

The Old and New Covenants

by Robert B. Thompson

The New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant because it is based on the blood of Jesus and founded on better promises, requiring faith to please God.

Duration: 1:18:00

Scripture: Genesis 4:3-5, Deuteronomy 30:6, John 3:16, Romans 6:6, Romans 10:9-10, 2 Corinthians 3:7-11, Hebrews 8:7

Topics: "New Covenant", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of the new covenant and its significance in our lives. He emphasizes that the grace of God is the help we have to achieve our goals. The preacher also highlights that the requirements placed on individuals under the new covenant are greater than those under the law of Moses. He explains that the transformation brought about by the new covenant is first seen in our behavior and then in the people we interact with. The preacher references 2 Corinthians chapters three and four to support his points and encourages memorizing verses that speak of the transformation and the knowledge of God's glory through Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Lord, as we come unto you tonight, it is with great praise and thanksgiving. It is a wonder, Lord, how you bring us through all the vicissitudes of life. It is a wonder, and yet you do, Lord.

You just seem like we're never going to last, but you just keep bringing us on, bringing us on, and we know it's your faithfulness, Lord. We thank you for it. We pray tonight, Lord, for the families represented here.

Lord, you know the needs. We pray that you keep their families, their concerned loved ones in health and safety, Lord. All of our families, keep us, Lord.

As we go forward tonight, Lord, we pray that the truth of God's kingdom will be real. You'll make it real to us. The Holy Spirit will teach us, bring Christ to each one in Jesus' name.

Amen. All right, we will turn then to Hebrews 8. Okay, starting with verse 6. But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs, that is referring to the Mosaic priesthood, as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises. So, the old covenant is what? Moses.

And what is the idea of a covenant? They teach you about that in Point Loma? Well, they teach you that a covenant is a promise between two people. That's true, like a marriage covenant. And the covenant was between God and Israel, and the idea was that if they did what God said, God would do what he said in return.

And it was established with blood of animals. That's the first covenant. And now we're under a new covenant.

It's not the same. And you know, Christianity has been in existence now for 2,000 years, and the difference between the covenants is still not clear. And you'll hear people mixing the old covenant with the new, without really understanding.

They say, well, we're not under the law, but under grace. But what they mean by that is, we don't have to do what God commanded in the first covenant. What do we have to do? Believe.

So, the new covenant has become one of belief. And as I said, the common understanding is that the difference is that the old covenant was works, and the new covenant is faith. Well, what did we say about that Sunday? Do you remember? Every covenant works by faith.

The distinctive is not faith. It's not faith. You say, how did faith work in the law of Moses? Well, you had to have faith to do it.

And if you did it without faith, then you are in the way of Cain. Remember, Jude speaks of the way of Cain. That's the way of Cain, is to do your religious duty without loving God.

And you can do that under Christianity. Just as slick as you can under Moses. And the outworking under Moses is that you get off into all these little things that don't really matter, like throwing a switch on Saturday, or pushing the elevator button on Saturday.

The minutia of it all. That's what happens. That's the natural evolution of keeping the law of Moses without faith.

You can keep any covenant with God without faith. Now, the natural evolution of the new covenant is licentiousness. It's just, there's no law, there's no rules, nothing governs.

That is as much an aberration as you can't chew a breath mint, which was part of the things that were threshed out, whether you could, they call them peppercorn, or the peppercorn was used as a breath mint. You couldn't chew it on the Sabbath, on Saturday. And we say, how ridiculous.

But that's what happens when you go in the way of Cain. When you offer your religious duty without loving God, and the basis of faith is loving God and trusting Him. That's the basis of it.

And you can go through the Jewish law of Moses with a heart full of love for God, and offer your offering with a heart full of love of God, and keep the Sabbath, and rejoice, and love God, and do the laws of leprosy, and love God, and everything else, and love God, and then you're justified by faith. And Paul, of course, when he talks teaching about that, goes back to Abraham. See how he was justified by faith? Because he believed God.

He loved God. And Cain says, yeah, more than that, he was justified by faith when he offered up the Son. And so then it comes, you know, the common denominator is to love God.

And if you do what you do without loving God, it's not accepted. It's not faith. And you can't please God apart from faith.

The righteous live by faith, the way of Cain. And so, under the new covenant, it spells out as it has today, by taking a scripture here, and a scripture there, and proving that we don't have to do anything. That way you keep what it says, but you do it without faith.

Do you see that? So, you can do Christianity without faith wonderfully. You just take Romans 10, 9, and 10, and John 3, 16, and John 5, 27, and dip in here, and dip out there, and leave out the stuff you don't understand, or apply it to the Jews. And you come up with this abomination that you don't have to live righteously.

Does that make sense to you? That's what Hebrews is telling us, that Abel's sacrifice was better, because he offered it with faith. Cain didn't have it. He had a bitterness and strife in his heart.

And so, God didn't accept it for that reason. So, the Old Testament is full of instances where God reproves Israel, because their heart was, they were not circumcised of heart. They were not circumcised of heart.

The circumcision was in the flesh, and that was done without any love for God, or anything. It was just to do the duty, and God didn't accept it. So, the distinctive of the Christian new covenant is not faith.

Faith is common to all the covenants of God, and without faith you cannot please God. As it says in Romans 11, without faith it is impossible to please. You can't please God by keeping the statute of Moses, or a verse or two of the New Testament.

You can't do that. Your heart has to be toward God. If there could have been a law made that would have created righteousness, it would have been the law of Moses, but God had something better in mind.

What is one of the distinctives of the New Covenant? Yes, exactly. Remember what Jesus said at the communion? This is my blood of the New Testament. That's one of the main distinctives, is the blood of Jesus.

