

GOD HAS A PLAN FOR EVERY PART OF YOUR LIFE

(Our God is a Covenant God)





COVENANT AND THE CHURCH

Week 11

REVIEW: COVENANT OF GRACE

Covenant of Grace is *One* Covenant. It is the *same* in substance in both the Old Testament and the New Testament

- There is only one way that God saves His people — it is **progressively** revealed



REVIEW: COVENANT OF GRACE

- The Covenant of Grace is One Covenant. It is the same in substance in both the Old Testament and the New Testament
 - “Be a God to you and your descendants”
 - There is only one way that God saves His people-- it is progressively revealed



REVIEW: COVENANT OF GRACE

- What then essentially happens in the Covenant of Grace?
 - God accounts **(credits)** the righteousness of Christ to the believer
- That righteousness is two things:
 - Fulfilling obedience for us *(the life he lived)*
 - Paying the penalty for our disobedience *(the death He died)*



COVENANTAL SALVATION

- God created man
- God entered into covenant with man
- Man **broke** that Covenant of Works
- Man is now **incapable** of keeping the Covenant of Works
- God **provided redemption** by a second Covenant of Grace



REVIEW: COVENANTAL SALVATION

- The true promise of salvation is *"I will be their God, and they shall be my people"* (Hebrews 8:10)
- The Biblical ground of salvation is union with Christ



REVIEW: UNION WITH CHRIST

Covenantal and Vital

- Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. (John 15:4)
- I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Gal. 2:20)



WHY START THERE?

- If we are to talk about how a covenantal worldview affects our view of the Church, why start with the Covenant of Grace and salvation?
- What is the Church but the collective body of those who are saved through the Covenant of Grace?





A COVENANTAL PEOPLE



A COVENANTAL PEOPLE

- If salvation is covenantal, won't "the saved" be a covenantal people?
- Union with Christ brings consequences:
 - ✓ Justification
 - ✓ Sanctification
 - ✓ Communion with God



A COVENANTAL UNION

- It is important to start with union with Christ (a covenantal concept) because it is the source of communion and fellowship in the Church
- Three important passages:
 - 1 John 1:1-4
 - Ephesians 3:14-21
 - Ephesians 2:4-7



ONE SINGLE COMMUNITY

- Remember our past discussion about the unity of the Covenant of Grace
- If there is one covenant, one single way of salvation and one promise, then how many communities of God's people will there be?
- The answer: **THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE.**



ONE PEOPLE OF GOD

- Because there is only one covenant and one way of salvation there is only one people of God
- Remember the illustration of the covenant-- the bud that blooms into the flower?
- The Church is like that, being revealed more clearly in the NT than the OT



ONE PEOPLE OF GOD

- We see it and its function more clearly in Paul's writings than in Moses', but it is the same
- Another example would be a person:
 - He begins as a child, and needs a tutor to instruct him
 - Eventually he becomes a man



A COVENANTAL COMMUNITY

- The Bible shows us that God's people are a covenantal community
- God does not save His people for their own **individual** ends
- God calls His people to **relationship** and communion with each other
- Union with Christ is the **source** of communion with fellow believers



A COVENANTAL COMMUNITY

- Biblical view of the Christian is one who is part of a covenant community
 - 1 Corinthians 3:11-17
 - 1 Corinthians 6:19
 - 2 Corinthians 6:11-18
 - 1 Peter 2:5



A COVENANTAL CHURCH

- God's view of the Church is a unified covenantal church (Heb. 11:39-40)
- That covenantal body shows itself in this world with both covenant-keepers and covenant-breakers
- God has not changed His mind or plan for Israel; He has opened up the covenant to those outside (Romans 11; Ephesians 2:11-22)



UNION WITH CHRIST & THE CHURCH

- A Christian's union with Christ puts him in communion with others who are also united to their Lord
- What does this mean?
 - Every Christian's gifts are given by Christ for the benefit of the body
 - Every Christian has obligations to fellow Christians
 - **THERE CAN BE NO "LONE RANGER CHRISTIANS"**



A COVENANTAL BODY

- What then are those obligations?
 - Assembling for worship
 - Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 2:42
 - Performing spiritual services for the mutual edification of the body
 - Romans 14:19; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:9-15
 - Relieve each other in outward things
 - 2 Cor. 8:1-5; 1 John 3:16-18; Acts 11:29-30; Romans 15:25



COVENANTAL MARKS

- Therefore, the true purpose of the church is to be God's dwelling among men on earth
- This means that the focus of the Christian church should be:
 - Objective (union in Christ), not subjective (union in goals or needs)
 - Upward (to God) and outward (evangelism) looking, not inward looking (self-created communion)



COVENANTAL CHARACTERISTICS

- **WORSHIP**
 - Ministry of the Word
 - Administration of the Sacraments
- Exercise of **Discipline**
- **Evangelism**





WHY DO WE WORSHIP?



