

# **GOD HAS A PLAN FOR EVERY PART OF YOUR LIFE**

**(Our God is a Covenant God)**





# **COVENANT AND THE MEANS OF GRACE**

**Week 12**

# REVIEW: ELEMENTS

- *What are the **elements** of a covenant?*
  1. Parties
  2. Condition
  3. Promise or Blessing
  4. Penalty or Curse





# **REVIEW: THE COVENANTS**

**God Relating to Mankind**

# REVIEW: COVENANT OF WORKS

1. Parties

2. Condition

3. Promise/Blessing

4. Penalty/Curse

1. God and Adam – Adam represents all men

2. Obedience – Perfect, personal obedience

3. Eternal Life – Communion with God forever

4. Death – Spiritual, physical, judicial



# REVIEW: COVENANT OF WORKS

- 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: COVENANT OF GRACE

1. Parties
2. Condition
3. Promise/Blessing
4. Penalty/Curse

1. God and Christ
2. Faith in Christ
3. God is our God  
Forgiveness of sins
4. God always fulfills!



# REVIEW: COVENANT OF GRACE

- Who sets the terms of the Covenant of Grace?
- Who fulfils the conditions?
- Who is the focus of the Covenant of Grace?
  - **God, not man**





# REVIEW: COVENANTAL SALVATION

- God sets the terms of salvation
- God effects salvation by His power
- The covenantal promise of salvation is “I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Hebrews 8:10)