So, the basis of the covenant is no longer the blood of animals, but the blood of Jesus. Yes. You said something interesting when you said, and used that word testament, because I was raised in a church, and this is probably most of the churches in America, and we've heard the New Testament not as ourselves, but as the scripture, as the Bible.

This becomes what's worshipped, and this becomes what is biblically authoritative. Yes. This can never be the New Covenant.

Or the New Testament. This isn't the New Testament that we have here. What we have here is a record of men who themselves were the New Covenant.

See, the New Covenant is people. You see that in Isaiah 42, I will make you a covenant of the people. And Jesus is the covenant himself.

And when he is in us, and we are crucified, and Christ is living in us, then we become the covenant of God to people. And if they do what we say, then God will bless them. That's the priesthood, the royal priesthood.

So, in the last analysis, in the finest sense of the word, the New Covenant is Jesus himself. Can anyone find that quickly in Isaiah 42, I will make you a covenant of the people? It's about the middle of the chapter, and it's speaking of the servant of the Lord. What's the verse? 6? Okay, 42-6.

But, that's speaking of whom? Who is the servant of the Lord? Is the servant of the Lord. Christ is the servant of the Lord, and Jesus is the head, and the church is the body, and that's all the servant of the Lord. So, the whole servant of the Lord is the covenant of God with men.

So, you are the light of the world. Whosoever sins you remit are remitted unto them. You have the keys of the kingdom.

These kinds of things set the church apart from mankind as being the covenant of God toward man. Okay, so a covenant is an agreement. So, the Old Covenant can be written on papyrus, or lambskin, or paper, or the walls of your house.

But, the New Covenant can only be written where Audrey said. It can only be written in the heart of man. Okay, yes.

Has a problem if it departs from the written word, because the written word cannot be changed. But, the key to it is not the papacy. The key to it is the preceding verse, where it says Jesus breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Spirit.

Whosoever sins you remit are remitted, and whosoever sins you retain are retained. So, it only operates when you are living in the Spirit. The basis of that is the Spirit of God.

When you are not living in the Spirit of God, it's non-operative, and it can't be passed down in the church organization. It cannot do that. Of course, many of the things in the Catholic Church are shadows of what once was a reality in the very early centuries.

And so, it's vestigial. But, it is true. Bill, you had a question? I think this follows on to what Andrew was saying in the next part of the covenant, that I was talking about as all men shall know me.

No man shall teach his brother, nor the Lord, and I think that's through the Spirit, as opposed to... Well, let's look at what it, that's right, and let's look at what it says. The minute, and it's founded on better promises. Verse 7, for if there had, Hebrews 8, 7, for if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant.

Now, this is important to look at here. What was wrong with the first covenant? Very important to understand. If there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another.

But, now notice what was wrong with the covenant. But, God found fault with the people. There was no problem.

The law is perfect. The problem was with the people. I think sometimes the idea is that it was an inferior covenant.

It was not, well, it's inferior to the new, but it's still a divine covenant issued from Sinai. Yes. And that's a bit of a relation, though, where Paul said that the promise of the new covenant was given before the law, and the law was only given to hold people in prison until faith had come.

That's absolutely true. That's absolutely true. The law was given to keep sin on ice until the seed should come.

The seed of Abraham should come, which is Christ and all who are part of Christ, to whom the promise was made. That is the promise of the Holy Spirit. That's the promise.

To whom the promise was made. So, that's absolutely true. The law was a stopgap until the new covenant would come.

Nevertheless, the problem with the covenant was that it operated in terms of the Adamic nature. So, you can say it was imperfect for that reason. Nonetheless, the bottom line was that Christ kept it perfectly.

And we see that when Pilate said, I find no fault in him. See, that's a legal statement concerning the Passover lamb. The Passover lamb had to be inspected and be without blemish.

And Pilate inspected Jesus and he said, there's no fault in him. And that made Jesus eligible to be the Passover lamb. Yes? And Jesus said that.

He said, I didn't come to do away with the law. I came to fulfill the law. It's pretty sometimes that the law was here and then we go, phew, no more law.

And now we have Christ. But the truth is that by receiving Christ, we're able to fulfill the intent of the law. Every portion of it.

Because it was Christ himself who gave the law in Sinai. But it was addressed to the natural man. The point is, the problem with it was that the people could not keep that righteous behavior.

Well, Tony, we're talking about the new covenant from Hebrews 8, verse 8. But you see how the preaching of Christianity has missed the point? Because it teaches that the new covenant is better because now we don't have to live righteously. Which is a non sequitur. Because God gave a covenant that enables us to live righteously.

Not as an alternative to righteous behavior. If the new covenant was an alternative to righteous behavior, then it would not, then God would not, see, God found fault because they weren't living righteously. So the idea is that the covenant now makes you live righteously, that's why it's better.

Not that God gave up and said we don't have to keep it anymore. And that's a fundamental misunderstanding of evangelical thinking. That the new covenant is better because now we don't have to obey God.

I'm just putting it succinctly, but that's about where it is. We just believe, we take a theological stance, that's how the just live by faith. If we misbehave and everything, it's not critically important, it's undesirable certainly, but not critically important because now we have an alternative to having to live righteously.

Thus missing the entire thrust, the entire purpose of having the new covenant. It's like God wanted righteousness and he didn't get it, so now he gave us a new covenant in which righteousness is not required, we're saved rather by faith. A complete, a complete missing of the intention of God.

Completely missed the point. Now that's what happens when your heart isn't in it, see, that's what happens when your heart is not, isn't that what Stephen said? You do always err, where? In your heart,

Acts 7. You do always err in your heart. It's heart trouble that we have.

And the Jews has had it, and the Christians have it. We do always miss the point. Every time God zigs, we zag.

