

REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 25 JULY 2010: EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 138:4

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 0:1,10

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 4:2

Scripture reading: Exodus 12:1-17 and 24-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29; Titus 3

Scripture text: Exodus 12:24-27; 1 Corinthians 11:26; Titus 3:4-7; Catechism Sunday 28

24 "And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever.

25 "It will come to pass when you come to the land which the Lord will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service.

26 "And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?'

27 "that you shall say, 'It is the Passover sacrifice of the Lord, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.' " So the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

(Exodus 12:24-27)

23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;

24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

(1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

**4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,
5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy
He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,
6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,
7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the
hope of eternal life.**
(Titus 3:4-7)

What does the service mean there?

- That is what the children of the Israelites should then ask regarding the Passover.
- Then they must explain to their children and tell them that the Passover sacrifice is to the honour of the Lord, because with the tenth plague in Egypt the Lord skipped the dwellings of the Israelites and brought death to the Egyptians.

In the New Testament the Holy Spirit continues doing the same!

- All of us sitting at His table are His children.
- Therefore the apostle Paul says: **“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you!”**
- Thus Holy Communion every time teaches us exactly the same that was taught to the Jewish children of the Passover.

Why? The Lord Jesus made the Passover into the Holy Communion.

- We must know how to answer our children should they ask: “What does the Holy Communion mean?”
- Just as the children of the Israelites had the right to know, so has our children also the right to know what the Holy Communion and Baptising means to them.

A proper answer guarantees that they will remember why they were baptised and also let them understand what Holy Communion means to them.

- It goes without saying that they will then properly prepare themselves for their confession, giving them access to Holy Communion.
- Every time they celebrate Holy Communion thereafter they will diligently prepare and ready themselves to sit at the table of Holy Communion.

To educate our children it is necessary that we, as adults be, from time to time, reminded about the meaning of Holy Communion.

- What person never forgets?
- And what person does not get so used to something that at a later stage it does not diminish in meaning – or even lose its meaning totally!

To us, because we have part to the cross, Holy Communion is a public confession.

- Therefore we share in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Because of the Holy Communion we know again the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord who saved us.

We have reached a time in history where we again have to clearly consider and reflect on these matters of faith.

- It may be possible that in times to come we might lose our lives should we celebrate this confession publicly to the eyes of the world.

- When we arrive at that stage our faith must be so strong that we will not be ashamed to die in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Catechism Sunday very clearly explains the Holy Communion. By question 75 we are taught who is the Host to the Holy Communion meal.

Question 76 points out the spiritual food and drink of Holy Communion.

Question 77 teaches who the guests to the Holy Communion Table are.

We cannot just arrive for a supper without somebody inviting us to a meal.

- Therefore we celebrate Holy Communion when Jesus Christ orders us to sit at His table and celebrate His death.
- With Holy Communion it is the same as with any other meal: the Host arranges everything.
 - He determines the venue of the Holy Communion – just as He determined the venue for the last Passover when He instituted the Holy Communion.
 - This is not something only taught to us by the New Testament. In Deuteronomy 16:2 we already read that Israel had to slaughter the Passover at the place chosen by the Lord to have His name living there.

Just the same with Holy Communion.

- The Lord Jesus Christ commanded His church to celebrate Holy Communion.
- The church, just as the apostles were told to prepare the Passover, must see to the necessary arrangements in providing the Bread and Wine! (food and drink)
- In our case the deacons prepare the physical meal and the elders must spiritually prepare the Holy Communion partakers.

This we must always keep in mind: although the Holy Communion takes place at the church, it is the Lord Jesus hosting the Holy Communion and commanding you to sit at His table.

- Because it is the meal of the Lord Jesus Christ, the elder must visit you at home.
- He has to come in the name of Jesus Christ – the Lord sends the elder to inform you that Holy Communion is being readied and that, under the command of the Lord Jesus, you have to come to the table and celebrate Holy Communion, commemorating the redemption of sin.
- The Lord uses the church council to see to it that everything transpires orderly, per example that Holy Communion is celebrated and that all the needed means are there.

It is also in the Name of the Lord that the minister at the table tells you that, under command of the Lord Jesus, you must come to the table.

- During Holy Communion the Lord Jesus Christ Himself again ministers to us.
- By means of a visible way He teaches us about His mercy and serviceability to us.
- Although we are living such a long after His crucifixion, He also lets us see the cross.

He teaches us that, on that day at Golgotha His goodness to us did not stop or come to an end.

- Just as He still teaches us, by Holy Communion, about His suffering and death, just the same is His mercy still with us today.
- The proof is that we share in His supper – just as we are sharing in His love.
- Further He teaches that He is God's High Priest who sacrificed His own body and spilt His blood for us.

The Bible, by means of various parables, teaches us what happens when Christ dies for us.

- He is the Good Shepherd laying down His life for His sheep.

- He prepares Himself as a food so that we, by means of the food and drink we come to use at His table, may satisfy our souls and that till eternity we will never thirst again – this He teaches the Samaritan woman.
- He is the Father seeing to it that His children never suffer from spiritual hunger.

We can nearly say that at the table of Holy Communion there are two types of food and drink.

- In the first instance we eat real bread and drink wine per mouth.
- But, in the other instance, the blood and flesh of Christ also spiritually satisfy us.

