

God's Judgment on Fallen Man

Rev. C. Harinck - Romans 3:19-20

Sing: Psalter 389: 1, 2

Sing: Psalter 143 1,2

Read: Romans 1:28-32

Read: Romans 3:9-20

Sing: Psalter 146: 1 – 6

Sing: Psalter 140: 2 ,3

Sing: Psalter 415: 3

Sing: Psalter 362: 1 - 3

Congregation, once, at the installation service of a minister in his new congregation, the elder who addressed him said, "Reverend, your work here will be very easy; these are all good people." Afterwards, in the consistory room, the minister said, "I fear that my work here will be very hard because I am going to have to tell these people that they are an ungodly people and that they can only be saved by the grace of God and the blood of Christ."

Such was the message Paul preached. We read this in our text, which can be found in Romans 3, verse 19 and 20. There we read:

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

We wish to speak about God's Judgment on Fallen Man.

1. Man is altogether wicked
2. Man is altogether powerless

1. Man is altogether wicked

No book of the Bible has played a more significant role in the history of the Christian church than the epistle to the Romans. Augustine, as he read the last part of chapter 13, was brought to repentance and conversion while Martin Luther was brought to the light of the Gospel when he read Romans 1 verses 16 and 17.

In this epistle to the Romans, the Reformers recognized examples of the essential truths of

the Christian doctrine. The three-part division of misery, deliverance, and thankfulness, which is characteristic of the Reformation, is found in Romans. The epistle contains the heart of the Gospel – which is: the undeserved justification of an ungodly sinner, only by faith in Jesus Christ.

We tend to consider the epistle to the Romans a rather difficult epistle, and we often find sermons from this letter hard to understand. However, this might say more about our lack of interest than about the epistle to the Romans.

Paul wrote this epistle to people who had only recently come to faith in Christ. In it, he addresses the young Christian congregation in Rome. The purpose of this epistle is to explain the gospel of Christ to newly converted Christians. In the first chapter, Paul says that he would rather have done that face-to-face. He had already intended to travel to Rome a few times, but so far had been hindered from actually going. He says that he strongly desires to meet them, and hopes that God will grant him the opportunity to achieve his desire in the future. Meanwhile, he wishes to expound the doctrine to them by means of this letter, so that they will be strengthened in the faith that Jesus is the Christ who was to come into this world.

We notice in this letter that the apostle Paul recognized the importance of the congregation of Rome. Rome was the world center of the time. Not only did all roads lead to Rome, but Rome's influence also radiated *from* it to all the other countries of the known world. The apostle realized how especially important it was to establish that congregation in the Christian faith.

The apostle wants to convince the young congregation of Rome of the glory of the gospel message. It is not merely a new philosophy, one among the many new ideas promoted in that time. Instead, the gospel is the only way of salvation for a lost world. He calls the proclamation of salvation through faith in Christ crucified "the power of God unto salvation." There is power in this message – power to save sinners from destruction. That is why he says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16).

Only the gospel can save lost sinners. Therefore, Saul of Tarsus, the brilliant young Jewish theologian, who even sat at the feet of the famous Jewish teacher Gamaliel, is not ashamed of the message of the gospel.

The believers in Rome were mostly raised in Judaism. Their brethren, the Jews, spoke with disdain of believing in a crucified Messiah. After all, someone who had been crucified could not be the Messiah. Therefore, the significant Jewish community that lived in Rome despised the Jews who believed that the crucified Jesus was the Messiah.

For this reason, there was a real danger that the Christian Jews would become ashamed of their faith in a crucified Messiah. However, the gospel is not a message of which we need to be ashamed: rather, it is the only means of salvation for a lost world. Therefore, Paul wants to convince the young congregation of the glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

How does he do that? Which method does he use? How does he approach this? Firstly, by stating that everyone has sinned, and that the whole world has become guilty before God. That is why the world desperately needs this gospel of the crucified Jesus.