Well, try not to do better than that. The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant. Now, where, do you know where that's quoted from? Jeremiah 33, isn't it? 31, chapter verse 33.

Yeah, I think, it's 31 verse 33, I think 33 figures in there somewhere. And now, it's interesting that the word used in Jeremiah is Torah, the traditional Hebrew word for law, and I think it's the same word used here, if I recall, I checked that out one time. And when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, now, I want to stop there, because this will put your mind into a trajectory.

The new covenant cannot be made with a Gentile. It's only made with the house of Israel. So, in order to come under the new covenant, what must you do? You have to be grafted into the olive tree, because there are not two olive trees, there's only the one.

And God does not have a Jewish olive tree and a Gentile olive tree, and that is a tremendous, I don't know as I've ever heard anyone get that straight, that just is a profound problem in Christian thinking, the church and Israel. There's no such thing. There's only Israel.

Israel under the old covenant was by the race of the Jews, Israel under the new covenant is the church, but that does not mean that God has given up on the physical land and people of Israel. That's another mistake that's made, replacement theology. The Bible teaches clearly in Romans that God is going to return again to the physical land and people of Israel, and graft the Jewish Jews by race back into the olive tree.

And there are several verses to that, some in the old covenant, some in the new, but the idea seems to be, the best I can make out of the various verses, is that they will come out of Zion, that out of the church, that deliver the body of Christ and bring salvation to Israel, and the nation will be saved. How can that be? Just like Paul was saved on the road to Damascus. He said, I'll take away their sins.

And God can do that with any person at any time he wants to. You just take away your sins. You don't have to go through an altar call.

The apostle Paul did not go through an altar call. He did not accept Christ. He did not do the four steps of salvation.

It's as it were, he was saved against his will, so to speak. Not actually, but and looking at it superficially. I mean, he's going along trying to murder Christians, going to get the names, so he can throw more people in jail.

And a light comes, you know, knocks him off his camel, whatever it did, he's blinded by it. Why are you kicking against the gold, you know? Well, who are you? I'm Jesus, whom you persecuted. Go up, you know, and you'll be told what to do.

Whoa. I mean, picture the guy. I mean, he just got through helping with the murder of the first martyr.

And he had all this blood, all these people. He never forgot that either. That's why he said, I'm the chiefest of sinners.

Because every church he'd go to, they had relatives that he'd thrown in jail. And he never forgot that. God had ways of keeping old Paul humble.

But it was almost against his will. I mean, God just says, not only are you saved, but the Gentiles now get on with it. You're going to suffer.

And God can do that anytime he wants to. We see that in the revival in Wales. But God just poured out his spirit on Wales at the turn of the century.

And I mean, those coal miners were getting saved by the hundreds and thousands, and closed the bars, closed the dance halls. They were singing the hymns in the mine shafts. He can do that anytime he takes a notion to.

We don't realize that, but it's true. And so, what I get out of Isaiah that talks about Israel and Romans and so on, is that in the last days, God is just going to take this that he has developed in his church, his bride, and just bring it down onto the land of Israel. And the whole thing will be restored.

And that's the meaning of, and all Israel shall be saved. But you never, if you want to deal with God, you have to deal with Israel. And the church is Israel.

And Israel is the church. Israel was the church in the wilderness. Because the word church means called out.

And Israel was the called out people of God in the wilderness. They were the church in the wilderness. And we are called out from the world today.

And the first Christian church was 5,000 Jews keeping the law of Moses. Honest. I wouldn't put you on.

Yes. Where does the switch to anti-Semitism in church history, even as far back as Lutherism, already had? What turned the tide? Oh, I think it goes way back beyond Luther. Luther was very anti-Semitic, it's true.

But I think when you go way back, probably before Constantine, what happened was in the very early stages, the Jews persecuted the Gentiles, which brought up a bunch of hostility right there. And then when Christianity became, you can always sit up close to the front if you want to, when Christianity became, what shall I say, Christianity became secular. If you read about the way the early people, for example, from Scandinavia and the British Isles were converted to Christianity, it rapidly became into a situation where the bishops would go after the leader of a tribe, and he would get converted, and then he'd command the whole group, whether it was Celts or or what was that Irish tribe? There's a famous Irish tribe.

No, that's a religion. That was a wild Irish. No, that was, those were warriors.

The Berserkers were warriors. I don't remember whether they were from Scandinavia. I think they were from Scandinavia.

They would go out in front of the army, paint themselves blue. They were naked, and they were like wild men, and they would charge, you know, and that's where you get the term Berserk. Those were the Berserkers.

But there were wild tribes in Ireland and Scotland and England, and a lot of the people in England were coming. Some were coming in from Scandinavia, and some were coming in from France, and then some from Scotland and Ireland, so England was a real hodgepodge. But what happened was that Christianity became a case.

They'd march, you know, a whole tribe down into the water, you know, and then they'd give the mass, because the Catholic Church was very active way back there in the beginning, and they'd give the mass, and they were Christians. There was no born again or anything like that. I'm sure there was a lot of sincere people that God really touched, but it's almost, you almost call it secular.

So then this idea began to grow up against the Jews. So that goes way back, because they murdered Christ. And so, and the church became very political and had vested interests in all these geographic areas where it went, and so the Jews were out of it as far as the church.

They wouldn't obey the church, for one thing. They would not, and the church was very rigorous. It was political.

It was run like an organization, and the Jews, of course, would not agree, and so they were very quickly on the burnt end of the stick. It started back in the early 70s, 80s, when they had the fall of Jerusalem, because right before the Jerusalem fell, the Christians all exited the city, and that created the rift between the Jews, what they call the Nazarene sect, which were the Jewish Christians, and the city, and the Romans came and destroyed everybody. Did Gentile Christians leave the city, are you saying? No, they were just Gentiles.

