

Sing before the service: Psalm 9:1, 7

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 100:1-4

Prayer

Psalm 146:1, 8

Scripture reading: Romans 5 and Revelation 3:7-13

Scripture text: Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—
(Romans 5:12 NIV)

You who are confessing your faith tonight are carrying a heavy burden because you are the next generation who have to spread the gospel and honour of God and take the church into the future towards the Second Coming.

- During your lifetime many things will crop up that will try to destroy the church – things our generation might not even know about – but you must not shy away from them.
- Go forward with the Lord and with his Word, because the blessing of God goes with you.
- In his Word the Lord says:

Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. (Isaiah 59:1 NIV)

In this sermon tonight we are going look at the entire history of man since the creation and up to the hereafter. Let's have a look at the way we have come and study the road map for the distance ahead of us. Two important issues come to the fore:

- 1. The violence of God's curse as a result of our fall into sin**
- 2. God destroys the violence of his curse with regard to his chosen people**

1. The violence of God's curse as a result of our fall into sin

The first phase of man's existence was superb:

- Everything was perfect: plants, animals, everything on the earth.
- Man's relationship with God was perfect, and there were no sins and no temptations.
- We were so perfect that we understood the will of God and we served Him in the right way and in complete holiness (Belgic Confession Art. 14).

The Lord even concluded a covenant of works with Adam.

- Adam was the head of all mankind, and the covenant of works determined that he had to work the ground and take care of the creation to the honour of God.
- There was only one negative command: Adam and his wife had to stay away from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
 - They were not allowed to eat its fruit.
 - This was a command to test their obedience.

And then everything went wrong. Adam trespassed. God punished. His holiness does not allow Him to act differently.

To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” (Genesis 3:17-19 NIV)

This transgression was of such immensity that God’s curse rests on all Adam’s descendants.

- The Bible describes the terrible consequences of this event in our Scripture text – that sin entered the world through one man and that death entered through sin.
- After the fall of man all people would die, because through this act of Adam death came to all people.
- Adam sinned on behalf of all mankind and this is why all people sin.

Also, it’s not just a matter of committing sins. Consider it from God’s point of view:

- The effect of our sins is immense and very serious, because the Lord says that our iniquities have separated us from Him.
- Our sins have hidden the Lord’s face from us, so that He will not hear.
- The Lord says our hands are stained with blood and our fingers with guilt, and that our lips have spoken lies and our tongue mutters wicked things (Isaiah 59:2, 3).

We should never think that we are without sins just because we live after the crucifixion. In this life we will still suffer as a result of the fall of man. Remember what the apostle Paul wrote:

As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

(Romans 3:10-12 NIV)

We cannot hold the Lord responsible for the fall of man and for our present circumstances. Bear in mind what the author of Ecclesiastes 7:29 said:

This only have I found: God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes. (Ecclesiastes 7:29 NIV)

Why is it important to focus again on this appalling part of our history tonight? Because no man can be saved unless he has an honest sense of sin.

- We must know that God made us good and upright, but that we occupy ourselves with all kinds of shrewdness.
- We are exactly like the people of those times: We annoy the Lord with all our glib talk and work done in the dark, thinking that we can deceive Him and justify ourselves.

In Ecclesiastes 12:6 we find a few images of how good we really were:

- Before the Lord we were a golden bowl;
- a pitcher at the spring from which creation could drink and live to the honour of God;
- we were like the wheel at the well that was working perfectly to draw life-giving water.

But we have never been the same. After the Lord passed sentence:

- the silver cord was severed and
- the golden bowl was broken.
- The pitcher was shattered at the spring
- and the wheel was broken at the well.

As the Lord said, dust returns to the ground where it was before, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

However, always remember this: Before God no man is inferior.

- He ordained that even the weakest among us would be able to keep the Word of the Lord and live it, provided that we truly believe in Him.
- Through the Lord Jesus Christ and through the working of God the Holy Spirit He gives us the ability to keep his Word and not deny his Name.
- The Lord promises to make the conquerors pillars in the temple of God and to write on them the Name of God.

Hence the Lord reveals victory to us!

- You and I must continue to follow the way of truth and not fall back from God's grace.
- We must spread the gospel and not deny the Lord for the sake of other people.

This is not going to be easy, because the Lord reveals to us that in the last days there will be people of the synagogue of Satan among us like in the days of the church of Philadelphia (Revelation 3:9; Revelation 2:9).

- They will be controlled by the lie.
- And they will be within the church.
- In the last days before the Lord Jesus comes again, the Satan and his wicked plans will make life unbearable for the believers.

Matthew 24:22 describes it as follows:

If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:22 NIV)

In such circumstances you must be steadfast because the world would want you to be like them.

