

Sing before the service: Psalm 104:1, 21

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 103:1, 2, 3

Prayer

Psalm 34:6 (p. 167)

Scripture reading: John 1

Scripture text: John 1:12, 18; Catechism Lord's Day 13

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— (John 1:12 NIV-UK)

No-one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known. (John 1:18 NIV-UK)

When reading this text the words **to become children of God** are striking.

- The words imply that there is tension between the Lord and us and that Jesus mediated between the two parties to reconcile them with one another.
- Anyone who needs to reconcile two parties needs to know both parties very well, and he should also have a specific relationship with both of them.

And Jesus is exactly like this:

- He stands between God and the people to make propitiation for the people's sins against God.
- He has a very close relationship with both parties:
 - He is the Lord's Son – and at the same time He is God Himself.
 - His relates to man because He was also man because He took on the flesh and blood of man.

Hence He bears the Name(s) *Jesus Christ*.

- *Jesus* is his Godly name that indicates that He is God the Saviour.
- *Christ* is his official name indicating that He is man who was anointed by God to – in terms of his office – save man and make propitiation for man's sins.

Let's look at the following:

- 1. What do we confess through these Names?**
- 2. What do these Names mean to us?**
- 3. What do we expect of these Names?**

1. What do we confess through these Names?

Through these Names we confess a few mysteries.

- First, that Jesus is God's Only-begotten Son. Psalm 2:7 contains the Lord's prophetic words about Him:

You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

- When Paul later delivered a speech in the synagogue in Antioch he quoted these words and said they refer to Jesus Christ (Acts 13:33).
- Hebrews 1:5 also quotes these words and refers to the fact that the Lord never said anything like that to the angels. He only used these words in connection with Jesus Christ, and then these words follow:

I will be his Father, and he will be my Son.

How God did it is beyond our understanding, but it's a fact that He did it.

- No human mind can figure out how God Almighty accomplished being born Himself as his Son Jesus.
- He revealed it to us, and whoever belongs to the Lord, believes it.

All through the ages the gospel preached this message that has brought people to believe.

- Every true believer confesses the Divine glory of Jesus Christ as the basis of our salvation and of our hope to be in the eternal hereafter.
- We also confess that **we are also children of God** through this name *Jesus Christ*.
 - Actually, we were not born children of God, because by nature we are children of Satan and the wrath of God.
 - But we are adopted children of God through the blood of Jesus Christ.
 - The Lord adopted us as his children by grace.
 - We know and realise this every day when we experience the mysterious working of God the Holy Spirit in us.

Every one of us experiences things such as rebirth, calling and sanctification. It is our Lord Jesus who works in our hearts.

2. What do these Names mean to us?

These Names encompass our privilege of total salvation.

- At present already we should realise that salvation is not something vague and spiritual and that we will only find out exactly what it is and what it actually entails once we are in the hereafter.
- Total salvation means that my body and my soul have been saved from the controlling influence of the devil – in this life already, although it will only be perfect in the hereafter.

Do you ever consider the fact that you have become the Lord's inheritance? You have been purchased. Redeemed.

- And the currency was not of the kind we know today, like money or gold.
- The currency was the blood of Jesus. He redeemed us from the punishment of the Lord which means that we will not be turned over to the devil to be in hell.

You are so privileged to be sure of this salvation.

- You need not wonder about whether the Lord Jesus Christ was able to save you from the power of the devil.
- He saved you from all the power and violence aimed against your salvation.
- Through the power and the conquering glory of the Lord Jesus Christ we know for sure that we belong to Him and that we are part of the people who will live with Him in the hereafter that He is preparing for us now.

In this Name of Jesus Christ you have the guarantee that you will continue in true faith.

- We know from the Scriptures that as the Second Coming approaches people will become increasingly influenced by false doctrine and lose their faith.
- The true believers will need to ask themselves: Will I be able to continue in faith?

In the Name of Jesus Christ you have the guarantee that you will continue in faith.

- You belong to Him. Hence you bear the name *Christian*.
- Jesus Christ made you children of God by virtue of the power and justice and love of God.
- This is what John 1:12 says:
 - To all those who received Him and believed in Him, He gave the right to become children of God.
 - This does not happen through the power of man. It is the power from God that works in them through God the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit does these things through faith, repentance and perseverance. Hence you can be sure of the fact that you will always remain children of God.

3. What do we expect of these Names?

We find the answer to this question in John 1:18. We expect increased and continuing revelation.

- The Lord Jesus Christ revealed Himself as the Saviour and Conqueror over death.
- Many people saw how He died.
- Afterwards they saw the empty tomb. And many people saw Him after his resurrection when He appeared to them (1 Corinthians 15).
- He still reveals Himself to us through the work of and through God the Holy Spirit living in us.
- In addition, Jesus also revealed to us the will of the Father.
- As a matter of fact, the Holy Spirit lives in us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We expect that the Lord Jesus Christ will reveal Himself to us more and more,

- the more our knowledge of his Word increases, and
- the more we worship Him in truth.

We also expect to find peace of life through Him.

- We will personally experience that, even in times of tension, when we feel safe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We also expect of ourselves that,

- realising this, we will serve the Lord Jesus Christ better with all our strength and all our gifts every day.
- Also, as life goes on, we will experience increasing happiness, peace and hope in Jesus Christ.

We belong to Jesus Christ who has all authority in heaven and on earth.

- Let it be our purpose this year – as members of this congregation – to consider again the way in which we worship and serve Him.
- We must serve the Lord with all our gifts and strength. Then the Lord will also richly bless us as long as we live.

Let's read together Catechism Lord's Day 13.

33. Q. Why is He called God's only begotten Son, since we also are children of God?

A. Because Christ alone is the eternal, natural Son of God.[1] We, however, are children of God by adoption, through grace, for Christ's sake.[2]

[1] John 1:1-3, 14, 18; 3:16; Rom. 8:32; Heb. 1; I John 4:9. [2] John 1:12; Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:5, 6.

34. Q. Why do you call Him our Lord?

A. Because He has ransomed us, body and soul,[1] from all our sins, not with silver or gold but with His precious blood,[2] and has freed us from all the power of the devil to make us His own possession.[3]

[1] I Cor. 6:20; I Tim. 2:5, 6. [2] I Peter 1:18, 19. [3] Col. 1:13, 14; Heb. 2:14, 15.

Amen.

Closing prayer

Closing hymn: Scripture hymn 2-4:1 (33:1)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Amen.

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