

“The New Covenant Revisited”
Hebrews 8:6-13
Prepared for Wellspring Church
September 4, 2011

1. Introduction

a. engage

- i. What is your favorite book of the Bible? How do you answer that question?
 1. Can there be a favorite book? Does that mean that there are others that are less than? (Leviticus? Ezekiel?)
 2. I have Four, I think...
 - a. Deuteronomy
 - b. Hebrews
 - c. Romans
 - d. Luke
 3. Oh yes and then there are more...
 - a. Psalms
 - b. Proverbs
 - c. Oh and what about... Isaiah, the Gospel of the OT? Acts the History of the Church...

ii. Is that really a fair question?

b. Review: Since June 5 we have been studying and looking at the Divine Covenants of God.

i. The Various Covenants:

1. Adamic
2. Noahic
3. Abrahmic
4. Mosiac
5. Davidic
6. The Role of the Prophets in the Covenants
7. New Covenant on June 5, August 21 and again today (actually we will be referring back to the New Covenant the way through the end of this year—Applying it to Marriage, the Family, The church, to Prayer, and also to Baptism and the Lord’s Supper)

ii. New Has the Guarantee of presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit who is meant to lead us closer to Christ.

iii. Components

1. Preamble
2. Historical Prologue
3. Stipulations
4. Provisions fore treat document deposit and public reading
5. Witnesses (Divine)
6. Blessings and Curses

- c. Preview—Today we are going to compare the New Covenant granted to us today to the Old Covenant enacted on Sinai between God and the Jewish people through the mediator Moses. We will see at least four ways that the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant.
 - d. Big Idea: Since God has provided us with a new covenant we need to focus on its strengths and leave the weaknesses of the Old Covenant behind.
 - e. Read Text: Hebrews 8:6-13
2. A preliminary over view of the book of Hebrews.
- a. Doctrinal to Applicational (Practical)
 - b. Jesus Superior
 - i. To angels 1:4; 2:9-10
 - ii. The often repeated sacrifices 2:17—also 10:11
 - iii. Superior to Moses 3:3
 - iv. Superior as a Priest over the Aaronic priesthood 7:23-28
 - v. A better ministry than all who came before (Priests and Prophets) 8:6
 - vi. His body better than the tabernacle in the wilderness and the temple in Jerusalem 9:11
 - vii. His a better Sacrifice 10:11
 - c. Therefore this is how to live
 - i. 10:19; 12:1
 - d. Several breaks in the argument to bring warnings or applications.
 - i. example 2:3
 - ii. 3:12
 - iii. 6:1
 - e. Hebrews 8:6-13 is an explanatory break that refers back to 7:22. Not only is Christ superior in all ways to the Old Covenant, The Covenant that he brings is superior to the Old Covenant as well. 7:22; 8:6
3. The New Covenant is better than the Old—What does this mean? How was the Old Covenant Faulty?
- a. The first thing that we must see and understand is that God in no way made a mistake. He is not a trial and error God. (second try with woman as an improvement on man) He is perfect in all ways and that includes his knowledge both present and future.
 - b. It also does not mean that there was something wrong with the Moral law of God outlined in the Ten Commandments.
 - c. What it does mean is that the Old Covenant was insufficient, or faulty, not from God's side, but from man's. It was a Covenant made by a perfect God demanding and requiring perfect performance of a people who had no ability to carry it out. The first step to understanding our relationship with God is that we bring nothing to the table. No one has the ability to keep the demand and requirements of the Old Covenant. You cannot keep them and you have proven it over and over again. When we come to the Old Covenant we must realize and

