

Sunday May 14th sermon: "The Faulty Old Covenant -- The God of All Comforts (Pt 16)"

Preached at the Lord's Table at Grace Bible Church in Greenwood, MS,
by John Pittman Hey

Hebrews 8:7-13; Jeremiah 31

God comforts us by the oath He made to Christ, appointing Him our high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

In order to fulfill God's oath to Christ, promising His eternal priesthood, it was necessary that Christ have a better offering to bring unto God. That He did, when He offered up Himself as our sacrifice!

Because Christ has obtained a better priesthood, He is the mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises.

The old Mosaic covenant was based upon the promise -- obey the law, and live. But nobody could ever obey the law, and thus they all died.

But the better, New covenant is based upon the promise of God to His people, to write His law in their hearts, to conform them to Himself, to forgive their crimes, and to refuse to remember their sins against them anymore!

Christ's blood of the New covenant actually executes, and empowers, its better promises! Christ's shed blood forgives our sins! It works upon God's people to sanctify and cleanse them from all unrighteousness! It is the means by which we "know the Lord," and are brought little by little to keep His commandments!

Hebrews explains to us that a New covenant was necessary, because the old covenant was faulty. The fault, of course, lies in poor sinners, who cannot keep the old covenant, because of the fall, and their corrupt sin nature. The blessings of the old covenant therefore cannot be obtained.

The law is perfect, and holy, and just. The problem is with us. We are disobedient, and the law proves it when we all fall into sin.

This is why Paul writes that, by keeping the old covenant, by the works of the law, no man can be justified.

Indeed, the very purpose of the old covenant, the law, is to tutor us unto Christ! It proves our helplessness and guiltiness, and thereby we learn that we must flee to Jesus for our righteousness.

Therefore, God discloses His New covenant, that brings His people salvation, not by our works or obedience, but by God's unilateral promise to us.

Hebrews goes to precise lengths to explain, that this New covenant is NOT LIKE the old covenant, which God made when Israel was redeemed out of Egypt, which covenant they promptly broke.

The New covenant is very different indeed! It is all of God's promise to us, and none of our promises to God. Salvation, and forgiveness, and sanctification, are not of our works, but of God's divine power working in us.

God promises new, changed hearts, intimate knowledge of Him and His law, and restoration of our mutual relationship unto God. Under this new covenant, God owns us, claims us, acknowledges us as His people, and we will do likewise toward our God.

This relationship and change and power are from God, and not according to any creation or will of man. Neither are they brought about by any imposed church upon the people, nor by the power of the state.

It is, rather, the miraculous power of God working in us.

The keystone, of course, is the promised forgiveness of our sins by God. He will be merciful to our unrighteousness! The curse of the broken law will be taken away.

This forgiveness and mercy to our unrighteousness was, of course, executed and empowered by the sacrifice our high priest, the Lord Jesus, made for us at Calvary. His is the blood of the New covenant, shed for His people for the remission of our sin.

Hebrews had already referred to Christ's offering up Himself, because the law made nothing perfect.

Christ, by His blood, removed from us the promised judgment due under the old covenant, satisfying it Himself in our place, by His perfect obedience and perfect sacrifice.

Paul explained that the law could never justify us, because it was too weak in our flesh. Therefore, God condemned sin in the flesh of Christ, executing the judgment for our sin upon the Lord Jesus on the cross, so that we cannot be condemned for our sin, already laid on Christ.

Because the wrath and judgment are already satisfied for us, the Holy Spirit will now guide us into obedience.

Hebrews goes on to assert, that the old covenant is done away for us in Christ. That old covenant of salvation and life by keeping the law cannot be rehabilitated, modified, improved, or re-empowered, because it has been completely replaced for the believer by the New covenant.

False teachers will try to claim that the Holy Spirit will help us keep the law, so that in the end, we are saved by law keeping or our good works. They heretically assert that we can indeed obtain life by keeping the law by the Spirit, or by grace.

This false gospel, condemned by Paul in Galatians, is spread by the Roman Catholic so-called priests and their blasphemous teachings of the mass, by certain Seventh Day Adventists, and by a host of purveyors of works salvation. They all put their special twist upon this false gospel.

They pretend as if they can bolt the Holy Spirit on to the old covenant, rehabilitate it, and put it back into action as the way of salvation.

The key point is, that's not the New covenant at all. The change God works in His people under the New covenant is the result of our justification, not its cause!

And God has spoken: the old covenant is faulty, and is done away with for God's people by Christ, and replaced by the New covenant.

God's promise to us is no longer "do this and live." Rather, it is that we are saved by grace through faith, and not of works at all!

Good works are worked in us by the power of God as a consequence of His promise to us, to forgive us of our sin.

No wonder God's oath to Christ is such a great comfort to us, and a sure consolation. Our great high priest, by His obedience, and sacrifice, and faithful intercession for us, has rescued us from the old covenant of works!

The law of sin and death has been replaced by the New covenant, which has the far better promises of God: justification, forgiveness of our sin, and promised sanctification as we are conformed to the image of Christ.