

REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE : SUNDAY 1 MAY 2011 MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 73:9

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 145:10, 11

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 25:3, 5

Law

Psalm: 25:3, 5

Prayer:

- **Doxology**
- **Worship**
- **Confession of sins**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Gratitude**
- **Prayer for the need of the congregation of 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 103:2

Scripture reading: Luke 7

Scripture text: Luke 7:48

Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

(Luke 7:48)

Dearly beloved, how much would we not like to hear these words! The Lord Jesus Himself telling us: "Your sins are forgiven!"

There was a Pharisee wanting to know the Lord better

- A spiritual leader from those times.
- A man who should have known about the power of sin and the mercy of the Lord, through which our sins are forgiven.

This man invited Jesus Christ to a meal.

- Then they would be able to converse peacefully and he would hear Jesus in person.
- In this way, he reasoned, he would learn more about the Lord.

Whilst they were eating a woman arrived and washed and salved the Lord's feet. This is a potent event.

- The people used to lay on their sides with the feet angled away from the food.
- Therefore it was easy for this woman to be at Jesus' feet without being in the way.

She was not just any woman.

- She was a notorious woman – known to all the city inhabitants as a sinner.
- So reckless was she in her life that everybody knew her to be brazen.
- Everybody was aware of her sins.

But there still is something to be said about this woman of ill repute.

- She was amongst the people listening in the street to Jesus' sermon.
- There she heard about mercy.
- She experienced something else than the harsh contempt from the people in her vicinity.

She heard the Son of God teaching that He, for her as well, came to die for her sins in order that she may enter the kingdom of the Father.

This sermon moved something inside this bad woman.

- She was touched in her heart and brought to conversion.
- Somewhere she heard that Jesus was having a meal at the Pharisee's home.
- Therefore, to display her gratitude to the Lord, she went there.

At the supper table she washes Jesus' feet – not in the usual way by using water.

- She washes His feet with her tears.
- Tears of gratitude because God absolved her sins.

- But there was much more than gratitude – there was love as well.

Thereafter she dried the Lord Jesus' feet with her hair.

- Thereby, because for the Eastern woman her hair and hairdo was her greatest splendor, she relinquished her pride to the Lord.
- Even that, in her thankful deed of love, this woman relinquished.

Thereafter she kisses and salves the feet of Christ – but something else also comes with.

The fact of this woman crying at the feet of the Lord Jesus proves her true repentance about her wrongdoing.

The Pharisee is not very happy about this state of affairs. In his heart he also reasoned that now he had come to know Jesus.

In verse 39 the following is written:

Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

(Luke 7:39)

He thus holds this happening in contempt.

- He rejects Jesus as prophet.
- He only considers it that God does reject sin – which in fact is true – but that is not the whole truth.

He does not consider the mercy of God.

- He does not consider it that sins may be forgiven.
- In the thoughts of this man hold no possibility of the Lord Jesus practicing relationship with sinners in order to bring them to conversion and to keep them.

This also is quite typical of us.

- We very easily despise a sinner, without keeping in mind that with God it is possible to forgive his sins.
- On the other hand: Should we ourselves have sins, we also feel dirty and unworthy, and in fact we do not want, because we only think that we are rejectable, to believe.

Rather think about it that God still adopts us!

- Should it be that our sins are indeed plentiful and serious, through the virtues and effects of Christ's redemptive sacrifice on the cross, the Lord forgives everybody.
- Therewith also consider that we, like this woman, must have remorse about all the wrong matters in our lives.
- The most important is that we must, in gratitude and love to our Lord Jesus Christ, pay the thanks for the redemption of our sins.

The Lord Jesus was aware of what was transpiring in the mind of the Pharisee.

- Therefore He lets this Pharisee know that He is aware about everything connected to this woman.
- He also admonishes the Pharisee.

The Lord Jesus told about two people owing money.

- The one owed 500 and the other 50 denarii.
- Which one was the most thankful when their debt was absolved?
- It goes without saying that it was the one who owed 500 dinarii – he, because he was the deepest in misery, received the most.

This means that no one of us qualify for heaven.

- At least not by our own earnings – we all are debtors. Sinners.
- The one of us has more sin than the other, but all our sins are so great that all of us are in the red.

Thereafter Jesus pointed out to the Pharisee that in fact he was in a worse position than the bad woman was.

- In the Pharisee's own house he did not wash Jesus' feet, although it was customary of those times.
 - o But the bad woman did it in the house of another man.
- The Pharisee did not kiss Him.
 - o The woman kissed Jesus' feet continually.
- The Pharisee did not salve Jesus' head with oil.
 - o The woman salved His feet with precious ointment.

Then Jesus added:

47 "Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."

48 Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

(Luke 7:47, 48)

Hereby Jesus recognized this woman's guilt of sin.

- He, long before, already knew her innards.
- But the most important here is the mercy of God. The people whose lots of guilt are forgiven, love a lot.
- Man cannot love first. Firstly God forgives, and than man can love.

The Lord forgave this woman her sins.

- Therefore the Spirit of God brought her to remorse and knowledge of her sins.
- Because she herself now knows the mercy of God can she also give.

The came to Christ

- with love in her heart
- with confession of her guilt, and
- with gratitude for forgiveness.

This woman sinned a lot and deeply, but her remorse was also deeply grounded. Through her redemption of sin she also received the love from God.

Should we only superficially read this passage, it could seem that on grounds of her remorse and token of love, she received redemption.

- That is wrong, this matter works in the other way round: She received forgiveness of her sins and then the gratitude and love followed.
- When she came as far as proving these matters by foot washing and salving in public to Jesus, Christ does not just let her go.

She receives strengthening of her faith:

Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

(Luke 7:48)

Furthermore He said to her:

Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

(Luke 7:50)

Because she knows that she is saved, she also knows the internal peace of God's residence.

The Lord Jesus today again ensures us that our sins are forgiven.

- By His blessing He granted us, He ensures us about the forgiving of sins.
- The Spirit of God moved you to seek community with the Lord by worshipping in the church service.
- Let these words: **"Your sins are forgiven."** Remain affixed in your hearts.

Let us further on live every day with true remorse about our sins.

Show true gratitude to the Lord

And live in peace with God and our neighbour.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 32:1

The Lord bless and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you, the Lord turn His countenance to you and give peace.

Amen

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Scripture Modern King James Version