

MBC - 9/9/2018 - Pastor Doug Thompson
"The New Covenant in My Blood"
Matthew 26:27-30

Turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew's Gospel, ch.26 and this morning we want to look again at that night when Jesus turned the Passover meal into a brand new celebration - the Lord's Table—

- Matthew 26:26-30 ²⁶Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." ²⁷And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸for this is my blood of the covenant, [Luke's Gospel: "This cup is the new covenant in [or by] my blood"] which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." ³⁰And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Awhile back the Huffington Post had an article entitled, "Can Religion Save the World?" The author ended his essay with these words—

- "I'm in favor of religion that is for mutual understanding. A religion that is open to creative and relevant collaboration. A religion that embraces harmonious diversity. A religion whose adherents intentionally choose to work with others toward making the world a better place. A religion where the belief system is based on love."

Leave it to the HuffPost to come up with a perfect description of what the world believes about religion: it's about what we do for our fellow man and for God. But the Gospel of Jesus Christ is radically different—

- The Gospel doesn't ask a question: "What will you do for God?" The gospel shouts out the answer: "This is what God has done for you!"

When Christians come to the Lord's Table we are reminded again and again, that our salvation is not a matter of what we do, but Who we trust. When we take the bread that symbolizes our Jesus' body, and the cup that symbolizes our Jesus' blood, we are renouncing our own good-ness and good-works, and proclaiming, "Our hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus' blood and righteousness!"

On that night, and at that Table, Jesus was fulfilling the ancient Passover, ending it forever, and replacing it with His Table. But He was doing even more than that. Jesus made an earth-shaking, history-changing announcement: the whole arrangement between God and His people was about to change: the New Covenant, foretold by the prophets, was going to terminate and replace the Old Covenant God made with Moses. Let me explain in just a few words what was happening here—

- The Old Covenant that God made with Moses was inaugurated with blood. That blood stood for the curse that would come on any who broke that covenant. On the Cross Jesus took that curse on Himself, for His people, and inaugurated a New Covenant, for a new people of God!

Each time we drink the cup of the Lord's Supper, we remember that Jesus took the curse for our disobedience, and shed His blood to bring us into this amazing New Covenant. This morning I want to show you what it means to be a Christian living under the New Covenant! Turn

with me over to Hebrews ch.8—

The Jewish-Christians living in Rome were tempted to go back to life under the Law of Moses. Hebrews was written to warn them that this would be a disaster, and to encourage them that Christ and His New Covenant was better than Moses and the Old Covenant—

- Hebrews 8:6-13 ⁶But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old [the old Mosaic covenant] as the covenant he mediates [the New Covenant] is *better*, since it is enacted on better promises. ⁷For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. ⁸For he finds fault with them [notice: the problem was not with the covenant —the problem was with God’s people—they couldn’t keep that covenant!], when he says [and this is from Jer.31]: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ⁹*not like the covenant that I made with their fathers* on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. ¹⁰For *this* is the covenant that *I will* make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: *I will* put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and *I will* be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹¹And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall *all* know me, from the least of them to the greatest. ¹²For *I will* be merciful toward their iniquities, and *I will remember their sins no more.*” ¹³In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

I. Out with the old, in with the new.

- Paul said in Romans 6:14 ¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

So the next time you get pulled over for speeding you just smile and say, “But Officer, I’m no longer under Law, I’m under grace!” Good luck with that! But what Paul says is true, and it’s so radical and revolutionary that most Christians don’t get it. The New Covenant has *replaced* the Old Covenant. But what does this mean?

Look at your Bible: the first 2/3rds or so are the OT, and the last third is the NT, but that is just another way of saying: OC and NC, so in a general sense, OC = OT and NC = NT. More specifically, the Old Covenant was the Law given to Moses on Mt. Sinai to serve as the governing contract between God and His people - until Jesus came. It was never meant to be permanent. The Law of Moses had an expiration date - and that was the Cross!

And what was that Old Covenant like? *613 rules*. 613 ways you could mess up. Think of the 10 commandments: “Thou shalt, thou shalt not . . .” Do this and live, disobey and die. Seriously. If you kept the Law, you were promised life, health, and prosperity, but there was a catch: you had to keep it perfectly! Break one law, one time, and you have broken the covenant, and the penalty was death. So *no* one - not *one* person (except Jesus) - ever could or ever did keep God’s Law perfectly.

