

REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 29 MARCH 2009: MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 136:1,2

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: Scripture Versification 1-1:1,2,3 [Ephesians 1:1-14]

Confession of faith: Nicene

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was Incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And we believe one holy catholic* and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

After the reading of the Law we confess our guilt and pray for forgiveness and a new life before God with Psalm 40:4

Law

Psalm: 40:4

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 Scripture Versification 7-2:2 [Revelation 22: 12-15, 16b-17a, 20]

Scripture reading: Matthew 9; Luke 5:33; Mark 2:21

Scripture text: Matthew 9:17

"Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved." (Matthew 9:17)

We live in times when virtually everything can be copied, appearing just like the original.

- This, unluckily, also is the case with our religion!

The problem is that Religion can easily become just a habit.

- Therefore everybody should live close to God and guard against his Worship falling into just a habit. You must, by the necessary closeness to God, ensure that your Worship remains alive.
- Should we not want our Worship to change into something absurd then there are certain matters of our worship that we will have to put to the test, and if needed, rectify it.

The passage we have read deals with the fasting habits of the people of those times.

- All groups strictly upheld this habit: the disciples of John the Baptist, the Pharisees as well as all the children of Israel.
- The Pharisees followed this habit so strictly that they even fasted two days per week.
 - The days of fasting became a demonstration of their devoutness.
 - It became an external proof that they were good believers maintaining all the laws of God.

But because their persuasion was wrong,

- they lost contact with God
- Then these acts of worship just became part of their daily routine.

We have to consider this matter as it is at present. It is clear that there are church people who can follow two extremes:

- Either nothing is done – per example when somebody is a weak church member needing constant counselling to keep his faith-life on track.
- Or falling into superficial display.

Both these mistakes are equally serious.

- The fact of somebody having a few good habits, not possessed by the weaker church member, does not make that person better off than the other.
- This is because God does not grant us salvation based on our habits, but grants it based on the faith granted to us by the Triune God – and what we do with it!

- Here it deals with how, in an alive relationship with Him, we practice that faith.

These people made an issue out of fasting, although the time for fasting had run out, because facing them was the Christ of the New Testament.

- They stuck so solidly to their usual habits of worship that they did not notice the fulfilment of the council of God.
- They stagnated in such a way that the happening of deliverance completely passed them by.

Therefore the Lord charged them with blindness of their souls:

- Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?
- Are you unable to see what took place during the passage of salvation history?
- Because the Christ has arrived, now is the time, with full delivery about your joy of salvation, to rejoice!

We, in fact, are standing very guilty facing the words of the Lord Jesus as from that day up till now the salvation-council of God underwent a few major developments. The question now is whether we grew further than the Pharisees did?

- If the Lord could tell them that Religion is no longer a pain in the neck whereby you have to fast for a day so that your hunger pains may prove your miseries to you – what is He going to tell us to whom many the matter of attending church, monetary church contributions and even living together in the spirit of church is a bother and a pain!
- For such people the Lord has no appreciation.

In fact the Lord teaches that we, like people attending a wedding, must live with abundant joy!

- We are the chosen, already living after the death of our Redeemer, waiting on His imminent appearance!

The Pharisees could not manage this. Therefore, according to the Lord Jesus, their conduct sealed their fate.

Should our personal worship be in step, why do we sometimes have to struggle in serving God?

- Sometimes we have the weirdest excuses for struggling in complying with our principles.
- Often when somebody does something bad his excuse is that he, at present, is not in the company of church people and that only when you are amongst them do you have to do as they do!

The Lord Jesus also teaches about the dark side: A time to fast will arrive.

- He is referring to the great heartache the disciples shall experience when He will be crucified and buried.
- But because He has already risen long ago and sent another Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to aid us in joyously living, this has no bearing on us!

We are now living in the timeframe of the new cloth and the new wine as referred to by the Lord Jesus.

- The time of God living within us.
- The time of our bodies being the residence of the Holy Spirit.
- Sin and the time for promises have passed by.

We possess all the facts of the fulfilment – therefore daily we can fully go through life rejoicing in our faith!

In order to explain this properly the Lord Jesus referred to the art of making wine: something well known to them.

- Because the wine would ferment and the skins could expand without tearing they put new wine into new wineskins.
- Old wineskins cannot expand any more and should new wine be put into them they would tear – then the wineskin and the wine would be lost because the wineskin would tear and the wine would run out.

The message from the Lord Jesus to the Pharisees was that since He came to earth, the Gospel has a new content: **I am the Bridegroom.**

- In your Worship you must live like wedding guests.
- With the Christian of the New Testament an interior life-rejuvenation should thus take place.

In our hearts the Holy Spirit does not, like during the Old Testament, work on the promise of the arrival of a Saviour.

- Now He works with the fulfilment – through the power of the virtues of the Saviour He lets us live.
- The Saviour has already completed His work on earth.
- Within us He causes a new principle of life, namely that the Saviour has already departed and that, for us, He is preparing perfection – He now is the Bridegroom preparing to receive His bride.

He has already revealed His hegemony – through His resurrection and by the fact that He was able to, in front of our eyes, depart to heaven.

At the moment we are living in expectation of the reappearance of this Saviour,

- and that the new earth will descend – the new earth where we will be living.
- and that He will remove us from this world to the endowment where there is no scar of sin or imperfection.

In the corresponding passage of Luke 5:39 the Lord also teaches that no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'

- Again another truth about the faith of poor believers is revealed:
 - The sinful human does not want to part with the old things – this includes everything from doing nothing to wrongdoing.
- Thus the danger lies in the inability of the sinner in parting with his unwillingness and not completely accepting the responsibility of his salvation.

Such people will never inhabit the heaven – because the Bridegroom does not know them, they are absent from the wedding of the Lamb.

The judgement of this passage is the following:

- Worship is like the hell, painful to the false believer.

But it also contains a side of mercy:

- It is a wedding-party for the true believer – the person converted by heart.

The possibility for all to live with a new attitude exists.

- This is made possible by the crucifixion-death of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- In order for us, whom are chosen, receiving the power to really live fully and persevere in true faith, He died!
- But by His death He did not remove our responsibility at all:
 - We still must live pure so that a full Worship and true conversion is a reality in our lives.

Let us thus live like new wine maturing in new wineskins... for the sake of the Bridegroom who saved us. May our faith-life be a song to our salvation!

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 45:9

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

Amen

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Scripture Modern King James Version