

## REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 26 APRIL 2009: EVENING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 34:6

*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 36:2

**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**

Hymn 1-1(24):2

**Scripture reading:** John 20

**Scripture text:** John 20:28 and Heidelberg Catechism Lord's day 13

**Thomas answered, "My Lord and my God!"**

We do not read that Thomas did actually put his fingers where the nails were or his hand into the side of the Lord. It was no longer necessary for him to do so!

- But we do read that the Lord Jesus tells him: **"Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."** (John 20:29)
- And we read that he immediately made a confession: **"My Lord and my God!"**

The other disciples knew the joy of the Lord's resurrection as from the moment of His appearance to them.

- Only this one, who was not present at the first appearance, Thomas, did not have this joy.
- He did not, on the evidence of the others, want to confess the Lord's almight.

When the Lord appears to him everything in him changes! He confesses: My Lord and my God!

- This was a powerful confession, notwithstanding that it came from the mouth of someone who was somewhat backward in his faith.
- None of the other disciples had ever confessed the Lord Jesus to be so!

On Mount Carmel the Israelites did confess that the LORD is God (1 Kings 18:39), but this was only a confession of the **fact** that the Lord is God.

- It lacked the **personal** confession – that is why the people and Ahab did not repent: **Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, “The LORD, he is God! The LORD – he is God!”** (1 Kings 18:38-39)

The more important question is how Thomas arrived at the stage that he could make this confession.

- The answer is that the Lord Jesus sought him out – this what His grace is like!
- Thomas is invited to inspect the wounds and to satisfy himself about Who it is that is speaking to him.
- This grace causes Thomas to confess the Lord Jesus to be his Lord and his God.

This confession is not unique to Thomas:

- It is repeated regularly by every congregation that truly believes in the Lord Jesus.
- Every Sunday we confess the Lord Jesus to be the only begotten Son of God who died for us by suffering all the terrors of hell unto death.
- This confession we make so regularly is not based on only Thomas’ realisation that the Lord is his Lord and his God. It is based on more testimony passed on to us by the apostles.

Why is it important to us that we confess the Lord Jesus to be our God and Our Lord?

- Because in the ministry and the person of the Lord Jesus our entire salvation is embodied.
- The travellers to Emmaus said that their hope was in Jesus:  
**But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.** (Luke 24:21)

The truth is that those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus have no hope of life after death.

- They will drown in everlasting despair – not only because they do not have hope but also because they abandon their hope when they fail to confess Jesus as Lord and God.

Our confession is founded not only in Who the Lord Jesus Christ is – it is also founded in what He has made us.

- His death justified us before God
- We therefore have the living hope that we shall receive absolution when we stand in judgement before God
- We confess Him as our Lord and God because in His almight He destroyed the devil’s power and authority over us.

We therefore confess that the fact that He is Lord and God has made us to be children of God. We read that in a number of passages in the Bible, among others, in Ephesians 1:5:

**He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will..**

And also **Romans 8:**

**Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of**

**God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.** (Romans 8:14-17)

The same is written to the churches in Galatia:

**To redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out: "Abba, Father".** (Galatians 4:5-6)

Let us read what our confession teaches us about this in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's day 13:  
**Q. 33.**

Why is Christ called the "**only begotten Son**" of God, since we are also the children of God?

**A.**

Because Christ alone is the eternal and natural Son of God; (a) but we are children adopted of God, by grace, for his sake. (b)

(a)

John 1:1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:2: The same was in the beginning with God.

John 1:3: All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

John 1:14: And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

John 1:18: No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

Heb.1:1: God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Heb.1:2: Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

John 3:16: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

1 John 4:9: In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Rom.8:32: He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

(b)

Rom.8:15: For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

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

Rom.8:17: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

John 1:12: But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Gal.4:6: And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Eph.1:5: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Eph.1:6: To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

**Q. 34.**

Wherefore callest thou him "**our Lord**"?

**A.**

Because he hath redeemed us, both soul and body, from all our sins, not with silver or gold, but with his precious blood, and has delivered us from all the power of the devil; and thus has made us his own property.

(a)

(a)

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 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 Cor.6:20: For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Cor.7:23: Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

1 Tim.2:6: Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

John 20:28: And Thomas answered, "my Lord and my God".

Amen

Closing prayer.

Closing Hymn: 2-4 (33):1

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

**Amen**

**Dr MJ Du Plessis**

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**Scripture: New International Version**