

Sing beforehand: Psalm 138:1

Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earthⁱ. Beloved, grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christⁱⁱ. By the powerful operation of God the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Psalm of praise: Psalm 68:9

Confession of faith: Apostles Creed

*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 Ghost, 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 thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:
I believe in the Holy Ghost:
I believe in the holy catholic church: the communion of saints:
The forgiveness of sins:
The resurrection of the body:
And the life everlasting. Amen. ⁱⁱⁱ*

The Law

¹And God spake all these words, saying,

²I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

³Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

⁴Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

⁵Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

⁶And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

⁷Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

⁸Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

⁹Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

¹⁰But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

¹²Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

¹³Thou shalt not kill.

¹⁴Thou shalt not commit adultery.

¹⁵Thou shalt not steal.

¹⁶Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

¹⁷Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Exodus 20:1-17 KJV

We profess the reconciliation of our sins by singing:

Psalm 31:17

Prayer

- **Doxology:**
- **Worship:**
- **Confession:**
- **Supplication** (for pardon of sins):
- **Thanksgiving:**
- **Intercession**
(for the need of the congregation, the church, authorities, sinful world and appeal to the promises of God)

- **General supplication:**
- **Illumination of the Holy Spirit** (necessary for the ministry of the Word):

Amen.

Psalm 84:2

Scripture reading: Job 42^{iv}
 Scripture text: Job 42:5

⁵I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

But now my eye sees! After all: seeing is believing is it not.

- Which is why it sometimes makes faith hard. We can no longer see the Lord Jesus Christ, because He is no longer here. Because He departed from us!
- And for some, the guarantee of faith also disappeared with Him.

But to physically and bodily see, is not the only way of seeing.

- One can also see spiritually.
- Which is to experience something in such a way that one accepts and believes it. It is what David experienced when in Psalm 27:13 he called out:
¹³**I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living**

How does one see the Lord's goodness? By noticing the abundance of grace that He grants us.

First we read how that Satan went to stand before God in heaven.

- He went to Lord to there go and lay a terribly serious accusation against Job.
- He alleged that Job's worship of the Lord was an appearance only, and that the worship of his heart left much to be desired.

His accusation was that Job served God for no reason other than that Job was wealthy.

- God blessed Job with lots of possessions and thus, that was the only motive for Job's devotion to God.
- Satan was convinced that Job's devotion to God was not as deeply routed as he wished others to believe.

Then God granted Satan permission to test Job.

- The Lord knew that if He delivered Job to Satan, that Job's righteousness would be confirmed beyond all doubt.
- The Lord was not worried that Job would loose faith.

Satan was to learn that the faithful person's faith is not dependant on only the things that can be seen.

- Satan was to be taught that trouble and sorrow only serve to drive the Lord's children deeper into God's protection.

Job suffered the one trial after the after.

- Job sought the answer to all that happened to him in the visible and audible things.
- He was accustomed to God speaking with him and therefore he sought God in this affliction – but God did not make Himself heard.

But right throughout his trials, Job had one strong point.

- He was convinced that his blessedness was not dependent on the seen things only.
- He believed himself to be innocent and that God would deal justly with him.

But this struggle caused Job to see further

- He saw that he needed a Mediator
- Because he realized that a Mediator is indeed needed between God and us.

Just look at what caused him to gain this insight!

- His own actual physical experience caused him to realize that a man cannot bear God's wrath and live.
- And it was not even God's wrath that Job had to endure, but he only had to endure Satan's visitations.
- Still, he could obtain no answer from God, and that alone was terrifying.

Therefore it would be so much worse if we were to be faced with the judgment of God.

In chapter 9:33 he then says to God:

³³ **Nor is there any mediator between us, Who may lay his hand on us both.** (NKJV)

Job does not understand why a person has to suffer

He also has difficulty in distinguishing between:

- The judgment of God, and
- The evil Satan causes

Later on the Lord answers Job in a whirlwind – and then Job has the solution.

- At once it is clear to him that everything has to do with God's glory
- It is God's majesty that arranges all things – in also his life
- He then also realizes that God is so mighty, that He answers to no one

Which is the same position we ourselves occupy before God

- Oftentimes we are confused when there is so much of life that we fail to understand
- In addition, we stand before God with a terrible debt of sin
- What is to become of us?

God helps Job in his doubt and sin

- God grants him grace, so that he can look beyond his miseries
- God grants him grace, so that he can see God behind all that happens

In chapter 40:4 the light breaks through for him, when he realizes how small he is compared with God. He says:

Behold, I am vile; What shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth.

Now his eye has seen God (42:5)

Once he understood that he sees God, he also asked for a Mediator who can carry his guilt before God.

