

New Covenant Greater Than the Old Covenant

by Alan Martin

The sermon emphasizes the transformative power of the New Covenant, which brings righteousness and enables believers to live in obedience through the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Exodus 34:29, Ezekiel 36:22, John 15:3, Romans 6:4, Ephesians 5:26

Topics: "New Covenant"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that God accomplished His plan of salvation not through a judicial decree, but by sending His very life, the fullness of God, in the form of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus, the Spirit of the Father is poured out on believers, filling them and enabling them to bring glory to God through their good works. The preacher acknowledges that believers may still struggle with sinful desires, but under the leadership of Jesus, they can overcome these desires and live by the Spirit. By cooperating with God in the process of cutting away their old nature, believers can experience the glory that comes from being transformed by the Spirit. The preacher encourages believers to demonstrate God's holiness in their lives and to believe in the power of God, as demonstrated in the resurrection of Jesus.

Transcript

Get this. I forgot my regular glasses. You'll love this.

Look what I get to wear here today. I need help in that area. I have a very clear thought in my heart this morning.

Why is the new covenant so much greater than the old covenant? I can't see you like this. Why is it? Why is the new covenant so much better than the old covenant? Did the second one come with glory and the first one didn't? No, that's not the case. The first one came with glory.

The second one came with glory. But why is the glory of the second so much greater than the glory of the first? Because it's not how they came. It's what they accomplished.

What did the first covenant accomplish? Yeah, death. Look in there. 2 Corinthians chapter 3. Turn there.

Thank you, Greg. I can see. 2 Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 7. Now, if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters, that's what... See, Drew gave the right answer.

What did it accomplish? Death. And just so you don't have any doubt, which was engraved in letters on stone. Where did that happen? That happened on Mount Sinai.

That's talking about the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are very good at producing death. That's what they're good at.

But it came with glory. So that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of his glory. Well, they knew what it was.

Will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? Now, follow. Here's why. For if the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much greater is the ministry that does what? Brings righteousness.

Now, right away, you can choose to interpret this judicially. Okay, God just declares you righteous. Or is that really the righteousness He's talking about bringing? Well, let's look at the first.

How did the first covenant produce death? Because when the law came, whenever men broke the commandment, the wages of sin according to the law is death. So, did God just drop that requirement? Is that all the glory of the New Covenant? Okay, now you can sin but you don't die. That's the glory of the New Covenant.

No. That's not the glory of the New Covenant. Even in the first covenant, you had a means to be forgiven.

How could you be forgiven in the first covenant so that you didn't die? You admitted what you had done wrong and you made a sacrifice and therefore, rather than be killed, you were allowed to live. That sounds like some people's understanding of the New Covenant. Jesus' blood covers our sin and therefore we go on sinning but now we don't die because Jesus' blood takes care of that.

That's only partially true. What does it mean by it brings righteousness? What righteousness is God talking about bringing? Well, let's look. Let's make sure we understand when the Bible speaks of righteousness, it's not speaking merely of judicial righteousness.

1 John 3. Most of you will know this. Many of you will know this. 1 John 3. We'll start with verse 3. Everyone who has this hope, this hope that we are the children of God, this hope that we can know and be ready for Him when He appears.

Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure. Everyone who sins breaks the law. In fact, sin is lawlessness.

But you know that He appeared that He might take away sin. Now, do you understand that? He appeared that He might take away sin. It did not say He appeared that He might take away guilt.

Big difference. You know why? You take away sin, you take care of the guilt. You bring in righteousness and you don't have to deal with guilt.

You see what I mean? You can deal with guilt in the Old Testament by how? Offering a sacrifice. But it says in Hebrews that that sacrifice was never really able to cleanse the consciousness of the worshipper. And it also says in the book of Hebrews that the law, although it could specify that sacrifices could be made, the law made nothing perfect.

But God wants to bring righteousness through the new covenant. And He does that. What kind of righteousness? Let's go on down to 1 John 3. But you know that He appeared that He might take away our sins, not just our guilt.

And in Him is no sin. No one who lives in Him sins. Present tense in the Greek.

Present tense in the Greek has the connotation of continuing to sin. If you don't know the Greek language, you can argue that all day long and you can quote the King James until you're blue in the face. But in the original language it means a present continuous action.

And no one living in Him continues just in the same course of action. They're delivered from that. In Him is no sin.

No one who lives in Him continues to sin. No one who continues to sin has either seen Him or known Him. Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray.

He that doeth what is right is... Now would that be the hint then of how the new covenant is going to bring about righteousness? Who's righteous according to what God has just said through His Holy Spirit through John? Who's righteous? The one who does righteousness is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil. There's no sin in Him.

So He brings about when you come into Him, you come out of sin and into Him. And Him in you who has no sin begins to produce what He is, the righteousness of God. And Christ in you Himself begins to produce this new creation.

This new man, this new creature where old things are passed away. What's called old in regards to our nature and our physical person? What's called old? I'm just going to hint at it. Our old man, our old nature.

