

Christ, Our Surety!

Call to Worship: Psalm 110

Hymn #432- *Jesus! What a Friend for Sinners*

1st Scripture: Hebrews 7:11-8:13

Hymn #175- *Man of Sorrows!*

2nd Scripture: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Hymn #550- *Jesus, Priceless Treasure*

Introduction:

What is it that you would consider most valuable and precious to you in this world? Or, let me put that question another way: If you could have anything in this world, anything at all, what would that "anything" be? Fill in the blank: More than anything, I would love to have _____.

Now, the answer to that question could be very different for every individual person, couldn't it? For example, there are people in this world, who might answer that question with some of the very things that you and I take for granted, such as "living in a free country, having sufficient food to satisfy the needs of the body, having running water, having loving parents...etc." It really is a matter of perspective, isn't it? In fact, sometimes, lacking something that you once had and took for granted, could be the answer to that question, couldn't it?

Let me give you a very real and concrete example. Several years ago, I used to work with people who had suffered from some form of a traumatic brain injury; people who once lived life like you and me; some, very successful from a financial/material standpoint, who without a moment's notice suffered from a stroke, a catastrophic car accident or some other injury that had changed their lives forever. One moment everything was fine, and then without warning, "wham," their entire lives were turned upside down, and there was no looking back. The unexpected intrusion of a stroke came or a car accident or a complication in the pregnancy, and now they are incapable of even going to the bathroom on their own, let alone participating in any of the joyous activities of life that come to those who can simply walk. And these people receive all kinds of therapies, which would serve to help them simply obtain some of the basic abilities they once had, and took for granted. The years pass, and for most, the progress is very slow and

small. Ask most of them that question; ask most of them the, "If I could only have this," question, and you will find them wishing for something that is not even on the radar screen for you and I. "I'd just love to walk again." "I'd just love to be able to go to the bathroom on my own, or to feed myself...etc." It is all a matter of perspective, isn't it?

But friends, let me ask you, is there anything *under the sun* that could ultimately satisfy the long term desire of the human soul, which loves to live and to enjoy and to experience life? Will money or material things or popularity or power or sexual fulfillment or adventure or a life long vacation mean anything beyond the grave? Nothing passes through the filter of the grave...except the soul, of course, which is why, upon their wrestling with the question of whether being His disciple is worthy of bearing a cross and denying one's self daily...our Lord presses His disciples with the rhetorical question, "What would it profit you, if you gain the whole world and yet lose your own soul? Or, what would you give in exchange for your soul?" Indeed, it is a matter of perspective, isn't it? We just need a bit of grace and the time to contemplate the various perspectives, before we can ever realize this.

Our text, here in Jeremiah, speaks of the coming of a "*New Covenant*," from the standpoint of those who were presently bound to a failing and weak, "*Old Covenant*." The Old Covenant was made with the Physical/ethnic nation of Israel, and that, through the mediation of the great prophet and deliverer Moses. And it was a covenant that promised many wonderful blessings to those who would remain obedient and faithful to it. But, it had a tremendous weakness in this respect...it was contingent upon the obedience of an unregenerate people. Anyone born of Jewish origin was automatically assumed into this covenant, regardless of the condition of his heart. The sign of "circumcision" secured this inclusion. And what happened? Most of the Israelites; the great majority of the Jews were unconverted, having no true desire to know, love and serve God. And so, the people *as a nation* often rebelled, turned away from YHWH and served all manner of other idols. Man was the problem in the Old Covenant, and by means of a "*New Covenant*," with better promises and a perfect Mediator, God would correct the problem. This text provides us with the great and glorious solution, the "*New Covenant*," full of blessings beyond comprehension, blessings that very well ought to be the only sane and reasonable answer to the question, "If I could have anything I wish, I would have....?"

