

The Promise that Changes Lives: “I Will Be Your God”

This morning we are going to go a little deeper, and a little further, into the incredible blessings Jesus obtained for us at the cross. Jesus died to bring us into a new and overwhelmingly better relationship with God, called the New Covenant.

As we said, last week...The New Covenant REALLY IS the answer to all that is wrong with us and with every human being! The New Covenant solves the problem of our sin. It solves the problem of hearts that are prone to sin; the New Covenant is God’s solution to human rebellion. It solves our problem of being estranged from God. It solves the feeling that we are distant from God, or alone and without God.

Last Sunday we saw that: God has placed in our hearts the desire and the power to live for him. God said, I will write my laws in your minds and upon your hearts. He liberated our hearts from their bondage to sin. We delight to do his will, because God put that in us by his Spirit!

This does not mean obedience is automatic, but it is natural! It is the most natural thing in the world, for you to want to please God now, because God has written that into your heart. Paul said, “We are ambitious, whether at home or away, to be well-pleasing to Him”. That is the cry of a person born of God!! Recognize this desire in your heart; and say, “My one ambition in life is to be well-pleasing to him!” Own that!! You can think this way and speak this way, and live this way, because God himself put that in you when he made you a new creation.

This morning we come to the second blessing of the New Covenant that is given us in Hebrews chapter 8.

*God has come near to us and brought us near to him, in a special bond, through Jesus. The God who created the universe, the God of the Bible, the almighty, holy and loving God, says, “I will be YOUR God”! “And You will be MY people”. God has committed himself to us, to you, ...without reservation, without restraint, without holding anything back! He says, “I-WILL-BE-YOUR-GOD!

Sam Storms said, “God isn’t just God. He’s not just there. He is not simply (all powerful), infinitely kind, and gracious supreme being, who created all things and upholds all things. What we rejoice in, isn’t simply that God exists. Rather, he is MY God! He is your God! He belongs to you!” This is what we rejoice in!

Spurgeon said; “This is the masterpiece of all the promises; (the enjoyment of this promise) makes a heaven below and will make a heaven above.”

This promise, “I will be your God and you will be my people” is so grand, that it has always been the ultimate promise of God through history and it is the ultimate blessing of heaven. John said he heard a voice from God’s throne say, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

This is one of the most repeated promises in the Bible. It was given to Abraham, and the Old Testament saints. The prophets spoke of a time coming when this inseparable bond between God and his people would be a reality. And the writer of Hebrews says the fulfillment of this promise is FOR US who come to God through Jesus. There will be a greater fulfillment in the New Heaven and Earth, (of course!) but this promise, “I will be your God and you will be my people” is for us now!

In the first part of this promise, God is saying to us, “All that I am, Savior, Helper, Father, Counselor, Defender, Shield, Healer, Redeemer, Refuge and Friend, I will be all that and more to you!”. This is a promise of relentless faithfulness. God has eternally bound himself to us, and he has bound us to him, in this eternal loving embrace!

As you live your life, as you face your trials or disappointments or grief, as you face overwhelming responsibilities, or anxieties about work and family, as you face just the mundane experience of everyday life, God has a message for you, “I will be your God”. This word is for you! This one word, from God, can make all the difference in your life!

It can make you a secure person, a stable person, a fundamentally happy person; it puts a sense of well-being in your heart, it infuses your heart with peace. It removes fear, and loneliness, it removes the sense that no one is there for you.

The second part of the promise is that we will be his special people. Even to Israel God said, “You will be my treasured possession among all peoples”. When God says “you will be my people”, God

is saying to us, “I will take you as my own treasured possession, and you will be in my loving care.

Spurgeon said, “People have their treasures, their pearls, their jewels, their rubies, their diamonds, and these are their (special possession). Now, all in the covenant of grace are the special (treasure) of God. He values them above all things else besides. In fact, He keeps the world spinning for them.”

This is all ours because of Jesus! We come into this place of special love and care and attention through the blood of Jesus. Leon Morris said, “When people have been saved at the awful cost of Calvary, they are the people of God in a way never before known”.

Whatever you are going through, no matter how great the need, HE is your God, and you are his! We need to know this, and live in it; we need to feed our souls with the wonder of this. Drink in the truth of this this promise; drink in the love and the wonder of this promise and let your heart soar!

Now I want us to see how this New Covenant promise, (He is ours and we are his), solves our root problem of being far from God, AND feeling “far away” from God. It solves our problem of not belonging to God and therefore carrying this vague feeling like we don’t belong everywhere we go. It solves our real problem of being detached from God and all the feelings that came with that.

We have words in our vocabulary like alone, lonely, orphaned, rejected, abandoned, desolate, because human beings have feelings like this! That is because of our alienation from God that came from Adam’s sin and then our own sin.

When Adam was created, he was near God. He experienced free and open fellowship, friendship, and communion with God. Adam's sin caused a withdrawal of God's presence. He was no longer near God. This separation was real for Adam and it is real for every human being who has ever lived. Separation from God is part of being human. There is something in the human soul that feels this separation.