Well, what else passes away if not that? Well, if the old nature passes away and all things become new, how can you and I claim that we're still being affected by the old nature? If you still got the same old nature, how are you saying you're made new? How are you new? What's newness if you're still battling the same old nature that you had before in the same way? That's not what is meant in this glorious new covenant. He takes away our sin and brings about His own righteousness. And you want to see how this is beautifully pictured in the Old Testament? Turn with me to Ezekiel.

This is the promise of the new covenant as spoken by the prophets. In Ezekiel, let's go to chapter... Let's just stop for just a moment in chapter 34. Just a brief stop.

I may not want to stop. I may want to just go right... Let's go right into chapter 36. We'll just go there.

Ezekiel chapter 36. Start with verse 22 with me. Therefore say to the house of Israel, This is what the sovereign Lord says, It's not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I'm going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone.

Now first of all, let me ask you a question. How has Israel profaned the name of God? I'm looking for a simple answer. By their actions.

Their actions and the way they lived profaned the name of God. So if He wants to rectify His name, and He wants to show the greatness of His name, won't it be in relation to fixing the problem of why His name is being profaned in the first place? Won't it have something to do with a changing our actions? Now watch

and read on. With me there.

Verse 23. For I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations. The name you have profaned among them then the nations will know that I am the Lord declares the Sovereign Lord when I show myself holy through you.

How does God show Himself holy through us? When His life and character and His Spirit changes our inner man so much that our actions no longer profane His name. It takes Himself. You know He didn't say I will show my law holy through you.

I will show myself. I will show you who real truth is. I will show the nations who real power is.

I will show the nations what divine life really is. And I will do it through you. Through living in you, I will show them who I really am.

God's presence in us. Verse 24. For I will take you out of the nations and I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.

And I will sprinkle clean water on you. What clean water is being sprinkled on us? That and the water of the Word. Didn't it say that husbands love your wives as Christ loves the church and cleanses her, purifying her through the water of the Word.

Didn't Jesus look at His disciples and say ye are clean because of the Word I have spoken unto you. And those being cleansed by the Lord Jesus are being cleansed by His Word. And yes Bill, they are baptized into Christ and into that baptism into Christ you die to sin and you live to righteousness.

So He sprinkles us clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you.

I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and you will be careful to keep my law. That's the result of the new covenant.

When the Spirit of God comes to live in someone who's genuinely been born again and become one with Christ God begins to show Himself holy through them. Through this new heart new spirit and this new inspiration to walk in obedience. And people even begin to be careful to keep His law.

Because they want to. To them it's freedom. We look into this perfect law called liberty.

What is it liberty from? It's liberty from the old man. It's liberty from the law of sin. Because a new law the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death.

Because what the law could not do weak as it was through the flesh God did. He didn't accomplish it by some judicial decree He accomplished it by sending His very life the fullness of God the exact image of God in whom all the power of the Godhead rested bodily came and manifested the Father and He obtained from the Father the Spirit the Spirit of the Father that He pours out and when He pours out this Spirit on us it fills us, it gives us a new heart it gives us a new spirit it gives us a new mind and from the inside God begins to show Himself holy. This is Christianity.

This is the way it should have always been taught from the beginning. Transform lives bringing glory to God because now their actions men see your good works and they glorify the Father instead of seeing

your disobedience or fainting His name. That's the gospel.

And I know some of you say but it's not happening with me. Take heart. Let me explain something that happened in Israel very similar to what is going to happen with many of us yet.

Who led the people out of Egypt? Moses led them out of Egypt. All of these people were saved. They all got baptized into the cloud and into the sea.

They all drank from the spiritual rock that was among them and that rock was Christ. They all saw a manifestation of the presence of God in the pillar of cloud by day and in the fire that was in the cloud by night and they ate manna and they saw God do miraculous things. But this generation that came out of Egypt was unfaithful to God and therefore they ended up dying in the wilderness.

And God still wanting to accomplish His promise and His will raised up from them their seed and took them to the land of promise but He wasn't going to have Moses take them in. No, to go into the land of milk and honey Moses is not sufficient. To go into the promised land it takes Joshua.

Do you know what we call Joshua in English? Jesus. Because Moses can't take people into the promised land but when Joshua full of the spirit of God goes forth and then God says I shall send my angel before you and he shall drive out the inhabitants before you. And you know what this angel is called? This angel is called the angel of the Lord's presence.

And when Christ our Joshua goes before us and leads us into the promised land the land of spiritual milk and honey the land of rest where the cities have already been built fields have already been cultivated orchards are already in bloom no enemy is ever able to stand against Joshua and the spirit of God.