Well, they were Christians. They were Zionist Christians. Someone received a vision of a rift between the Grecian widows and the Jewish widows, wasn't it? And then they appointed Stephen.

So very early, and it's because both were in the flesh. They both were in the flesh. Both the Jewish Christians and the Gentiles were in the flesh, and so whenever people are in the flesh, that's the way it happens.

All right, I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Now, I don't know if that kind of reminds you, doesn't it, in Ezekiel where they had one stick in his hand for Israel, and the one they had was for Joseph and Ephraim, and the other stick was for Judah, and we are included in the Ephraim thing by the prophecy that Jacob prayed over Ephraim that he would be the father of many nations, not just the Jews. So we come under Ephraim, but we are Israel.

Make no mistake, you read in Galatians the third chapter about the second to last verse, and it says, if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed. The seed is singular, and it only applies to Christ, and it only applies to a Jew when he becomes part of Christ, because the Jew without Christ is not of the seed of Abraham, because Paul said it's not by natural birth, but it's by promise in Romans 9. So, we are true Israel, but we have not replaced the land and people of Israel. We have not replaced them.

God broke them out of the olive tree because of unbelief, and he says, you are grafted in, and he says, be careful, because you stand by faith, and he says, lest you also be removed. But he said, God has not forgotten them, and the Redeemer shall come from Zion and turn away ungodliness from Israel, and then all Israel will be saved, which means all who are part of Christ, Jews and Gentiles. And that's what the Bible teaches.

Okay, so the new covenant is made only with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, the two sticks, that we'll become one in God's hand, and that of course is the cross, and that's in Ephesians, the second chapter, is broken down the wall of enmity by the cross, and made us both one, and made us the house of God. Any questions? Okay, it will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, and by the way, if you are part of Christ, they are your forefathers. Don't forget that.

God made that plain to me. You are in the lineage, when you belong to Christ, you are in the lineage of Israel, and it's not a fanciful thing, it's a very real thing. You no longer are a Gentile.

Do you understand that you no longer are a Gentile? And Peter, when he's writing to the strangers and so on, he said, first Peter was speaking to Gentiles, Christians, and he calls them the royal priesthood, and he said that your behavior should be excellent among the Gentiles, meaning they were no longer Gentiles. You are not a Gentile if you belong to Jesus. If you are a Gentile, you're still in the Gentile tree, that's an uncultivated tree, it's a wild olive tree.

It's not acceptable. You've got to be part of Jesus. That makes you a first-class Jew.

And the Jew which is not part of Jesus is not a Jew. He's a Jew by race, but he's not of Israel, because Israel is always by what? Promise, by promise. That's what Paul said, that the reason that Isaac continued the seed of Abraham was because he was given to Abraham by promise.

And the same way with Jacob. Isaac had two sons, but only one of them was of the promise, only one of them was Israel, which was Jacob. But Esau was the son of Isaac and Rebekah, but he was not counted.

God said, Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated, because the promise went on Jacob, and then the promise continued by prophecy on the sons of Jacob. Now where did the promise light on us? In Hosea. Do you remember where it was at in Hosea? I will call them my people who are not my people.

And that's where the promise of God passed on to Gentiles. But if you read the book of Acts, you'll find that those Gentiles that received eternal life were selected by the Lord, and that's repeated several times in the book of Acts. Those who were ordained to eternal life believed.

So God went out as the prophet said, I'll take out of the Gentiles a people for my name. But then as Ezekiel, he says there shall be one fold and one shepherd, and David will be king over all of them. So you are an integral part of the Israel of God, and the only way you can be in there is by promise.

And you remember in Romans that he said, today there is a remnant of Jews and Gentiles that God has chosen. But the other Jews, Paul said, the prayer of David was fulfilled, I will make your table a trap unto you. And so they were blinded by prophecy.

And that prophecy is in the sixth chapter of Isaiah, where he said, go and tell this people that seeing you may not see, and hearing you may not hear, and then Paul repeated that in Acts. That's all by prophecy. And that's the way Israel is.

It's chosen of God. It's by promise and never by the flesh. And you're here by promise, and that's John 15.

You did not choose me. I chose you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit. And that fruit is the image of Jesus Christ.

The fruit of Christ and the bride interacting brings forth the image of Christ. Does that make sense? So the new covenant is very profound, isn't it? When I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt because they did not remain faithful to my covenant and I turned away from them. They broke the covenant and then God called it quits.

Not forever, but at the time I turned away from them. I turned away from them. So Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.

God is strict. He says, remember, you stand by faith. If you mess up, you'll be cut off.

Remember in Romans chapter 11? Alright. The Bible is much stricter than it's preached in America. It's much stricter.

We have a spoiled citizenry as regards Christianity, and God's affliction will take us to the woodshed. This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time. Now I want you to notice carefully what the covenant is.

First of all, the primary thrust of the covenant is not forgiveness. Christianity is preached as being primarily forgiveness. And probably from the book of Acts, because the first thing that the apostles preached was repentance and forgiveness.

They never preached forgiveness apart from repentance. There was no forgiveness unless you turned away from the world. As it says in Acts, you have to do works suitable for repentance.

So there's no forgiveness unless you turn from the ways of the world. There's no forgiveness in Acts apart from repentance, turning away from the world. So forgiveness is preached today without repentance.

It's not a biblical message. And it is works. Do works suitable for repentance.

That's in Acts. We are, as James says, justified by works. Yes.

Absolutely. God's covenants, whatever they are, always have one goal. And that is to make man in the image of God.