One of the phrases used in the Bible to describe us Gentiles is that we were "far off" or "far away from God". Ephesians 2:12 says, "You must remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world". Listen to those words, separate, excluded, foreigners, without hope, without God in the world – that describes the desolation and loneliness of the human heart without God. (And people experience those feelings even though they may not understand that they come from a very real separation from God.) But, "you who once were far off, have been brought NEAR by the blood of Christ". (vs 13)

Acts 2:39 (Speaking of the promise of the Holy Spirit) says, "This promise belongs to you and to your children and to all who are far off, to all whom the Lord our God will call to Himself." The promise of the Holy Spirit is for us who were "far off", but now we are people **THE LORD HAS CALLED TO HIMSELF**!"

Jesus came to make a way for us who were "far off" to be near God, to belong to God and for God to belong to us. That is what we were

made for, and we are broken, dysfunctional, sick and spiritually dead without this kind of faithful, loving bond with the God who made us.

But God, because of his great love, began a rescue mission to re-establish nearness. He did that first through the Law, and the sacrifices for sins, and all that went with that. But that covenant (or means of having a relationship with God) was always intended to be only temporary. From before the world was made, God planned for us to be reunited with him, in a better way, in a perfect way.

Hebrews 7:19 (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God. ISV

So our problem of NOT being near God, of not experiencing God, of not belonging to God, is solved in Jesus and the New Covenant. Jesus, himself, guarantees our never-failing acceptance before God, our never-failing intimacy with God, and a never failing bond with God. And nothing describes this nearness, than these intimate words from God, “I will be your God and you will be my people”. Jesus died to bring us into this, “I am yours and you are mine” relationship with God!!

I want to look at a few places in scripture this promise is made to help give us a fuller understanding of all that this means:

In Leviticus 26:11-12 the Lord says, “I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.”

When the Lord says I will be your God he is saying, “I will come and live with you, or I will make my home with you....”. God moves towards us, He comes to us, He dwells with us, or lives with

us! When you make your home with someone, you settle down with that person, you are comfortable together.

This promise from Leviticus is repeated in 2 Corinthians 6:16.

“What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, ‘I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.’” In this passage Paul emphasizes the idea that God has so committed himself to be our God, that he dwells, or lives in us, “We are his temple!”.

Then He says, “My soul will not abhor you”. CEV “I will live among you and never again look on you with disgust.” Under the New Covenant God does not abhor you, or despise you! Through the perfect reconciling work of Jesus, we are beloved people of God.

By saying “I am your God and you are my people”, God destroys the idea that he doesn’t like us or doesn’t want us. He says right here, “I don’t look upon you with disgust! I want you for my own! I want to be near you and for you to be near me. This New Covenant promise, solves the problem of thinking God doesn’t like you! Or that he isn’t interested in you, or that he doesn’t have time for you.

1 Peter 2:9-10 says, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people;”. IE Once there was nothing special about you, you didn’t belong to anyone or anything that gave you a sense of belonging or meaning or purpose or status, but now you are God’s OWN people. You are his special possession! He is yours and you are his!

These are precious and very great promises. Yet, we must be clear, this special relationship, is for those who draw near to God through Jesus! It is Jesus, that makes possible, this faithful, loving, bond with God. This is offered freely, but you must turn from sin and self and come to him, to know this!

Application:

First: Let your heart respond to these things! This is just a suggestion, but go out by yourself somewhere and respond to God! Say out loud, “God, I love being yours! And I love having you for my God!” If someone came up to you and said, “I love you and I am your friend forever, and more than anything I love being with you”, how would you respond? You would probably say something like, “Wow! That really touches me! I deeply appreciate that! I love you too!” If these promises are real to us, we will respond the same way to God! If they are not that real to you then pray that God would open your eyes and make them real!

We should often think about how privileged we are to be God “own possession”. Spurgeon said, “Here is a deep sea of bliss, a shoreless ocean of delight; come, bathe your spirit in it; swim an age, and you shall find no shore; dive throughout eternity, and you shall find no bottom: ‘I will be their God.’”.

Third: Saturate your mind and heart with the glories of the New Covenant. We should know the truths of the NC backwards and forwards, and cling to them by faith even when we don’t feel things are this way, when we are tempted, when we are downcast, when we are discouraged with ourselves. Let’s review them:

First: God has placed in our hearts the desire and the power to live for him. The external laws of God were good but our hearts couldn't keep them. Now God has written his laws in our minds and upon our hearts. We respond, "yes" to God, by his work in us. We say, "My ambition is life is to please the Lord", knowing that is the work of God's Spirit in us!!

Second: God has brought us near to him, and committed himself to an intimate relationship with us! He said, "I will be your God. And You will be my people". Drink in the truth of this this promise; drink in the love and the wonder of this promise!

Three: We have been given first hand experience of God. "They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest". We are each one given the gift of personally knowing God. We have come to know God!!

Four: God has said, "I will be merciful regarding their wrong deeds, and I will never again remember their sins." Through the blood of Jesus, God will never remember your sins against you! He relates to us as if we had never sinned.

I pray that we would be a church full of people who know these things and live in these things. Often think on these things. Let this be the air you breathe, the thought pattern of you mind, the meditation of your heart! Let these promises of God frame your whole attitude toward life. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind with these promises!

****Let's pray this morning for a great work of God to radically awaken our minds and hearts to the blessings we have in the New**

Covenant, which Christ purchased for us with his blood. Let's cry out togetherto comprehend them better, to live in them more,