**Jeremiah 31: 31-34 (Craig Strunk);   Hebrews 5: 5-10 (Craig);   John 12: 20-33**

**Sermon:  “The New Covenant”**

**Jeremiah 31: 31-34**

**Good News Translation**

**31** The Lord says, “The time is coming when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. **32** It will not be like the old covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. Although I was like a husband to them, they did not keep that covenant. **33** The new covenant that I will make with the people of Israel will be this: I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. **34** None of them will have to teach a neighbor to know the Lord, because all will know me, from the least to the greatest. I will forgive their sins and I will no longer remember their wrongs. I, the Lord, have spoken.”

**Commentary:**

O what a wonderful, what an amazing New Covenant God has promised!  We study this passage in detail because of the remarkable summation of the mighty and compassionate acts of God it relates.  Jesus builds on this passage when He teaches the New Covenant for which He gives His holy life—the new wine of His life and sacrifice:

16 “No one patches up an old coat with a piece of new cloth, for the new patch will shrink and make an even bigger hole in the coat. 17 Nor does anyone pour new wine into used wineskins, for the skins will burst, the wine will pour out, and the skins will be ruined. Instead, new wine is poured into fresh wineskins, and both will keep in good condition.” (Matthew 9)

God is creating a whole new relationship!  Would that we could fully appreciate the depth of this teaching with the meaning of the new covenant God has made in Christ.  New wine skins for the new wine (from the body of Christ) that God has given us in this majestic new covenant.

This is the purpose of Sunday’s sermon.

 —God as our “husband.”  (Intimate partner!)

 —New covenant written in our hearts, not chiseled in stone.

 —All will know God personally—God speaks directly to you from deep within, no

 need…no use for another to teach you.  God is your teacher!  The Holy Spirit dwells

 within you!  Ultimately, the preacher is out of a job! (Except to point out that the truth

 lies deep within you.)

 —Best of all, God promises complete forgiveness of sins to the point that

 ***God literally forgets them!***  Wow that is huge.

“I, the Lord, have spoken.”  Thanks be to God.  Amen.

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**Hebrews 5:5-10**

**Good News Translation**

**5** In the same way, Christ did not take upon himself the honor of being a high priest. Instead, God said to him,

 “You are my Son;
     today I have become your Father.”
**6** He also said in another place,
 “You will be a priest forever,
     in the priestly order of Melchizedek.”

**7** In his life on earth Jesus made his prayers and requests with loud cries and tears to God, who could save him from death. Because he was humble and devoted, God heard him. **8** But even though he was God's Son, he learned through his sufferings to be obedient. **9** When he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him, **10** and God declared him to be high priest, in the priestly order of Melchizedek.

**Commentary:**

Hebrews teaches that Jesus is the legitimate high priest in the true worship of God.  This distinguishes Him from the errant high priest in Jerusalem who had Him crucified.  Melchizedek is an ancient high priest in the area of Jerusalem who worshipped the true God some 2,000 years before Jesus walked the earth—at the time of Abraham.  Father Abraham receives a blessing from Melchizedek and through the linage of Abraham and Sarah the Messiah was born!  So the circle of redemption is complete.

What awesome words of faith:  “through His holy life, His humility, sufferings and obedience, He was made perfect, and He became the source of eternal salvation for us who obey Him.

Now that’s a new covenant worth believing!

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**John 12:20-33**

**Good News Translation**

**Some Greeks Seek Jesus**

**20** Some Greeks were among those who had gone to Jerusalem to worship during the festival. **21** They went to Philip (he was from Bethsaida in Galilee) and said, “Sir, we want to see Jesus.”

**22** Philip went and told Andrew, and the two of them went and told Jesus. **23** Jesus answered them, “The hour has now come for the Son of Man to receive great glory. **24** I am telling you the truth: a grain of wheat remains no more than a single grain unless it is dropped into the ground and dies. If it does die, then it produces many grains. **25** Those who love their own life will lose it; those who hate their own life in this world will keep it for life eternal. **26** Whoever wants to serve me must follow me, so that my servant will be with me where I am. And my Father will honor anyone who serves me.

**Jesus Speaks about His Death**

**27** “Now my heart is troubled—and what shall I say? Shall I say, ‘Father, do not let this hour come upon me’? But that is why I came—so that I might go through this hour of suffering. **28** Father, bring glory to your name!”

Then a voice spoke from heaven, “I have brought glory to it, and I will do so again.”

**29** The crowd standing there heard the voice, and some of them said it was thunder, while others said, “An angel spoke to him!”

**30** But Jesus said to them, “It was not for my sake that this voice spoke, but for yours. **31** Now is the time for this world to be judged; now the ruler of this world will be overthrown. **32** When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to me.” (**33** In saying this he indicated the kind of death he was going to suffer.)

**Commentary:**

“Greeks” represent the rest of the non-Jewish world.  Christ is the light to all nations which is central to the meaning of the new covenant.  When Greeks seek Christ in John’s gospel this is a sign to Jesus that the time has come for Him to fulfill the new covenant.

Jesus speaks of this new relationship as expressing the glory of God which God affirms and promises more glory!  Lord what a glorious morning awaits us!

Those near Jesus mistake this affirmation as thunder.  It is actually the voice of God speaking from heaven.  God spoke at Jesus’ baptism, at His transfiguration with Moses and Elijah on Mt. Tabor, and now as Christ speaks of His approaching death.  So at birth (rebirth of baptism), throughout life (transfigured living in Christ) and at death God speaks to affirm Jesus’ life and mission.  God does the same for us.  We must learn to be attuned to the voice speaking within and around, below and above us!  This is the meaning of the new covenant.

Christ is lifted up upon the cross and the new covenant is formed through His blood which is like a seed planted in the ground, dies (germinates), and is metamorphosed into new resurrection life.

Thanks be to God for this amazing miracle that is seen all around us and is the purpose and call of our lives as we live anew in Jesus.

May this meaning of Lent came home to each of us this year.

In Christ,

Pastor Austin