

## REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 4 APRIL 2010: MORNING SERVICE

**Sing before (standing):** Scripture Versification 2-4:1,2,3 [1John 3: 1-4]

*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 68:1,15

**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 universal 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 48:4*

Law

Psalm: 48:4

**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 84:1, 4

**Scripture reading:** Luke 24

**Scripture text:** Luke 24:15, 16

**So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. (Luke 24:15, 16)**

Observe this description very well

- It is completely normal and earthly.
- There is nothing supernatural to this event – until they recognised the Lord and He became invisible from them.
- With this description Luke told how the Lord, during the normal run of life, appeared to people without them recognising Him.
- Therefore we can definitely say that the crux of this passage is: Unwittingly on the road with God.

Time and distance do not limit the appearance of the Lord. Consider examples from the Old Testament:

- We know that prior to the birth of Christ He already appeared to Abraham, per example when the Lord dined with him and told him that He will destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.
- Also consider the event when there was somebody with Daniel's friends in the fiery oven.
- It is thus possible for the Lord to also appear to people in our times.

The consolation thereof is that the Lord always living close to us. His mercy is always near us. But there is a danger as well.

- There are religions, every now and then, laying claim to revelations and visions they supposedly have had from the Lord.
  - In the past none of these sensational so-called visions ever materialised.
  - Consider, as an example, all these revelations about when earth was supposed to be destroyed!
- Such people misuse the fact of the Lord appearing to people by preaching all sorts of false doctrine.
- Such things will, without the shadow of a doubt, be aggravating circumstances to such people during the final judgement.

*Should we, for a moment, reflect on the words of the Lord in the New Testament that He, during the judgement, would reproach us for not giving Him a drink when He thirsted and gave Him nothing to eat when He was hungry, then you wonder how many times something like the Emmaus-happening took place in the lives of all of us.*

This matter, should you look at how Mark describes it, poses a strong quandary to you:

**After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. (Mark 16:12)**

Two are walking in the field and suddenly the Lord walks with them. So easily and simple things happen.

It is very interesting seeing how the Lord puts the principle of His presence.

- On the first day of the week following Easter two men were walking to Emmaus. Thus they were on their way home.
- The people walking home were two of the people who always followed the Lord. The Bible teaches that it was **two of them**. This points back to Luke 24 verse 9 where it is written that they told all these things to the Eleven and to the rest.

It does not deal with whether Emmaus had anything to do with this matter. Nobody knows where Emmaus was. There are two possible places: one about 6 kilometres from Jerusalem and the more or less 33 kilometres from Jerusalem

- These two were walking and talking with great incomprehension about the events of the weekend when it was discovered that somebody suddenly joined them.
- Note how the facts of the circumstances were eluding these two hikers.
  - Nobody knew from where the third Person came, not where He was on His way to.
  - The other two did not ask either.

The Lord Himself supplies the reason why these two did not recognise Him:

- The Lord held their eyes were held so that they could not know Him.
- The Lord Himself made these two men unable to recognise Him.
- He did not want them to realise that He was their companion on the way home because firstly He wanted to straighten out something bent in their faith-lives.

This shows that the Lord so spontaneously takes a place in our lives that we are not even aware of it because spontaneously He joined in the conversation: **He said to them, What words are these that you have with one another as you walk, and are you so sad?**

- Cleopas then asked the Stranger whether He only was a stranger in Jerusalem. Literally it is written: Are you the only one living in Jerusalem without citizenship?
- These two men were thus truly under the impression that the Lord was either a stranger or foreigner who arrived in Jerusalem only after the Passover.
- As such you could meet the Lord without having any idea whatsoever that it is Him who are with you.

Then the Lord tested the two men.

- He enticed them to show reveal their faith. This they did.
- Their confession, about who Jesus is, is very pure but the result thereof in their lives was very unclear.
- They confessed that Jesus was a prophet and that His teachings and works were powerful in the eyes of God and all the children. (Take note that they were aware that his work was powerful in the eyes of God!)

Up to here their confession was flawless, but when they came to the application there were flaws because they tried fitting their confession into an incorrect human scheme.

- In their case they tried forcing the redemption work of Jesus into the politics of the day: They hoped that Jesus would free Israel.
- They naturally meant that Jesus would free them from the Roman domination.

It is quite ironic that they asked Jesus whether He had citizenship, now suddenly it became clear that they did not have citizenship in the redemption by Jesus, as their accent was still wrong.

