

Sunday, March 21, 2021 – Fifth Sunday in Lent

Jeremiah 31:31-34 - A new covenant written on the heart

³¹The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

Covenant vs. contract

Covenant with Noah – Genesis 9: 11 – "Never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

Covenant with Abraham – Genesis 12: 2 – "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing."

Covenant with Moses – Exodus 12: 13 – "When I see the blood, I will pass over you."

Covenant with David – 2 Samuel 7: 16 – "Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever."

³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD.

³³This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

³⁴I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.

Psalms 103: 12 - As far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us.

Psalm 51:1-12 - Create in me a clean heart, O God.

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

Justice – we get what we deserve. Mercy – we do not get what we deserve. Grace – we get what we do not deserve.

The only basis upon which David had any hope of being spared was God's mercy, steadfast love, and great compassion.

³I know my offenses, and my sin is ever before me.

⁴Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

David certainly had also sinned against Bathsheba, Uriah, Bathsheba's child (who would die), and in fact the whole nation. But in sinning against the one who had given him the role of king, he had sinned most against God.

You are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.

⁵I was born steeped in wickedness, a sinner from my mother's womb.

Sin is not just something that we do. It is our very nature – something we are enslaved to.

⁸Let me hear joy and gladness; that the body you have broken may rejoice.

¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Create means to make out of nothing. If I am going to have a clean heart, God is going to have to make it out of nothing. I contribute nothing to the process.

¹¹Cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

1 Samuel 16: 14 - David had already seen what had happened to Saul when God removed His Spirit from Saul. David did not want that to happen to him.

¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

John 12:20-33 - The grain of wheat dying in the earth

²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

Why did the Greeks go to Philip?

Because of your personality, your areas of giftedness, passions, interests, and skills, your cultural background, who are the people that you could be most effective in bringing to Jesus?

The demoniac in Mark 5: 18-19 – As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. But Jesus refused and said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and what mercy he has shown you."

²³Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

²⁴"Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

When have you seen that principle at work – that something needs to die in order for there to be new life – in your own life and/or in someone else's life?

²⁷"Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say — 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name."

What are you willing to do and endure so that God's name would be glorified?

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

Here we have the third of three times in the Gospels that God the Father is quoted as speaking. The other two times were at Jesus' baptism – Mark 1: 11 – "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

And at the Transfiguration – Mark 9: 7 – "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"

³¹Now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.