

REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2011 MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 135: 8

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 universal 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 65:2

Law

Psalm: 65:2

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 136:1, 19

Scripture reading: Deuteronomy 32:36-42 (40)
 2 Samuel 22:32-47 (47)
 Ezekiel 33:10-12 (11)
 Romans 14:10-12 (11)
 Hebrews 7:20-28 (25)

Scripture text: Hebrews 7:25b
 ...seeing he ever liveth ... (Hebrews 7:25b)

Have you ever considered the reason for so much decadence in our times – degeneration in virtually every walk of life?

- There is moral and ethical decay.
- There is decay in human relationships.
- Physically many things are going down the drain.

Why?

- It is due to too many people forgetting that the Lord is alive.
- The attributes and ways of general thought about everything done by the world in these times were allowed to be brought into our religion.

Many faith-issues have just been completely moved to the common sense and issues of the heart relegated to the background!

- We know that God exists.
- But to the most of us that is just that.

This is why the thoughts of so many people (also so-called believers!) very seldom reach God.

This is also the reason why so few people have an actual relationship with Him.

The decay also has some roots in the fact that, in general, people have less and less knowledge about the contents of the Bible.

- Many people no longer have the true faith as described in the Bible.
- The Bible teaches that we must have a definite knowledge of God's revelation and a solid trust in His mercy.
 - This supposes a perfect knowledge of God and His Word.
 - The general Bible-knowledge of most believers is wanting – and without knowledge the trust in God has also waned.

This explained how the realization remained that God is there – an omnipotent and elevated God.

- Up to here it is correct, but the important part that got lost is that this God also is a personal and living God, personally present with me, here and now.
- The fact is just that those amongst us who lost this realization will have to regain it, should we want to rectify and manage our problems and lives again.

From the passages we read together where the living God have been described every time, there is one matter strongly coming to the foreground:

- The judgement we encounter in our lives is solely due to our own doing, because should we have known the presence of God and experienced it, we would have experienced His love.
- The presence of God thus deals with His love and the blessings flowing from it.

Firstly we consider the passage from Deuteronomy 32. What is taking place here?

- Moses had just appointed Joshua as his successor.
- He knows that the people will fall into retrogression and warns them against it.
- He does everything by means of a song.

This song also contains a passage where it is sung about how God protects His people – *it is connected to the fact that the Lord is living.*

- God will protect the people. He will challenge and destroy the idols.
- Tate note: He will clean up whatever threatens and causes His people to fall.

Then He takes an oath on his life that He will destroy all that is bad.

- But you must keep in mind that the people have already been removed from those who are to be destroyed.
- The closeness of God is His love protecting us and killing our enemies.

The people who are present and remembering that God is living, also realizes His omnipotence – which He undoubtedly destroys with, but also most certainly uses to ensure the security and future of His chosen.

This is why God can take an oath on His life – contained in His life is His everlastingness and omnipotence.

- Because in His life He is elevated above all, He can destroy the creatures opposing Him.

- This passage also has the importance of giving the principle that God, with His life, is protecting the people whom worship and serve Him.

In 2 Samuel 22 we again have a song. This time David is the singer.

- The contents are quite different, this song does not deal with the people but with one person only.
- It deals with the personal relationship between one believer and the living God.

This passage we have read together describes the powerful blessings of the Lord.

- The Lord even blessed David in the face of other nations.
- How could all that happen? Because the Lord is living!
 - The power and love for us is in the life of God.
 - In the life of God He commands blessings over us.

The life of God thus goes hand in hand and in close relation to our experiencing of His personal presence and life together with and over us.

- In Ezekiel 33 we have the relationship between God and the office bearer as well as the relationship between God and His church.
- The living God confirms an office bearer.
 - In this instance the office bearer is Ezekiel: God appoints him as guard over the house of Israel.
 - He has to preach judgement to the unconvertible and mercy to the others.

Together with the life of God also stands God's love.

- Again God takes an oath on His life.
 - This time He takes an oath of not wanting to destroy the people.
 - He is interested that the wicked should convert and live.
- Life then has this meaning of the life we obtain through God's deliverance – life eternal.

Take note:

- So great and steadfast is God's love that He takes an oath about it, grounding the truthfulness of this oath on His own life!
- The crux of this passage is that the people of the church should realize that God cannot be compared to any other God – He is the only Living God.

The passage in Romans 14 deals with yet another relationship relevant to the life of the Lord.

- It is our relationship towards other people and that of all of us towards God.
- Here it is mentioned about people despising the servants of other people and people despising the viewpoints of each other.
- Then Paul comes to this conclusion: Why do you judge your brother?
 - You cannot, unless you have something very special inside yourself, despise or prevail over somebody else.
 - Both of you stand on equal footing facing the judgement of Jesus.

The Lord Jesus shall judge over what was right and wrong in both of your lives.

- In His love He will grant life to those He absolves.
- The point is this: The Lord is present.
 - Bow to Him and do not try assuming the role of judging over other people.
 - Make use of the love showered upon you by the life of the Lord.

Here again is an oath: As I live, saith the Lord

- This passage is a quotation from the Old Testament, but the Holy Spirit makes it part of the New Testament.
- God still takes an oath on His life.

Now the passage placing the other passages into perspective follows (Hebrews 7)

- How does it come to pass that God in His living association can grant us so much love?
- And how is it possible for God living with us and able to personally live together with us?

The answer is: Jesus Christ.

- God, at any rate, exists from ever to ever – there is no question about that.
- Due to our own injustices we estrange ourselves from this eternal living God.

But because He still is here with us and because He continues loving us, He therefore decides to remove our sins and trespasses.

- He became a priest Himself.
- The work of a priest was to, facing God, pray for the people and then bring offers from the people.
- The offers were to indicate that the people were again reconciled with God.

The problem was that through the ages the priests, because they were humans unable to live long, died.

- They themselves were also tainted by sin and could therefore only deliver incomplete service.
- The offers were also from creation and subject to the curse of the Fall and had thus to be repeated time and again.

Then God Himself came as Priest.

- He could live faultlessly as a human.
- He then had them offer His perfect and untainted body.
- Thereafter He came back to life and ascended away from our world to the dwelling of God – and there He continually prays for us.

The living God is eternally with and over us. In connection with this look at Hebrews 7:24-245:

...but he, because he abideth for ever, hath his priesthood unchangeable. Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

(Hebrews 7:24-25)

This is how the matter now stands for us:

- God lives forever.
- He, because His omnipresence cannot be excluded by anything, lives here together with us.
- His love is over us and His life envelops us.

When sin again approaches us be wary:

- Do not offend the living God and aggravate Him by the evil matters of our lives.
- Remember that He actually is where you are, and that He sees there, and also knows what you are doing – and that He can punish and indeed will do so, should we live as if He does not exist.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 68:2

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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