

REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SATURDAY 25 DECEMBER 2010: CHRISTMAS DAY

Sing before: Psalm 145:1, 11, 12

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 100:1-4

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 89:1, 3, 7

Scripture reading: Isaiah 43

Scripture text: Isaiah 43:1. Catechism Sunday 01

Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine.
(Isaiah 43:1)

The true believer expects the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus, because he always feared the punishment for his sins, as a day of consolation, and this day he experiences the absolution, by the Lord, of his guilt. He knows that on this day he will enter into eternal life with God in His Kingdom.

Come, let us consider two outstanding aspects:

1. **The Lord Jesus ensures us that we are absolved from our punishment of sin.**
2. **The second is the certainty it gives us that we are cared for in life and death.**

The believer again experiences the fulfilment of Isaiah 43: **Fear not, for I have redeemed you.** It is like something in the memory of Jesus' birth is calling to man:

“Because you belong to the Lord, have no fear. The Lord called you by your name and the Lord Jesus then lived and died for you”

Therefore in verse 3 the Lord says:

For I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.

Christmas day is thus a day of joy, because this day remains a beacon reminding you that:

- The Lord Jesus is born.
- God was true to His promise of redemption, and therefore Jesus the Redeemer came to earth.
- We may again remember that He was born to do the task of redemption.

How often during times of affliction do we not think that the Lord has rejected us.

- Other times we think that the Lord is busy punishing us for all our sins.
- Here the Lord calls Himself *Saviour* – Redeemer. The One that brings about salvation.
- Thus: The One removing sins.

Sins and death is closely related to each other, sin causes death, and death is the result of sin.

- Therefore we can rest assured that, together with the forgiving of our sins, the Lord also pulls us away from hell.
- You and I are also freed from the power of death.
- We will die the earthly death, but the death of hell, because the Lord Jesus freed us from it, will never come close to us.

2. The second is the certainty it gives us that we are cared for in life and death.

The way in which each one of us celebrates Christmas is thus related to our surety of faith.

- Surety of faith brings together two worlds: it is to know that in this life, and as well in the life after this one, you belong to the Lord Jesus.
- You belong with body and soul, in life and in death, to the Lord.

In the first part of this sermon I put it to you in a negative way.

- The true believer will not go to hell.
- But you must also consider it in a positive way: The Lord, in this life, looks after you every day, but in life hereafter, the Lord also looks after you.

About this life the Lord said that He would care for us in such a way that there shall not a hair of our heads perish.

- By that the Lord did not mean that it would only be applicable until we die, and afterwards everything would be lost.
- In fact, because in the hereafter we will be with Him, He cares for us during this life.

Our main concern is especially what will become of us after we have died:

- Where will I open my eyes?
- How sure can I be of not going to hell?
- Because we are aware that nobody except the Lord can take care of us in the afterlife.

You have the assurance through the birth, life and crucifixion-death of the Lord Jesus.

- For that reason he came to earth, was born here and attained everlasting life for you.
- Therefore an accursed cross-death, bearing all God's wrath about our sins, later followed His birth.
- On this accursed-cross he concurred the death.

This He did not do for His own benefit, because He had no sin for which He had to be punished, and nether did He need the eternal life for Himself, as He is the ever-living God!

He bore the entire wrath and attained everlasting life for us.

- Keep in mind His promise to His disciples about going away and preparing place.
- The crucifixion did not halt the redemption work of our Lord Jesus, because He is still working: Right at this moment He is busy preparing a place of residence for us in the afterlife.
- It has to be clear that we, after our earthly death, also have to belong to the Lord because He, in fact, has residence for us with Him.

Christmas time is thus time of grace.

- Time of grace, because these times especially bring the becoming of a human/birth of the Lord Jesus to our attention.
- Together with Christmas the believer cannot but also experience the fulfillment of God's deed of redemption through Christ.
- During this Christmas do not focus on the day, but focus on the God of Christmas.

Please be aware of the dangers of Christmas. The danger of Christmas is that it might have a heathen influence over us!

- We could easily, like the heathen, direct our joy away from God, make each other happy, and stay only with gifts, holidays and debauchery
- Do not allow the worldly temptations to estrange you from the Lord and mislead you to trespassing against the Almighty.

Come, let us today anew fix our sight on the horizon of the history and perceive the Lord of Christmas where He is busy coming again to take us with Him into eternity.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 116:1, 5

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

Dr MJ Du Plessis
Reformed Church Bellville
Christmas Day 2010
Scripture: Modern King James Version

This sermon is based upon the Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 01.

Question 1.

What is thy only comfort in life and death?

Answer.

That I with body and soul, both in life and death, (a)
am not my own, (b)
but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ; (c)
who, with his precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins, (d)
and delivered me from all the power of the devil; (e)
and so preserves me (f)

that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; (g)
 yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, (h)
 and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, (i)
 and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him. (j)

(a)

Rom.14:7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

Rom.14:8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord:
 whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

(b)

1 Cor.6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye
 have of God, and ye are not your own?

(c)

1 Cor.3:23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Tit.2:14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a
 peculiar people, zealous of good works.

(d)

1 Pet.1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and
 gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

1 Pet.1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the
 blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

1 John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the
 whole world.

1 John 2:12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

(e)

Heb.2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise
 took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the
 devil;

1 John 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this
 purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the
 servant of sin.

John 8:35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

John 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

(f)

John 6:39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should
 lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

John 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck
 them out of my hand.

2 Thess.3:3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.

1 Pet.1:5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the
 last time.

(g)

Matt.10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground
 without your Father.

Matt.10:30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Matt.10:31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Luke 21:18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

(h)

Rom.8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

(i)

2 Cor. 1:20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

2 Cor. 1:21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath

anointed us, is God; 2 Cor.1:22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

2 Cor.5:5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

Eph.1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

Eph.1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Rom.8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

(j)

Rom.8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

1 John 3:3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Q. 2.

How many things are necessary for thee to know, that thou, enjoying this comfort, mayest live and die happily?

A.

Three; (a)

the first, how great my sins and miseries are; (b)

the second, how I may be delivered from all my sins and miseries; (c)

the third, how I shall express my gratitude to God for such deliverance. (d)

(a)

Matt.11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Matt.11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Matt.11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Luke 24:46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

Luke 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Luke 24:48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

1 Cor.6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Tit.3:3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

Tit.3:4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

Tit.3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Tit.3:6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

Tit.3:7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

(b)

John 9:41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

John 15:22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.

(c)

John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Acts 10:43 To him (Jesus) give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

(d)

Eph.5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

Eph.5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

Eph.5:10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

Eph.5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

1 Pet.2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

1 Pet.2:10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Rom.6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

Rom.6:2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Rom.6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Rom.6:13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.