- James 2:10 ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.

- Galatians 3:10 ¹⁰For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.”

That’s hardcore. Now the Law of Moses was good and holy - but because *people* are sinful and can’t keep it, it was a death sentence. Peter called the Law of Moses, “*a yoke . . . that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear!*”

Now there was grace under the OC: God accepted the sacrifice of animals in place of the death of the sinner. He doled out forgiveness with the sacrifice offered, but it had to be repeated over and over and over and over. It was temporary, and incomplete. Listen to—

- Hebrews 10:1-4 [the law] can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. ²Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? ³But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. ⁴For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Welcome to church under the OC.

So if it couldn’t actually save anyone, because no one could keep it - what was its purpose?

- Romans 3:19-20 . . . so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. [i.e., to put every human being under the same sentence of judgment] ²⁰For by works of the law *no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.*

Not ‘the way of salvation’, but ‘the explanation of the problem!’ The Law only shows our complete inability and failure to live up to God’s holy standards. As we say, it was never meant to be a *ladder*, it was always meant to be a *mirror*. It couldn’t get us to heaven, but it was meant to show us our sins, and drive us to our knees that we might cry out to God for mercy! And God has mercy for those who cry out, doesn’t He? In Jesus Christ!

The demands of the Law were meant to drive us to the grace of the Gospel -

- Romans 3:21-24 ²¹But now the righteousness of God has been manifested *apart from the law*, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²²the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

It’s not what we do, but Who we believe. Now go with me over to Galatians, where Paul gives an analogy to show the transition between OC Law, and NC faith—

- Galatians 3:23-26 ²³Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

The word “guardian” or your Bible might say “tutor,” is the Gk. word *paidagogos*, which was the particular slave who was put in charge of a Jewish boy between the ages of 6 and 16. This slave would lead the boy to school each day and make sure he did his homework. The *paida-*

gogos was a strict disciplinarian, and those Jewish boys longed for the day when they would be free of that person! Paul says, that's just like the OT Law!

*The purpose of Moses was to lead us to Christ! "But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian," Wait - what's the guardian? The Law of Moses! So what is this former Pharisee, saying? We are no longer under the Law of Moses. And let that sink in. Christian, the 613 laws in the Law of Moses are not your laws! You are not under those laws--including the 10 commandments--anymore than you are under the laws of Sweden. That is exactly what Paul is saying here. Christians are no longer under the Law of Moses.

Now maybe that sounds shocking, but if you are worshiping with us, on a Sunday, instead of the Sabbath, which was yesterday; and if you had shrimp at The Red Lobster last night - you already know that something has changed, right? Paul gives another illustration of a Christian's relationship to the OC—

- Romans 7:1-4 ¹Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? ²For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. ³Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress. ⁴Likewise, my brothers, *you also have died to the law* through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.
- Romans 7:6 ⁶But now *we are released from the law*, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

Jesus obeyed the Law, in our place; He took the curse of the Law, in our place, so through our union with Christ, we have paid our debt to Moses—we've signed off in Jesus—and we are no more under the Law of Moses than a widow is still married to her deceased husband. As a matter of fact, we have re-married, to a new husband—Christ, and we're havin' kids—bearing fruit, in the Holy Spirit. There's no going back!

Now we still have a relationship with our ex! But it's different:

II. So how do we deal with our ex?

You have to wonder, "If we're not under the Law of Moses, does that mean that the OT is irrelevant? And is pastor Doug saying that we don't have to obey the 10 Commandments?"

I want to make this as clear as I can. I don't want anyone to leave here confused.

First: All of the Bible is the inspired Word of God for all His people! All 66 books, and every word of it! I read the Bible cover to cover, every year, including the first five books that contain "the Law," but my relationship to those books is different than it was for the Israelites who were under that Law.

- God told Joshua to exterminate the Canaanites. But that command is not for me or you. Please, if you meet a Canaanite on the street, don't exterminate him.