Now in the beginning, God said, we're going to make man in our image, we're going to make him male and female, we're going to make him fruitful, and we're going to give him dominion. And that will never change. And every covenant is for that purpose, to make man in God's image, to make him male and female.

But that male and female has a limited fulfillment in the human race, but all of these have a transcendent and ultimate fulfillment in Christ and the church. And so the first man that ever on the earth in God's image was whom? Christ. Not Adam.

Christ. And then the fulfillment of male and female is where God gets us away from our singleton life of individuality and we're married to Christ. Because as long as we're not married to Christ, we're a wandering star in the universe, we were made male and female, we do not exist as a singleton.

We only exist in God's image, we only exist as married to Christ. We were made to be married to Christ. When God said in the beginning, it is not good for a man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him, he was talking about what says that in Ephesians 5 where he said, bone of his bones, this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

When God spoke in the beginning of Genesis, he was speaking, when he said it is not good for man to be alone, he was talking about Christ. This whole thing is a Christ. Paul says, I speak in a mystery, I speak concerning Christ and the church.

And so, if you will recall, the original marriage was not like marriage we have today, one person was made from the other. So we can see right away that that's not human marriage, because in human marriage, one isn't made from the other. But in our marriage to Christ, we are made from Christ, that's the fulfillment of the divine fire.

First, that we're in God's image, secondly, that we lose our individuality, never our uniqueness, but we lose our state of being detached from the only thing that gives significance, which is marriage to Christ. When we're detached from Christ, we're dead, we're nothing, we're an animal. We have no eternal life.

There's no eternal life other than in Jesus. Until we're married to him, we have no eternal life. We're an animal, homo sapiens, that's all we are.

We're dead while we're living. Dead while we're living, just a breathing animal, warm-blooded, nourish our young with milk, with a backbone. I mean, we're just a mammal, that's all we are, vertebrate mammal.

No eternal life, nothing, we're dust. And God said that to me, you're dust, you're going to return to the dust, and that's all we are. Because we're nothing until we're married to Jesus.

Nothing. It's in marriage to Jesus that we fulfill what we're supposed to be. Isn't that wonderful? I'm waiting for you to smile.

How's everything going? Yes. Now I'm talking to the young lady behind you because she has frowned at me the whole time. I don't want to preach something to knock you out of the water.

All right, you got me there. I can't complain about that. Yes? Unless we are married to Christ and we die, we just turn to nothing.

No, I'm not preaching that, and I don't even understand that at all. I don't understand, I'll be the first one to say I don't understand what the Bible talks about when it talks about perishing and destruction. I don't understand that.

It has something to do with the resurrection, but God has not made it clear to me. When it says who believes in him shall not perish, that word perish is used, it's used in the New Testament to mean physical death. For example, the tower of Siloam, and you know, and they perish, it says, you shall, you will perish, you will likewise perish.

That's how the Greek term is used in the New Testament. It doesn't refer to hell at all. So I'm not going to be here to answer.

I have no idea what, it has something to do with the resurrection, but I do not understand what God means, because almost invariably in the New Testament, when it talks about penalties, it talks about perishing and destruction. We are not of those who shrink back to destruction, you know, and those in Galatians will reap corruption. It talks about perishing, corruption and destruction, and I do not understand it, so I'm not going to even comment on it.

I don't even, I don't understand it at all, to tell you the truth. What? I think that correlates with John 5 and Isaiah 66, where it talks about, well Isaiah 66 talks about those who rebelled are burning, and the world shall not die, and then in John 5, all shall hear his voice, and shall be raised up to damnation, and some to eternal life. That's exactly true.

Is that the same thing? I don't know. I do know that Isaiah 66 is talking about the body. See, it doesn't say, look on the souls of those who rebelled against me, or look on the spirits of those who rebelled against me, as if you look on the bodies of those who rebelled against me.

So it has something to do with the resurrection, and yes, it says some will be raised to life, and some to judgment. King James says damnation, but the other translations say judgment. The wicked shall be raised to judgment, but I'm not going to, you know, I know the rich man was in hell, I mean that's very clear, but other things are not as clear.

I don't understand it, but I do know one thing, that when we're, that the only eternal life there is, that life that is not animal, is the life that is in Jesus. And until we're married to him, we are dust. We are just dust.

Now what God is going to do with that dust, I'm not here. Where our spirit and our soul fit in there, I do not understand. I know the word death fish is used for animals as well as people, the Hebrew term for souls, so I just don't understand.

I'm at a loss. I've been asking God, please explain that to me. I do not understand that part.

Where they are, how they're treated, I've read the visions of the saints, and they're pretty hair-raising, as far as what happens to the wicked. So, but I just do not know. The only thing that I'm sure of, is that until we're married to Jesus Christ, we do not have life.

We do not have eternal life, we do not have the life of God, we do not have significant life. Because the other life, if you stop to think about it, is physical life. It's physical life.

He didn't say to Adam, spirit you are, into the spirit world you will return. He says, dust you are, into the dust you return. Now that's the Bible.

But I'm not saying that Adam and Eve aren't alive in the spirit realm, I tend to think they are. So I don't understand it, but I do think it has something to do with the resurrection, and I've been asking God to explain it. Yes, Audrey.

It's contrasted in John 3.16 with Shalom perished, but had everlasting life. There you go. There you go.

It's the opposite of life. That kind of put a flash of insight into my mind, it's the opposite of life. So if you don't sow to the spirit, what you do is end up as a human being without eternal life.

And I've said for years, heck, the contest in the New Testament is not between heaven and hell, it's between death and life. That's very plain. I mean, Paul didn't even use the term hell.

We know there's a hell. So I'm not saying there isn't a hell or there isn't a heaven by any means. What I'm saying is that the issue, the thing that was lost in the beginning, was the access of the dust of the ground to the tree of life.

