

## REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2010: EVENING SERVICE

### **Sing before (standing):**

Psalm 49:4

*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 138:1

- **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 5-4:1+2+3+5+6

**Scripture reading:** Genesis 3:1-9 and Romans 5:14-21.

**Scripture text:** Heidelberg Catechism Lord's day 3.

In the history of mankind four persons are active:

- God.....The Creator
- Satan.....The Tempter
- Man.....Falls into sin
- Holy Spirit.....Minister of rebirth.

A mighty deed occurs when God commences to work in our history. God speaks a word and as this word resounds things come about:

- Heaven and earth
- Light
- The firmament
- Plants and animals
- Man

The LORD finishes off His creation by creating man: man is the crown of His creation – first one and then two people.

- The Lord created this entire creation to glorify Him – not only temporarily but for ever.

- That is why the entire creation was made durable.  
The emphasis is on man.
- He is created in the image of God – perfect and without sin or any defect.
- He lives in perfect harmony and communion with God.
- He also receives spiritual gifts from God:
  - He has knowledge, righteousness and holiness.
  - He knows God personally and communicates directly with God.

Perfectly empowered for this task, God now commands man to manage this creation for Him. This man could comfortably have lived close to God. The manner of his creation already shows this.

When the LORD created the animals He only spoke a word and the animals were all there.

- But man was created differently. The Lord forms him carefully with His own fingers.
- He must be a king in creation.
- He was formed so perfectly that – should he in love obey his Creator – he would live with God eternally!

We read in Psalm 148:2, 11 – 13 what the purpose of creation is (remember that the angels are also part of creation!)

Praise Him, all His angels, praise Him, all His heavenly hosts. (verse 2)

Kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and maidens, old men and children.

Let them praise the Name of the LORD, for His Name alone is exalted; His splendour is above the earth and the heavens.

Meanwhile another person appears. The devil.

- He has his origin in heaven.
- God did not create Satan. He was created a good angel with a high position.
- He and a number of angels with him revolted against God. The Bible does not tell what exactly occurred. All we know is that it was some kind of rebellion. We read in Jude verse 6:  
“And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home – these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the Great Day.”

We surmise that the devil became conceited and in his conceit believed that he could take God's kingdom from Him, because we read in 1 Timothy 3:6 where Paul discusses the qualities of an elder the following:

“He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.”

In this passage the Bible indicates that his sin was conceit.

The Bible also tells us that some angels fell with him – 2 Peter 2:4:

“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment;”

So it happened that the first sin was committed in heaven.

- This leader of a band of angels – who from then on became devils – did not leave creation alone.

- He was a declared enemy of God and infiltrated creation.

It stands to reason:

- He was powerless against God,
- He was jealous of man because, whereas he was cast out of Heaven, man was living in a beautiful loving relationship with God.
- Therefore he destroys God's work.

He aims to tempt man and to seduce him into sinning against God too.

- He wants make man unhappy and enslave him and crush him under the weight of misery.
- He therefore made it his aim to deform the image of God in man!

This trespass by Satan was a very serious crime for in God's Plan it is recorded that he committed murder. John 8:44:

"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him."

He killed the people with lies!

The seduction that occurred in Paradise occurred in a sly manner.

- The devil comes hidden – disguised in the shape of a snake.
  - that is the direction from which man did not expect any danger.
  - Eve did not suspect anything amiss and the entire evil plan was hidden from her until it was too late.
- Eve is targeted because in his assault Satan compels her to go outside her area of competence.
  - Eve enters a field in which she cannot hold her own and fails.
  - So the people fell together.

Which brings us to man.

- They fall into sin totally.
- They forfeit their perfect relationship with God.
- Adam sins knowingly with Eve. He has no excuse.

But what is this all about? It is about responsibility.

- Responsibility is tied to watchfulness.
- That is precisely the situation in which we live today. We carry as much responsibility as Adam did and we must be as vigilant as he had to be, although we live in and subject to sin.
- That command from the Lord has not been recalled!