We could easily begin to criticize Paul's approach by saying, "What method of reaching out to the people with the gospel is that? Is that how you should do it? Do you have to begin with man's misery? Do you have to begin by stating that the whole world is condemned before God? Wouldn't it be better to begin by telling people that God loves them, and that Jesus has died for them?"

However, the apostle is a better evangelist than we. He wants to reveal the preciousness and glory of the gospel message; this can only be done against the dark background of mankind's guilt and misery.

A missionary or evangelist may be tempted to think, "I will start by speaking about the love of God and wait with addressing sin until later." However, if we do not begin with man's sin and misery, we will be unable to truly reveal the heart of the biblical message. That is why the apostle begins with fallen man's sinfulness.

Paul begins by describing the Greek and Roman society of that time. In fact, he describes what he observes around him. And what does Paul see? He reports, "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful" (Romans 1:29-31). He sees around him a corrupt, perverse society that is full of immorality, especially sexual immorality. It is a world where homosexual and lesbian relationships were common, a world in which there is no room for the handicapped or the elderly, a world without natural love. It is a merciless, cruel, self-centered world in which people only lived for themselves and their self-indulgent entertainment.

But what had caused the heathen world to become so depraved? The apostle identifies the cause when in Romans 1:18 he refers to those “who hold the truth in unrighteousness.” This was the real cardinal sin from which all the other sins of the heathens flowed. They had willfully suppressed the truth about God and refused to acknowledge Him, even though God had revealed Himself to them in nature, and in their consciences. They knew what was good and evil, yet despite this knowledge, they did not acknowledge or honor Him as God. Instead, they made themselves idols, gods devised according to their own likings.

It was because of this, says the apostle, that “God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (Romans 1:28). God gave them over to themselves, abandoned them, and did not restrain them any longer.

Consequently, what had become of the world? The heathen world sank away in immorality, cruelty, and unnatural sexual behavior. Fourteen of the 15 Roman emperors were homosexuals and some of them were open pedophiles. They judged intimacy between men to be superior to the intimacy between husband and wife.

That is how the world was in the days of Paul. What a very relevant issue! It is as if he describes our world today, because that is exactly how our world is.

But the world of the Jews was not much better. That is what Paul points out in chapter 2. For example, in verse 18 he says that *although* they knew the will of God, and although they were instructors in the wisdom of God, even guides of the blind as they knew so much more than the heathens, *nevertheless*, says the apostle, they did not live according to that knowledge. They taught others not to commit adultery, but they themselves committed adultery. They preached to others that stealing was wrong, but they themselves committed theft. They abhorred idolatry, but they themselves sacrificed the maimed and the sick.

Paul’s final conclusion is: “For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you” (Romans 2:24). The Gentiles said of the Jews, “Look at them, they are greedy, unreliable, and deceitful: their religion is not worth anything either.”

A mirror is held before us! How do our religious lives, our Christian lives appear? Is God’s name blasphemed because of us? Do we give cause for the unbelievers to say, “Are these people Christians? They claim to know God and be better than us, but they are less reliable, and less compassionate than people who don’t believe in God!”

The apostle finalizes his verdict of these Jews with a question, “What then? Are we better than they?” And his answer is, “No, in no wise.”

His final conclusion is, "For we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin" (Romans 3:9). They are all under sin, both Jew and Gentile. They are all under the power and corruption of sin. They are all sinners, they are all transgressors of God's good commandments. Mankind is lost in sin and guilt. The world of man is a world of unclean people, evil doers, haters, fools, liars, murderers, and troublemakers.

This judgment is based on facts, and the apostle presents evidence for what he says. We can find this evidence in Romans 3, verses 10 through 18. It contains a long list of accusations against both Jew and Gentile. In fact, it is a catalog of sins.

The apostles starts with saying, "There is none righteous, no, not one." Among Jews and Gentiles there is not one right with God. No one does what is good and right in God's eyes.

He says further, "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." Among all these people there is not one that possesses the understanding to say, "There must be a God; there must be a Creator who has made all these things." The sad reality, however, is that there is no one wise enough to make this observation, and consequently there is no one who seeks God. Everyone exclaims, "There is no God; there is no soul; there is no hell, and there is no heaven. Absolutely nothing of this exists."