Let us then consider some of the blessings of the New Covenant, and some of the assumptions that surround it: [Read Jeremiah 31:31-34]

I. The Blessings of the New Covenant

1) "I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts..." (vs. 33a&b)

Unlike the Old Covenant ethnic Israelite, the New Covenant spiritual Israelite (the Christian) will not be able to break the New Covenant. How can we be so sure of this? Because God will write His law not on tablets of stone, but in the inner most recesses of the mind and heart of His people. The New Covenant relies not upon the obedience of sinful man, but wholly upon the divine working of God in the heart of man. *God* will put His law in the mind and write it on the heart, so that His true people will never fall away. In our "Call to Worship" (from Psalm 110); in the context of that glorious oath and prophetic proclamation, guaranteeing Christ's eternal office of High Priest, it was beautifully put this way, "Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power." "Your people will strongly desire to love, honor, worship and serve You, when You resurrect their naturally fallen and dead souls!" And so, one blessing of the New Covenant, is that God will inscribe His law in the minds and on the hearts of His people, causing them to remain faithful out of a willing and desirous heart. And because of this reality...

2) "[God] will be their God, and they shall be [His] people" (vs. 33c)

In the truest sense; in the eternal sense, God [and no idol] will be their God, and they will be His people. They will have true, inner, ongoing, spiritual fellowship and communion with their God. He will care for them, love them, guide and direct them. He will have a relationship with them in the truest and most intimate sense. And they will desire to know Him more. They will be given eyes to see, such that their greatest desire in life will be to know, love and serve Him. No longer, will they blindly chase after idols, striving to find comfort, hope and rest in the things of this world, which can never satisfy the human soul. No longer will they look to the world and earthly things for their security and hope. Having tasted and seen that the Lord is good, He will become the object of their love and affections. They will

strive to serve Him with a sincere heart, putting to death the deeds of the body in this life, longing for glory, where they will be complete and at home with Christ. The purpose of their existence will be restored, and that unto the great relief and pleasure of the soul. God will be their God and they will be His people.

3) "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord" (vs. 34a)

In the Old Covenant, being born Jewish and receiving the sign of circumcision, automatically placed you in the covenant, right from the outset. But none of that guaranteed that the heart would ever be right with the Lord. In fact, in the great majority of cases, circumcised, Old Covenant Israelites, remained unconverted, never really coming to know God. They got hung up in all of the outward rituals and ceremonies, while their hearts were far from God in truth. Those in the covenant had to be taught to know, fear and love God. And many never came to have a genuine faith. But in the New Covenant, that dilemma will be resolved. Physical birth and natural descent are no longer the requirements for entering into covenant with God (which is why we don't baptize infants). Rather, there must be a "new birth," evidenced by a changed life and a viable profession of faith in Christ.

The New Covenant is made with regenerate, living believers, who have exhibited this regeneration by experiencing the new birth. In other words, brethren, one of the glorious benefits of the New Covenant is the promise of "regeneration" itself, that work of the Holy Spirit, in the soul, whereby He raises the once lost and dead soul, to spiritual life in Christ. It is a work of God; a work of free grace, which creates children of the living God, giving them faith and a new heart and desire to serve God, by the keeping of His law. Jesus speaks of this mysterious "new birth" in John chapter 3, when He dialogs with Nicodemus. And the Apostle Paul alludes to this in Ephesians 2:8-10, when he states, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. *For* we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." And so, the New Covenant brings with it, the promise of regeneration *for all* who are in the covenant. And how is it that our holy and just God, could guarantee such a promise to sinners?