- He begs God and then he says:
Now put down a pledge for me with Yourself. Who is he who will shake hands with me?
- And with that he says that he repents of everything that he has said and is in dust and ashes because of it (42:6)

This is how it came that Job professed the greatness of God.

- He calls out
I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.
- The height of this confession is verse 5:
now my eye sees You
- He saw that with God there is redemption

Job lives in the Old Testament

- Therefore he asks for a Mediator to reconcile his sin with God and to remove God's wrath from him
- We have much more than Job, because we already know this Mediator
 - He lived on our earth for a certain length of time
 - He was seen by many
 - The point is just: We have much more reason than Job had, to say: truly, now my eye has seen!

Job was a *type* of the Lord Jesus Christ in His suffering

- Like the Lord Jesus on the cross, God forsook Job.
- On his own Job could not cope with it
- That is why he prayed for a Mediator to come and save him

The Lord Jesus' forsakenness was much worse than Job's

- Job's life was not in danger, because the Lord prevented Satan from touching his life.
- But when the Lord Jesus knew that it was time for Him to die, He was indeed forsaken of God.

- In those moments He called it out:
My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46)

There was nothing to see

- No help was visible
- It even became dark in the middle of the day

In Job's case it was completely different: he finds someone to contend in his place

- All this time Satan was under God's control! The devil is limited in all his evil doings – and eventually the Lord removes him and doubly blesses Job!

That the Lord Jesus did not have.

- He had to carry the burden of our sins and the punishment for it on His own!
- He also had to ensure the attempts of the devil – who thought that he would now kill the Lord Jesus. He had to fight this alone and come out of it as Victor!

What Job saw with his spiritual eye, we truly saw ourselves.

- Our eye saw it – so many witnesses recorded it because they were there in our stead and observed it on our behalf!
- Today we commemorate this historical fact yet again.

The first Christians saw Him after His resurrection.

- They witnessed that the grave could not hold Him!

But we also see Him. We celebrate the Lord's Supper regularly.

- We see and eat the bread, and drink the wine – but we must look beyond that!
- We see the signs, which were instituted so that we can believe where our eye can no longer literally see.
- The signs allow us to see the crucifixion and resurrection from the dead. Naturally also the Lord Jesus' ascension to heaven and to the throne – and how that our own victory and resurrection proceeds from it. In this way we become part of eternity.

Like Job, we must also say:

Therefore I abhor *myself*, And repent in dust and ashes

Which means:

- Lord, I repent of all the sins I have committed up till now
- I leave all wrong things behind me, because You have regenerated me
- I now see things I did not see before!
 - I see the tremendous anguish You endured for all the elect due to our sins
 - But I also recognize exactly how much of that I personally caused

I also see how that You rose from the dead for also me, so that I too may one day stand before the throne of God. I see that I have eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Beloved, remember always to see the risen Lord in your mind's eye

- And see yourself one day standing before Him
- Not unto condemnation
- No, for us who believe, He rose exactly so that we may be acquitted on that day.

Let us celebrate the Lord's Supper and then listen that this is exactly this that He says to you!

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Psalm 98:3

Formulary^y.

Psalm 103:1,2

During the Lord's Supper we sing psalm 116 at the table (including Psalm 118)

Closing Psalm.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.¹

Amen.

Dr. M.J. du Plessis
Reformed Church Bellville
Date: Lord's Supper February 2011

¹ 2 Corinthians 13:14

ⁱ Psalm 124:8

ⁱⁱ 1 Corinthians 1:3

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.ccel.org/creeds/apostles.creed.html>

^{iv} <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job%2042&version=KJV>

^v Formulary for celebrating the Lord's Supper (freely translated from the Afrikaans)

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Institution

Listen to the words with which this sacrament of our Lord Jesus Christ was instituted, as described to us by the apostle Paul in the first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11:23-28):

“²³For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: ²⁴And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. ²⁵After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me. ²⁶For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. ²⁷Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.”

Now in order to celebrate the Lord's Supper unto our comfort, it is firstly necessary that we will examine ourselves rightly beforehand and secondly, that we will keep it according to the purpose for which the Lord Christ determined and instituted it, namely in remembrance of Him.

Self examination

True self examination contains these three main points:

Firstly: Each one must personally reflect on his sin and damnation, so that he may revile himself and humble himself before God; as the wrath of God against sin is so great that He, rather than leaving it unpunished, did visit it upon his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, with the bitter and shameful death on the cross.

Secondly: Each one must search his heart, whether he believes the certain promise of God that all his sins are forgiven him on grounds of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ only; also whether he believes that the perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed to and granted him as his own — so completely as if he had personally paid for all his sins and accomplished all righteousness.

Thirdly: Each one must search his conscience, whether he intends to henceforth show God true gratitude with his whole life and upright walk before Him; likewise, while he abandons all enmity, hate and envy, to honestly have an earnest intention to henceforth live in true love and harmony with his neighbour.