No one fall no enemy every promise he said has failed and with the spirit of God's presence you enter the land of promise and you begin to experience the fruit of this spiritual land love, joy, peace, patience kindness, goodness, gentleness faithfulness, meekness and self-control and God begins to show himself holy through you and right near the very onset when you cross he stops the flood of the river Jordan and you pass through right after that something has to happen right before you begin the conquest because something has happened in the wandering of this wilderness that didn't get done that's supposed to be done because we have a whole generation of those that came out of Egypt but they've never been circumcised in the wilderness why not? well you're not going to begin to enter and

take the land of promise without being circumcised so Joshua made knives and Joshua circumcised Israel and after they were circumcised and began to heal they began to take the land of promise one by one and this is where you and I are God can bring us through a time of wondering but in this wondering you're going to find that the real problem is you've not ever been fully what circumcision are we talking about? we're talking about the kind Paul talked about in Colossians not a circumcision done by hands of men but a circumcision done by Christ and what is Christ the flesh he cuts away the old flesh and you become that is the sign of the covenant with Abraham that's the covenant of faith this shall be the sign of my covenant he shall be circumcised what really sets men apart from the

world? some physical circumcision that the Jews do a lot of Christians do the Muslims do and other cultures do is that what sets you apart? you know what genuinely sets those who are really in the glory of the new covenant apart? is their old flesh has been cut they have been set apart isn't that what the word holy means? and I will show myself set apart through you nothing brings God more glory than believers

who walk by his spirit led by his spirit because when you are led by his spirit you do not fulfill the lust of the flesh when you are led by his spirit the glory of God is going before you and his spirit with your cooperation begins the process of taking over your soul and driving out the enemies of your soul what are the enemies of your soul? the sinful desires that war against it

and by the power of the spirit under the leadership of our Joshua he begins to drive out anger he begins to drive out lack of control he begins to drive out other desires and he begins to see his sovereign power take and fill a vessel and as the spirit of God begins more and more by your help it says if by the spirit we put to death the deeds of the body we begin to live by the spirit and as we begin to live by the spirit we genuinely become sons of God sons of God whose actions bring our father glory he shows himself holy to us not most of us have already demonstrated he's merciful we've demonstrated he's patient it's time to demonstrate he's holy we are to be holy and when he resides in us it says Paul says I pray for you that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you

may know what is the hope of your calling the riches of your glory and inheritance in the same and what is the all surpassing power towards us and it says that power is like the working of his mighty strength which he exerted in Christ Jesus when he did what? what? raised him from the dead let me ask you a question do you believe God raised Christ from the dead? let me ask you again do you believe Christ God raised Christ from the dead? that's the power that lives in you according to his work so why can you believe that Christ that God raised Christ from the dead and not believe that all that power is for you to manifest God's holiness in this life if that if you believe that God was able to take a dead man and raise him back to life can't he do it in you? the only thing standing between

you and that happening would be belief or unbelief so we strive to enter this rest this rest do you know what this rest is? this rest happens after circumcision circumcision is that painful part because these these Israelites that were now having come across the Jordan they weren't babies it's nice the way we circumcise our little ones isn't it? how are you going to circumcise grown men? you're only going to do it by their cooperation and when you cooperate with God in this painful process of cutting away your old nature the glory that comes through this process is worth every bit of it then you go to your Jericho and by the power of God it falls you may have some even defeats along the way like Ai but Ai falls and in every where the spirit of God leads you to begin to deal with these

areas in your life you'll find the power of God is greater in every case than the power of the enemy and you'll go from glory to glory it is a process but it's worth it is the gospel that's how God wants to show himself holy Israel before profaned his name by having his name and acting like the heathen and if we have the name of Christ upon us and our lives are no different than those if we get just as angry as they do if we have just as lack of control as they do then what do we bear his name for? we've made his name among us it's time for us to repent and to acknowledge that he's always wanted to show himself holy to us and it's possible and in that transformation that all those that know us when they see this transformation they will know this did not come they will know something

powerful has lived in you must be in you and you'll have the opportunity to explain what that is they'll ask you about it and many will want it many will want it before I close as the Lord prompted anyone else to say something this is what Paul said in Colossians put to death therefore mortified therefore whatever belongs to the flesh and make no provision for it what they were told is that everyone you allow to remain will become thorns in your sides barbs in your eyes whips in your back and they will cost you the promised land and this is our relationship with one another we are to exhort one another with these words we're to

make sure that there is none among us what? with a sinful unbelieving heart what would what would be the unbelieving heart among us? it not be the it wouldn't be

the heart of unbelief that Jesus lived it would be the heart of unbelief that this life is fully possible in this life it would be the same unbelief that said but the giants are there and they've lived there a long time and their cities are strong and powerful and if it weren't for them we could see it might be a possibility but Joshua you're not being very real here no it's it's not any surprise that all the promises are really only for he who over comes and this is the victory that overcomes the world even our faith just like Abraham facing the fact that it's not going to come from these weak and miserable bodies not going to come from Sarah's womb either it's dead but we don't waver through unbelief do we we become like he did fully convinced that God had power to do what he promised

and God has power to accomplish this far greater than we're fully experiencing right now alright let's pray hey brother Steve Shrout would you cry out to the Lord for us how hard it hurts amen let's sing something together a prayer we'll be dismissed I think most of you know it let's stand up and sing a little more Spirit of the living God Amen

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