

## REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2009: MORNING SERVICE

### Opening Reading:

**who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises (Romans 9:4)**

### Sing before: Psalm 91:8

*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 107:1

### 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 40:4*

Law

Psalm: 40:4

### 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 38: 1, 17

**Scripture reading:** Jeremiah 36 and Mark 13

**Scripture text:** Jeremiah 36:23 and Mark 13:7, 19, 20, 24 & 25

**And they went to the king, into the court; but they stored the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the hearing of the king. So the king sent Jehudi to bring the scroll, and he took it from Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the hearing of the king and in the hearing of all the princes who stood beside the king. Now the king was sitting in the winter house in the ninth month, with a fire burning on the hearth before him. And it happened, when Jehudi had read three or four columns, that the king cut it with the scribe's knife and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the scroll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth.**

(Jeremiah 36:20 – 23)

We must always humble ourselves to God.

In modesty we have to confess our sins to God and also beg for redemption and freedom from the matters bothering us.

In the first passage we read, we find a king who, against God, hardened himself and rebelled.

- Jehoiakim and his officials lacked interest in God and religion.
- To them, their own outlook on life was the most important issue.

Therefore the Lord decided to punish these people.

- In this instance the punishment was Banishment.
- We also know of other instances where the punishment differed: in the times of Noah an excessive amount of water arrived during the deluge.
- We also know of the drought during the times of Elisha.

In the case of Jehoiakim we have an exact revelation of what caused the Lord to decide upon punishment to the people for lacking of faith.

- All the children were falling into sin.
- There were a few exceptions but the majority was glad about the hardening of the king as it considerably alleviated them from their duties of faith.
- It happens to be a fact that there will always be a fair number of people who will most happily grasp onto any excuse to neglect religion.

In the passage we have read the Lord proved His mercy to the fullest extent.

- He revealed Himself to Jeremiah and commanded him to record everything said to him by the Lord.  
**"It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the adversities which I purpose to bring upon them, that everyone may turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin."** (Jeremiah 36:3)
- Jeremiah then called onto Baruch, dictating everything to him. In this way Baruch helped Jeremiah in complying with the command of the Lord.

Under the direction of Jeremiah, Baruch then read this book in the Temple.

- That gave rise to the event of the book being read for a second time – this time to the officials.

Take note of a very important matter:

- The people did nothing to transform themselves.
- Neither did the officials.
- The officials were highly upset about the attitude of the king towards this matter!
- But not about the attitude of God!

The king was in his winter palace.

- He had to comply with the request of his principality and listen to the book that God had written.
- He is very frustrated.
- He sits with a scribe's knife in hand and when Jehudi had read three or four columns, the king cut it with the scribe's knife and cast it into the fire

*Some of the officials implored the king not to burn the scroll; but he would not listen to them. He was so unmoved by the demands of God that he acted with the maximum contempt he could muster against the word of God.*

All he servants were in agreement with the king:

**Yet they were not afraid, nor did they tear their garments, the king nor any of his servants who heard all these words.** (Jeremiah 36:24)

We all know the rest of the history very well.

These people were conquered during bloody battles and chased, like animals, to Babylon where they had to stay in exile for seventy years.

Take note that the crux of this matter is in what the Lord Himself said:

- He wanted to bring the people to conversion so that He could forgive their sin.
- This was the purpose of the punishment over them.

Are matters any better in our country?

- The shocking fact is that there are more and more people completely indifferent towards God and the church.
- More and more religion is misplaced because every time the essence of the matter is mankind and their rights, not the glory of God.

Because far too many people are living amongst us, who just do not heed Him, the Lord thus has the right to punish all of us.

- But the Lord is taking a different route with us. He wants to bless us.
- Therefore He is calling us to Holy Communion.
- Of course we will arrive beseechingly, but He, in fact, shall assure us about His love and mercy.

We must also keep in mind that we are living at the end of times.

- Common to the end of times are events like earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, wars and such matters.
- These are all matters we nowadays see taking place.
- *But again the Lord says very clearly that this is the result of the increasing ungodliness of the world.*

Because this condition is prevalent world-wide the prayers of one nation only will not prevent it. This places us within the framework of the times we are caught into.

But this does not mean that we must not pray for peace.

- We have to, but we must not pray as if the peace we desire should immediately replace this place of us with heaven.
- The Lord puts it very clearly that at the end of times, prior to His Coming, there will be nasty persecutions and uprisings and underlines that this is only the START of misery.

He makes it very clear that the Kingdom of God will only arrive after these times have struggled through this layer of misery.

- Therefore the Lord wants us together at the Holy Communion again.
- He wants to assure us that during these times we have not become lost to His mercy.

What perhaps still awaits us in future? Together we have just read that the complete creation will be disrupted due to the increasing power of sin.

- Tsunamis, floods, earthquakes and droughts are of the least of what is still to come.
- There will come a time when the sun will cease to give light and together with it the moon will darken.

But all these things do not mean the end for us, but we also have to pray that the mercy of God, in such times, will be enough for us.

It deals with our attitude towards the Lord.

- Do we cut the Bible to pieces and burn it in aid of venting our frustrations against the Lord with as much contempt as possible? – We at least have seen how Jehoiakim has done it!
- Or do we endure these matters through prayer and imploring to the Lord – as the Lord Jesus tells us to do in Mark 13.

Remember in these times we are living that the Lord Jesus also died and arose from the dead so that God the Father will grant us mercy in these moments.

- So much mercy that we may look beyond the surface of these miseries and see the Lord using these matters to engineer the coming of His Kingdom.
- Therefore, so that we may know all of this, it was told to us.

But the demand remains – we have to continually convert ourselves.

- We must keep in mind that our sins are so big that at any moment the Lord has reason to destroy us – we, as a punishment, earn these things.
- But the way of the Lord goes differently with us who believe.
  - He enfolds us in His Love
  - Time and again He gives us the assurance that He is looking after us and that no moment will ever arise that the miseries of the end of times will be able to erase our place in His Kingdom.

*Come let us prepare with a solid faith in God to attend His Sacrament.*

*We come as people doing daily battle against our sin.*

*We hear and taste the confirmation of God's mercy and love.*

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 138: 4

The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you.  
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

**Amen**

**Dr MJ Du Plessis**

**Reformed Church Bellville**

**1 November 2009**

**Scripture Modern King James Version**