

REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 6 DECEMBER 2009: MORNING SERVICE

Opening reading:

"Let us continue to go and pray before the Lord, And seek the Lord of hosts. I myself will go also." (Zechariah 8:21)

Sing before: Psalm 90:2

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 105:1

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 25:2

Law

Psalm: 25:2

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

Psalm 72:2

Scripture reading: Matthew 7

Scripture text: Matthew 7:24 – 27

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall. (Matthew 7:24-27)

It is not sufficient only saying "LORD, Lord" to each and every truth and good sermon.

- It is useless verbally confirming faith-values whilst your daily life remains wanting.
- No faith-value has any use should it not be implemented into your daily life and activities.

With this parable about the two dwellings the Lord Jesus brings home to us the very big responsibility, resting on our shoulders, of dealing with faith and the Kingdom of God in our daily lives.

The lives of two persons are depicted by this parable.

- Both were planning a specific structure.
- The Lord, because he built according to a plan approved by God, called the first wise.
- He made the foundation of his house so deep that it rested on the rocks beneath the soil.
- He built his house on these exceedingly strong foundations.

The Lord teaches that this dwelling was so solid that the storms could not damage this house at all.

The second mason built his house on the sand.

- To understand the rest of this parable we must realise the point made by this parable: *this builder built without any foundation at all.*
- He just laid the bricks on top of the sand.

Afterwards a storm came up.

- This house which was built on the sand fell with a loud noise.
- The wind and rain, blowing on that house and washing away the sand beneath the bricks, caused it to crack and fall.
- In this parable the Lord teaches that the fall of this house was GREAT.

This parable has two aspects we must consider:

- Firstly, to the eye, both houses appeared similar.
 - You cannot, from the outside, always determine the difference between somebody's life attitude and power of faith.
 - The naked eye cannot determine which house has a subterranean foundation and which has not.
- The second point of comparison lies in the vast difference between the artisans building the houses.
 - The first artisan knew about the importance of the foundation to his house.
 - The other lacked the ability of understanding that, in the future, his house would be subjected to stresses.

In His parable, the Lord does not teach that the builders each made use of different types of material.

- Both thus had equal contact with everything offered, by God, to them.
- The difference coming to the foreground is that whilst some people live wisely, others live recklessly.

From this parable certain matters are very clear.

- Firstly it is clear that the Lord is not referring to houses, but to people and the ways in which they erect the structures of their lives.
- Further it is clear that the Lord teaches that, only should there be sufficient depth, the image your life presents, can have power facing Him.

Your life is thus a relationship with God.

- *It is a relationship that will be tested to the Word of God and will have to survive a specific test.*
- *The crux of this parable is that the temptation of following the road of least resistance will always be present, resulting in us not fully struggling through matters to their fullest context, but rather just paying attention to the superficial exterior and visible matters.*

In other words we will show an image of good faith to other people, but God, who can test deeper, will know that there is no solid basis.

The storms referred to by God are temptations – in whatsoever form.

- The temptations by the devil always going hand in hand with a great deal of violence.
- Eventually everybody will be subjected to the test of the Final Judgement.

In our present lives we find the signs of those lacking foundations.

- He might be a total agnostic.
- But possibly he may also be a church member becoming embittered and wanting to know why only he has to bear the burden of the world.
- His prayer-life diminishes, and together with that, his communion with the congregation.
- Many times the ways of this person results in the termination of his communion with his church.

He is also the person rebellious about every matter of faith that he does not understand and blaming God as unjust in any matter.

These things take place when no foundation of faith is present.

Living a life of depth and strength is not so impossible.

- The Lord teaches us that it is a life of communion with God.
- It is a Life of Prayer.

It is easy to stipulate the requirements practically:

- We must pray regularly and also continually study the Word of God.
- We must reflect a lot about the matters pleasing God and realise how boundless His mercy and power is over us.

Paul also refers to these matters:

- He wrote that when a serious test is made, the true fruit of God could be distinguished from the false.

We must thus not crumble when exposed.

- Then we prove ourselves as empty and without contents.
- Lacking a foundation, just like the house built on the sand.

We can regard the Gospel of Christ in two ways:

- Firstly we can say that He, just like us, was exposed to various miseries.
 - We also remember how He was tempted and plagued by the devil.
 - But His relationship with God was such that no crack ever appeared in His life.
- Furthermore we may take heed that the submissiveness of the Lord Jesus Christ to every demand of God the Father, actually led to His crucifixion.
 - By this He laid the foundation for our eternal lives.

This then is the second point of the Gospel of Christ:

- The Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation of our lives.
 - Should our lives in fact not be built on the Lord Jesus Christ, then there is no possibility of us ever exchanging these times with the Kingdom of God.
 - Making the Lord Jesus Christ the foundation of your house is to truly believe. (we all know the Catechism question dealing with this)

To truly believe is firstly to have knowledge. True Knowledge.

- It is having as much Bible knowledge as your brain can contain.
- Bible-knowledge means knowledge about your redemption and bliss granted by God, through Jesus Christ, to you.

Not only should we know all these things, we also must have a solid trust that God, in fact, had the Saviour, promised in the Old Testament and who lived in the New Testament, die for me.

- I must have the conviction that I am part of the complete deliverance.
- In life Hereafter a foundation for my life was laid by the resurrection of Christ.

AND then I must round off this belief and trust through a life filled with good deeds.

- I must do everything I set to do, to the Glory of God.
- Then I will be one of the wise whose house will not be washed away by the storms.
- The fall of that house was great, but then, in the light of the Power of God, our survival is great.

This is exactly what this time of the year reminds us of.

It reminds us that the Lord Jesus Christ has already laid a foundation of bliss for us – this is why He was with us on earth.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 134: 2, 3.

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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