Everyone who is so disposed, God will surely accept in grace and view as a worthy guest –at the table– of his Son, Jesus Christ. But those who, on the other hand, do not experience this testimony in their hearts, eat and drink a judgement over themselves. According to the command of Christ and of the apostle Paul also we admonish everyone who knows that they are tainted by the following objectionable sins, to abstain from the table of the Lord, and we proclaim to them (Eph. 2:1), that they have no part in the kingdom of Christ (1 Cor. 5:11): all idolaters; all who call on deceased saints, angels or other created things, and those who venerate images; all sorcerers and soothsayers who swear by animals or people or other things and those who believe in such incantations; all revilers of God and his Word and the holy sacraments (Eph. 5:5); all blasphemers (Lev. 19:12); all who want to cause schism, division and unrest in church and state; every one who swears falsely and who disobeys their parents and authorities; all murderers and trouble-maker and those who live in hate and enmity with their neighbour (Matt. 5:43 ff.; Zech. 8:17); all adulterers, dissolute, drunkards,

thieves, unlawful profiteers, robbers, gamblers, the avaricious, scandalmongers (Exod. 20:12-17) and all who live offensively (Gal. 5:19, 21). For as long as they persist in such sins, they must all keep themselves from this nourishment, which Christ instituted for his faithful only, so that their judgement and damnation does not become even more severe.

But, beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, the purpose is not to discourage the downcast hearts of the faithful, as if no one may come to the table of the Lord, excepting only those who are without sin. We therefore do not come to the Lord's Supper, to thereby intimate that we are perfect and righteous in ourselves; to the contrary, it is precisely because we seek our life in Christ, outside of ourselves, that we thereby acknowledge that we lie in the midst of death. It is indeed true that we still find much misery and infirmity within ourselves, namely that we do not have a perfect faith; that we also do not serve God with due ardour; that we have to daily contend with the frailty of our faith and the evil desires of our flesh. However where we, by grace of the Holy Spirit, have heartfelt remorse about such infirmity and desire to contend with our unbelief and to live according to all the commandments of God, we will be completely certain that no sin or weakness that remains in us, against our will, can hinder God from accepting us in grace and thus making us worthy of partaking in this heavenly nourishment and drink.

Remembrance

Let us now further reflect on the purpose for which the Lord instituted his Supper for our sake, namely that we must partake of it in remembrance of Him. This means that we must commemorate Him as follows:

Firstly that we must whole-heartedly trust –in accordance with the promises that were made to the forefathers in the Old Testament since the beginning– that our Lord Jesus Christ was sent to this world by the Father; we must trust that He assumed our flesh and blood and bore the wrath of God –that we would have had to eternally endure– for our sake, since the beginning of his incarnation up to the end of his life on earth; we must trust that He fulfilled the law of God in perfect obedience and righteousness for our sake, especially when the burden of our sins and of the wrath of God caused Him to sweat drops of blood in the garden Gethsemane (Luke 22:44), where He was bound to unbind us; thereafter He suffered awful scorn (Isa. 53:3), so that we would never again be objects of shame; we must trust that He was innocently condemned to death, so that we would be acquitted before God's tribunal; yea, we must trust that He allowed his blessed body to be nailed to the cross, to there nail to it the ordinance of debt, of our sins (Col. 2:14), and that He thus took upon Himself the burden of our condemnation, to overload us with his blessing; we must trust that He humbled Himself on the cross, body and soul, unto the depths of the insult and anxiety of hell, when He cried out with a loud voice: *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34)? — so that we may be accepted by God and would nevermore be forsaken by Him; we must trust that He finally confirmed the new and eternal testament, the covenant of grace and reconciliation, with his death and the shedding of his blood (Heb. 4:15), when He said that: *It is finished* (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34; John 19:30).

So that we may unwaveringly believe that we share in this covenant of grace, the Lord Jesus when He instituted the Lord's Supper, took the bread, and after He gave thanks, He broke it, gave it to his disciples and said: "Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped. And when he had given thanks, *saying, Drink ye all of it^a*; This cup is the new testament in my blood: which is shed *for you and^b* for many for the remission of sins. "this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me." (1 Cor. 11:23-26). That is, as often as you eat of this bread and drink from this cup, you will thereby, as is the case with an established remembrance and guarantee, be encouraged and assured of this My whole-hearted love and fidelity toward you. From which it is evident that I gave, for you, who would otherwise have had to suffer eternal death, my body on the cross unto death and shed my blood, and sustained and nourished your hungry and thirsty hearts with my crucified body and spilt blood unto eternal life. Of this you are assured by the bread which is broken before your eyes, the cup is given to each one of you, and by the fact that you eat and drink it with your mouth in remembrance of me.
(*a* Matt. 26:27; *b* Matt. 26:27b-28 & Luke 22:20; *cf.* BC, Art. 35)

From this institution of the holy sacrament of our Lord Jesus Christ we see that He directs our faith and trust to his perfect sacrificial offer, which was fulfilled on the cross once-for-all, as the

only ground and foundation of our salvation. By his perfect sacrifice He became the true nourishment and drink of eternal life for our hungry and thirsty hearts. After all, He by his death removed the cause of our eternal hunger and worry, namely sin. He obtained the life giving Spirit for us, so that we through the Spirit –who lives in Christ as the Head and in us as his members– shall have true communion with Him and share in all his riches, life eternal, righteousness and glory.

