

REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 19 OCTOBER 2008: MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 78:8,9

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 107:4

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 catholic* 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 81:1,4

Law

Psalm: 81:1,4

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 147:3

Scripture reading: Isaiah 4

Scripture text: Isaiah 4:5. Catechism Sunday 50

then the Lord will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering. (Isaiah 4:5)

The Lord wants to be resident in Zion. In the city of David. This is the image of the Old Testament.

Under the New Testament we would say that the Lord wants to be resident amongst His congregation.

- Like a Father amongst His children
- In the language of the New Testament we say that God in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is living in His congregation.

It borders on the unbelievable that the Lord, in such a wonderful way, came to live amongst us sinners.

- This, at any rate, is the way in which our Father in the heaven is granting us His favour and mercy.
 - Where God is resident there of course is no hunger.
 - His blessing to His children is revealed in Him satisfying their appetite with bread.
 - A human father would not even live amongst his children allowing them to die of starvation, how would the heavenly Father then live amongst His children and not give them bread?

It is with these promises sounding in our ears that God is living amongst us to feed the poor with bread, that we pray for our daily bread.

It is not a command at all when we pray to God to give us our daily bread.

- It is a prayer to God requesting the means needed daily.
- It does not mean that a miracle must take place suddenly supplying us with food and clothing.
- It comprises of us praying that, through work, we may earn the needed.

Daily care is a good gift of God – or like James puts it:

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. (James 1:17)

Nobody has these gifts of daily care out of his own means. The Lord Jesus teaches to request this, by prayer, from Above.

When we pray for bread we do not only pray for bread – we pray for all physical necessities.

- Because bread is the most important for the sustenance of the temporary daily life, the Lord Jesus calls all this “bread”.
- It is the same as the Psalm writer puts it. The Lord is living in Zion.
I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread. (Psalm 132:15)
- The destitute are the poor. There the Lord provides them with bread.
 - It is necessities of life.
 - Because the Father fully supplies to the satisfaction of their needs, He actually is providing in abundance.

Because we are receiving our means through the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have the bread of life. Therefore we are receiving so much more from the hand of the Father. For us it is written:

"Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! (Matthew 7:9-11)

This means that the Lord Jesus Christ did not only die for our salvation hereafter.

- His virtues and effects on the cross also have a relation to our lives this side of the grave.
- We, as the children of God have in Christ a child-like right on daily bread.
 - But the Lord instructs us to pray for it.
 - We may not accept our blessings as a matter of course.

Also we pray this prayer in unselfishness. We are not the only whom the Lord Jesus died for. The Father has more children.

- Therefore we must pray that we may receive our daily bread.
- It is not only me having this need for food and clothing – others also have these needs.
- We must not, out of habit, or without thinking, pray for their needs – we must pray for them because in our hearts, there is a real love and compassion for and with our neighbour.

When praying: Give us our daily bread, we confess thereby that we reject sins like avarice, selfishness, jealousy and even lack of charity.

- Here the commandment of love comes into play.
- We love our neighbour as ourselves and therefore we desire the same gifts for him, as I need from the Father.

This teaches us how the love of our heavenly Father really is:

- With love He lets us eat and strengthens us.
- Out of loving kindness He clothes us.

Give us our daily bread also deals with the blessings in our life.

Most of us daily pray at the dinner table: "Father bless us in the use of this gift!"

This is a great deal to pray for and how many of us are aware of what we then are asking for!

- In the first instance we are asking the Lord to bless us for the way in which we acquire our food.
 - Only God can give it and therefore we want it with blessing from His hand.
- Secondly we ask for the blessing of the purpose of which we use the food, namely to strengthen our bodies.
 - A body deprived from food weakens and should a body be deprived from food long enough it will die.
- Thirdly we pray to the Father for the blessing of the result of the daily use of the bread.
 - This means that the Father, through our daily care of the innards, must bless us in a way enabling us to do our work with care and exactness.
 - So that we, with responsible work in the correct way, may receive food and clothing.

Food and clothing do not fall from the skies. God grants it – which is true.

- But He also prescribes specific responsibilities concerning this – every day, we have to work for it!
- Six days of each week we have to work on the land (or wherever the Lord supplies the work).

On the seventh day we have to work to the building of God's earthly Kingdom.

- Then we are not working to, by our earnings, be flattered by the people.
- Any honest hard-working person soon learns that the blessing on our work comes from Above.

With this prayer we pray for the hidden powers of God to work in us, so that we, with our work, may let His gifts on earth flourish.

When our Father, who is in heaven, blesses us with the things we physically need on earth it results in us thankfully living our lives in devotion to our Triune God.

But again we must first understand very well:

- When He is supplying our daily necessities, the Lord is not bribing us to be believers.
- No, the fact of Him supplying it teaches us to believe.
- And, due to the continued supplying our faith is strengthened.

The daily care with food and clothing causes us to realise how the Lord is also busy spiritually preparing us for eternal life.

- Not only does a father feed his child, he also teaches him values and educates him.
- In this way the heavenly Father is also spiritually caring for us.
- By the daily care not only are our bodies fed, our souls are also strengthened for eternal life.

When thus praying for bread we are actually praying for mercy in all walks of our lives.

- This we receive because the father loves us so much – We get all this through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- He is our guarantee that the Father will not falter in caring for us.
- He is the Revelation of the mercy and love the Father has for us.
- He is the Bread of life through whom we experience joy in our lives.
- He feeds the hope of eternal life in us – through the Holy Spirit that He sent back to live within us.
- The Holy Spirit teaches that we, as children of the Father, are cared for with bread to body and soul.

When we pray: Give us today our daily bread, we are in other words actually praying that:

- Under us, the Name of God should be hallowed
- and that His will should, under us be revealed in a heavenly way.
- This revelation serves to the building up of God's earthly kingdom.

It is thus mandatory that every day we must pray to receive our daily bread from the hand of God.

Let us look and see what the Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 50, teaches about our confession of these matters:

Q. 125.**Which is the fourth petition?****A.**

"Give us this day our daily bread"; that is, be pleased to provide us with all things necessary for the body, (a)

that we may thereby acknowledge thee to be the only fountain of all good, (b)

and that neither our care nor industry, nor even thy gifts, can profit us without thy blessing; (c)

and therefore that we may withdraw our trust from all creatures, and place it alone in thee. (d)

(a)

Ps.104:27 These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

Ps.104:28 That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

Ps.145:15 The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.

Ps.145:16 Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

Matt.6:25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Matt.6:26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

(b)

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Acts 14:17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Acts 17:27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

Acts 17:28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

(c)

1 Cor.15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Deut.8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

Ps.37:3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

Ps.37:4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Ps.37:5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

Ps.37:16 A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.

Ps.127:1 <<A Song of degrees for Solomon.>> Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

Ps.127:2 It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

(d)

Ps.55:23 But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.

Ps.62:11 God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.

Ps.146:3 Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

Jer.17:5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

Jer.17:7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Song Scripture Versification 2-5:3 (Romans 11:33-36)

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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Reformed Church Bellville

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