

“Keeping Covenant”
Exodus 34:10-27
(Preached at Trinity, July 12, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we come to this section it all hinges on the statement God makes in **Verse 10**.
KJV “I make a covenant” NAS “Behold, I am going to make a covenant.”
2. God could have destroyed Israel. It would have been just.
Exodus 32:9-10 – “And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it *is* a stiffnecked people: ¹⁰ Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.”
3. God did not destroy them for two reasons:
 - A. He is a God of mercy.
Exodus 34:6-7 – “The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, ⁷ Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin”
 - B. He is a God who keeps covenant.
This was the basis of his statement to Moses in **Chapter 32**.
“Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.”
 - C. God would not cast them off completely because of His covenant.
God never forgets, never falters, never fails in keeping His Word – God cannot lie
Numbers 23:19 – “God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”
4. All of the Bible pivots on the concept of Covenant.
 - A. God made a covenant in eternity between the Godhead. From the race of fallen men the Father elected a people to give to His Son who would then secure their redemption by His atoning sacrifice.
All other Biblical covenants hinge upon this covenant.
 - B. God’s Covenants are absolute. He is a covenant keeping God.
God demands that human beings trust His Word and trust it simply on the authority of God.
5. God is always faithful to His Covenant Promises
 - A. When the children of Israel multiplied in Egypt and began to suffer under the cruelty of the Egyptians we read:
Exodus 2:24 – “And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.”
 - B. When the children of Israel prepared to enter into the Promised Land we read:
Deuteronomy 7:9 – “Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he *is* God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;”

6. All of God's covenantal promises are ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ. In fact you cannot really understand the saving work of Christ without understanding the concept of covenant.

2 Corinthians 1:19 – “For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”

- A. The birth of Christ was a declaration that God is a covenant keeping God.
Luke 1:72-73 – “To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he sware to our father Abraham”
- B. This was Peter's message to the Jews
Acts 3:25-26 – “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. ²⁶ Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”
- C. Jesus is the long awaited fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant
Luke 1:32-33 – “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: ³³ And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”
- D. This is the believer's great comfort – We have absolute confidence and assurance in God keeping His promises to us.
- E. We have absolute confidence in eternal life because God is a covenant keeping God
Titus 1:2 – “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;”
7. What is the basis of God's unchanging love for us? What is the basis of our eternal security – how do we know that our salvation will not ultimately be lost due to some failure on our part?
The answer can be found in one word – **Covenant**.
God has chosen us and redeemed us because of His eternal covenant with His Son. God's dealings with us are all on the basis of that eternal covenant.
8. In this passage God reveals several important truths about His covenant.

I. God's covenant originates with Himself

- A. “Behold I am making a covenant” - כָּרַת בְּרִית – literally, “cut a covenant”
1. It originates with God
 2. When God made His covenant with Abraham it was ratified by passing between the halves of a sacrifice cut in two
Genesis 15:8-10 – “And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? ⁹ And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. ¹⁰ And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.

Genesis 15:17-18 – “And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram . . .”

- B. God’s covenants are for His own glory
Exodus 34:10 – “. . . before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou *art* shall see the work of the LORD: for it *is* a terrible thing that I will do with thee.”
1. The word for “marvels” means something miraculous or extraordinary – something that can only be attributed to God almighty.
 “Terrible” means “awe-inspiring.” We use the word “awesome”
To bring forth Christ
 2. All of the Book of Exodus points to the glory of God
 He raised up Pharaoh and then crushed him for His own glory
Romans 9:17 – “For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”
 3. God’s great purpose in the redemption of His people is that His great name might be declared throughout all the earth
Psalm 96:3-4 – “Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. ⁴ For the LORD *is* great, and greatly to be praised: he *is* to be feared above all gods.”
 4. Paul declares this as he closed out the Book of Romans
Romans 16:25-27 – “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, ²⁶ But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: ²⁷ To God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen”
- C. God gets all the glory because all the deliverance is by Him
1. God unilaterally delivered Israel from Egypt
 2. By God’s might they would conquer Canaan
Exodus 34:11 – “Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.”
- D. **Our salvation is all of God**

- II. While the covenant is all God's work for His glory alone there are human responsibilities
- A. God demands total allegiance
Exodus 34:12 – "Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee"
1. God's covenant also demanded a response – choose you this day
 2. God's covenant demands a mutual relationship – we must follow God alone. Israel belonged to God. He demanded their faithfulness.
 3. God's command is absolute
 "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."
2 Corinthians 6:17-18 – "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, ¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
- B. God describes His name as Jealous – **Verse 14**
1. This is one of His attributes
 2. Jealousy is a sinful act for a man. It denotes a self-centeredness and distrust of our brother. It is motivated by resentment and envy. It manifests itself most often in relationships between men and women.
 3. God is jealous of His glory.
Isaiah 42:8 – "I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."
Isaiah 48:11 – "For mine own sake, *even* for mine own sake, will I do *it*: for how should *my name* be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another."
 4. God is also jealous of His love for His people. He is jealous when they begin to run after other god's or to worship Him in a false manner
Zechariah 1:14 – ". . . Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy."
 5. God demands our faithfulness as a husband and wife are true to their marital vows
 Calvin: "God very commonly takes on the character of a husband to us. Indeed, the union by which he binds us to himself when he receives us into the bosom of the church is like sacred wedlock, which must rest upon mutual faithfulness. As he performs all the duties of a true and faithful husband, of us in return he demands love and conjugal chastity. That is, we are not to yield our souls to Satan, to lust, and to the filthy desires of the flesh, to be defiled by them."
 6. God sees such unfaithfulness as adultery
 The KJV puts it bluntly in **Verses 15-16** – "and they go a whoring after their gods." NAS – "and they play the harlot"
- C. In order to maintain their distinctiveness God placed upon them many ceremonial laws – **Verses 18-27**.
1. The annual feasts were a continual reminder to Israel that they were the people of God – they were a corporate celebration of worship
 2. They were all fulfilled in Christ. We gather weekly to celebrate Christ.
 3. The 4th Commandment is also repeated. Just as the Sabbath was a weekly festival for worship for Israel so it is for us.

Conclusion:

1. God gives strict demands upon His people. But what if we cannot stand up to His demands? Israel did not heed God's warnings. They did take the heathens to marry their sons and daughters. Eventually God would cast them out of the Promised Land.
2. What if we cannot stand up to God's demands? Will He cast us off? NO!
John 6:37 – "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."
2. The New Covenant cannot be broken because it is not based upon our obedience to the Law but upon Christ's obedience
 1. Jesus Christ is the Guarantor
Hebrews 7:22 – "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament."
1 Corinthians 1:30 – "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:"
 2. Jesus sealed the Covenant with His own blood
Matthew 26:28 – "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
Mark 14:24 – "And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many."
1 Corinthians 11:25 – "After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me."
3. God has given us a new heart; a heart to obey Him, to love Him. He has pledged to keep us.
Jeremiah 32:40 – "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."
4. God's covenant with His church is like a marriage relationship. Christ has pledged Himself to us as His bride. We have a marriage certificate sealed with the blood of Christ. Where do you place your love? Is it your comfort? Your comfortable home? Your nice car? Have you fallen in love with Christ? Have you given your all to Him?