Consequently, as the apostle says, "There is none that seeketh after God." How terrible! This is one of the saddest observations that the Bible makes. The world in which we live in is a world that no longer seeks after God.

Next, the apostle says, "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable." They have all strayed from the right way; they are all on the wrong track. They are all together become unprofitable. That means: they no longer serve the purpose for which God created them. They have become unprofitable, useless, and good-for-nothing.

The list of man's sinfulness goes on. The apostle says, "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips." When people open their mouth, it is as if the stench of an open grave comes out. What lies,

deceit, uncleanness, and filth comes out of their mouths! “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.” People curse each other with horrible curses.

“Their feet are swift to shed blood,” says the apostle. Man’s footprints here on earth are typically composed of murder, manslaughter, and the violence of war. Since leaving Paradise, man, in this world, has left behind a trail of blood, and continues to do so. The world, as it were, is drenched with the blood of war and destruction.

“The way of peace have they not known” – the way to peace and reconciliation is unknown for fallen man.

“There is no fear of God before their eyes” – they do not esteem God and they do not respect His commandments.

It is a long list of indictments against the Gentiles. But not only against the Gentiles, also against the Jews. This charge is indeed very serious, congregation. A charge against mankind, a charge against you and me!

Finally, the apostle concludes with, “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” Thus is the final conclusion, the verdict pronounced by the Torah, and the Word of God; the verdict pronounced against Jew and Gentile. They are both under the demands of the law of God, and are they both obliged to live and act accordingly. Because of their sins and trespasses, the whole world is subject to God’s judgment. The whole world is guilty before God. The Greek word that Paul uses in this phrase stems from the judiciary. After thorough judicial inquiry the defendant is judged. The apostle has inquired into man’s case, and what is the verdict? He declares, “All the world is guilty before God.”

Congregation, this is what Paul wanted the young Christians in Rome to believe and confess. And God wants you and me to believe it too. We are called to believe that we are the one who does not seek after God. That we are the man who has become unprofitable, the man whose throat is an open sepulchre. The apostle wants us to realize that we are unrighteous, that we do not fear God. “That all the world may become guilty before God.”

And another phrase connected with this is: “*That every mouth may be stopped*, and all the world may become guilty before God.” No one can deny this verdict. The evidence that the apostle has provided renders us unable to challenge this verdict. Everyone’s mouth is stopped.

Our mouth, however, is not so easily stopped. We are not so quickly lost for words. The modern westerner, in particular, has an opinion on every matter and a ready answer for almost everything. When something is stated, we soon hear the response, "I think a bit differently" or "I don't think it is quite as you say." Especially when it comes to the question of blame, we are quick to point to someone else or something else. But the apostle wants every mouth to be stopped and all the world to become guilty before God.

The world cannot accept that. The Gentile world cannot, but neither can the religious world. Just listen to what the world says of God when natural disasters occur. The world criticizes God and openly says or writes, "If there is a God, He is either powerless or evil. If God *could* not have prevented this disaster, He must be powerless; and if He did not *want* to prevent it, He is just plain evil."

The mouth of the world is not easily stopped. People dare to open their mouths wide and publicly criticize God. Their mouths are not stopped. On the contrary, they speak loudly!

The mouth of the religious world, however, is not so easily stopped either. Religious man opposes the message that the whole world is guilty before God to the core! "Why would I be guilty and damnable? I try to live according to God's commandments as well as I can. I pray for conversion and cleave to the truth of the Bible. How can I help that I am unconverted and do not have true faith? Conversion, after all, is a work of God and faith a gift of God, or not? You cannot hold me responsible for the fact that I do not have faith and am not converted! Besides that, isn't there an election? God shows mercy to whom He wants to show mercy and He hardens whom He wills, doesn't He?" How bold religious man is when he opens his mouth against God!

The apostle, however, wants our mouths be stopped and our arguing to cease, so that the only thing that remains will be the words, "Against Thee only have I sinned, Done evil in Thy sight;" That was also all that remained of the prodigal son when he returned to his father. He confessed, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee" (Luke 15:18).

