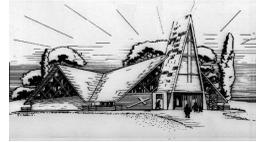




Free Evangelical Lutheran  
Synod in South Africa

## Sermon - Day of Confession and Prayer

*God's kindness leads you to  
repentance!*



St. John's Lutheran Parish Shelly Beach

### • The Word of God for this Sermon is written in Rom 2, 1-11:

- **ESV** 1 Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgement on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.
- 2 We know that the judgement of God rightly falls on those who do such things.
- 3 Do you suppose, O man- you who judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself- that you will escape the judgement of God?
- 4 Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?
- 5 But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgement will be revealed.
- 6 He will render to each one according to his works:
- 7 to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, he will give eternal life;
- 8 but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.
- 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek,
- 10 but glory and honour and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.
- 11 For God shows no partiality.
- *Let us pray: Come Holy Spirit, open our ears and our hearts for God's Law and God's Gospel so that we will abide in Christ. Amen.*

### • **Dear Congregation in Christ!**

- If we look at the current state of our country there is no other way than to describe it as a big mess. Investigations with regard to the state capture report and now possibly also state personnel involved in the rhino killings- one wants to say, "what next?" Can it get any worse? At the core of all these allegations lies self-enrichment, self-upliftment, its time to take a grab. Our country is not alone. Even the mighty USA seems to have its fair share of issues at the highest level.
- The social media is a very busy network as everyday more evil is served

on the platter. And we take it in and we shake our heads.

- But then comes the day of Confession and Prayer Service and all of a sudden we are confronted with an unnerving text written by Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

- [1] *"Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges."* Let us pause for a moment. We need to get some clarity what is meant by "judging others". "Judging others" means wishing the curse of God down on others, desiring the death of the sinner, desiring for the evildøer to be destroyed and cast off into hell!

- Paul says everyone who gets so furious and desires these judgements to fall on the one who does evil condemns himself. He gives an astonishing reason for this: *"For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things."* Please note, he does not say, "because you the judge may have practiced the same things". No, he says, even in the present tense mode: *"because you, the judge, practice the very same things."*

- How dare he say that? Have we really done what "they" have done? What have they done, whomever we want to accuse? They have transgressed against the Commandments of God. Anyone with whom we are angry, whom we desire to rot in jail and in hell, they will have broken the 10 Commandments of God. Anyone who desires for such a person to be cursed by God and be destroyed from this earth, judges himself or herself! I think we know why ... Who has kept any of the Commandments of God this last year to the full? Ask yourself. Is God my priority in my heart? Has He always got the first place in my heart and in my life? If that would be the case all other commandments would be fulfilled by us.

- Then we would not have judged the other person, then we would not have desired for him or her to rot in hell! The fifth commandment says that we

should not kill anyone. Jesus takes that commandment and gives it the true spiritual meaning when He says, that whoever hates his neighbour or wishes any evil to him, kills him.

- Judging someone like this is not according to God's Will. This doesn't mean that those who do evil don't deserve the judgement of God. They deserve it just as much as we do. Then Paul reveals the real heart of the issue by means of a rhetorical question [4]: *"... do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?"*

- Isn't it true and the best news in the world, that God does not want for you and for me to rot in jail or in hell? God does not desire the death of a sinner!!! That holds true for the one I judged and for myself! God wants sinners to repent! And He has patience with sinners. We would have long ago judged them to hell whilst God is long-suffering. He desires their repentance. And both the preaching of His Law and His Gospel want to accomplish this, that they and I, myself, will be led to repentance!

- God opens my eyes and reveals to me that my old Adam, my old nature, my Self, contributed to the mess this country is in. My old Self is a member of Adam, the sinful nature. In my old Self I am part of the evil network that stretches throughout South Africa and the world. My old Self is linked to all the evil of this world. If I point fingers to others, I am condemning my self. That is in fact the terrible blindness our old Adam suffers the most. My Self doesn't see its own sins whilst the sins of others sting in my eyes. My old Self is blind for the fact that he is part of sinful Adam.

- This is true for us Christians in the church also, because we still have the old Adam with us. He is with us until we die.

- But as Christians we are above all united with Christ in Baptism. This old

Adam has been crucified for us, by God. Its official. He is dead in God's eyes. Therefore, this judgement of his will stop tonight. It will be curbed. I will repent and receive the forgiveness of God in my hearing, established and fulfilled by our Lord Jesus on the cross. A new beginning is possible and real. The mercies of God are new every morning. We don't have to continue slinging mud. We are empowered to use our bodies to serve the righteousness of God: We can pray for our government officials, that God will first of all lead them to repentance. We can also pray that our justice system will give them a fair trial if they refuse to repent.

- Its all about our desire towards them: Jesus comes to us tonight and says, receive my mercy and grace and give it to them. Do not wish the worst for them. Don't hate your enemies, come, here, receive my forgiveness and pray for their repentance and faith.

- To be sure, that is what God wants. He wants all people to be reborn into the Body of Christ. In the Body of Christ the Word of God governs and determines our outlook and desires for our neighbours. By His forgiveness He makes us conform to His attitude.

- And so we become patient and merciful towards our worst enemies and this makes us calm, this gives peace, a peace amongst all the turmoil of this world, a peace which truly transcends all our understanding and anything our old Adam can offer.

- LORD, lead us to repentance through Your kindness! **Amen.**

- *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. **Amen.** [Phil 4,7].*