And as far as I'm concerned, the only tree of life there is, is the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, finally the tree of life came and is available to us now, but in order to eat of him, we have to do what? Overcome. Revelation 2. He that overcomes will I grant to eat of the tree of life.

So it isn't just given to us by faith. We have to overcome the things that come against us, and then we're given the opportunity to become something more than a flesh and blood creature. I don't see any way out of it.

So the divine fiat was, one, that we be in God's image, which is Christ. Two, that we be male and female, that Christ is the eternal male, and his church makes up the eternal female. Third, that we be fruitful, and that's what he said, I have ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain, which is the image of Christ, the interaction of Christ and his church, and the result of fruitfulness is dominion.

You will rule all the works of God's hands, and that's the first thing Jesus said, all authority in heaven and earth is given to me. It was not given to him because he's the son of God, because the scripture assigns all authority to men, beginning in the 8th Psalm, and then continuing in Hebrews the second chapter. Now, every one of God's covenants has as its goal to bring forth the divine fiat, every one of them.

The goal never changes. What changes is two things. Do you know what they are? One is the requirements, the demands made on us, which keep getting stricter and stricter and stricter from covenant to covenant.

And what's the other thing that keeps increasing? Huh? The help. And what do we call the help? Grace. So we have more grace than any other covenant, and the demands are greater, but the goal never changes.

It's always the moral image of Christ, which is male and female. It's always, I mean, which is righteous behavior, holy behavior, and obedient behavior. That's the image of Christ.

Secondly, male and female, that's what I talk about, union, union, union, image and union. And the result, when the image is created and the union is created, the thing that follows is fruitfulness. Fruitfulness.

Remember Romans 7, that we're dead to the law, married to Christ, that we might bring forth fruit unto God. And then the result of fruitfulness is dominion. A man's sons, how does it go, something about a man's son or his strength, or arrows in his quiver, or something, thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.

Fruitfulness is associated with strength and dominion. The more sons you had, the stronger your house was under the old covenant. The sons were the arrows in the quiver of the father.

And so fruitfulness, the increase, it brings about dominion. And these four things are the goals of all of God's covenants. But now we have two things that have increased.

What are they? The grace, which is the help that we have to attain the goals. And secondly, the requirements on us as an individual are far greater than under the law of Moses. Yes.

The fruit works out in us first in a transformation of our behavior. Secondly, in the transformation of people whom we contact. You'll see this in 2 Corinthians chapters 3 and 4. You need to look at these, Stan.

These are important. These are foundational. I used to preach years ago, Audrey could tell you.

I used to preach a great deal on the new covenant, but somehow since I've been in poly, I don't know if I've ever preached on the new covenant. Bob Porcelli would know. Now do you see in chapter 4 of 2 Corinthians, starting with verse 10, we always carry around in our body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may be revealed in our body.

For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake so his life may be revealed in our mortal body. So then death is at work in us, but life in you. You see, that's the law of nature, isn't it? That something lives, and then it has to die so that something else will live.

And that's the way it works in the spirit realm. The first fruit comes up in us. Now, that fruit of image and all, you see is in the same chapter if you'll go to verse 6. For God who said, let light shine out of darkness, may his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Now that is the fruit that is in us. Now if you'll back up into the third chapter, it discusses the new covenant, starting with verse 7 of chapter 3 of 2 Corinthians. Now if the ministry that brought death, which is what? The law, which was engraved in letters on stone came with glory so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, will not the ministry of the spirit be even more glorious if the ministry that condemns men is glorious? How much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness? The ministry that brings righteousness, see that? It always comes up.

That's God's goal in the new covenant, is righteous behavior. For what was glorious had no glory. Now in comparison with the passing glory, and if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts? Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.

We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it, while a radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed because only in Christ is it taken away.

Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the spirit, and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

That is freedom from having to obey the statutes of Moses that Paul is talking about. Now I want you to notice 3.18, because there is no verse in the New Testament that more succinctly and comprehensively describes the new covenant than 2 Corinthians 3.18. And it's a good verse to memorize. It's a good verse to memorize, if you have never memorized it.

And we who with unveiled faces, that is without the veil that was over the face of Moses, are being transformed into his likeness. That's what the new covenant is. And as we are, see, then we're brought down to death, and then it comes out to other people.

That's how we bear fruit. And that's how we overcome the enemy. Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.

As Christ is multiplied, it gives strength. That's what we need in America. See, we're being overcome by wickedness.

And we need Christ multiplied in the people so it can overcome that wickedness. Alright, now notice what it says. Are being transformed.

The Greek word there, meta, change, is the same word we use for metamorphosis, where a caterpillar turns into a butterfly. We are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. See, we reflect the Lord's glory, and I think the literal translation is receiving and reflecting.

We receive and reflect the Lord's glory, and every time we see it, there's a transmutation takes place of our personality. It is actually radically changed. Now, back to Hebrews 3, you'll see this here, because this is what the new covenant is, is change.

And the forgiveness, instead of being central, is ancillary. It is, well, what I say, it's more than that. It's actually, it's the way in, and it makes it possible, but it's not the operation.

The operation of the old was the human action. The operation of the new is the Holy Spirit. See, the Holy Spirit is the Christian counterpart of the law of Moses.

The Holy Spirit himself is our law. That's where the freedom is, the liberty and the glory of the children of God. The promise made to Abraham was the promise of the Spirit.

The Spirit is everything. The Spirit of God is everything. It's eternal life.

It's the life that will resurrect us. Jesus has the Spirit without measure, and we will too someday, I do believe. Alright, now notice what he says.

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their mind. Now, some will stumble on that, because the word in Jeremiah is Torah, and I believe it is here too.