WHY WORSHIP?

- New Testament is filled with examples showing it is essential to corporately worship God
 - *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*
(Acts 2:42)
 - John 20:19
 - Acts 1:13-14; 2:1; 20:7
 - 1 Corinthians 11:17-20



COVENANTAL OBLIGATION

- And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, **not neglecting to meet together**, as is the habit of some, **but encouraging** one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24-25)



COVENANTAL OBLIGATION

- What does it mean **“not to neglect”**?
 - A Christian does not abandon corporate worship, or consider it unimportant
 - It also means that a Christian may not “partially” abandon worship by being inattentive or careless



“DO NOT NEGLECT”

- For Demas, in love with this present world, has **deserted** me and gone to Thessalonica. (2 Tim. 4:10)
- Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor **forsake** you.” (Hebrews 13:5)





THE DUTY OF WORSHIP



THE DUTY: “ENCOURAGE”

- strengthening the souls of the disciples, **encouraging** them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. (Acts 14:22)
- I **appeal** to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Rom. 12:1)
 - See also 1 Thessalonians 3:2



NON COVENANTAL WORSHIP

- There are two main errors that modern Christians fall into with respect to worship:
 - (1) denying the **vital importance** of corporate worship
 - (2) denying God's **covenantal right** to establish acceptable worship



WHO IS WORSHIP FOR?

- Remember that the church is a place for God's glory to be seen
 - "to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations" (Eph. 3:21)
- It seems self-evident that worship is to be "God centered"
- What does that preclude?



WHO IS WORSHIP FOR?

- If worship is directed toward, about and for God, then a non-covenantal view of worship is dangerous when the worshipper is concerned about:
 - what he “gets out of worship”
 - if “his needs are being met”



WHO IS WORSHIP FOR?

- If worship is directed toward, about and for God, then a non-covenantal view of worship is dangerous when the worshipper is concerned about:
 - **having his personal tastes gratified**
 - **imposing non-Biblical worship on others**



WHAT IS PROPER WORSHIP?

- Since God is our God by His gracious covenant of grace, doesn't it make sense that He would have something to say about worship?
- Wouldn't that include:
 - Who we ought to worship?
 - what that worship should be?
 - how (in what manner) we ought to worship?





PROPER WORSHIP



THE 1ST COMMANDMENT

- **God says Who we ought to worship:**
 - *You shall have no other gods before Me* (Exodus 20:3)
 - Religious worship is to be given to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and to him alone: not to angels, saints, or any other creature: and, since the fall, not without a Mediator; nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone. (WCF 21.2)



THE 2ND COMMANDMENT

- **God says what worship He wants:**
 - You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me (Exodus 20:4-5)



THE 2ND COMMANDMENT

- God, who has lordship and sovereignty over all...is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served... **the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men...or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture.** (WCF 21.1)



THE 2ND COMMANDMENT

- The **reading of the Scriptures** with godly fear; the **sound preaching**, and conscionable hearing of the word, in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith, and reverence; **singing** of psalms with grace in the heart; as also the due administration and worthy receiving of the **sacraments** instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God (WCF 21.5)



THE 2ND COMMANDMENT

- *in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. (Matthew 15:9)*
- *These have indeed an **appearance of wisdom** in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh. (Col. 2:23)*
- Deuteronomy 4:15-20



DOES GOD REALLY CARE?

- Leviticus 10:1-5
- 1 Chronicles 13:3-14
 - Exodus 25:12-15
 - Numbers 7:5-9



COVENANTAL MEANS

- Remember that the church administers the Covenant of Grace through the means of grace:
 - preaching of the Word
 - administration of the sacraments
 - prayer
 - praise



THE 3RD COMMANDMENT

- God says how we ought to worship
 - You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. (Exodus 20:7)
 - You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Deuteronomy 6:5)



THE 3RD COMMANDMENT

- God is to be worshipped every where **in spirit and in truth**; as in private families daily, and in secret each one by himself; so more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or willfully to be neglected or forsaken (WCF 21.6)



HOW DO WE DO THAT?

ASYMMETRICAL SYNERGISM



GOD'S POWER IN WORSHIP

ASYMMETRICAL SYNERGISM



IS IT REALLY THAT EASY?

YES!



NEXT WEEK:

- We apply a covenantal way of thinking to **the Means of Grace**
- Homework:
 - John 16
 - Romans 4

