



Grace Fellowship of Morehead, KY

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-Covenant-Relationship-Month-

Our Need For **Covenant**

Message preached on Sunday Morning, October 1st and 8th, 2023

Introduction

The Holy Spirit dropped in my heart, as I began studying for this month, that there are two types to teachers in the church:

1.) **The kind that teaches to benefit himself.**

Everything they teach is about it being better and easier for them.

GIVING: Pays my bills, lines my pockets.

EVANGELISM: Gets people into my church to hear me.

COVENANT: Gets people to cooperate with me...gets people to treat me with respect...makes them afraid to leave me.

NOTE: These are hirelings! It is about their pay.

2.) **The kind that teaches to benefit the sheep.**

Everything they teach is about the sheep being stronger, healthier, richer, better!

Even if it doesn't immediately benefit himself...that is fine, as long as the sheep are good.

GIVE: Because it will bring a harvest to you and increase you.

EVANGELISM: People need Jesus...you need to share Jesus...it will cause you to increase in passion for the things of God the more you give Him to others.

COVENANT: A key to unlocking some frustrating doors in your life. You've been stopped up for WAY TO LONG...covenant will unlock some doors for you!

NOTE: These are shepherds! It is about the sheep!

That is probably the most frustrating thing about covenant teaching...it really does separate the hirelings from the shepherds.

Too often it is used in a THEE-NOT-ME concept. Preachers use it to control the peeps, but don't live it themselves.

UNDERSTAND: Covenant relationship is the most important thing you will learn in your life.

When you understand covenant relationship with God...you will NOT have any problems walking by faith (thus Hebrews). When you understand covenant relationship with man...you will get SO MUCH more done in life.

Covenant is about YOUR BENEFIT!

PERHAPS: Talk about our two tribes...farming tribe and warring tribe. When they come into covenant... the farming tribe is at ease because they now get to farm without fear of attacks and thieves...the warring tribe now knows that they will eat regularly and always have supply.

Henry Stanley and David Livingstone

Livingstone had gone into the interior of Africa in the mid 1800's on a two-fold mission:

- * Lead them to Christianity.
- * Put an end to the business of selling captured Africans as slaves.

Livingstone's trip was to last about two years and after about six years the New York Herald sent Stanley to find him.

Stanley, when he found Livingstone, ended up staying with him and working with him. When Livingstone died Stanley kept the work going that Livingstone had begun.

HOWEVER: The process of finding Livingstone took Stanley a long time and he found MANY trials and hardships.

- 1.) The tribes of Africa would attack him and his party (between 100 and 200 men) and steal his goods and kill his men! Those goods were things he had brought to buy and sell along the way.
- 2.) He was constantly harassed and frustrated.
- 3.) One particular time he encountered a very powerful war-like tribe and Stanley felt helpless. Adding to the problems...his health was NOT the best.
- 4.) His interpreter asked him if he wanted to make a covenant with the tribe (chieftain). Stanley didn't know what it meant. When it was explained, he was disgusted at such a thing and refused to do it.
- 5.) **HOWEVER:** Conditions continued to get worse.
- 6.) His interpreter asked him again (and again) about cutting the covenant with the chief of this powerful tribe.
- 7.) Stanley finally asked, "What would this benefit me?"
The interpreter answered, "Everything he has will be yours when you need it."
- 8.) After a day of negotiations, they arrived at the covenant.
 - a.) The chieftain questioned Stanley as to his motives and standing, and his ability to make a covenant.
 - b.) There was an exchange of gifts.
The chieftain wanted Stanley's goat. Stanley was in poor health and the goat's milk was about the only thing that he could take for nourishment, so it was never hard for him to give this up, but the chieftain seemed to want NOTHING else.

REMEMBER: In covenant, whatever one person has belongs to the other...so Stanley actually lost nothing. He gave the goat!

The chieftain gave Stanley his seven-foot-copper-wound spear. Stanley thought he had been beat! He gave him his prized goat and all Stanley got was a stick!

HOWEVER: Stanley found out that wherever he went in Africa with that spear, every tribe he came across would bow to him and submitted to him. ***This covenant opened the whole continent of Africa to Stanley and his party!***

AGAIN: Did the chieftain just need a new goat? Nope! This covenant was for Stanley's benefit.

- c.) The chieftain brought on his princes and Stanley brought one of his men and they both had blood from their wrists put into a cup of wine and drank it on behalf of the chief and Stanley.
This act (of shedding of blood) bound Stanley and the chief and Stanley's men and the chieftain's men.
- d.) A priest stepped out and pronounced the most awful curses that Stanley had ever heard; curses that were to come upon him if he broke the covenant.
Then Stanley's interpreter pronounced curses on the chief, his family and the village if they broke the covenant.
(see Deuteronomy 11:26-29; Deuteronomy 27:12&13 to read about curses to covenants)

- e.) The gunpowder was rubbed into the wounds, so that when it healed there would be a black mark to indicate that they were covenant men.
- f.) A tree was planted as a lasting memorial to this covenant.