Sin causes us untold misery.

- Because now we are obstreperous and disobedient to God.
- And because we have knowingly and willingly become servants of Satan.
- And in so many respects are actually egoistic and ungrateful towards God.

And that is where we stand after this Holy Communion.

But happily that is not the last word about man's history that is written in the Word of God.

- God has a Son. The Bible calls Him the Second Adam.

- He was generated in a woman by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit overshadowed a girl in Palestine. Her name was Mary and she gave birth to this child of God.

As this Son grew up all the powers of hell were concentrated on Him.

- The reason? Satan knew that this Son was born to correct all Adam's mistakes and to save mankind from his power.
- That is why the devil makes it his purpose to fill the life of the Lord Jesus Christ with struggle and strife and temptations.
- He even attempts to bribe Him into serving him!

Then Satan, with the aid of men, murders this Son of God.

- For hell this deed has absolutely fatal results.
- The Lord Jesus Christ dies and in this way He enters Satan's realm – death.
- He crushes the power of death. On the third day He simply arises from the dead.

Because the Lord Jesus was righteous, and also God Himself, He did not need this life that He had acquired. He donates this life to us.

Subsequently God comes back to us in the person of the Holy Spirit. Of this we read in Acts 2: the Holy Spirit is poured out onto the church.

- Because we are redeemed and also because God the Holy Spirit dwells in us, we cannot, like Adam, hide away when we commit sin.
- Each time sin overpowers us we go down on our knees.
  - Then we pray the words that the Holy Spirit puts into our mind.
  - Then the Holy Spirit lifts you up and shows you the right road ahead of you.

God the Holy Spirit shows us all the pitfalls the devil digs for us. Now, in the power of God, we can be true believers.

Which brings us back to the issue of our responsibility.

- Our responsibility must drive us, not only to overcome and master sin, but even to harness it to the greater glory of God.
- If we are able to arise from sin with joy and next time, with royal dignity, refuse this sin to take hold of me again, then it is to the glory of God. That is what is expected of us.

The Heidelberg Catechism gives us a poor testimonial.

- We were created good but we left God!
- Now we are so bad that all of us are conceived and born in sin. Those are facts.
- But another fact is stated: through the ministry of the Holy Spirit such wicked people are brought to rebirth.
  - Then they are able to do good
  - They are also not condemned to hell
  - That is why they are all once again made to be children of God by Jesus Christ.
  - In that way the gates of heaven are opened for us.

Do not imagine that these issues do not concern us. Sin is under the skin of us all.

That is why we must seize God's promises.

- We must subject ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

- The promises are not for other people. The Lord loves you and me and He wants us all together in His eternal kingdom.

Let us read the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's day 3, together.

### 3. Lord's Day

- Q. 6.  
Did God then create man so wicked and perverse?
- A.  
By no means; but God created man good, (a) and after his own image, (b) in true righteousness and holiness, that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love him and live with him in eternal happiness to glorify and praise him. (c)
- (a)  
Gen.1:31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.
- (b)  
Gen.1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.  
Gen.1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.
- (c)  
Col.3:9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;  
Col.3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:  
Eph.4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;  
Eph.4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.  
2 Cor.3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.
- Q. 7.  
Whence then proceeds this depravity of human nature?
- A.  
From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise; (a) hence our nature is become so corrupt, that we are all conceived and born in sin. (b)
- (a)  
Genesis 3.  
Rom.5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:  
Rom.5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.  
Rom.5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.
- (b)  
Ps.51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.  
Gen.5:3 And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth:

Q. 8.

Are we then so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness?

A.

Indeed we are; (a) except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God. (b)

(a)

Gen.8:21 The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Gen.6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Job 14:4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.

Job 15:14 What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?

Job 15:16 How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?

Job 15:35 They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit.

Isa.53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

(b)

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

1 Cor.12:3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

2 Cor.3:5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Hymn: 12-2:5.

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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**Reformed Church Bellville**

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**Scripture: New International Version**