When do we come to that point? It is when the Holy Spirit holds up to us the mirror of Romans 3 and we begin to see, "I am that man", "I am that woman", "I am that boy" or "I am that girl" of whom it is said, "There is none righteous, no, not one." I am the one of whom it is said, "There is none that seeketh after God." When it says, "There is no fear of God before their eyes," it applies to me.

When God thus holds this mirror up before us, we see ourselves as God sees us, and how He always has seen us, right from the moment we were conceived. But then we see it ourselves.

Our eyes are then opened to see who we are before God: that is: an unrighteous, foolish, unprofitable, sinner who has never honored or sought God their Creator, one who has not known the way of peace.

The long list of accusations of Romans 3 condemns us personally. The result is that our mouth is stopped and that we together with the world are declared guilty before God.

This then is the first thing of which the apostle wanted the young church of Rome to be keenly aware. They had to realize this first of all. They had to know that they, together with the whole world, stood guilty before God: that man is altogether wicked.

The second thing he wanted to teach them is this, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight."

We wish to consider this in our second thought: but first let us sing from

Psalter 140: 2 and 3.

2. Man is altogether powerless

Paul not only wanted the members of the church of Rome to be convinced of their damnable state before God, but also that they would know that man, because of that damnable state, is unable to save himself.

His conclusion is, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

The epistle to the Romans is filled with words like "therefore," "but," and "because." They form logical connections with what has been previously said. It was characteristic of the contemporary Jewish debating, and that Paul knew this, is evident. After his long discourse on the sinfulness of the Gentile and thereafter of the Jew, he arrives at a conclusion. He says, "Therefore," – because of man's sinfulness and corruption – "Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight."

Here, in the epistle to the Romans, we are presented with some key concepts. Firstly, there is the concept of "the deeds of the law:" deeds that are consistent with the law of God.

Secondly, the apostle speaks of "flesh." Paul uses this term in the epistle to the Romans to depict man in his sinfulness. Man is "flesh," that is, corrupt in the way of sin.

Next Paul speaks of "being justified" in God's sight. It means that God declares innocent

and acquits from guilt and condemnation.

Finally, Paul's conclusion is: because we are "flesh", sinful and corrupt, no one can be justified in the sight of the God of heaven and earth by the deeds of the law. Out of the bitter well of man's corruption no good virtue can spring up that is able to justify us before God.

Why? Why are the deeds of the law unable to achieve this? Why can we not be saved by the deeds of the law? Because, as Paul says, "by the law is the knowledge of sin." In other words, the law is not a means of salvation: the law does not save or redeem. On the contrary! The law reveals our wicked deeds, words, and thoughts as sin.

The great error of the Jews was to consider the law to be a means of salvation: to them the Torah was a ladder to ascend into heaven. They sought to be justified before God through the works and deeds of the law. They esteemed the law as a means by which they could be saved from their guilt and misery. In this regard therefore, says Paul, they did not have the proper knowledge of the law. They did not consider that the law only reveals the sins of sinful man: it only accuses and condemns him.

Originally, in Paradise, the way of the law, the way of keeping God's commandments, was the way for man to acquire righteousness. God promised to reward the keeping of His law with eternal life. But that is no longer possible. Not because the law and the promise of the law have changed, but because we have become "flesh", that is: sinful people. Man, because of his fall into sin and the wretchedness of his nature, cannot do anything other than continuously transgressing against God's holy law. He has become powerless to do what the law requires. Therefore he cannot be saved by keeping the law.

The law does not bring any comfort to sinful man. Rather, it gives him the knowledge of sin. The law teaches us that serving idols, despising your parents, stealing, lying, committing adultery, are all sin. The law is no means of salvation. The law is an accuser and judge of man's sinful deeds.