When I read all of the laws and rituals in Leviticus, I don't read them as *my* job description, I

read them as Christ's job description. He kept all those laws, and He fulfilled them, so that you and I are no longer under those laws. Paul said something amazing in—

- Romans 10:4 ⁴For Christ is the end of the law for [or, "resulting in"] righteousness to everyone who believes.

The word "end" is the Gk. word *telos*, and it means *end*, but it also means "goal, fulfillment." Jesus is both. He is the goal toward which the Law pointed, and having fulfilled the Law, He is its end.

- When I used to run track, there would be a ribbon at the end of the race course. That ribbon was the *telos*--it was the goal toward which I was running, and it was also the end of the race.

Christ ran our race perfectly, and earned for us the life that the Law promised for those who would keep it perfectly - do you get that? So the Law served its purpose - Jesus broke the ribbon - that race is over! When you trust in Christ you receive His victor's crown--and a new contract, which is called the New Covenant. .

Look with me at what Paul said in—

- 1 Corinthians 9:20-21 ²⁰To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. ²¹To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but *under the law of Christ*) that I might win those outside the law.

Paul didn't see himself as being under the old Law of Moses, but under the Law of Christ. So where do we find this law of Christ? Please get this: we find it in the NT or NC Scriptures!

- This is the new contract, the new constitution, for the new covenant people of God. The OT is the preparation and foundation for the new contract, and it's full of Christ, isn't it? But it's not your contract or mine. This whole issue came up in Acts 15, this very issue: "Were Gentiles Christians obligated to keep the Law of Moses?" And the answer that came back from Peter and James and the Apostles was - no! No! The issue is no longer up for debate.

You are not obligated to circumcise your baby boys, or abstain from pork, or offer up sacrifices. But what about the 10 commandments? 9 of the 10 commandments are repeated in the NT, the only exception is what? The Sabbath. That was fulfilled in Christ. He is our Sabbath rest.

Let me give you an analogy of the OC to the NC—

- The American colonies were under the constitution and laws of England up until July 4th, 1776. On that date, we declared ourselves to be no longer under those laws. We drew up a new constitution and they became the new laws for the USA. The laws of England no longer had any legal authority over any American--they were null and void. The laws of England could not be appealed to as the final authority on any matter whatsoever. America was under a new document or *covenant*--the Constitution of the United States of America.

But it's obvious that the men who drafted our Constitution, gave careful consideration to the

old laws of England. They kept many, changed some, and threw others out. There isn't a whole lot of difference today between living in America and living in England--but they are under completely separate and different laws, no matter how similar they are!

This is a parallel between the Tablets of Stone given to Israel and the New Covenant given to the Church--The New Testament is a completely new constitution for God's people—it flows out of the old, it fulfills the old. And you can't understand the New until you understand the Old. The ethics for God's people are basically the same, but it is a new—and much, much better covenant!

So back to Hebrews 8, I want to give you three blessings of the new covenant, and we're going to start from the bottom and work up—

III. The blessings of the New Covenant.

A.) Sin is fully and finally forgiven.

- Hebrews 8:12 ¹²For (*this is the foundation of all the New Covenant blessings*) I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”
- Matthew 26:28 ²⁸for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Under the old system, sins were just passed over--put on hold until a better sacrifice could remove them once and for all—

- Hebrews 10:11-17 ¹¹And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹²But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. ¹⁵And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, ¹⁶“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,” ¹⁷then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

Beloved, this is new! There is a *world* of difference between what the Jewish priests did, again and again, and what our Lord did *once* on the Cross. Last week we came to the Lord's Table—and we do it often—but it is a constant reminder that Jesus' death has purchased forgiveness and salvation for His people—once for all! It is finished!

*All your sins. Once and for all. Do you believe that this morning? Do you believe that God looks at you just as if you had never sinned - He looks at you and sees the sinlessness of His Son? And when you go home this afternoon, and sin again, He still sees you as sin-less because in Christ He remembers your sins and lawless deeds no more! This is the covenant He has made with you if you are trusting in His Son!

- “My sin, O the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin not in part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear them no more, Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, O my soul!”

C. A new people of God is created.

- Hebrews 8:10-11 (last part of v.10): I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for *they shall all know me*, from the least of them to the greatest.