confess that we are impotent, powerless, incapable, weak, helpless—in fact

- i. Example #1
 - ii. Example # 2
 - d. The weakness and fault of the Old Covenant is that it could only demand but it did not enable.
 - e. This inability of man to keep the covenant was very real and personal to Jeremiah when he first heard the promise of God regarding the NC in Jer. 31. One writer has said “I do not doubt that the first impulse of Jeremiah was to leap with joy when the news of a clean sweep of all heathenism was first received.” A leap for Joy! The disciples hearing the story of Christ’s fulfillment of the law and the prophets after the Emmaus walk with the risen Christ. Did not our hearts burn within us! This is what the promise of the new covenant is meant to do—bring a leap for joy, a burning heart, a thankfulness and relief that the battle to keep to requirements of God, the futility of trying to know and experience God on my own, the constant gnawing ache and fear that I cannot remove my failure and guilt before my creator will all be changed. This is why the message of the New Covenant is called the gospel , the good news.
4. There are at least four ways that the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant.
 - a. It is a covenant of reconciliation
 - i. It promised to unite the two parts of the broken people of God (Israel and Judah)
 - ii. It has brought Jews and Gentiles together under one Banner—the Banner of the Cross.
 - b. It is Covenant that works from the inside out. “I will put my laws into their minds and write them on their hearts...”
 - i. This means that the new covenant is much more than memory...
 1. Psalm 119:9-16
 2. Deut. 6:4ff
 3. Memorization and intention are not enough!
 - a. Ohio State and NCAA Rules
 - b. Massachusetts Gun laws and the Doing...
 - ii. This means that there will be a new heart! When God calls a person into a new covenant relationship with Himself he provides the means for that relationship as well. With the New Covenant comes a renewed mind and a regenerated heart. This is the sweetness of the promise of Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26
 - iii. This means that there is more than good intentions! We will have the spiritual power to perform.
 - iv. There is more here than just a new heart and a new mind. There is the promise of a more personal, intimate and vital relationship with the Covenant making God.

1. I will be their God
 2. They will be my people
 3. II Cor. 6:14-18
 4. Rev. 21:3
- v. This promise carries a deeper significance when union with Christ and adoption are brought into the mix.
- c. The New Covenant is better than the Old because **It is a Covenant that brings true knowledge of God**. This new covenant brings a knowledge of God that is immediate (not mediated by priests or prophets) intimate (not theoretical) one-on one (not ethnic and congregational only).
- i. Israel knew JHWH as the true God and the nations did not.
 - ii. It is a lack of knowledge of God that brings disaster.
 1. Hosea 4:1-3, 6, 14
 - iii. They will all know me does not mean that we are given complete and inexhaustible knowledge of God at the point of Regeneration. What it does mean is that there is a new ability and desire to know God that comes with Regeneration. The curtain and veil have been raised, the blind eyes have been opened the darkened mind has been enlightened.
 - iv. How?
 1. Knowledge written on the mind—Knowing God is a thinking person’s work. Before the heart can love and before the will can act the mind must be taught. We are not merely given faith, we are given faith to believe the Word of God as it comes into our minds. Richard Phillips is very helpful here

“ This tells us that faith takes place in both the mind—and our thinking faculty—and in the heart, which includes our will and affections. First we have to understand truth, and then we have to embrace it, to commit to it, and love it in our hearts. This is how saving faith works. Both the head and the heart are necessary. It is sometimes said that the heart is the sanctuary of the soul, and that is true. But the mind is the vestibule of the heart. Light shine through the mind into the heart.”
 (Richard D. Phillips, Hebrews, Presbyterian Reformed Publishing, 2006, page 280-281

2. Knowledge given in the Word
 - a. Word written—read and Study, and
 - b. Word Preached—listen
 - c. If there is no desire to know God through the means he has provided then this surely means only one thing—there is no new heart. Is this hard to hear? Hear it anyway. If you do not have a desire to know God through his word—your soul is in dire danger. If you simply wait for God to make impressions upon you and to give you experiences or if you think that you have gained

sufficient knowledge of God and can coast then you are in danger of never having known God.

