

BUMC Weekly Bible and Sermon Study

Sermon: “A Better Covenant” from the “Anchored” sermon series

Scripture: Hebrews 8:1-13

Key take-aways from the Scripture

- In this section of Hebrews, we continue our examination of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and in chapter 8, how Jesus brings with Him a New Covenant which was prophesized by Jeremiah (see Jer.31:31-34).
- In verses 1-6, we see that Jesus is the High Priest and Mediator who “sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being.” Think back to the priests who offered sacrifices and worship in a tent, based upon the pattern given to Moses in Exodus 25:8, 9-40. This was the basis for the Old Covenant, which consisted of Tabernacle worship and the Ten Commandments established in Exodus. Jesus brings to us something more powerful and everlasting with the New Covenant! It is “...established on better promises.” (v.6)
- In verses 7-13, we see how the New Covenant of Jesus differs from the Old. Verse 7 says, “For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another.” This section of chapter 8 draws upon Jeremiah 31:31-34 to demonstrate how the New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant. The Book of Hebrews Shepherd Notes explains: “Christ’s covenant with God’s people is superior in three ways: (1) it provided a new awareness of God’s laws and a new nature by which to obey God; (2) it gave a personal knowledge of God that inspired a loyalty and commitment to Him; and (3) it provided a complete forgiveness of sins (8:8-12).” Whereas the Old Covenant was written in stone upon the Ten Commandments, verse 10 explains “I will put my laws in their minds and write them in their hearts.”
- In verse 13, we read: “By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.” Fritz Rienecker, in his Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament, says of the word “Obsolete”: “This word means ‘To declare or treat as old or obsolete. ‘The word was used in the papyri for a temple and a wall which had become old and obsolete and needed repairing.” (p.692).

Key take-aways from the Sermon

- These thirteen chapters in Hebrews contain the apostolic preaching of the early church. The “preacher” of this text is encouraging the early church to stand firm in their faith from persecution. The author is not advocating merely “positive thinking” and self-help, but rather to stay firm in their faith to Jesus Christ.
- In this chapter, the writer is comparing the Old and the New Covenants: Law and Grace...Moses and Jesus (Hebrews 8:6).
- Jesus is our *Mediator*, in that He stand between God and humanity. He facilitates a better covenant between God and man.
 - This does not mean that the Old Covenant was bad. We ought to learn and respect our past, rather than bash it or erase it. We must resist *egotism!*
- We must resist the notion that the Old Covenant is bad! The Law and Commandments are good, the priesthood is good, the Tabernacle is good! It is best to think of these as a “prelude” to the greatness of what was to come in Jesus!
- The questions is, how is the New Covenant *better* than the Old?
 - For one, we do not have to keep coming to the Tabernacle to offer a blood sacrifice for our sin by the Levitical priests. Jesus gives a better sacrifice...Himself! (see Heb 8:12)
 - Also, it is not just about the “Thou shalt nots...”, in other words, what we should not be doing, rather, internal disposition! The New Covenant is about a new heart and regeneration. It is not about fear but about love!
- On May 24, 1738 was the date John Wesley (who at that time was an experienced preacher) had the “Aldersgate experience”. This is the moment, while attending a Bible study (that he did not want to attend), that John Wesley experienced his heart “strangely warmed”.
 - Here is how he described that moment: “I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”
- How often in our lives that God overcomes our initial reluctance and lines our heart with grace. What God does on the “inside” always shows up on the out.
- When you are anchored to the High Priest, we cannot help but to reach out and help others. When we are tethered to Jesus, it is amazing what we are capable of doing, for love’s sake.

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- What were your key take-aways from the sermon? How can you apply this to your everyday life?
- Hebrews 8:6 refers to Jesus as a Mediator. What is the significance of this title given to Jesus? What does Christ do within this role?
- In what ways is the New Covenant different from the Old Covenant? Do you think that the word superior is appropriate to use when comparing the Old Covenant from the New Covenant? Why?
- Hebrews 8:13 says that the Old Covenant is “obsolete and outdated”. In what ways does Jesus’ New Covenant render the Old Covenant obsolete and outdated? Why does this matter to us today?
- Have you ever experienced something like John Wesley when he explained his “Aldersgate moment”? What happened? How did this impact your life and your faith?
- How is your life *anchored* in Christ? What has this meant to you?

