MY COVENANT WITH GOD (WATER BAPTISM)

We seal our covenant of faith in Jesus with water baptism in His name.

KEY POINTS

- In Bible terms, a covenant is "an agreement which brings about a relationship of commitment between God and His people."
- For example, God made a covenant with Noah and the Earth (Genesis 9:11-13); with Abraham (Gen. 15, 28:14; Gal. 3:16); with Israel, the Ten Commandments – essentially a love covenant of marriage (Exodus 19:3-6; 20:1-17; Jeremiah 31:32); with David (2 Samuel 7:8-16).
- God is a covenant maker, and His covenants show His heart of love toward His people.
- Jeremiah 31 describes a covenant that impacts us directly in this New Testament Era:

  "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and…the house of Judah…. I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people…they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest…. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Verses 31-34)
- Jeremiah calls it "a new covenant," and others have dubbed it the "Covenant of Grace." The Lord essentially said, 'This isn't going to be like the marriage covenant I made with Israel at Mount Sinai, written on tables of stone. This time, I'll write My law in their minds and in their hearts so they'll connect with Me on both an intellectual and an emotional level. They will know Me in a very personal way. I'm going to forgive their sins, and it's going to have a profound impact on their lives.'
- And the truth is, as much as God concentrated on His main target (the nation of Israel), He always had a bigger plan to include all of humanity in His Covenant of Grace.
- Let's jump forward a little over 600 years from *Jeremiah* (620 – 580BC) to Paul's epistle to the Romans (~56AD).
- Focusing on Romans 10 and 11, the first thing we notice is that salvation comes to us by faith.

  But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith…); [9]that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. [10]For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (10: 8-10)
- In Romans 5, Paul said:

  …having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, [2]through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [6]For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. [7]For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. [8] But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- In Romans 6:1-5, Paul asks a very important question we all need to answer:

  What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? [2]Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? [3]Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? [4]Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. [5]For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection….
- How do we receive this justification from our sins? Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ at Calvary! We receive the forgiveness of sin Jeremiah spoke about through faith in Jesus and obedience to the covenant of water baptism in His name.
- Baptism is a covenant as defined above: it brings us into the beautiful relationship of holy union with Jesus Christ. This covenant is the physical representation of the spiritual change that has taken place in our heart.
- As we vicariously experience the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus through baptism, we are 'united together' with Him.
- Entering the covenant of baptism is crucial! It's how we personally enter into the covenant and receive the salvation Jesus purchased for us 2,000 years ago.
- We need to receive this word from the Lord with joyful hearts and obey it quickly.

KEY SCRIPTURES: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 10:8-10, 5:1-2, 6-8, 12, 18b-19; 6:1-5; Acts 16:25-34, 2:38-41; Matthew 3:13-15

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Read the following scriptures: Matt. 3:13-15; Acts 2:38-41; Acts 16:25-34. What does each one teach about the significance and importance of baptism? Discuss (with other scriptures that come to mind).

PRAYER TIME

Lord, thank You for the opportunity to covenant with You through baptism in Your name. Amen.

Start-up: What is your favourite/least favourite type of "initiation", ice-breaker", or "team building" activity? Why?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 2022

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

(Reminds me/Confirms) (New idea) (Think about)

! (Do this) (Speaks to my heart) (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

Go deeper with your Life Group family.
CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE WORD
Your Life Group ~ Your Lifeline