Do you have Greek Testament there? You don't have it. Shame on you. What does it say? Nomos? Nomos? Is it nomos? No, no, I mean where it says where they put the law in their minds.

The word for law. You're talking about the word for covenant. This is the word for law.

It's in verse 10. I'll put my laws in their minds. What's the Greek on that? It doesn't say I'll put my covenant in their mind, Tony.

What's the Greek term? Nomos. Alright, but it's in the Hebrew, it's the Torah. Now, people will say, does that mean that God is going to write the law of Moses in his heart? You have to understand there's two laws being dealt with.

One is the eternal moral law of God, and the law of Moses is an abridged, negative, covenantal form of the eternal moral law of God. The eternal moral law of God always has been because it's what God is, and when the law was written on stone, you couldn't write what God is on stone, so it's abridged, it's negative, it's almost all thou shalt not do this and thou shalt not do that. It doesn't talk about being transformed into glory, and it is covenantal.

That is, it was a covenant made with Israel and peculiar to Israel. It's not eternal. But the moral law of God, which is what? What's the finest form of the eternal moral law of God? Yes.

And another way of saying it, Jesus, is you will love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself, and on this hangs the law and the prophets. So that is what is written in the heart. It isn't written, it isn't the Ten Commandments that are written in the heart.

It isn't the laws governing, the kosher laws of diet that are written in the heart. It isn't, it isn't the animal sacrifices that are written in the heart. What is written in the heart is a law that existed before the law of Moses, the law that's written in the conscience of people.

And it never changes. If the eternal moral law of God ever changed, it would best be that we had never come into existence. That's the one thing you don't ever want to change.

And so when people are teaching about grace and say we're not under any law, the basis of the new covenant is law. I will write my law in their mind because we have to have understanding. God gave us a brain, not so we could plan our way, but so we could understand his covenant.

How do you know that? Because of Proverbs, trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding. So God did not give us a brain so we could plan our way. God gave us a brain so we could understand the covenant.

God will plan our way. God, if we trust in him and look to him, that's how the righteous live, is by trusting God for every decision. And God gives us wisdom when we ask for it.

But the writing of the law of God in our mind is God putting that, our understanding of God, his holiness, his ways, the importance of love, the importance of obedience, the importance of right, we have to understand that with our brain. And then he writes it in our heart. Why? Because in the brain alone it would make us doctrinaire.

We would be harsh. So he puts it in our heart because God is love, and love is an affair of the heart and not of the brain. So he puts his law in our heart so we can comprehend where God is coming from.

That's understanding. It says with all your getting, get understanding. And understanding is different from wisdom and knowledge in that it kind of puts it all together and greases the wheels so that it comes out right.

And that's understanding. Know when to lay the law down. Know when not to do it, you know.

Wisdom may say this is time for the law or something, but understanding goes beyond that and says well it is, but it isn't because the people aren't ready or whatever, you know. The food may be perfect, but the sheep won't eat it if you throw it at them when it isn't cooked right. So with all your getting, get a heart.

That's what God says. You always hear in your heart. You may be as wise as Solomon, and you may have all knowledge, but you're a tinkling symbol.

So it has to be written in our mind, and the Spirit does that. The Spirit, we saw in 2 Corinthians, it's written with the Spirit of the living God in the tables of our heart. And He writes in our heart, and He writes in our mind, and the way that happens is as we're, it happens through the body and blood of Jesus as we're going along and we're subjected to the trials and troubles of life and pray and interact with Jesus.

And through that the Holy Spirit is able to take of the virtue of Christ and the wisdom of Christ and the nature of Christ and put it into our personality line upon line and command upon command. And it

necessitates that Adam die. Adam dies an inch at a time.

We assign him to the cross in total, but in experience he dies an inch at a time. We're raised to the right hand of Christ in total, but Christ is formed in us a line at a time. And so we go along through life, and every day we're brought into a situation that has the potential every day of our life, because the days of our life are numbered.

Did you know Psalm says that? The days of your life are already written in God's book. They're already written in God's book. The days of your life are written in God's book, unless they're truncated or aborted because of something, and I believe that can really happen.

But if you spend your life the way God wants you to spend, it's already written, and every day has as its purpose to put you in his image, to bring you into union with him, to make you fruitful, and to give you dominion, because man has no sign to the throne that governs all the works of God's hands. God in a figure has died, that's why it's a testament, because a testament requires the death of the testator. So in a figure, God has died, so to speak, in quotes, and has given us in a kind of a living trust, all the works of his hands.

Taken it away from the angels, made them our servants, so that we might be heirs of all things with Jesus Christ. We're co-heirs with him of all the works of God's hands. And every day of our life, but see this necessitates, our ruling all things necessitates the first three, that we're made in God's image, that we're brought into union with God, so we're not rushing around with all our gifts and everything.

Satan wants to be like God, he wants to be in God's image, but he doesn't want to be in union with God. He wants to be like God, I will be like the most high. So it's not enough to be like God, you have to be in union with God to have the thing work right.

And the result of that is fruitfulness, the result of that is dominion. So every day has the potential to move you an inch along that continuum, and at the conclusion of every day, you should be a little bit more in the image of God, a little bit more leaning on your beloved, a little bit more bearing the fruit in yourself, and when you're mature, because you don't bear fruit when you're a kindergarten child, you bear fruit when you're old enough to bear fruit, so when you're old enough to fall into the ground and die, then you're bearing fruit, and every day has the potential for that, and every day has the potential to put more idols under your feet, and that gives you dominion, so that God is ruling Christ, and Christ is ruling you, and that's the order, the hierarchy of government of the universe. So the only way you can blow the program is by being confronted with the evil of the day, and opting to save your life, opting to save your right to do your thing, and you lose that day's opportunity to pass from Adam to Christ, from dust to eternal life, and it's a fact.