The Jews, however, thought that the law was a means of salvation. Sadly, this is still the teaching of the Jew. They still consider the law to be a ladder by which they can ascend into heaven. However, this is not only a Jewish error: it is a common error. It is a common thought among people that seriously observing the law and improving our lives can make us righteous before our Creator. But the apostle says that the law is not a means of salvation. Why not? Because, as he says, "by the law is the knowledge of sin."

The question comes up why the apostle wants the people of Rome to know this. Why does he stress so urgently that the law is not a way of salvation? He has pointed out that both Jew and Gentile are sinners before God. He has concluded that all are under sin and therefore the whole world, both Jew and Gentile, is guilty and damnable before God. Why is it so necessary to stress that the law cannot save us?

It is meant to let both the Christians in Rome and us know that we cannot save ourselves. Man is not only guilty, he is also powerless to save himself. Time and again, it is evident in the epistle to the Romans that Paul considers this truth to be of the utmost importance. He wants to press upon us that we cannot save ourselves.

The apostle considers two matters essential: first, that our mouth is stopped and that we, together with the whole world, accept that we are guilty before God. Our mouth must be stopped. We have to stop criticizing God, justifying ourselves, and making excuses. When we stop doing so, we show that we are convicted of our sins and that our mouth is stopped. Then we will no longer raise objections against all the accusations that God's Word lists against us. We will side with God and confess that His judgment of sin is just. As Luther says, "We declare God righteous in His judgment on our sins." "And," he continues, "when we so justify God, He justifies us." Pleading guilty, and accepting God's judgment is the way to forgiveness and acquittal.

Secondly, the apostle Paul also wants us to know that there is no salvation in the law. The law is not a ladder to heaven. Surely, this is an essential lesson for the experimental life of faith!

Paul deemed it necessary to tell us how he himself had learned that the law could not save him. He speaks from his own experience when he says, "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (Romans 7:9).

The apostle tells us that in his spiritual blindness, he once believed that the law was a way to salvation. We too believe this, thus showing our blindness and foolishness. When a sinner begins to be concerned about his sins and his lost state, he will first flee to the law in order to acquire peace with God in the improvement of his life and a serious keeping of God's commandments. Sadly, many do not make it any further. They became concerned about their sins but set themselves at ease with an outward change of life.

With Paul, however, it went otherwise. When he understood, really understood, what the law required, sin revived in him. His sins, which he had buried under a

pious and legalistic life, became alive through the mirror of the law. They rose, as it were, from the dead. The consequence was that he died to seeking salvation by the works of the law.

That is also the experience of all who with their troubled heart flee to the law. The commandment which once was a way of life, becomes a way of death. The law revives sin. It is a mirror which more and more shows us who we are. The apostle says that the law taught him that sinful desires and thoughts, though they might never turn into actual deeds, are also sin before God. Regarding that He says, “for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Romans 7:7).

Through the law and its demand for perfect obedience we understand more and more that through the law no flesh shall be justified before God. After all, we are “flesh,” wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness. Man is lost beyond hope. He is guilty before God His Creator, and incapable to save himself.

These are the two important matters the apostle wants us to know. Why? Why does he want to make sure that the Christians in the congregation of Rome thoroughly understand these two matters? For this reason: so that they will also understand the gospel of salvation, the gospel of which he wrote in Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” It is the gospel of which he wrote in verse 17 of chapter 1, “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

The apostle wants them to come to the knowledge of the gospel which proclaims that a guilty, damnable, powerless, totally lost sinner is saved only by entrusting himself to Christ crucified. Paul desires to guide and lead them into the mystery of the justification of the ungodly through faith in Jesus Christ alone, as he expresses in chapter 1 verse 17, “from faith to faith,” that is, only by faith, from beginning to end.

Let us sing of it from Psalter 415: 3

Congregation, we have paid attention to Paul's judgment on the world in which he lived. He laid charges against Jew and Greek.

Perhaps someone could comment, "Well, that was only Paul's verdict." However, it was not merely Paul's judgment. It is God's judgment on man. The list of charges laid against both Jew and Greek comes from Psalm 14, where we read, "The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God" (Psalm 14:2). The conclusion was, "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Psalm 14:3).

