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#### New Covenant pt. 4

I'm going to share again on the New Covenant this morning. I don't know how long we're going to camp out on the New Covenant, but there is just so much to discuss.

Lets review really quickly, and then move on. We've first of all said that a covenant is an understanding or an agreement by which two parties come into some kind of relationship. In other words, a covenant agreement is the basis or foundation for a relationship.

And we talked about how the New Covenant was an agreement or understanding by which God and man came into a relationship. And its essential to remember that God is not dealing with you and relating to you apart from His covenant. Just like in a marriage relationship. You are not dealing with or relating to your spouse (emotionally, physically, relationally) apart from that marriage covenant. You relate to you wife differently than anyone else because of that covenant. Your expectations of them, your feelings toward them, the nature of your relationship is different because of that covenant.

If you have a relationship with God, if you are to experience more of your relationship with God, it is going to be on the grounds of the covenant.

Well, what is that covenant? The New Covenant, that came through the cross, is the foundation of our relationship with God. What is that covenant? Well let me say it a few ways.

1. I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I that live but Christ that lives in me.
2. God has placed me into His Son, and deals with me there IN CHRIST.
3. I have died and my new life is hidden with Christ in God.

According to the covenant, according to the New Covenant, God relates to me in union with His Son. God relates to me IN CHRIST. That is the foundation for the relationship. That is the understanding by which I can be related to the Father. I have been given a new life in the Son. I relate to God as one joined to Christ.

It is so hard to understand how God is working, what God is doing and not doing in your life, apart from understanding that God deals with us according to the covenant relationship.

God does not relate to you as an individual person outside of Christ. He relates to you as a partaker of Christ's life and a member of Christ's body. Now that does not mean that He doesn't see you as an individual with an individual personality (of course He does)...but his relationship with you is based on you being brought into Christ. Its according to the covenant. You have entered into the Son's relationship with the Father, not your own separate relationship.

[Diagram]

You experience that relationship as an individual, but your experience is entirely because you've been brought into the eternal relationship that the Son had with the Father. In the covenant, the Father says "I'll relate to you in my Son. I'll see you with His life. I'll see you with His righteousness. I'll love you like I love Him...because you've been crucified and your new life is hidden in Him."

Here's a weird analogy. I get married to Jessie, and we come into a relationship on the basis of a covenant agreement. There is an understanding and an agreement by which we have formed a permanent relationship. He's some of the agreement...I am committed to her, I love her, cherish her, speak kindly to her, provide for her, etc. (Don't ask her how I'm doing on all of that).

Ok, but now Jessie gets pregnant. And inside of her is a baby. And actually, right now she is 8 months pregnant. So inside of her is the life of another individual that is joined to her. And by virtue of the covenant relationship that Jessie and I have, this baby that is hidden in Jessie, receives the benefits of a covenant relationship that existed before it was even born. By virtue of me fulfilling my covenant with Jessie, I am thereby protecting, loving, providing for, cherishing, speaking kindly to, this indwelling little one. I bring home the bacon for Jessie, guess who else is nourished. I give Jessie a hug, guess who else gets a hug.

Now, do I relate to all of the individual children of the world in the same way that I do this one child that is joined to my wife? Of course not. I deal with this child according to the covenant relationship that I have with my wife. And the child experiences that relationship because her life is flowing through him. Her oxygen and nourishment is flowing through Him. His belly button is attached to her whatever.

This is what I'm saying. We have been brought into Christ. And so the Father relates to us as those who are IN CHRIST. Not as some separate people with whom He has some other kind of relationship with. No...we are relating to the Father in His Son.

Now, remember...we said that this was an understanding or an agreement whereby TWO parties walk as one.

What if....one of the parties doesn't understand the agreement? What if one of the two parties isn't taught, or doesn't learn the understanding that is the basis of that relationship.

For instance, lets go back to our example of my marriage with Jessie. Now lets say that maybe Jessie, though we got married, didn't really understand the covenant agreement.

- Maybe that covenant was written in Greek and when it was translated by someone to her, they mistranslated it based on their own relationship with their spouse. (oops, did I say that?)
- Maybe nobody ever took the time to explain to her the nature of a marriage covenant relationship.
- Maybe she just really interpreted it wrong, based on her understanding of a marriage she saw on a cartoon, or one she made up with Ken and Barbie in her own childish natural mind world.

