7, further underlining this matter: Do not be deceived, God is not mocked. Why did the Lord write this?

- Because the Lord knows that there are certain people deceiving themselves by cunning in believing that they are better than what they really are.
- Because the Lord knows that there are people who, for reasons humanly correct, rather step on their neighbour than help.

He wants these people to fully understand that they are on the wrong track and that they, whilst there is still time, must convert themselves. Once they are brought under His judgement they will be cruelly disillusioned because God, unlike humans, cannot be mocked by being presented with false values!

For the example we should follow, let us consider the Lord Jesus Christ.

- There is nobody who had more patience and compassion towards the fallen than Him.
- How many times did He not tell somebody that his or her sins are forgiven.
- Or think about the ridicule He had to contend with because He had dined with tax-collectors.
- Before they sat down to the Last Supper (the first Holy Communion) He humbly washed the feet of His disciples!

In contrast with that He is unmoving in His justness.

- He is God and therefore nobody could deceive Him.
- To one He said that, in Israel He has not seen such a great faith.
- And to the other that he was a whitewashed sepulchre.

In the same way He told the Pharisees that they only wash the outside of their cups and forget that the Lord also made the inside. That they offer the tenth but neglect the right of God.

He died as an honest man.

- The dishonesty of the people found Him guilty.

- The dishonesty of His accusers was so false that even Pontius Pilate, the heathen, witnessed that the believers were, contrary to the law, crucifying Him as he did not find any guilt in Him.
- During His last moments He was tender-hearted towards the sinners by imploring God to forgive their sin, as they did not know what they were doing.
- We must also be like this.

Furthermore the Lord Jesus Christ also died for our honesty.

- So that we may know ourselves properly and not overrate our value.
- He sent God, the Holy Spirit to teach us these proper values.

Beloved, let us heed the voice of the Holy Spirit and carry each other's burden.

- Let us carry it in the Spirit of Holiness.
- Let us not wander and mock God, because then we attract the everlasting wrath of God.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Song: Scripture Versification 8-1:2 [Ezekiel 36:25-28]

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

Dr MJ Du Plessis
Reformed Church Bellville
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