- Their first wrong accent can be found in the cause of the crucifixion.
  - The two claimed that the high priests and rulers killed, by way of the crucifixion, Jesus.
  - The Jewish and Roman people were thus innocent.
  - It was the other people only who caused it, and we are innocent.
- No wonder that Paul, at a later stage, wrote to all the Christians having the same convictions, that we have to keep in mind that the letter of guilt pertaining to all our sins as cause of the crucifixion, was nailed to the cross.
- In this way, should you be dishonest, the Lord can catch you out.
  - Here we have exactly the same principle as in Paradise when Adam claimed his innocence to all the trouble; it was Eve who caused it all.

- On her turn Eve did exactly the same.
- The fact that these two men, and the rest of the people, did nothing to try and stop the crucifixion is just suppressed.
- What emanates from their confession is that the other people crucified the Lord.

It also becomes clear that they were disappointed that He, from death, has not yet done anything to free them from the Romans.

- It, they said, is already the third day since all this happened.
- In these words lay the expectation that Jesus, should He have been such a great prophet satisfying God by His teachings and works, must do something – but still there is nothing.

Something of the old Jewish superstition comes from their words.

- The Jews believed that the human body, within three days after death, could become alive again because the soul first wanders for three days across earth and then only departs.
- We find the same thought with Martha when telling the Lord that it was already the fourth day since Lazarus's death.
  - With that she meant that his soul was no longer in the vicinity for the Lord to be able to recall it.
  - **Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days."** (John 11:39)
  - Three days has passed since the crucifixion and therefore these two men were heartbroken: There no longer is any hope.

On this point the confession of the two men snapped totally, they still told about three more facts, but they did not believe it. Indeed many things, that should have strengthened their hope, happened, but then their hope, in order to understand it, should have been at the right place:

- Early the morning the women went to the grave, but could not find the body of the Lord.
- The women saw angels who told them that Jesus is alive.
- Some of those who were with them (Peter and John) returned to the grave and found matters to be exactly as told by the women.

Their narrative clearly shows that they thought that Jesus could possibly have been the Saviour.

- All that these two men were able to glean from these matters was that it terribly upset them.
- But it did not bring home to them the realisation that, with this, the real salvation had arrived.
- They should have looked past the Romans towards the Kingdom of God, and then all matters would have been in the proper perspective.

This is exactly the reason why the Lord, on the day of His resurrection, literally walked into their lives.

- He catechised them and directed their expectations towards the proper direction.
- After the men laid open the crux of their problem, Jesus told them that their hearts were apathetic in believing the predictions of the prophets.
- The word **heart** is used with a specific reason: From the heart is the ways of life – the Bible teaches this.
- Their life departure points and content of their faith was wrong.

This is the point to which we also must give attention. We may possess all the facts, but we may place all the facts into an incorrect context. Then our whole life would be confused and our faith worthless because it will be unable to carry us where it should.

What did the Lord Jesus do then?

- He started afresh, so that their facts of faith and confession may come into the proper perspective, explaining the Bible to them.
  - It does not deal with the Roman Empire.
  - It also does not deal with an earthly salvation.
  - It deals with the eternal glory of the Messiah.
- The Messiah had to suffer before He entered into the eternal glory.
- It goes without saying that He explained to them that this opens our road in following Him. Therein lies the true salvation.

See how, also after His resurrection, the Lord Jesus renders attention to the believers. He accompanies them on their road of life. Undetected, He is present and corrects their faith.

This is the wonderful part of this passage of history. We are, together with the Lord Himself, on the road.

- Notwithstanding our mistakes and disbelief He, Himself, brings about conversion and change.
- Where lacking, He grants the proper insight.

Of course we now must not expect a physical appearance of the Lord in our lives.

- It is so that He can certainly physically send somebody to us, because in these times after His ascension to heaven He is physically there.
- Such is an example when the Lord sent Philip to board the wagon of the Ethiopian servant from Candace and explain the Bible to him. (Act 8:26-30)
- In principle the same happened as with the Emmaus event.

How should we apply this Bible passage to our lives?

- We all live with the realisation that the Lord arose from death and that daily He makes His redemption come true over the people.
- He, in His omnipresence, at any rate, is everywhere and with all.
- We must live in such a way that our lives confess the greatness of the Lord and that we understand the power of His protection.

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 118:5

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**

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 Scripture Modern King James Version