

Jesus Our Lord: The Mediator of the New Covenant

From the number of references made by Jesus and His apostles regarding our side of the covenant we have made with God, it is astonishing that anyone would think that all we have to do is rely on God's grace to get to heaven. Like all of God's covenants, there are promises God makes and conditions that man must meet. The first covenant with Noah, required an ark, the one with Abraham required leaving his country, trusting God's promises, and even offering his son Isaac. The covenant at Sinai required they keep the law and worship God alone. Those who kept their side of the covenant found God to be faithful and true and those who did not keep the covenant also found God to be faithful and true.

Our New Covenant is enacted upon better promises:

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. Heb 8:6

Nevertheless it is still a covenant and we must be faithful to it just as Israel was to theirs:

This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. 12 If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. 13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself. 14 Remind them of these things, 2Tim. 2:11-13

We have heard enough sermons over the years to know what God's expects and demands from us in order to enter into a covenant with Him. He has explained clearly that after our first sin, we became spiritually dead (Rom. 7:9-10) Defiled and bereft of holiness, we were drifting, with no purpose or use for God. God so loved the world, that He sent His only begotten Son to die on a cross for the remission of our sins, whosoever believes on Him will not perish, but have eternal life. But belief is not just in the heart. Faith with no works is dead and barren.

Jesus walks us through the steps.

*Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not **believe** that I am He, you will die in your sins." Jn. 8:24*

*I tell you, no; but unless you **repent** you will all likewise perish. Lk. 13:3-4*

*"Therefore whoever **confesses** Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever **denies** Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. Matt 10:32-33*

*And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who **believes** and is **baptized** will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. Mk. 16:15-16*

If we have been taught properly, even before we enter into this covenant we have been made aware that we have responsibilities and obligations. If we are going to confess Jesus as Lord, then we have to treat Him as our Lord. We have to hear His sayings and do them if we want our lives to be built on the rock.

"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say? 47 Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. ... 49 But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. Lk. 6:46-49

What about Jesus' words? Are we doing them? Are we truly, safely and securely, founded on that rock? As we consider His words, found in the Gospels, revealing His expectations and demands as our Lord, are we truly doing them?

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ... 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will prove to be My disciples." Jn. 15:1-2

This was the continuation of the message John had come to bring to prepare the people to meet with and enter into covenant with their Messiah. He was simply making the application of Jeremiah.

And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Mt 3:10

The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. Jer 8:20

Jesus continued this theme in one of His parables. Using the same emotions and thoughts as man has with a fruit tree, He expresses His own desire and that of His Father. There is only one purpose for a fruit tree and that is to bear fruit. It is not a shade tree. If it won't bear that fruit there is no purpose for it in the yard. In grace and mercy, we too might try to do all we can to get it to produce,

but there is a limit. After doing all that can be done, the day comes when the tree must be cut down.

And He began telling this parable: A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any. 7 And he said to the vineyard-keeper, Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground? 8 And he answered and said to him, Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; 9 and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down. Lk. 13:6-9

God made a direct parallel between His word being preached and vegetation having what it needs to bring forth and bud.

For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth Isa 55:10-11

But trees and vegetation are only a small portion of the figures and parables used to help us understand before it is too late that being faithful requires hard work, exhausting toil, deep sacrifices and continued faithfulness.

Merchants:

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, 46 who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. Mt. 13:45-46

Talents:

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; Mt. 25:14-15

Ability + Opportunity = Responsibility

Servants

“Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; 36 and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. 37 Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. 38 And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. Lk. 12:35-39

Physicians

And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. 45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. 47 And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, 48 where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. Mk. 9:43-48

Denial

And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. 25 For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? Lk. 9:23-25

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Mt. 10:37-39

The Gate is narrow and the Way is difficult

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Mt. 7:13-14

And He said to them, 24 “Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. 25 When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’ Lk. 13:23-26

We only have one chance. Any mistakes can have tragic and eternal consequences. Jesus doesn't want us to make any mistakes. Most of the verses I chose today come directly from His mouth. He is deeply concerned that we do not measure up. His warnings reverberate down through the centuries. Are we listening?