BELOVED: A few hours before this act, Stanley's men had to stand on guard about their supplies, but now he could leave them on the street unattended and nothing would ever be touched.

NOW: The chieftain couldn't do enough to bless his new found brother.

It is said that Stanley cut the covenant over 50 times in his journey's in Africa. He found out there is power in the Blood Covenant!

Covenant is For Your Benefit

Whether it is with God or with man...it is for you! It helps you!

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

- 9 Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.
- 10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.
- 11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?
- 12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Covenant gives YOU a reward.

Covenant gets YOU out of the ditch.

Covenant gets YOU warm.

But your focus must be on the reward of the other, the lifting of the other, the warmth of the other.

NOTE: Crazy to not want to enter covenant or walk in covenant with someone because you don't want to get caught up helping them all the time. That is literally hurting you!

Why is Covenant So Important for Me

So, Pastor Thad, "I know you like preaching on covenant...but I can live my life fine without certain covenants. As a matter of fact, if I don't make covenants I don't have the curse of the covenant over me. So, I will just stick with me and do whatever I want whenever I want."

NOW: That is a way to live (not a good way)...but you would be missing all the benefits that covenant brings...

1.) **Covenant is Important because it is God's idea!**

Many times when we are tempted on doing stuff on our own...we must remember that covenant isn't a secular concept or a worldly idea.

It came from the heart of God. From the time the first man walked the earth, God was making covenants with Him.

REALLY ESSENTIAL: Covenant isn't so we can keep God in line...but so that we can understand (from a human mindset) the heart of God.

When God tells us to love others...covenant is his heart-set.

Ephesians 5:1 (NASB) – "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children."

If God does a thing...**BELOVED:** We should make up our minds that we **MUST ABSOLUTELY** do that same thing.

Genesis 15:2,3,8

2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

THEN GOD told him specifically it would be a child from HIM...his descendants would be as the stars in numbers.

8 But he said, "Lord GOD, how may I know that I will possess it?"

NOTICE: Abraham is STRUGGLING with a capital RUGGLE! He cannot wrap his head around the fact that a man over 75 (almost 85) would have a child (his wife being 65...almost 75).

UNDERSTAND: He loved God...he left everything for the blessing/promise that God spoke to him (Genesis 12)...but he was struggling!

QUESTION: Was God joshing around?

QUESTION: Was God confused? Pick the wrong couple?

QUESTION: Was God wrong? Did He just miss it completely?

BELOVED: No! God's words are not trite! If He spoke it...that settles it! He speaks with purpose! When He speaks it will happen! (Genesis 1; Hebrews 11:3)

God could have "pinky-promised", He could have "really-really-promised"...but Abraham wasn't getting the ABSOLUTENESS of this promises.

The impossiblness of it NOT coming to pass.

SOMEHOW God needed to get His heart into Abraham. So what did He choose?

Genesis 15:9-11

9 And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

10 And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.

11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, ***Abram drove them away.***

The only way for God to show Abraham His heart was to break covenant with Him.

That settled it.

No matter what Abraham would face over the next several years...he had a covenant on the matter...eventually it would settle him down (Genesis 17).

Remember, it was when he was about a 100 years old that he stopped struggling...this shows that it takes effort to think like God thinks in regards to covenant, ***but it is worth it.***

GOD'S JOB? Bring the harvest, the blessing!

ABRAHAM'S JOB? Vs. 11 – Keep the enemy way from that covenant!

Protect that covenant at all cost.

~ Job said he made a covenant with his eyes not to look on a maid (Job 31:1).

~ 2 Corinthians 10:5 tells us to cast down vain imaginations that rise against those covenant words.

BELOVED: If we are the children of God...we will imitate Him...we will think like Him (Ephesians 5:1)...so we will think in terms of covenant with Him and with His people.

QUICK THOUGHT: After leaving his home...the first two tests that he was confronted with were relationship tests (covenant tests)...

~ Sarai in Egypt.

~ Lot in Canaan.

Our covenants with people are essential also...which we will continue to focus on in this series. The enemy tries to stop our covenant with God by messing with our relationships with one another.

Covenant is the calling card of a child of God.

The blood of Jesus is the ONCE AND FOR ALL BLOOD for all covenants. So His blood flowing through us BINDS us to others in covenant.

2.) Covenant is important because it **ELIMINATES OUR WEAKNESSES.**

This operates inside of our definition of covenant:

“An intimate, intricate and binding relationship between two or more people that unites their strengths in order to eliminate their weaknesses.”

Often when we look for people to connect with...we look for people JUST LIKE US, with our same strengths, our same weaknesses, our same interests.

Or we try to change those who are different that we are...to be just like us and what we like!

Think of the lunacy of the farming tribe trying to transform the hunting tribe or visa versa.

The strength of that relationship is that they were different.

HOWEVER: That just emphasizes our weakness.

The beauty of covenant is that you are connected to someone that completes you and eliminates your weaknesses.

