

Summary of the sermon – December 8th, 2013, 14h30

Reading of the Holy Scriptures: 1 Thessalonians 5 Heidelberg Catechism – Lord's Day 52

Theme of the sermon:

Needy praying in view of our destiny.

1. Red zone or front

Jesus' disciples live in the red zone of danger. And they stand at the front. Much danger and many risks also. In Holland we feel safe and happy. Here are no prosecutions like other countries in the world.

Still as Christians we stand in a spiritual conflict. And there we need protection against the attacks of the enemy. And we need deliverance from evil. Jesus teaches his disciples to pray for that protection and deliverance. All of them collectively.

Thus strengthening of faith is necessary. For example at the Lord's supper by bread and wine.

2. Weakness

We confess we are weak of ourselves. But sometimes we don't feel so.

Peter thought he was strong in his faith. But he denied Jesus. He overestimated the force of his faith. See Luke 22,31.32.

Underestimating the power of the enemy (i.e. the devil) is very dangerous. Jesus warns us for him. The tactic of Satan is temptation. His dangerous allies are the world and our own flesh. Again and again we fell in sin. But Christ prayed for his disciples.

3. Watchfulness

1 Thessalonians 5,5-8: 'We must keep awake and sober, armed with faith and love for coat of mail, and the hope of salvation for helmet.'

Without the equipment of faith, love and hope we don't get along in the conflict against the evil. But don't be afraid. Needy is not helpless. For Christ is the conqueror. He will strengthen us through the Holy Spirit. We need to pray for power to stand along. Our Father, lead us not into temptation. But bring us into your kingdom.

4. Praise

God gives us the victory. That shows God's glory and power. Therefore we praise Him at the end of our prayer. God's is the kingdom, the glory and the power for ever and ever.

Praying is not only asking, but also thanking and praising God. See 1 Thessalonians 5,16-18. In Christ God delivers us from evil. Our destiny is the complete salvation through Christ. Therefore we praise Him forever.

5. Confidence

Reaching our destiny is sure in Christ. See 1 Thessalonians 5,23.24. God is to be trusted. He surely and truly hears our prayers. Therefore the last word of the Lord's Prayer is 'Amen'. With that word we say that we trust in our Father in heaven.