

REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 6 July 2008: MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Scripture versification 5-4:2 (Romans 8:33-39)

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 9:1,9

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 16:5

Law

Psalm: 16:5

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 33:5

Scripture reading: Romans 6

Scripture text: Romans 6:11

Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus

Let us commence this sermon with a summary of events often occurring in our life of faith:

- We believe that we are saved by the Lord Jesus Christ
- We also believe that the Lord will punish us for sinning.
- We are aware that we must not sin and we also say that we continually have to resist sin.
- We always regard sin as a force threatening us and we realise that we have to resist and fight sin.

Because usually we regard resisting sin as a deed of action, this immediately brings us to the point of this sermon.

- These things are all correct, but if this is all that we believe and know, then we do not know enough – and the truth is standing quite distorted to us.
- There are other things of utmost importance that we have to pay attention to, namely:
 - Sin is not a spiritual power existing vaguely and undefined.
 - Sin is a person.
 - It is somebody – it is the devil, because he directly causes these things.
 - The second matter of importance is that the afterlife we have through the Lord Jesus have to be exercised in this life already.

Who of us, for every second, are thinking that everything we do at any moment in time, has to be done in the light of this redemption for us?

Differently put: Is it visible in the way you are fighting against sin that you are one of those who, one day in the afterlife, will be on the new earth, together with God?

Thus the question is: How, to the glory of God, do I fight against sin? This is the crux of our scripture passage. You can fight somebody in many ways, but mainly there are two ways:

- One way is, in fact, to hit or kill your enemy. Thus to actively engage him.
- The other way is to ignore him or just not react when he accosts you.

It is this last way of fighting that our scripture passage is referring to. This may sound impossible to you. Therefore we will first have to ascertain the viewpoint of the Bible.

- The Bible has the viewpoint that there are two sides or facets in your life.
- It is such that only one of these two facets can be active at a time.
- It is not too difficult to understand because here is written that you can only live either for God or for the devil.

Both ways of life have by-products.

- Should you live for the devil, the Lord cannot use you because you are completely dead towards the Lord.
- Should you live for the Lord then you are completely dead towards the devil.

Exactly this is the idea where our scripture passage joins in:

- If you are living for God, the devil can do absolutely nothing to you because your body and soul is like a corpse to him.
- Here the Lord is saying that this is exactly what you must do to sin.

- You do not need to engage in a big battle with blood and dust scattering all over.
- You must just simply play dead towards the devil.
- Then, because he cannot use you, you cannot sin – As easy as that.

Let us, in order to find how he reaches this point of his submission, now look at the argument of the apostle Paul.

- Verse 2 to 4 teaches that we died together with the Lord Jesus.
 - But it is not a normal death in the way we always think about death.
 - The Lord Jesus went to die against sin. Look at verse 6:
knowing this, that our old man was crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin;

Against this background, now take note of verse 7:

for he that hath died is justified from sin

Sin cannot do anything with somebody who has died already.

- Because we also can do nothing with dead persons, it is just logical because they do not answer back, do no work and also do not listen.
- The devil has the same lack of power over a dead person.
 - He can only work with a human whilst this human is still alive.

Take note of the words “justified from sin” as written in verse 7. These words are used against the background of what is written in verse 6:

- *so we should no longer be in bondage to sin - sin thus has no longer any power over us.*
- Sin is thus a power, ruling mankind, as if he is the slave of sin.

This matter is put strongly negatively. Just listen to the words like “hath died“ and “in bondage to sin”.

- But the Lord not only uses negative words.
- Therefore it is put strongly positive in verse 8:
But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him;

The Lord Jesus Christ is now living a life free from the attempts of death, and together with Him, we also, are in that life – together with Him we rose into a new life.

Because it is dealing with people already risen from death, this passage instantly renders a new meaning to baptism.

- In other words it is not still dealing with children and this life, but with the effects of the virtues of Christ’s redemptive sacrifice on the cross towards this child’s later life.
- One day the baptised rises from death.

As the baptism teaches that, together with Christ, you have already passed through death, the fact that you were baptised signifies the life you are living together with Christ.

This is exactly what is written in verse 9 and 10:

knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over him. For the death that he died, he died unto sin once: but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

When the Lord Jesus died he came under the clutches of death. (Even though He went there himself.)

- But through His resurrection He moved away from the power and grip of death.

- He now indeed is on the “other side of death”, in an area where death cannot venture nor exert any power.

Now you only have to remember that you, already, are there! This, amongst other things, is in fact, the meaning of you being a Christian:

- You are sharing in the fulfilment of the promises by the Lord Jesus Christ. We read this in verse 11:
- Everything pertaining to the death and life of the Lord Jesus also pertains to us!
- Therefore it is very important that we must remember that, through the work of the Lord Jesus, we are dead and useless for sin – so that we, in our lives, can give full attention and worship to God.

There is obviousness, although to us, not always so evident, in this passage.

- For us, continuing every day, life against sin is a sorrowful battle.
- But the Bible is talking about something totally different!
 - You are living for God – not for sin!
 - Sin is not such a severe impediment as we make it to be.
 - We just have to play dead-dead when sin arrives.

This might be an alien idea to you, but here it is written.

- Our problem with sin comes to that we do not want to leave the wrong things alone.
- In stead of simply ignoring it, we are too occupied with it.
 - Here our problem starts – we are making too much of sin and give too much attention to it.
 - Sin catches up with us because of that – we occupy ourselves too long with it and then start seeing the attractions of the wrong.

Because of that it is simply written here: As such you must also reckon yourselves as dead to sin!

- Just like that, as if it is one of the most well-known facts of faith.
- Here is something very important in this text that went astray during the translation and it is the word “reckon”.
- The Greek word means “to do sums”
- Indeed, the meaning is thus: You have to do sums and then you will find that you are dead towards sin.

There are a lot more that can be said in this sermon, as an example that the mortification of sin is a pure working of faith.

- That can only happen through the working of the Holy Ghost and through the power and victory over death and sin by Jesus.
- In this passage it is written in the words: **...but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.**

Note that verse 12 includes, to the redemption work of the Lord Jesus, our complete life on earth:

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof:

The Lord does definitely not mean that only our bodies should benefit from the redemption work.

- The meaning is that our whole complete being on this side of the grave must stay away from sin.

What is the Lord saying here? This:

- Your resurrection and redemption from sin concerns your complete humanity, thus granting on every terrain, new life.
- But exactly because of that the Lord's demands are also stronger upon us:
 - Your complete life is renewed and you as a complete human being is sharing in the new life of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - See to it that your complete human being is dead towards sin!

Again look at the redemption work of the Lord Jesus: In order that you can have the power to cross so majestically over sin, that sin deems you to be dead, He died.

- Hold yourself as dead towards sin and use all your energy in worshipping God.
- Indeed we have a lot to tidy up.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 68:9

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

Dr MJ Du Plessis
Reformed Church Bellville
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Scripture King James Version