THINK ON THIS (from Ecclesiastes 4): Whatever ditch you may fall into is a ditch that your covenant partner won't fall into...therefore, he can help you out!

Whatever ditch your covenant partner may fall into is a ditch that you have the wisdom to stay out of...so you can help them out!

God spoke this to the Apostle Paul also...

2 Corinthians 12:9 – “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: ***for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*** Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

When we are at our weakest...our covenant partner is at His strongest.

NOTE: The Apostle Paul learned more about the importance of covenant as he progressed in his ministry. At the beginning...toss aside John Mark for his mistakes, at the end...needing those to pray with him and encourage him (needed John Mark at the end).

Matthew 18:19,20

19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

NOTICE: What couldn't be done with ONE...can be done with more!

BELOVED: Way too many Christians are trying to get things done by themselves, that they are NOT created to do by themselves.

Galatians 6:2 – “Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

If Jesus couldn't do what He came here to do on His own...what makes us think we can!

UNDERSTAND: If you think you can accomplish your calling in life on your own...you have NOT completely understood what your calling actually is!

3.) **Covenant is Important because it give us access to stuff we don't have!**

Stanley needed acceptance as he walked through Africa...he did NOT have it...at ALL! But covenant gave him access to places and stuff he didn't originally have.

Abram and Sarai needed kids...descendants...heirs that they did NOT have at all! They had no way to get it! **HOWEVER:** The covenant gave him access to HEAVENLY HELP and HEAVENLY SUPPLY!

BELOVED: That is the way it is with any covenant you have.

ILLUSTRATION: Jessica's first car that she owned was a 1989 Toyota Corolla that she didn't pay anything for...at all! But she came into covenant with me, now she had FULL access to the car whenever she wanted it!

ZIG ZIGLAR: You can have anything in life that you want, if you just help enough other people get what they want.

That is a fact! When you come into covenant with others...you become their property to take care of...to watch over...to protect!

IN THIS BODY of believers I have access to...

- * Excellent guitar playing...even though I have never taken a lesson.
- * Excellent piano...drum...even though I can actually play them.
- * Carpentry skills...even though mine is limited.
- * Wisdom, etc.

ILLUSTRATION: The pastor who got in front of his body of believers and announced a new building project. Everyone got excited. He said, “Now I have some good news and I have some bad news.” They listened! He said, “The good news is, we have every cent that is needed for the building project.” They all exploded with applause! Then he said, “The bad news, it is still in your pocket.”

When you are in covenant...you may not HAVE what is necessary to accomplish the result, but your covenant partners do!

2 Peter 1:3,4

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: **that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

4.) **Covenant is important because it becomes an anchor to our soul.**

Abraham was struggling! I mean struggling! He could NOT figure out how things were going to work.

God said, “To help you out with this...bring me a heifer...”

Hebrews 6:18,19

- 18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:
- 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

TWO UNCHANGEABLE THINGS: Cutting of covenant and blood sworn oath!

What does that do? Vs. 19 – Anchor for the soul!

When your mind wants to be double-minded...if you know covenant, you can rest secure.

ILLUSTRATION: Jessica and I dating...engaged...I was always kind of insecure knowing that I had out-kicked my coverage. But when we came into covenant...there was a peace and a rest that I entered into!

BELOVED: When Jesus had shed His blood...became the curse...was ready to FINALIZE that covenant, what did He say? "It is finished"

That is what covenant does...it brings an end to all strife

Hebrews 6:16 – "For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for **confirmation is to them an end of all strife.**"

When we have a direction by God...we know that with Him and with the covenant partners that He has connected us with...we can get the job done! It is impossible for us to fail...so we can rest secure!

So we can have an assurance that...

- * What God said, he would do! It will come to pass.
- * He will be constant, no matter what is going on.
- * We can trust Him.
- * Who and what He is...is ours.
- * We can rely on His help to fulfill our purpose.

We all like that...awesome... "Go God." But if we are suppose to think like God...and our covenant with one another is the **same...then...**

- * What we say...our covenant partners says, will be done! It will come to pass.
- * We will...our covenant partners will be constant...no matter what is going on in life.
- * You can trust me and I can trust you!
- * Who and what I am is yours and who and what you are is mine!
- * You can rely on me and I can rely on you to fulfill the purpose we have been given by OUR covenant partner, Almighty God!

BELOVED: If a pastor is trying to win the approval of his congregation by performing to certain standard (or visa versa), he will ALWAYS find himself stressing and eventually wearing out!

HOWEVER: If a pastor (or visa versa) knows that he is accepted by God and by a circle of trust worthy friends...he will find that a fruit of joy and peace will flow through him and his congregation.

Conclusion

BELOVED: There is such a temptation to run from COVENANT TEACHING because of the abuse of so many...but when you understand that it is FOR YOUR benefit...for you to get what you need to get the job done...you will NEVER RUN FROM IT...YOU WILL RUN TO IT, and be secure in that position.