Under the OC, the people of God were a mixed bunch: Israel was made up of saved and unsaved people. In Romans 9 Paul said that "Not all Israel was Israel," he meant that within the covenant people of God, not all of them really knew God. All the males were circumcised in their flesh but not all were circumcised in their hearts. Those who knew God, by faith, are always called "the remnant." This is why they were exhorted as a nation to "*know the Lord.*" And the sad fact is, most of Israel didn't know God.

You see the OC created a physical people, a national people, but it couldn't create a spiritual people of God. But the blood of Christ creates a brand new people of God. And they all know Him.

- Now this is important because it explains why we don't baptize babies here at MBC: You were a part of the OC people of God simply by virtue of your physical birth - you were born into it - and circumcision was a sign of that covenant. But you could be part of that covenant and not be regenerate. The NC is completely different: You are a part of the NC people of God only by virtue of a new birth - being born again - and *baptism* is the sign of this New Covenant. This is why we only baptize professing believers.

We say it like this: "You were born into the OC, but you are *born again* into the NC."

- This is just amazing: What God does through Christ's blood is to create a new people; a church, a body, a temple, a people for His own possession, forgiven of sins, transformed in their hearts--*a people who will never again wander away from Him!* We should be in awe of the church of Jesus Christ!

No one on the face of this earth has ever been able to create a diverse group of people who are truly one, who will never desert each other--and people have certainly tried! But God has done it in the New Covenant through Christ's blood.

- When I was in Bucharest, Romania, back in '86, when it was still under the Communist dictator, Ceausescu. I was teaching a roomful of pastors the book of Philippians. We would go for 2-3 hours at a shot before we would take a break. And during one of the breaks, the men were going around the room sharing about how each one of them had been persecuted, thrown in Russian jails, tortured and beaten for their faith. I asked my translator, Carman, "Why do the Communists hate Christians so much?" He said, "They are jealous! The great goal of communism is to re-make society, and create "the new man"--but brother, only Jesus Christ can make a new man!"

C. A new heart of obedience is given.

- Hebrews 8:10 ¹⁰For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Ezekiel 36 put it like this--

- Ezekiel 36:26-27 ²⁶And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

²⁷And I will put my Spirit within you, and *cause* you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Under the NC, God not only forgives our sins, but He gives His people the enabling power to believe Him and obey Him, and stop sinning. *He helps us!* He gives the Holy Spirit to us! OC saints did not have the indwelling Holy Spirit - That's why even David prayed, "Lord, do not take Your Holy Spirit from me." But every Christian has the indwelling Holy Spirit to help us in our walk.

*The OC only made demands. Moses offered no help, no power—

- In Pilgrim's Progress, a man named Faithful is being beaten to death by a man representing Moses! When Faithful pleaded for mercy, Moses responded, "I don't know how to show mercy," and kept beating him! Only the Man with the nail-scarred hands could stop the beating!

The old Scottish preacher Ralph Erksine said it this way—

A rigid matter was the law,
demanding brick, denying straw,
But when with gospel tongue it sings,
it bids me fly and gives me wings!

Under the NC, there are commands—but along with the commands comes divine power and enablement, and comfort and encouragement to carry out those commands.

Let me put it like this: The meaning of the New Covenant is not only that God has replaced the shadows of the OC with Reality in Jesus Christ, but the meaning of the NC is also that God Himself takes this Reality about Christ, and makes it real to His children. He writes it on our hearts! He doesn't take this gift of salvation and lay it at your feet and say, "Well, there it is, you can pick it up if you want—go ahead and transform yourself in your own strength." NO! God Himself picks it up and puts in your heart and in your mind, and He Himself begins to transform you by His Spirit, through faith in His Word. He *causes* you to walk in His statutes!

The New Covenant says what the OC never could have said—

- 2 Corinthians 5:17 ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

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Application--

This is what I want you all to leave with this morning: Jesus' blood does all of this for anyone who will trust in Him. This is what we celebrate and remember, and receive again and again, when we come to the Lord's Table - the finished work of Jesus on behalf of all who believe, and a brand New Covenant.

Moses said, "*Do this and live!*" Jesus says, "*I've done it all, just believe!*"