3. [Knowledge comes through the Church]

- d. It is a Covenant of Complete Forgiveness. To have a new heart, to have a new knowledge of God—these are wonderful things. But a new heart with out an ongoing forgiveness is not a salve, a it is just a new start. A new knowledge of God without the promise of acceptance is to add a newer and deeper terror to our guilt and shame. I will blot out their sins!
 - i. Our God is an “incomparably pardoning God.”
 - 1. Ex. 34:6
 - 2. Micah 7:18
 - 3. Psalm 103
 - ii. Does God really forget? How is this possible? He chooses to overlook at great cost to himself. He takes on the penalty. There is not such thing as free forgiveness. There can be full forgiveness, but not free forgiveness.
 - 1. Full Forgiveness means that every part of the debt has been paid.
 - 2. Free forgiveness is impossible because someone has to pay.
 - a. A broken lamp
 - b. A broken relationship through betrayal
 - c. A debt
 - iii. The wonder of the Gospel is that God who is fully just in bring the full penalty of sin to bear against us—that of death—takes that death upon himself and grants to all who place their faith in him a full—but not free forgiveness, at least not free to himself.
- 5. Why is it important for us to focus on the New Covenant again today?
 - a. The Old Man, that is, the Flesh loves the Old Covenant more than the New. (Going back to Externals rather than living in the new internal power granted to us in Christ) We are tempted in at least two ways by our flesh
 - i. Pride. You and I want to keep the rules to prove how good we are. We want to show ourselves and others that we can do it. By our own might and strength.
 - 1. This is as foolish as saying that someone beat cancer. There are no cancer survivors only those who God has healed. There are not good people, only those God has granted new a new heart.
 - 2. Your old heart constantly wants to rise up and take credit for your moral accomplishments.
 - 3. Do not fall into the trap of saying you accepted Christ, you gave your heart to Jesus, you decided for Jesus. To say this is not to understand the deadness and inability

of your old dead heart—which still wants to be seen as alive and well.

- ii. False freedom. The second way that we are tempted to live under the reign of the old heart is to buy into its lie that there is freedom to be found in a life outside of the law of God, whether it is written on stone tablets or the tablets of your heart. Living outside the covenant of God is slavery and it is a slavery that leads to death—eternal death.
 - b. We are constantly tempted to seek wrong ways of knowing God and relating to God.
 - i. Heart only—People today want to be spiritual, to live by the spirit and the heart. They want to have a heart religion only. Doctrine seems boring and useless and even dangerous and dividing. Heart only religion is wrong for two reasons
 - 1. It is a religion that attempts to know or to experience God by using only half of what he has promised. The law written on the heart and not the law written on the heart and the mind. True religion is a regenerated heart and a renewed mind.
 - 2. It is wrong because it is impossible. You cannot know God only through your heart—through a love from God or a love to God. This is the deadly mistake of the mystics, the Gnostics.
 - 3. If you say that you have a love for God, it must be in response to what God has revealed about himself, to the salvation he has revealed in his Word, and which most certainly has doctrinal or propositional content. Many people have religious emotionalism but are not saved because they have not known the God of the Bible.”
(Phillips)
 - ii. Head Only—At the same time it is impossible to know God only through the mind. Knowing about God is not knowing God. Knowing theology and doctrine and the right orthodox answers about the things of God is not knowing God. The heart has to be engaged in love for God and for people. The commandment is not to know God, but to love God and to love people.
 - iii. Hand only—New experiences.
 - c. We are constantly tempted to forget or to disbelieve the gospel.
 - i. Be a better person
 - ii. Love if you obey
 - iii. It is insufficient there is more work to be done, more experiences to know, etc.
6. What you need to hear
- a. You are a sinner
 - b. You are in dire need of forgiveness

- c. You cannot come to God on your own, that it with your own desires, your owns ideas, your own works
- d. God has made a way through Jesus Christ and You can be forgiven—this is why Christ has come, this is the blessing and promise of the new covenant
- e. Jesus is the only way, the only sacrifice, the Supper we celebrate is the sign and seal of what he has done.