

SERIES: Kings & Prophets

SERMON 11: "Jeremiah Prophesies a New Covenant"

TEXT: Jeremiah 31:31-34

DATE: November 18/19, 2017

"The problem with human beings is that they're human beings and that they repeatedly make decisions that undermine their own long-term well-being." (Freakonomics Radio Podcast, "How to Launch a Behavior-Change Revolution")

Jeremiah 31 offers an amazing solution to this problem. The solution is what the prophet Jeremiah calls "a new covenant."

Covenants in the Bible

Jeremiah 31:31-32

There are four (and only four) formal covenant agreements between God and humans in the Old Testament, and they provide the framework for the entire story of the Old Testament.

The Four Covenants:

- With Noah
- With Abraham
- With Israel (Moses)
- With David

The New Covenant

Jeremiah 31:33

When God gave the old covenant through Moses, he wrote the introduction (the 10 Commandments) on stone, and said, "Get this into your heart." Now he will write the covenant on his people's hearts.

Heart = your motivational core, the steering wheel of your life

The Solution = God will one day change our desires so that we always want what enhances our long-term well-being and the well-being of others

The Timing =

In his death, Jesus establishes the New Covenant. He does it in HIS blood.

But there is still a struggle and a fight.

We await the second coming of Jesus when he will make all things right and there will be no more fight.

The Gospel Implications of the New Covenant

1. Embrace true humility.

2. Pursue deep transformation.

We're called to cultivate new loves in our hearts that will transform the way we think and the way we love, making us more like Jesus today than we were yesterday.

3. Join God in his redemptive mission.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

1. Looking back over your notes from this week's sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
2. What is the difference between commanding someone to obey outwardly and commanding someone to obey inwardly? - **Leaders: The Gospel Project adult study offers a great analogy that you might want to share with your group: When I was a kid, I indiscriminately hated to eat vegetables. Green beans, carrots, broccoli—you name it, I refused it. My poor parents, knowing the importance of eating vegetables, tried all kinds of ways to get them into my diet. But I couldn't get past the fact that these green and yellow and orange things tasted so much worse than meat and potatoes (potatoes being the one exception to my vegetable rule).
As usually happens, vegetable eating became a test of the wills, a contest to see who would break first. Most of the time, my parents would command me to eat the vegetables, and I**

Family Discussion Questions:

1. How does knowing that believers are given new hearts change the way our family approaches obedience to God?
2. Talk about the "Christ Connection" below?
3. What can we do as a family to deal with the continuing struggle with sin?

CHRIST CONNECTION

The problem in Jeremiah's day was the people had God's law but were unable to obey him due to the sinfulness of their hearts. Jeremiah prophesied about a coming day when God would forgive sin and write his law on the hearts of his people. This prophecy is fulfilled in the gospel. Through Jesus, God offers us forgiveness. Through the Holy Spirit, God enables us to obey his commands.

would obey them and choke a few down. Now imagine that one night at the dinner table, my parents didn't say to me, "Eat the vegetables"; imagine instead that they told me to "Love the vegetables."

That changes the conversation, doesn't it? Yes, because my parents would have given me a command that I was incapable of obeying. In order to obey, it wouldn't be enough for me to force myself to swallow a few bites; I would need something much deeper to change in me. I would need a new set of taste buds.

In a similar way, this is what happens in the gospel. God not only commands that we love Him with all our heart, mind, and strength, but He actually gives us a new heart capable of doing so. Jeremiah prophesied about the day when this would become a reality.

3. Read Jeremiah 17:10 This passage graphically and poetically portrays the problem at the core of humanity—a heart (desire, motivation) opposed to God and his ways. Why is it important to understand that we don't only commit sins but that we are also sinful? - **It shows the depth of the problem and that it can't be fixed with more commands or trying harder to be good. We need transformation.**

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

Why should we obey God?

4. Read Jeremiah 31:31-33. How is the new covenant fundamentally different from the old one with Moses? - **The old one with Moses told us to get it into our hearts but the new covenant is written on our hearts.**

5. Why do we still struggle with sin in spite of having new hearts in Christ? - **The new covenant has not come in fullness. We are in the already/not yet. We have a fight with the world, the flesh, and the devil.**

6. Reflect on what needs to happen in your life so that you are cultivating a new and deeper love for God and desires that reflect his image and will, helping you be more like Jesus today than you were yesterday (be specific)? - **For one thing, I often spend time with God in the morning as an obligation and often hurry through it (not having made enough time), rather than seeing it as a necessity that recalibrate my heart at the start of the day. When I see it for what it truly is, I go to bed earlier and get up earlier so that the time is protected.**

7. Looking back over this week's sermon and study, what one thing is most important for you to remember and apply?