In the Old Testament the Israelites were not allowed eating the flesh of the sin-offer, nor were they allowed to use the blood of the slaughtered animal.

- But now, in the New Testament comes the Lord Jesus Christ and changes it.
 - He says: eat and drink.
- Is this not a huge advantage?
 - We are allowed to eat the bread of life and drink the blood of redemption to thereby prove that we are part thereof.
 - We receive this due to mercy – we do not need to pay for it. Everything free by the mercy of God.
- This proves that we have full share in everything done and attained by Christ and not only to one or two of the matters attained by Him.

This spiritual food and drink confirms that:

- We have redemption from all our sins.
- It confirms that we have a share to eternal life, just as we have a share in all the food we eat.
- All we must do is to believe it – and with that the Lord Jesus Christ even helps by means of the visible presentation of Holy Communion.

As if it is not sufficient mercy God grants us weak people, He also grants us the Holy Spirit to come and live inside us.

- In this instance the Holy Spirit of God convinces us that we are one body with the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Christ removes the distance between Him and us by taking away our sins from us, because this was what separated us from Him.
- Then we have such a unity with Him that we, together with Him, sit for a meal. We share in all His redemptive deeds.

Who are the guests? Let us put this question even deeper. Who are allowed to sit at the table when Christ offers His meal?

- Christ calls all the believers.
- It is important that, in fact, it is written that all believers must celebrate His death.

The accent is on *believers*.

- It does not refer at all to perfect people!
- All believers must!
- Should you be perfect then you would not need strengthening of your faith.
- In fact, the Lord Jesus Christ presents the Holy Communion is such a way that it, because we are imperfect, must strengthen our faith.

We need the Holy Communion!

- The Lord Jesus Christ calls the people who are weak in faith to the table.
- People who are aware of their weaknesses!
- People praying for mercy!

This is what a believer is:

- It is a person blinded by sin, but not persevering in sin.
- He battles in the Name of the Lord for victory over his sins.
- They then, because they receive forgiveness of sin and the Holy Spirit comes to reside inside them, become the cleansed.
- Because Christ seals it to them, they are the people inheriting salvation.

Beloved, we are busy with preparations for celebrating Holy Communion. What effect will the Holy Communion have on you? Will it confirm our belief that we can experience the closeness of God to me?

- We must repentantly pray for the forgiving of our sins.
- We must yearn for the mercy of the Lord.
- If we believe all the promises of God then we must know that we are the chosen and that all the promises of the Holy Communion are part of our share.

Thus be strengthened in your spirit because through Holy Communion the Lord will again strengthen your spirit so that you may always be joyful and ensured of eternal life.

Let us read together what is confessed about Holy Communion in the Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 28:

Q. 75.

How art thou admonished and assured in the Lord's Supper, that thou art a partaker of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross, and of all his benefits?

A.

Thus: That Christ has commanded me and all believers, to eat of this broken bread, and to drink of this cup, in remembrance of him, adding these promises: (a) first, that his body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and his blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes, the bread of the Lord broken for me, and the cup communicated to me; and further, that he feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, with his crucified body and shed blood, as assuredly as I receive from the hands of the minister, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ.

(a)

Matt.26:26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

Matt.26:27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

Matt.26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Mark 14:22 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

Mark 14:23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.

Mark 14:24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

Luke 22:19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

Luke 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

1 Cor.10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

1 Cor.10:17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

1 Cor.11:23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

1 Cor.11:24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

1 Cor.11:25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

1 Cor.12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Q. 76.

What is it then to eat the crucified body, and drink the shed blood of Christ?

A.

It is not only to embrace with believing heart all the sufferings and death of Christ and thereby to obtain the pardon of sin, and life eternal; (a)

but also, besides that, to become more and more united to his sacred body, (b)

by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in us; so that we, though Christ is in heaven (c)

and we on earth, are notwithstanding "flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone" (d)

and that we live, and are governed forever by one spirit, (e)

as members of the same body are by one soul.

(a)

John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

John 6:48 I am that bread of life.

John 6:49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

John 6:50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

John 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

John 6:52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

John 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

John 6:54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

(b)

John 6:55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

John 6:56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

(c)

Col.3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Acts 3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

1 Cor.11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

(d)

Eph.3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

Eph.5:29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

Eph.5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

Eph.5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

1 Cor.6:15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?

shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

1 Cor.6:17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

1 Cor.6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

1 John 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

1 John 4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

(e)

John 6:56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

John 6:57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

John 6:58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

John 15:2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

John 15:3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

John 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

John 15:6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

Eph.4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Eph.4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Q. 77.

Where has Christ promised that he will as certainly feed and nourish believers with his body and bleed, as they eat of this broken bread, and drink of this cup?

A.

In the institution of the supper, which is thus expressed: (a)

"The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said: eat, this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of

me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying: this cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For, as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

1 Cor.11:23-26. This promise is repeated by the holy apostle Paul, where he says "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."

1 Cor.10:16,17.

(a)

1 Cor.11:23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

1 Cor.11:24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

1 Cor.11:25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Matt.26:26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

Matt.26:27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

Matt.26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Mark 14:22 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

Mark 14:23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.

Mark 14:24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

Luke 22:19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

Luke 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

1 Cor.10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

1 Cor.10:17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 31:2. 16

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

Dr MJ Du Plessis

Reformed Church Bellville

25 July 2010

Scripture Modern King James Version