



MOUNT MERRION FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

[BELFAST NORTHERN IRELAND].



Pulpit Ministry of Mount Merrion Free Presbyterian Church

Lord's Day Evening 25th January 2009.

Bishop Gene Robinson's Blasphemous Invocation at Barack Obama's Inauguration.

Scripture Reading Matthew Ch25:31-41; Ephesians Ch4:18

By. Rev. Paul Thompson.

The worldwide fraternity of God's people was shocked to discover that the openly homosexual Bishop Gene Robinson, Bishop of the New Hampshire diocese of the Episcopal Church USA was requested by President Elect Barack Obama to give the invocation prayer at the "We are One" concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on Lord's Day 18th Jan 2009 as part of his inauguration ceremony. This event greatly disturbed the hearts of evangelical Christians around the world, that a Sodomite Bishop masquerading as the servant of Christ should be requested by the President Elect of the United States to offer the first inauguration prayer for the New President. Bishop Robinson gave a recent interview on NPR [National and Public Radio], stating that as he prepared for his invocation, he read previous inaugural prayers, offered by the likes of Billy Graham etc. Robinson described his reading of the past 30-40 years of inaugural prayers as preparation '*as shocking*', he is on record as being "*shocked at how aggressively Christian they are.*" He goes on to say that, "*my intention is not to invoke [cite as my authority] the name of Jesus, but to make this a prayer for Christians and non-Christians alike. Although I hold the Scripture to be the word of God, you know those Scriptures are holy to me and to Jews and Christians, but many other faith traditions have their own sacred texts. And so rather than insert that and exclude them from the prayer by doing so, I want this to be a prayer to the god of our many understandings and a prayer that all people of faith can join me in.*"

The message that Gene Robinson wanted the world to receive was that God is some kind of '*common denominator*' that links together all world faiths and all kinds of lifestyle, irrespective of what the Word of God declares! He also expressed a desire that '*all people of faith could join him in*' However, we must affirm against what Bishop Robinson says, even though he presents himself to the world as one who '*holds the scripture to be the word of God*'; that the Scriptures do not declare God to be a God of '*our many understandings*', nor can any true Child of God join with him in his prayer. For God's people who heard his invocation, you could not but help but be grieved as a profligate Bishop announced to the world that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit were persons tolerant of gross, open wickedness. We need as the Church today to rise against an ever increasing tide of mind-conditioning, and establish the message that there is one God and one faith and one Christ! When I heard the Bishop's words my heart was immediately turned to our saviours words in Matt Ch12:30, words that expressly declare that there is no neutrality with God, "*He that is not with me is against me.*" And the Apostle Paul's words in Eph Ch4:18, "*Having the understanding darkened.*"

When we come to Matt Ch12 we find that the scribes and Pharisees have accuse Christ of being in league with Satan [v24], "*This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by the Beelzebub the prince of the devils.*" They certainly had got one thing right and that was that Beelzebub was the Prince of the devils, Satan, or '*Lord of the Flies.*' But to say that Christ was working with Satan was a blasphemous accusation. Something for which Christ later says they will never be forgiven. The reality was that Christ was continually opposing Satan and overthrowing his house. There is no common ground between God and Satan, hence Christ's words in v30.

1) There is no Neutrality with God.

God was presented in Bishop Robinson's prayer as a God of neutrality and tolerance, that God is a '*God of our many understandings.*' It is certainly true that God is longsuffering and that he patiently bears with evildoers, but in no

*"In this great and deadly struggle, there can be no neutrality."
...John Broadas on Matt Ch12:24-31...*

way does the scriptures declare that God can tolerate sin! There is a line of demarcation between men and God, you are either with me or against me! We acknowledge that in this world man believes that there are many ways to God. Are we to expect; or is it safe to assume that God on the basis of 'our many understandings' of Him will accept us as his children. Dare a man put his trust in his own understanding?

a) **Man's Understanding of God.** Eph Ch4:18, "*Having the understanding darkened.*"