Furthermore by the same Spirit [of Christ] we are also mutually bound together as members of one body in true brotherly love, as the apostle says: “For we *being* many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1 Cor. 10:17). Just as flour is ground of many grains of wheat and of it one bread is baked and of many grapes, once pressed, wine and drink flows and blends into one, so we who are ingrafted by faith in Christ must all be one body. We, who are ingrafted by faith in Christ, must through brotherly love, for the sake of our beloved Saviour, who loved us first, be one body and this not by words alone but also with deed prove this one to another.

May the almighty, merciful God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ through his Holy Spirit help us to this end. Amen.

Let us now, to obtain all of this, humble ourselves before God and with true faith call upon Him for his grace:

Prayer
Merciful God and Father,

In this Lord’s Supper we commemorate in our official gathering the glorious event of the bitter death of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ. We pray Thee that Thou through thy Holy Spirit will work it in our hearts that we in our sincere trust will surrender ourselves the more to thy Son; [this we pray Thee do,] so that our dejected and downcast hearts may be nourished and refreshed, through the power of the Holy Spirit, with its true body and blood, yea, with Him, true God and true man, the only heavenly bread, and that we no longer live in our sins, but He in us and we in Him. Grant that we thus truly share in the new and eternal testament and covenant of grace, so that we do not doubt that Thou art eternally our gracious Father who never again imputes our sins to us and sustains us with all things, as thy beloved children and heirs, body and soul.

Grant us also thy grace to: take up our cross, having been comforted; to deny ourselves; to profess our Saviour, and amidst all affliction, expect our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven with suspense, when He will conform our mortal bodies to his glorified body and take us to Him unto eternity. Hear us, o God and merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray thus:

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.
(Matt. 6:9-13)

Amen.

Whereupon the minister says:

The heart’s elevation / Lift up you heart

Now then to be nourished by the true heavenly bread, namely Christ, we must with our heart not cling to the visible signs of bread and wine, but lift our heart up to heaven, where Jesus Christ our Intercessor sits at the right hand of his heavenly Father (1 John 2:1), whereto the Articles of our Christian faith directs us. At the same time let us also not doubt that our lives are nourished and refreshed with his body and blood through the working of the Holy Spirit just as surely as when we receive the bread and wine in remembrance of Him (HC 2:8:28:75:a).

While the bread is broken and distributed, the minister says:
The bread we break, is communion with the body of Christ. Take, eat, in remembrance and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ is broken unto perfect reconciliation of all our sins.

And when he passes the cup:

The cup of blessing for which we thank God (1 Cor. 10:16), is communion with the blood of Christ. Take, all drink from it; in remembrance and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was shed unto perfect reconciliation of all our sins.

Afterwards the minister says:

Glorification

Beloved in the Lord, since the Lord nourished our souls at his table, let us now together gratefully praise his Name and in our heart say the following:

¹Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, *bless* his holy name. ²Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: ³Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; ⁴Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; (Ps. 103:1-4) ... ⁸The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. ⁹He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* for ever. ¹⁰He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. ¹¹For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. ¹²As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. ¹³Like as a father pitieth *his* children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. (Ps. 103:8-13)

He did not even spare his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, with Him He will also freely give us all things (Rom. 8:32). Since God already showed his love for us therein that Christ died for us when we were still sinners, we will be saved from his wrath so much the more now that we are justified in his blood. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, so much the more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life (Rom. 5:8-10). Therefore my mouth and heart will proclaim the glory of the Lord from now unto eternity. Amen.

Prayer

O merciful God and Father, We thank Thee with all our heart that Thou of groundless mercy has given us thine only begotten Son as a Mediator and sacrificial-offer for our sins, and as the food and drink of everlasting life. We also thank Thee that Thou hast given us a true faith, through which we partake of these benefits, and that Thee also had the Lord's Supper instituted and ordained for us unto a strengthening of our faith. We pray Thee, faithful God and Father, that by the working of thy Holy Spirit Thee will make the remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ and the proclamation of his death beneficial to our the daily advance in the correct faith and in the blessed communion. This we pray through Him, thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen