September 22, 2024

This Week: 9:30 a.m. Reading Service

2:30 p.m. Rev. Baan

Next Week: 9:30 a.m. Catechism Reading Service (LD1)

6:30 p.m. Reading Service

Preliminary meeting of classes after the morning service

Wednesday: Rev. Maljaars will be installed in the NRC of Courtland on September 25 at 1:30 p.m. CST with Rev. Hakvoort officiating. Rev. Maljaars will preach his inaugural service at 6:00 p.m. CST. Both services will be held in the NRC of Norwich (livestream at nrcnorwich.mixlr.com or nrcnorwich on Mixlr app)

Saturday: Post High School Youth Outdoor activity. For more details, contact Case at 712-360-2725 / Megan at 712-578-1775.

Collections: Today: 1st General Fund Next week: 1st General Fund 2nd Disaster Relief 2nd Israel Mission

We Remember in Prayer:

- -The decisions made in the synod meeting this past week.
- -Our widows and lonely ones, our families, prodigal sons and daughters, and those with hidden crosses.

MEDITATIONS

One of the most striking examples of "holding-on" we find in the Caananite woman (Matt. 15:22-29)... Before Jesus Christ comes near unto a poor lost sinner to reveal Himself in mercy unto him, and to admit him to a familiar exercise of faith in a covenant engagement, God, by His all-wise ruling, guidance and permission, disposes certain matters or circumstances concerning that person which vex him, without admitting any rest or peace, producing a gnawing worm, which takes away the sap of all contentment and comfort. So it was with the converts on the day of Pentecost; they were pricked in their hearts (Acts 2:37). So it was with this woman: her daughter was grievously vexed with a devil; this it was which drove this woman, and urged her to go unto Christ; this made her continue.

And so is God's way with many yet today. He causes them to pass under the rod of oppression, ere He brings them under the sweet bond of His covenant (Ezek. 20:11,12). He sends plagues, judgments and many straits whereby the conscience is awakened and a man is made restless and desperate and helpless; his visage is changed, he cannot live as heretofore; there is inward anxiety,

which takes away the bloom of his life, though often he knows not what is the matter. I believe that many are brought to God in this way.

Read with care and attention Psa. 107 where are examples of all sorts of men calling to God out of trouble, whom God helps. Could little ones – in whom, though they know it not, there is a beginning of the work of God – could they observe this, it would keep them from despair; surely the first work of the Holy Spirit is this; and where this is in truth, the Spirit will further it also.

We can also learn from the narrative, that when Jesus draws near, matters are brought closer to the soul; that which aforetime caused a general anxiety, becomes a house-plague, something by which the soul is daily affected, which is daily within view as the cause of the anxiety and restlessness. This her daughter in her very house is vexed of a devil. Thus it is still, even today. If it is to touch a man in earnest, then it must press upon him personally; he can mourn if it befalls his neighbor, but how much the more heartfelt is his mourning when he himself is the man who is vexed by the devil on account of sin! Then for the first time it becomes a reality, then he looks about, then he carries on and on looking, then he can no longer rest.

Notice that Jesus, as the words imply, now comes closer, though not revealing Himself as so doing. O! Christ comes unto such, though it be in Tyre and Sidon – the most wicked districts, cities or families – to help and to save. He comes through the word and through the preaching thereof, crying that He is such an one as heals all spiritual diseases. And though the soul for a long time cannot concur with the work as applying to himself particularly, yet it saves from despair and causes the soul to remain constant in the means of grace, yes, it makes the soul a thousand times to come before God and cast himself upon Him that he may be Christ's....

Mercy in God relates to His delight and inclination to do good unto wretches, to help and to save them. Hence, such do not come puffed up, relying upon self-merit and worthiness, but as outcasts, penitent, as worms and as sinful nonentities, praying for mercy and continuing to do so. And this is the amazing quality which is in faith; and in all its descriptions in God's word, it is a soul-emptying grace, making a man beggar-poor and humbling him, to make him willing to receive this mercy for nothing. This is directly opposed to sinful, proud and self-sufficient nature, which will not submit to the way of free grace, nor with Paul count all things but loss and dung, before and until the almighty arm of God brings it about in the soul.

Whosoever then, from a felt sense of the nullity and Goddishonoring nature of even his best works, continues pleading with God for mercy only, he has the requisite attitude of soul; and God will not send him away, but rather will the Divine bowels be troubled for him (Jer. 31:20) ~Alexander Comrie 23. Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. Proverbs 23:23

This is the merchant-man, who purchased the "pearl of great price at the cost of all that he had." (Matthew 13:45-46.) The blessing can indeed only be "bought without price." (Isaiah 55:1.) It is as free, as it is precious. But the figure sets out the importance of gaining it at any cost. First, however, let us satisfy ourselves that the seller is no deceiver; that he is perfectly upright in his dealings. " Buy of me " (Revelation 3:18) — saith the Savior. This sets the matter at rest. If we do not really want the article, we shall not pay much heed to the injunction. "Buy those things that ye have need of" — is the rule. Ponder also its inestimable value. It is the truth, the only means of salvation, the only deliverance from sin, the only principle of holiness, the "One thing needful." Place the blessing fully in view — "The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord — that I may win Christ, and be found in him — that I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." We cannot be defrauded in the purchase. It is a cheap purchase at any price. (Proverbs 3:15.) The "lover of pleasure" values highly the baubles of Vanity Fair. But Bunyan beautifully describes the pilgrims, answering the sneering reproach — 'What will you buy?' They lifted up their eyes above — 'We will buy the truth.'

But, like the well-practiced merchant, we must secure the genuine article. Many a counterfeit article is put forth. Bring everything "to God's standard." That which brings wisdom, instruction, and understanding, is the truth of God.

Then, having ascertained its riches and its purity — not only wish for it, gaze at it, commend it, but buy the truth. Not only bid, make an offer, but strike the agreement. Make it thine. The man did not wish for the field with the "hidden treasure," but he "sold all that he had and bought it." And let thy purchase be the whole truth. Every particle, the very filings of the gold, are invaluable — "Set thine heart upon all that I shall shew thee." (Ezekiel 40:4.) Many are content to be at some pains, but they stop short of the prize. (2 Timothy 3:7.) Shrink not from the full price; as did Herod; the young ruler; Agrippa; and therefore they bought it not. Moses gave up for it "the treasures of Egypt;" Paul, his Jewish privileges, and high reputation. The Hebrews "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods." The martyrs "loved not their lives unto the death." And who of these repented of the costly purchase?

Reader: have you ever known that apprehension of Divine Truth, that has made it in your eyes worth every sacrifice to buy it? No one — be assured — who has really bought it, will ever be willing to sell it. — Charles Bridges

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CONGREGATION

Sioux Falls, SD



Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. Psalm 29:2

Services at 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 or 6:30 p.m.