In light of Gene Robinson's statement, one thing that men need to consider is that any understanding that man has of God, is corrupt and wicked, this being his condition, man is left not in a position of neutrality but in a state of enmity towards God. Eph 4:18 "*Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.*" Man by sin cannot rightly know God, his mind is spiritually incapacitated, what he professes to know is the product of his own wicked heart, without Grace opening the eyes, he will remain in darkness. This darkness that men find themselves in is a darkness that can only be equated with death. The Prince of darkness, the angel of death hath blinded their eyes! [2Cor Ch4:4]. Hence Paul says men are '*dead in trespasses and sins.*' It is a deathly darkness, which means man has no spiritual understanding of God than can lead God to be propitious or tolerant towards him. Isa Ch44:18 "*They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.*" A man devoid of Grace is unrestrained by morality. Hence Paul speaks in Rom Ch1:22-30 of those professing themselves to be wise, rejecting the knowledge of God and being given over to the unrestrained desires of the heart.

b) **Man's Separation from God.** Eph Ch4:18 "*alienated from the life of God.*"

Paul emphasises the effects of this darkened understanding, "*alienated from the life of God.*" This essentially means that as long as a man remains in a darkened condition he can neither claim to be the friend of God, he cannot lay hold to a relationship with God. He is estranged from God! There is no common ground. Men like Gene Robinson who profess a supposed neutrality that he and all men naturally have with God, offer great offence to God, they profess and use his name, yet all the while their hearts burn with hostility and hatred against Him, His Christ and his Gospel; Rom 8:7-8 "*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject [in the way of obeying] to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*" It is the unregenerate heart that is intolerant of God and his gospel! The Apostle James is essentially saying the same thing as Christ in Matt Ch12:30, [James Ch4:4] "*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*" Again Christ's words, ye are either with me or against me, and ye will only be with me if Grace has changed your heart, for all men naturally are against me! Only grace can change the mind and heart! John Newton, '*I once was blind but now I see.*'

c) **God's View of Man's Sin.** God's understanding of men is governed by his own nature and character; He is holy, he is pure God is light and in him there is no darkness at all! [1Peter Ch1:18; Heb Ch12:14]. God's holy character allows for no flexibility in his dealings with men. God in His being is infinitely holy and just, on the other hand Satan is a murderer

"God is always the same in his nature, and has the same aversion to sin continually; and though he is not always making men examples of his wrath, yet his wrath is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men."

...John Gill...

and liar from the beginning. Thus our argument based upon who God is, enables us to state forcefully that there can be no tolerance with God in regards to anything wicked. Gene Robinson prayed that God might, *“Bless us with anger – at discrimination, at home and abroad, against refugees and immigrants, women, people of color, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.”* No mention was made of God’s anger, Psalm 7:11 *“God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.”* [John Gill], *“God is always the same in his nature, and has the same aversion to sin continually; and though he is not always making men examples of his wrath, yet his wrath is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men.”* He also prayed that God might, *“Bless us with freedom from mere tolerance – replacing it with a genuine respect and warm embrace of our differences, and an understanding that in our diversity, we are stronger.”* No mention was made that God is no respecter of persons, [Rom 2:11], *“For there is no respect of persons with God.”* No favouritism, impartiality is a attribute of God!

Christ like the Father and Holy Spirit does not and indeed cannot tolerate the work of Satan in any shape or fashion! All members of the Trinity are in perfect agreement [1John Ch5:6-7]. How blasphemous it is then for a man to pray using the name of Christ [the word Amen is a title of Christ Rev Ch3:14] stating that God is a God of neutrality. John Broadas, *“In this great and deadly struggle, there can be no neutrality.”* Indeed the very sin of Sodomy, a sin might we say that Gene Robinson openly adopts as a veritable lifestyle, is obnoxious to God. God told Abraham that the sin of the men of Sodom had come up before him and remained as a stench in his nostrils! All Sin is an offence to God, however, as our Confessional standards state, *Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.* [Shorter Catechism Q83]. Reasons for sin being more offensive to God are due to:

- (a) the nature of the one offending. A man who professes Christ’s name.**
- (b) The parties offended. Sodomy is a sin that strikes at the heart of God’s creative design [Gen Ch1.**
- (c) The nature of the offence. Expressly against the letter of the law, the seventh commandment.**
- (d) The Circumstances of time and place. The Lord’s Day.**

What a combination we have in Bishop Robinson’s actions on Jan 18th 2009

By his own admission Bishop Robinson clearly states that the President they now have in office is the man who will deliver what they want, *“We implore you, O good and great God, to keep him [Obama] safe. Hold him in the palm of your hand – that he might do the work ‘we have called him to do.’”* Robinson masquerading as Christ’s ambassador, is in effect declaring of Christ, *“I will not have and we as a nation will not have this man [Christ] to reign over us.”* We need to pray for President Obama that he as well as others might be truly regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and brought to faith in Christ. God is sovereign in how He controls this world, it is his kingdom [Matt Ch6:13], however, the intentions of the Obama administration if realised are going to bring untold heartache to America and will be grieving to the hearts of God’s people. According to the official website of the president Obama, the administration lists that several of its goals, will be to: *‘repeal the Defense of Marriage Act’* and *‘expand adoption rights’* for homosexual couples; *‘oppose a Constitutional ban of same-sex marriage,’* and *‘expand hate crimes statutes’* at the federal level.

2) **There is Mercy With God.** [v31], *“All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but...”*

While Christ clearly states that there is no neutrality with his father, and that sinners ought not to expect any tolerance from his Father, Christ does drive home that ungodly men can know forgiveness and can receive mercy, there is hope for the unsaved!

We must handle this section with great care, no Christian can explicitly say that ‘such and such a man has committed the unpardonable sin’, God knows the heart, however, Christ leaves us with the marks of such a man who has been guilty of this sin, and for that sin will never know pardon, how tragic and solemn these words! When the scribes accused Christ of being in league with Satan [v24] saying that Christ was working with Beelzebub, they knew this not to be true, yet with an uncanny confidence they go against their knowledge of Christ and with their mouths openly align him with Satan. They were in essence saying, that the work of Christ carried forth by the Spirit was the work of Satan! The unpardonable sin is not something that is committed by accident. It’s a sin of degrees. The unpardonable sin is committed when, against this background of mental knowledge and conviction, a person consciously, wilfully, and maliciously rejects, slanders, and blasphemes the evidence and testimony of the Holy Spirit regarding the grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ and in the end, from his deep hatred for the Gospel he speaks of the truth as the lie. This sin is unpardonable, not because its guilt transcends the merits or abilities of Christ to save or because the person is beyond the power of the Holy Spirit to save; but because, in this sin of degrees, the sinner refuses to repent, hardens his heart, sears his conscience and God finally gives him over to himself. This frightful condition was displayed in Scripture the Pharisees. Because Jesus' teachings testified against them, the more powerfully they were convicted of the truth, the more they hated Him; until with hellish fury they denied, mocked and blasphemed Christ. Finally, God gave them over to the full hardening of heart. When the unpardonable sin is committed, there is no fear for, nor repentance from, sin anymore. In Matthew 12:31 the Pharisees are faced with positive proof that Jesus is who he says he is. They know what Jesus was doing was of the Spirit of God. But rather than believe, with their speech they ascribe the work of the Spirit to the devil. From a heart convinced of the truth there is a renunciation by speech of the Spirit’s work. Those who have committed this sin never experience any remorse, sorrow, or concern over these matters. The Word of God encourages all those who feel the weight of their sin, not to despair, but to plead for salvation in Jesus Christ. *“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death.”* There is one God one faith, a faith that has Christ for its subject, anything outside of Christ is not saving faith. Rom 10:12-13 *“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*