# 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)*



# REVIEW: GOD'S RELATIONSHIPS

## Covenant of Works

- Adam
- *"do this and live"*
- All mankind outside of Christ

## Covenant of Grace

- Christ
- *"the just shall live by faith"*
- Elect = believers

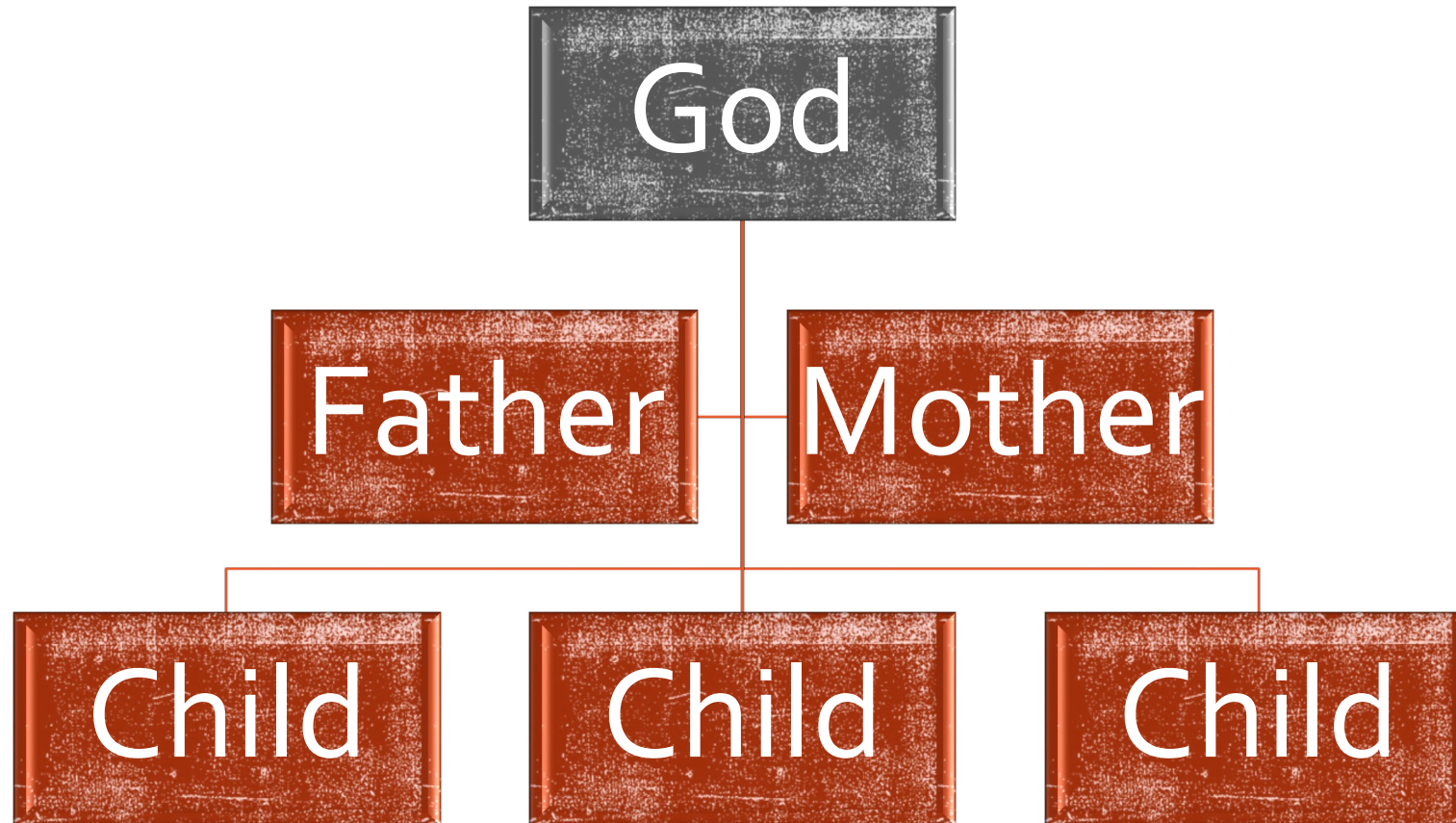




# **COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS**

**Relating to each other  
based on God's relating to us**

# FAMILY AS A PART OF GOD'S PLAN



# MARRIAGE A PICTURE OF GOD'S PLAN

- Of God's covenant with His People
- Of Christ's covenant with His Church

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, (1 Cor. 11:3–4)



# WORK A PART OF GOD'S PLAN

- God **designed** us for work! (Gen. 2:15)
- Work **glorifies** God! (1 Cor. 10:31)
- Work **fulfills** God's will in us (Eph. 4:28)
- Work **testifies** to the change Jesus makes in us (2 Thess. 3:6-12)





# REVIEW: THE CHURCH





# REVIEW: THE CHURCH

- 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



# PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

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



# MARKS OF THE CHURCH

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



# WORSHIP IS FOR GOD

- The church is a place for God's glory to be seen
- Worship is to be "God centered"





# MEANS OF GRACE



# COVENANTAL MEANS

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



# COVENANTAL INSTRUMENT



- The **Church** is God's chosen instrument:
  - a corporate expression of God's glory
  - bring the gospel
  - a place of edification, communion and grace



# COVENANTAL INSTRUMENT

- The Church is to proclaim God's covenant, and His will for His people
  - *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:19-20)





# MEANS OF GRACE

- The benefits of Christ's Mediation:  
"especially the word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for their salvation"  
(WLC 154)
- Prayer
- The Sacraments
- The Word
  - "the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word"  
(WLC 155)





# THE WORD OF GOD



# THE WORD OF GOD

- **Who** is used by God to bring the effectual Word to His people?
- **What** happens when the Word is made “effectual?”
- **How** is the Word to be brought to God’s people?



# WHO BRINGS THE WORD?

- Remember that our covenantal God **does not leave** us to our own efforts
- Christ has told us that He **would not abandon us**
  - John 16:5-15
  - Ephesians 4:11-16



# A COVENANTAL WORD

- Scripture constantly links hearing the Word and life
  - Deuteronomy 4:9-20
  - Isaiah 55:1-3
  - Psalm 143:6-11
  - John 5:24-25
  - Acts 3:19-26



# WHAT HAPPENS BY THE WORD?

- Remember the passage in John 16
  - ✓ Conviction (John 16:8-11)
  - ✓ Enlightenment (John 16:13)
  - ✓ Humility for man, glory to God (John 16:14)



# WHAT HAPPENS BY THE WORD?

- Driven from ourselves and to Christ
  - Acts 2:37-41; Acts 8:27-39
- Made more like Christ
  - 2 Corinthians 5:11-17
- Strengthened against temptation
  - Matthew 4



# WHAT HAPPENS BY THE WORD?

- *For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? **And how are they to hear without someone preaching?** And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:13-17)*





# WHAT HAPPENS BY THE WORD?

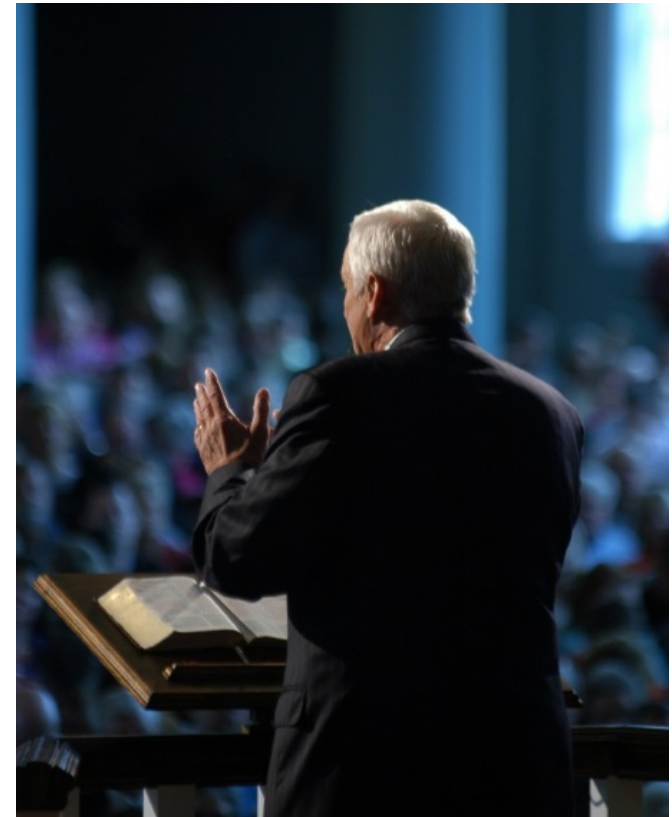
- The call of the gospel goes forth (Rom. 10:14)
  - And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? **And how are they to hear without someone preaching?** (Romans 10:14)
- Established and comforted in faith
  - Now to him who is able to **strengthen** you according to my gospel and the **preaching** of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:25)
  - Also 1 Thessalonians 3:2



# HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN?

God has willed that there are **two persons** involved in the effectual application of the Word:

- The **preacher** of the Word



# HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN?

God has willed that there are **two persons** involved in the effectual application of the Word:

- The **hearer** of the Word



# THE WORD PREACHED

- Doctrine must be sound  
*But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine....sound speech that cannot be condemned (Titus 2:1,8)*
- Preaching must be plain and in the Spirit  
*and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power (1 Cor. 2:4)*



# THE WORD PREACHED

- The preacher must be diligent
  - Acts 18:25; 2 Timothy 4:2
- Knowing the people
  - Colossians 1:28; 1 Cor. 3:2
- Love to Christ
  - 2 Cor. 5:13-14; Philippians 1:15-17



# THE WORD PREACHED

- For the salvation of sinners  
(1 Tim. 4:16)
- With Love for the souls of men  
(2 Cor. 12:15)
- For the glory of God  
(1 Thessalonians 2:4-6; John 7:18)



# THE WORD HEARD

- Diligence and preparation
  - *Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors. (Prov. 8:34)*
  - *So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— (1 Peter 2:1-2)*
- Luke 8:18



# THE WORD HEARD

- Prayer
  - *Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law. (Psalms 119:18)*
- Examining by the Scriptures
  - *These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. (Acts 17:11)*





# THE WORD HEARD

- Receive the truth with faith and love
  - For **good news came to us** just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were **not united by faith** with those who listened. (Hebrews 4:2)
  - and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they **refused to love the truth** and so be saved. (2 Thess. 2:10)



# THE WORD HEARD

- Meditate on it
  - Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You! (Psalms 119:11)
  - Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. (Hebrews 2:1)



# THE WORD HEARD

- Bring forth the fruit of it in life
  - As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and **bear fruit** with patience.  
(Luke 8:15)
  - But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a **doer** who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.  
(James 1:25)





# THE SACRAMENTS



# WHAT IS A SACRAMENT?

- A means of grace
- Given by Christ to His people
- to signify and apply God's covenant to their lives



# COVENANTAL MEANS OF GRACE

The sacraments do not have any power in themselves

- They are like the Word, which depends on the work of the Holy Spirit
- Because the sacraments are signs and seals (visible sermons) they also cannot be separated from the Word



# SIGNS OF THE COVENANT

- A sign makes something else known
  - Sacraments do not declare anything about themselves
  - A sign of grace, *not grace itself*
  - Example:
    - Moses' rod was a sign that God appeared to him



# SEALS OF THE COVENANT

- A seal authenticates or confirms
  - Its' benefit is for the recipient, not the giver
  - It does not cause something, it only confirms that it is so
  - Example: A seal on a diploma
    - It does not make a person educated, but **declares** that the authorities consider him to be educated





# COVENANTAL GIFT

- The sacraments are given by God
- Sacraments are only those things commanded by God to be a sign of His covenant
- Remember our discussion with respect to worship-- God, not man!



# COVENANTAL BENEFITS

- Represent Christ and His benefits
- Confirm our interest in Christ
- Put a *visible difference* between Christ's covenant community (the Church) and the rest of the world
- Solemnly engage Christians to the service of Christ



# COVENANTAL RECIPIENT

- The sacraments are given not to individual believers but to Christ's body, the Church
- Why?
  - Sacraments do not convey grace
  - Sacraments are signs and seals of God's covenant
  - Sacraments distinguish the Church from the world



# ONLY TWO SACRAMENTS?

- Christ commanded the Church to observe only two ordinances – Baptism & the Lord's Supper
  - Matthew 28:19-20
  - 1 Corinthians 11:23-26



# ENTRANCE INTO THE COVENANT

- Remember the unity of Covenant of Grace
- Similarities of circumcision and baptism:
  - ✓ administered only once
  - ✓ given to believers and their children
  - ✓ the recipient is completely passive
  - ✓ picture of the beginning of union with God



# COVENANTAL NOURISHMENT

- Similarities of Passover and Lord's Supper:
  - ✓ administered repeatedly
  - ✓ given only to professing members of the covenant
  - ✓ the recipient is active
  - ✓ picture of maintenance of union with God
  - ✓ nourishment, growth and sanctification



# IMPORTANCE OF SACRAMENTS

- God is not indifferent as to whether we obey Him and partake of the sacraments
  - Exodus 4:24-26
  - Luke 7:30
- God is not indifferent as to our attitude toward the sacraments
  - 1 Corinthians 11:28-34



**THAT'S ALL FOLKS!**