- Hence the Holy Spirit warns us not to conform to the pattern of this world.
- We must let God change us by renewing our minds. Then we will be able to test what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will (Romans 12:2).

2. God destroys the violence of his curse with regard to his chosen people

The Lord does not expect the impossible.

- Because He is concerned about our well-being He uses all the powers of heaven to protect us and help us along.
- Just think about the work of the angels.
- And, above all, He sent the Lord Jesus Christ to die so that He would bear the wrath of God for our sins.

The Saviour who would crush the serpent's head was promised to Eve. He was born as a man.

- In 1 Corinthians 15:21 and in Romans 5:12 the Lord tells us why Jesus had to be a man: Since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also had to come through a man.

This Lord Jesus died for us and opened the door to heaven for us so that we can leave this world of sin and approach the thrice-holy throne of God.

- Everybody who has a sense of the extent of his sins will understand the magnitude of the Lord Jesus' grace for us.
- Jesus said that nobody can come to him by himself.
- But God the Father, who sent the Lord Jesus, draws us to Him.

- The Lord Jesus says that at the last day He will raise up every one of us who has been drawn to Him.

The Lord Jesus personally ensured us that those who believe in Him have everlasting life (John 6:44-49). He said that He is the bread of life.

He described the saving grace He had given us through his death on the cross as follows:

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. (John 6:51 NIV)

Just think about the greatness of God's grace for us. We all commit sins. Our lives are filled with evil things. *Yet God loves us.*

Any person, who thinks about all these in great honesty, will also ask: "What is man that the Lord is mindful of him?" One night the psalmist looked at the stars and realised the magnificence of the starry vault of heaven – and also the insignificance of man when measured against it. This is why he wrote the following:

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, (Psalms 8:3-7 NIV)

Having received this tremendous grace from God and that He saves and renews us – who are so sinful – to be guided by the Holy Spirit, we must realise the full responsibility it entails. We may not live like our old self that was corrupted by its sinful desires.

- Our mind and thoughts should be controlled so that we can live like people created in the image of God.
- We must live and be holy, completely according to the will of God.
- We must put off all falsehood and speak truthfully to one another, because we are members of one body. (Ephesians 4:22-25).

God made us so that we would seek Him, even if we have to fumble about to find Him.

- He is not far from each one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:27, 28).
- If we do not want to believe in Jesus or if our lives are not an affirmation of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ will reject us – and then we will be excluded from his grace and from everlasting life on the New Earth!

Hence we should humble ourselves before the Lord every day. We must submit ourselves to the Lord every day.

- In everything that happens we should acknowledge the will of God.
- And we must confess our grumbling against Him.

You must realise that people who do not do this

- will remain conformed to the pattern of this world,
- will not let them be transformed by God,
- will not be able to test and approve what God's will is, and
- will remain unrepentant – and suffer the inevitable consequences.

The Lord is so serious about the fact that believers should rectify their relationship with Him and keep it right, that He ordered that anyone who did not humble himself should be cut off from his people (Leviticus 23:29).

Hence we carry a heavy burden, especially we who live in the last days.

- According to the prophecies our lives will be endangered and we could be killed because of our faith.
- We have not experienced it as yet, but the writing is on the wall.

Hence it is important to remember where we stand.

- God's unfailing love rests upon us, because he established a very special relationship with us.
- We are not part of the scum of this world – we are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people belonging to God.
- BUT at the same time we are the people who have to spread the gospel – the beneficial deeds of redemptive grace of the Lord Jesus Christ: He called us out of the darkness into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9).

Our congregation have a message for you who are going to confess your faith before God tonight – a message for your future life:

- A person who has no true and honest sense of sin cannot be saved.
- Be aware of your sins and repent.
- ***Continue by the grace of God and enjoy every moment of the life of salvation the Lord Jesus has granted you.***

Remember, life is not going to be easy. The Lord said – with very good reason – that we must keep his command to endure patiently.

- He warns us that trials will come upon the world to test those who live on the earth (Revelation 3:10). This suffering will also hit the believers.
- Hence we must all repent and fight for truth and justice, and strengthen each other, so that together we can win the battle.

For this responsibility God grants us much grace.

- In Revelation 3 we read that He is holy and true, He opens and shuts so powerfully that no one can open what He shuts, and no one can shut what He opens.
- This means that the Lord whose power is unlimited can bless his church – the believers.

The Lord requires from us to be available for Him (2 Timothy 2:15):

- We must be workmen who meet with God's approval.
- We must be workmen who are not ashamed of our work.
- We must be workmen who correctly handle the word of truth.

Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

- But through the Lord Jesus Christ we are saved and granted forgiveness for our sins.
- He prepares us for eternal life in the kingdom of God.

Amen.

Closing prayer

Closing hymn: Scripture hymn 10-2 (28B)

Confirmation

Psalm 121: 1-4

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Amen.

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