Paul's verdict is founded on God's inquiry. Facts prove that man is a sinner. The list of charges is tabled in the court room. "There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Romans 3:10-12). It is indisputable; the evidence is undeniable and therefore the mouth of all gainsayers is stopped and the whole world is declared guilty before God.

To be sure, this is a sad message. But it is also a message which may not be silenced. What would you think of a man who saw people walking towards a steep cliff, and let them continue without warning them? What would God think of a preacher who keeps silent on the message of Romans 3? Or of a church that ignores it?

We may not be silent: the whole world is guilty before God. It is an essential starting point to obtaining a clear understanding of the gospel. Without the message of Romans 3, Golgotha is left in a vacuum and we do not truly understand what the Son of Man came to do. Without it we fail to grasp the essence of the gospel, which proclaims, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Young people and children, this is the reason we may not hide this message from you. We must proclaim: the whole world is guilty before God. May this message cause us to esteem the gospel of God as a precious and invaluable declaration and seek our salvation only in Christ.

With this purpose in mind Paul wrote to the congregation of Rome, and he desired that it would lead them to Christ and to a deeper understanding of the gospel.

Perhaps we think that Paul chose a strange method to reach this goal. Perhaps we say, "How can we explain this to modern twenty-first century man? Do you think people will

actually listen to such a message? The message that the whole world is guilty before God? How do we bring that message to people who are alienated from God and His Word? How do we sell this to young people?"

It is very simple. One only needs to look around him and observe the world in which we live. What kind of society do we see? The same as the one Paul saw. A world which does not seek God, a world in which no-one is righteous, a world of people whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, whose feet are swift to shed blood and who leave behind them a trail of destruction and misery. It is the world of Romans 3 and it is our world. It is a world which is guilty before God, because of all its unrighteousness.

Paul wanted to proclaim the gospel in such a world. For such a world he had a message of salvation, the gospel of God who in Christ has reconciled the world unto Himself. It was not a message of, "Do your best, and all will be good." Instead, it was the proclamation that nothing can save the sinner from judgment other than faith in Jesus Christ alone, Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. This was the goal Paul aimed at and therefore he spoke of the guilt and perdition of Jew and Gentile alike, and declared that the whole world is guilty before God.

Congregation, this is what God aims at when He convicts of sin and misery. The knowledge of misery aims at teaching us that there is only one way of salvation, namely the way of faith in Jesus Christ. Calvin says that God lets His threatenings and accusations come down upon us as hammer blows, so that we will yearn for the life which He offers us in Jesus Christ.

Faith in Christ cannot be separated from the knowledge of our sin and guilt before God. When you have come to regard yourself as a damnable person before God, you will receive the message of the gospel with gladness and amazement. Only then will the message of the gospel truly become a message of salvation. Why would you seek Jesus and why would you believe in Him, without feeling anything of your guilt and misery before God?

"That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." This is quite a message that Paul proclaims here! Yet it is an essential one. We are quick to argue and discuss and criticize God in many different ways. Job did that too. Job even went so far as saying, "Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!" (Job 23:3). He wanted to appear before God's judgment seat and call Him to

account. But when God appeared, his mouth was stopped and he uttered, “I will lay mine hand upon my mouth” (Job 40:4).

One may use great words, criticize God and join atheists in exclaiming that there is no God, but in the presence of God everyone is silenced. Have you ever been silenced in the presence of God? Have you already experienced that? Do you have no arguments left to put forward? Do you agree with Paul when he says, “that they which commit such things are worthy of death” (Romans 1:32)?

I beg you, look unto Jesus! He was silent, while He had the right to speak. He could have defended Himself and said, “God, I did not commit the sins for which I have to suffer; I did not incur the debt which I have to pay; I do not deserve the chastisement which is upon Me.” However, He kept silence. “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth” (Isaiah 53:7). Why? Isaiah says, “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him” (Isaiah 53:5).

Look unto this Jesus, while in your misery and grief – this Jesus desired to stay silent in order to achieve what Paul preached, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Romans 1:16).

Amen.

Psalter 362: 1 - 3