4) "For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more,"

God will deal with the real hindrance; He will deal a fatal blow to that which has driven a wedge of enmity between Him and His people from the beginning. He will forgive their iniquity; He will pardon their sins and remember them no more. He will take all of our legal offenses and justly deal with them...how...by judging them in the Person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And through this same Christ, He will regenerate His people and bring them back into fellowship with Him. And this is the glory of the New Covenant! Everything that was pictured in the Old Covenant sacrificial system, where innocent animals were brutally killed and sacrificed unto the covering of sin and guilt, will find its true fulfillment in the death and sacrifice of the God-Man, Jesus Christ, who alone could truly and justly remove sin. Such are the blessings of the New Covenant. And friends, such ought to be the most coveted and desired privileges for any and every human being, living on this earth. But the deception of satan, and the constant lie of thinking that somehow the lusts and material things of this world will somehow ultimately satisfy, or are more important than the eternal welfare of our souls...hides this truth from us. The natural man has no inclination towards or desire to even consider these things, because the natural man is dead in sin. Hence, the desperate need for the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit, which you and I, brethren, have graciously experienced!

It is a matter of perspective, isn't it? Only this perspective can only be found by those who have tasted of the blessed reality of the new life found in Christ; it can only be found in those who have experienced God; who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good! The lame man clearly realizes his lameness for as long as he has been lame. He knows what it is like to live far less than the capacity granted to healthy humanity. He sees people running and jumping and walking and playing and working...and he dreams of nothing more than reaching that potential. The same could be said of the blind man...only dealing with sight; the deaf man...only dealing with hearing, and the leper, only dealing with the pain of leprosy and the agony of lacking a social life. But bring anyone of these into the healing arms of Christ, and what happens? Read the Gospels! The lame man, being healed, leaps up and down for joy and is overwhelmed with joy, simply because he can walk. The blind man, the deaf man and the leper, do the same when they receive what they had once lacked. And so it is with the redeemed sinner! Once lame spiritually; once blinded from the reality of God and his own sin, once deaf to

the truth of God and the glory of his Creator...when brought to the truth...well, there is only one way to describe it...a new birth! His whole perspective is changed! His ideals have changed! His whole concept of life has changed! Because it all comes down to this: There is nothing more valuable; there is nothing more precious; there is nothing more to be desired than a never ending relationship with your living God and Creator! He is the reason and purpose for our very existence. To live apart from Him is beyond insanity...an insane person still has life....to live apart from Him is death! But to know Him is to love Him beyond all else; it is to find that "pearl of great price," which when a man finds, he goes and sells everything else that he owns, so that he might obtain that one precious pearl! And all of this comes in and by Christ and Christ alone!

Whatever man's greatest desire is...whatever your greatest desire is...be sure, your greatest need is the Lord Jesus Christ! And He is only a humble, repentant cry away!

II. Christ, our Surety

Now friends, hopefully we have come to see and appreciate the blessings of the New Covenant, but let us now close by considering how these blessings are mediated to us. You see, these are wonderful blessings; blessings to be most desired by any sane person, but they come to us, only by means of mediation. In other words, God doesn't simply cast aside His holiness and embrace sinners. No, these things are deposited into the hands of a worthy representative, who then delivers them to His own people. And that Person; and the only Person who is worthy to take on that role of Mediator, is Christ Himself, which is why there is absolutely, beyond the shadow of any doubt, no other means of salvation, but through Christ alone.

You see, brethren, all of the benefits deposited in the New Covenant belong first and foremost to the Lord Jesus Christ. He merited the whole package, having fulfilled all righteousness and having conquered sin and death, by means of His own death and resurrection. And so, He mediates all of the benefits to God's people, both as a faithful and eternal High Priest, and as a benefactor who willingly and freely delivers over this inheritance to all of His chosen heirs. Christ is the Guarantor and Surety of this covenant! His death, having already taken place, assumes that the whole inheritance package belongs to all of His heirs...and all of His heirs are those who have repented of their sins, while putting their trust and confidence wholly in Him.

And His resurrected life, guarantees that every benefit of the New Covenant must come to His children...it can never fail, because, unlike the Levitical priests, Christ has entered the heavenly tabernacle (not made by human hands) as a High Priest who always lives to make intercession for us. There is no replacement for the ever living, perfect Christ! Let us live for Him, brethren! Let us live for Him!

As we prepare for the Lord's Supper, brethren, let us now close by reading again the words found in Hebrews 7:20-28.

AMEN!!!