

REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 5 APRIL 2009: EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 16:1

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 2:6

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 31:15

Scripture reading: Psalm 2

Scripture text: Psalm 2:11:

“Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.”

In the Book of Psalms the poet of this Psalm is not named but centuries later, in Acts 4:25, the Holy Spirit caused it to be done: David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote it.

Liturgically this Psalm was sung shortly before the Passover. It was done in an interesting manner for various voices sang it:

- Verses 1-3 were probably sung by all the people;
- They tell of the uprising of all the kings and rulers of the earth against God and His Anointed Son. They add that the rulers and nations conspire to throw off the fetters of obedience to God.
- These three verses tell how mankind in general has lost its respect for the Lord and rises up against the Lord and His Counsel of salvation.

Thereafter the priests sang of the Lord's response to this uprising;

- The Lord laughs and scoffs at the rebels
- One commentator suggests that a storm was brewing while these kings and rulers were advancing on David

- He proposes that the poet heard the Lord's laughter in the first rumblings and thereafter in the peals of thunder during the storm he heard the voice of the Lord rebuking them and their people (...and terrifies them in His wrath...)
- The priests end this part of their song by singing that the LORD has installed (anointed) a king on Zion His holy hill (verse 6).
 - When someone was anointed (installed) in a particular office he always received a special instruction from the LORD
 - In this a definite tense expectation is created: the people wish to know what this special instruction is that the LORD gives the king

Verses 7 – 9 were sung by the king:

- In his song he reveals to the people the special instruction given to him by the LORD
- He reveals that in the Messiah (who is the true King) the LORD extends His sovereignty over the nations.

Thereafter the people sing verses 10-11:

- Firstly they warn these rebellious kings to obey the LORD
- Then after having warned the rebels, the LORD commands all people to serve Him with fear and trembling and that the believers must rejoice before Him.

Something worries us:-

- Why must we fear the LORD?
- Why must we actually tremble with fear when we rejoice before Him?

It does not sound right that we must teach our children that we must be afraid of the LORD. Or is it correct?

- The point that the LORD wants to drive home is this: **Nobody trifles with the LORD**.
 - He is not our playmate
 - He is also not to be threatened (as by nations who want to throw off their fetters).

The whole Bible proclaims that in our religious life we must stand in awe of the LORD.

- Our attitude must be one of bowing before Him and of wanting to serve Him as He tells us to.
- There must always be a hesitation, a fear, that in our worship we wish to amuse ourselves for then our worship fails and we draw the Lord's wrath down upon us.

To demonstrate this a large clay pot was put before the king

- The king then, while he sang these lines, dashed this pot to pieces with his iron sceptre.
- This was to show the people that the LORD destroys rebels as the king dashed this pot to pieces.

In the Psalm the people of the church confess that they want to kiss the Son. With fear they want to subject themselves to Him.

- There are a number of passages in the Bible where the Lord tells us that we must serve him with fear (reverence). Consider Joshua 24:14:-

“Now fear the LORD and serve Him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshipped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.”

In this passage fear is coupled to repentance from idolatry. Why?

- Because all worship of idols contains an element of fear and horror.
- Think of the faces of these idols – they all have such cruel faces because the people were kept submissive through fear and sorcery.

Let us consider another passage in which repentance is mentioned:-

“Do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers were; submit to the LORD. Come to the sanctuary, which He has consecrated for ever. Serve the LORD your God, so that His fierce anger will turn away from you.” (2 Chronicles 30:8)

In this case church attendance and repentance are coupled to worship of the LORD.

- In another passage the LORD points out that people who act with sincerity fear the LORD but they who act deviously despise Him:-
- **“He whose walk is upright fears the LORD, but he whose ways are devious despises Him.”** (Proverbs 14:2)

We must avoid the presently fashionable position which holds that we must know and speak only of the love and grace of God.

- He also reveals Himself in His wrath
- Note that in the last verse the believers confess that they kiss the Son in subservience – **“lest He be angry ... for His wrath can flare up in a moment.”**

In this Psalm actual fear, terror, is mentioned.

- The nations gather in rebellion against the LORD because they are not afraid of Him.
- The Bible reveals that such people shall be destroyed as the pot of clay was dashed to pieces by the king.

Every human being must be very humble when he deals with the LORD.

- We must know the difference between His might and our power.
- As the author of the Proverbs puts it – **“Humility and fear of the LORD bring wealth and honour and life.”** (Proverbs 22:2)

When we remember the history of Israel during their journey through the wilderness on the road to Canaan we recall many incidents where the LORD struck fear in the heart of the people.

- The LORD frequently killed large numbers of them – which must have frightened them.
- Once the LORD commanded that the people gather before Him. The LORD said:-**“Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when He said to me: ”Assemble the people before Me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere Me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children.”** (Deut 4:10)

Fear of the LORD was always part of obedience:

- **“Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and no one among you will do such an evil thing again.”** (Deut 13:11)

Someone who has this deep fear and awe of the LORD will allow himself to be taught. He will want to know what the LORD wants to have done and he will learn such things and do them (Psalm 25:12)

- It is not only we who believe that must fear the LORD.

- The entire earth must fear the LORD, all the inhabitants of the world must revere Him. (Psalm 33:8)

In these days in which we live this matter is of the utmost importance because people devise their own ideas about faith and in so doing create tension between themselves and the Lord.

- **The LORD said: “These people come near to Me with their mouth and honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of Me is made up only of rules taught by men.”** (Isaiah 29:13)
- The LORD warns that their reverence of Him is only a man made rule and that He does not like.
- The church in Corinth once received a letter in which they were encouraged to purify themselves from all that contaminates the spirit and the body and perfect holiness “**out of reverence for God**”. (2 Corinthians 7:1)

If you want to know how dreadful it is to fall into the hands of God, think of the crucifixion. In Gethsemane, according to Luke 22:44, the sweat of the Lord Jesus “was like drops of blood falling to the ground.”

- We know this was because He was to bear the punishment for our sins, but we shall undergo the same judgement except that we shall not, like Him, bear the full punishment because He already bore the punishment for our sin.

Yet it is not true that the grace of God will cause us to appear before God without any trepidation.

- The moment the Lord Jesus, in our stead, appeared before God, events occurred which prophesied of the violence of that moment.
- Remember the rocks that split and the darkness which came over the land.
- Remember the cry of the Lord Jesus: “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”

That makes it clear to us why the Bible tells us that “**it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God**”. (Hebrews 10:31)

- Therefore, always serve God with due reverence and awe.
- Fear His wrath, for nothing and nobody can withstand it.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 128:1

The LORD bless you and keep you;

The LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you;

The LORD turn His face towards you and give you peace.

Amen

Dr MJ Du Plessis

Reformed Church Bellville

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Scripture: New International Version