It's a birth, and remember, birth does not take place at once. Birth is the exhibition of something that has been wrought invisibly over a period of time. When a baby is born, fantastic development has occurred by the time it has been born, and has changed from an egg into a baby, going through an embryo, and a fetus, and then a baby.

I mean, fantastic, incredible, miraculous things have taken place in those nine months to bring forth, so we say a baby is born. Well, what we mean is, it is apparent now that something has happened, because it happened long before. Well, if that's true of a flesh and blood baby, imagine the miraculousity, if that's a word, of what is taking place in advance of our appearing as a son of God.

And it happens invisibly, and the creation is waiting for that birth, because when that son of God comes forth, they're going to be released into the Holy Spirit. That's the glorious liberty of the children of God. We have the Holy Spirit now, we have the firstfruits of mankind, and the meek of the earth will inherit all this, and the wicked will be driven from the earth, wherever God wants the wicked driven, they'll be driven from the earth.

So, everything hinges on, I mean, there's no rewards designated in the New Testament for the loser. There's no rewards for the loser. Not life, not being a pillar in the temple of God, not eating the manna, not the crown of life, not ruling the nations, not the priesthood.

There's no rewards designated for the loser. And that's kind of hairy, because we're Americans, and we're used to getting our way even if we lose. And our society is built that way, so all us precious little peoples don't get uncomfortable.

But that's not reality. That's not the reality of nature. Nature is a survival of the fittest.

And we're going to find out that, too, when a more disciplined nation attacks us. If I'm hearing the Lord right, they're not going to destroy our nation, but boy, are we in for a change. Because we're just like when the Spartans come down against the Athenians, that's where we are there, Tony.

You know, we're having our play and everything, the play must go on, and the Spartans are at the gate, because they were disciplined. We're following the historic path. And God wants us to bear witness in that day.

But we will be no witness for God and no use to anybody, unless we're taking advantage of the time now. Because that fetus is being formed. That fetus is invisible yet, but it's there, and it's drawing from the umbilical cord, it's getting its life and its nutrients from God, if we are not saving our life.

If we save our life, what will happen? And saving our life means, when these abrasive things happen to you, they may be abrasive from people, they may be threatening by circumstances, financial or otherwise, or in the case of sickness, they may be great pain, as our brother Buck is going through. We'll pray for him when we conclude here. He's got another problem now.

That poor guy is beginning to ask for death now. He wants to die now. How old would you say he is, Audrey? He's not all that old.

Is he even that old? His wife's been through a nightmare. But she doesn't want to let him go. And I don't blame her.

I sympathize with her. But he won't see the kids get married, he won't see graduation or any of these things. So she's torn to pieces.

So all these things come up in life. They're abrasive, they're threatening, they're painful. Brother Buck himself is going through tremendous pain.

Tremendous pain. All the time. So on a scale of 1 to 10, it's a 12.

Can't bear it. It's unbearable pain. Constant.

You can't sympathize with that unless you have something like that yourself. Experience pain even for one day. Acute pain for one day.

Acute pain. Like C.S. Lewis says, they can talk about emotional pain all they want, but the worst pain in the world is physical pain. I think he's right.

And that's life. And the purpose of it is, as it says in 2 Corinthians 3.12, that we all with open face, beholding as a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed, we're metamorphosized into the image, the same image, by the glory of the Lord. That's the new covenant.

I will write my laws in their mind and in their heart, inscribed, not on tables of stone, but in the heart. And then he says, and their sins I will remember no longer. He says, and they shall not teach any man his neighbor saying, know the Lord.

That's part of the new covenant. For all shall know me. All shall know me.

Every member of Israel will know the Lord. That's the one thing you can take with you when you die. That's the one thing you can take is the knowledge of the Lord that you gained.

I'll tell you this, your gifts that God has given you, and your ministry, will be stripped from you in that day. You'll become a Samson said like any other man. You remember when Aaron went up on the hill and they took off his priestly garments? When you die, that will be removed from you.

You can't take that with you. But you can take one with you, one thing with you, the knowledge of the Lord. You can take that with you.

And then you'll have a chance to rest and you'll stand in your lot at the end of the days. And the day of resurrection, you'll get your new assignment. Shall we stand? Praise the Lord.

Hallelujah. Praise God for such a covenant. Through the blood of Jesus.

Hallelujah. This says better things than that of evil. Oh, hallelujah.

Lord, what a covenant. What an opportunity. What a goal.

What grace. Oh, Father. Hallelujah.

We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear. Hallelujah. But God's spirit in us cries out, my Father, my Father, my Father.

We say that you are our Father. You have begotten us with the word of truth. Hallelujah.

We're not just human animals trying to obey a law that we can't obey. But we are being made that law. Hallelujah.

That covenant to show forth to all mankind the glory of God out in the face of Jesus Christ. Now, Lord, our culture is provocative. It's stimulating.

It's interesting. It's alluring. And it has the potential to destroy the one opportunity we have of learning of God and of being changed, being transformed.

Hallelujah. And of serving. Tonight, for each one of us here to grow strangely dim in the light of your glory and grace.

Hallelujah. That our eyes will be on Jesus and on nothing else. We'll not be bemused or afraid or tantalized in any way by what's going on.

We overcame evil with the good of Christ. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.

Blessed be your holy name. You're so wonderful. And we remember our brother Buck, Lord, who is in intense pain.

And his wife and his children, Lord, who are threatened, who are fearful, who are angry, perhaps. So much distress. Whatever emotions they're experiencing, Lord, just encourage their hearts.

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