

## REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 24 AUGUST 2008: EVENING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 24:1

*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 36:3

**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 46:5

**Scripture reading:** Genesis 4

**Scripture text:** Genesis 4:8 Catechism Sunday 40

**And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.(Genesis 4:8)**

You can only appreciate life (yours as well as that of others) when you love God. As soon as your relationship with God goes awry it is not only your faith going wrong, you also lose your respect for life.

1. **The cause of the first murder**
2. **The results of inner evil**
3. **God and life**

### 1. **The cause of the first murder**

Through history the Lord reveals that after having disrupted their relationship in Paradise with God, the people also lost their respect for the life of another.

- At first, because it was only Adam and Eve, we do not realise it.
- Then the first child is born. Eve is very ecstatic about this child. His name is Cain, meaning: "I have received!"
- But her joy only lasted for a while. Soon she would - through death – discover the terrible results that their sin would bring about to them and their children.

The second child born was named Abel. He and Cain grew up together. They also worked together. But they also differed from each other.

- Cain followed Adam's occupation. He became an agriculturist.
- Abel started taming animals and became a shepherd farming with cattle.

The two sons differed even more, their persuasion and relationship with the Lord also differed.

- Abel was pious and a believer.
- Cain was not.

This was shown by their offers. At one stage both went to offer.

- Cain offered out of habit, not by faith.
- Abel brought his offer from the conviction of his faith. In Hebrews 11:4 is written:  
**By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. (Hebrews 11:4)**

The difference, at their altars, between these two, is further shown by their conduct. Cain's offer, because of his evil internal persuasion, was wrong. In 1 John 3:11-12 is written:

**For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. (1 John 3:11-12)**

## 2. The results of inner evil

Suddenly we realise that Cain is visibly conducting himself differently than his brother.

- It angered him that the Lord was not satisfied with his wickedness.
- He knew very well that the Lord was dissatisfied because the Bible teaches that the Lord Himself gave witness to the fact that Abel's offer was just. Cain's offer thus was unjust.

Cain then hung his head.

- He missed the joy of God being happy about him.
- From his side he did not want to relinquish the wrong principles causing stress.
- The Lord then spoke to Cain. He called him to conversion. Even after the Lord spoke to Cain he still did not come to conversion.
- He became worse and committed a deed of hate. Now not only against God but also against his fellow man.
- He smote Abel to death. With this the first murder is committed.
- In this act we see the origin of the wrong in every murderer – he abandoned God and decayed internally.
- This resulted in him losing his respect for the life of other people.

Again the Lord visited Cain. He asked him: "Where is your brother?" With this the Lord was testing his concern (love) for his brother. To what extent did the hatred in his heart develop?

- Cain's answer proved him carrying the direct opposite to love in his heart. "I am not the keeper of my brother!" In other words: I do not love my neighbour like myself.
- Cain's ability for love splintered and came to light in murder.
- It is shocking to know that the first human death was due to murder – of all things a righteous innocent man.

Consider the terrible results of this murder:

- God damns Cain. This denies his access to heaven.

- Cain became the first carrying the line of the anti-Christ into humanity.
- This is the line of people outside the covenant hating God and being disobedient to Him.

### 3. God and life

This passage of history shows how valuable God regards human life.

- God created the human for eternal life. He did not create them to die.
- Death came as punishment for sin. That is why we may not take human life.
- We are unable to create life and may not execute God's punishment by killing somebody as if we have the power and right thereto.

It stands to reason that the Lord is protecting our lives because He knew that humankind would deteriorate to the point of not having any respect for life.

- The Lord also knows that people use murder in taking revenge on other people. Cain, in fact, was afraid of being killed by others for killing Abel.
- The Lord prevented it and therefore gave Cain a mark, preventing people from killing him. Thus the Lord even protects the life of the unjust.
- Therefore the Lord not only disallows murder, He forbids all things related to murder such as hatred and enmity as well as any angry thoughts you may have, wishing your neighbour to death. Actually this is logical as Cain experienced all this prior to killing his brother.

God regards human life so valuable that He sent His Son to die for us, in order to, through his victory over death, reverse our situation. For us, He transformed death into life.

- Because God's Son was also innocently murdered, the cross death is in a way comparable to the death of Abel.
- It is quite ironical that we, through the murder of God's Son, receive eternal life.
- Jesus arose from death and ascended to heaven thereby giving us the assurance that He will be repairing our lives, enabling us to also rise from death and to live in His eternal Kingdom.
- What Jesus is doing is giving back to us, through His death and resurrection, that what we lost by the Fall of sin.

The prohibition on homicide means more to us New Testament Christians than to the Old Testament believers.

- For them it was just a law protecting their lives.
- We are standing in the sign of the cross, this means that we, through Christ, also have the instruction of protecting life.
  - We are unable to, like Jesus Christ, give back life,
  - but we can fight against hatred and enmity and thereby try eradicating the roots of murder.

In Christ we are people pampering life. We steer clear from the road of conflict, hatred and murder. We live positively in the worship of God and the consummation of love for Him and our neighbour.

Let us read together Catechism Sunday 40.

Q. 105.

**What does God require in the sixth commandment?**

A.

That neither in thoughts, nor words, nor gestures, much less in deeds, I dishonour, hate, wound, or kill my neighbour, by myself or by another: (a) but that I lay aside all desire of revenge: (b) also, that I hurt not myself, nor wilfully expose myself to any danger. (c) Wherefore also the magistrate is armed with the sword, to prevent murder. (d)

(a)

Matt.5:21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

Matt.5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Matt.26:52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Gen.9:6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

(b)

Eph.4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Rom.12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Matt.5:25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

Matt.18:35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

(c)

Rom.13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Col.2:23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

Matt.4:7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

(d)

Gen.9:6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

Exod.21:14 But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

Matt.26:52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Rom.13:4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Q. 106.

**But this commandment seems only to speak of murder?**

A.

In forbidding murder, God teaches us, that he abhors the causes thereof, such as envy, (a) hatred, (b) anger, (c) and desire of revenge; and that he accounts all these as murder. (d)

(a)

Prov.14:30 A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.

Rom.1:29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

(b)

1 John 2:9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

1 John 2:11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

(c)

James 1:20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Gal.5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

Gal.5:20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

Gal.5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

(d)

1 John 3:15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Q. 107.

**But is it enough that we do not kill any man in the manner mentioned above?**

A.

No: for when God forbids envy, hatred, and anger, he commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves; (a) to show patience, peace, meekness, mercy, and all kindness, towards him, (b) and prevent his hurt as much as in us lies; (c) and that we do good, even to our enemies. (d)

(a)

Matt.7:12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Matt.22:39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Rom.12:10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

(b)

Eph.4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

Gal.6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Gal.6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Matt.5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Matt.5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Matt.5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Rom.12:18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Luke 6:36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

1 Pet.3:8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

Col.3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

Rom.12:10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

Rom.12:15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

(c)

Exod.23:5 If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.

(d)

Matt.5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

Matt.5:45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Rom.12:20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

Rom.12:21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 62:8

The Lord bless and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you, the Lord turn His countenance to you and give you peace.

**Amen**

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Scripture King James Version**

### **Summary:**

God created the human for eternal life. He did not create them to die. That is why we may not take human life. We are unable to create life and may not execute God's punishment by killing somebody as if we have the power and right thereto.