My analogies here are intentional...but I wont explain them all.

Anyway, the point is she doesn't have an understanding of the covenant. She doesn't understand the agreement that was the foundation for our marriage relationship.

Well, what happens. She begins to act out of her own wrong understanding of that agreement. So, I expect her to be committed, and she's not. I expect her to show me love, and she doesn't. I expect her to help me with the kids, and she's off doing her own thing. Now, this is of course an earthly example...but it demonstrates that if there is no understanding of the covenant, then the two can't walk as one.

Proverbs says "how can two walk together unless they are in agreement"

Well, you can probably see where I'm going with this. Our failure to walk in the reality of the New Covenant is our failure to comprehend that agreement. It's our failure to have the understanding that acts as the basis of our relationship.

What's the understanding? What's the agreement? We already said – God relates to you in His Son...because you have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer you that live, but Christ that lives in you. You have died and your new life is hidden with Christ in God. If you are still trying to live independently of Christ being the life and source of all that you are, then you are misunderstanding the covenant.

If we don't understand that we have been crucified with Christ and raised together with him in resurrected union, so that Christ Himself may fill all things, then we misunderstand the agreement, and we cannot walk in the covenant.

Now let me give you another analogy. I'm full of analogies today, and this one I stole from my brother. But we have a NAFTA – free trade agreement when it comes to analogies. No taxes on the exchange of good analogies.

Ok, let's pretend that you are a hand. Now, under the old covenant, there was a series of laws and rules and regulations on how to be a good hand. You were supposed to do this and not do that in order to be a good hand. There was a book, a written covenant, a list of hand instructions, with diagrams, flow charts, and a free DVD that told how, in all circumstances, how to be a good hand. And then, of course, what had to be done to bad hands.

Now, everybody put your Old Covenant hand up in the air and do exactly what I'm doing. [move one finger, then another, etc.]

Very good, you are all pretty decent copiers of this old covenant hand. Although, Tim, you screwed it up. But don't worry, you can go repent, sacrifice a turtledove and it will be ok. Until you screw up again. ☺

Ok...now along comes Jesus and He says "guys, I want you to do this..." [for those listening to this on tape – I just shook my New Covenant hand wildly about]. And that's pretty much what the sermon on the mount looks like to us. And we say "I can't do that...I can barely move one finger at a time!"

And Jesus says “yes, I know that it is impossible for you to do this [shake hand] by imitating me, but I’m going to solve that problem. See its effortless for this hand to do this because its simply manifesting the life that flows through it. So, I’m going to give you that life, so that you can move as I move, shake as I shake, etc.”

See, even if I gave you a 100 pg instruction manual on how to be like Jesus, if we are not operating on the basis of His life, and not the Old Covenant mentality, then we don’t have a chance. But we have been given His life, and the Father’s goal has always been for us to express the Son’s life.

And so much of our problem is that we see the life of Jesus and we put up our Old Covenant hand and say “how did He do that? Was it like this? Or was it like that?” And Jesus says...friends, give that up...and let my life live through you. You’ve been grafted into my life (Romans 11). You’ve been joined to me in Spirit. (1 Cor 6:17) You can manifest my life. (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor 4)

But, that’s exactly what I was talking about. If we don’t understand the agreement that is the foundation for the relationship, how in the world are going to walk in it. If we, in the New Covenant, are still preaching to people that they have to put up their Old Covenant hand and imitate...how are people going to grow in their understanding of the covenant.

Friends, the New Covenant is an understanding by which we walk with God. God knows that understanding...and what I’m suggesting to you is that we don’t. What I’m suggesting to you is that we’re, so much of the time, preaching the Old Covenant understanding and trying to apply it to the New.

We’re always trying to go back to the Old Covenant. Just like Israel always wanted to go back to Egypt where they could finish their daily quota, get a gold star, and eat their onions and garlic. There is something about each of us that wants to send Moses up the mountain so that he can talk to God, get the instructions, come back down and tell us what to do.

When all the while, God’s deliverance from the Old Covenant to the New was an end to that impossible imitation of his life, and a beginning to a manifestation of His life. But, I ask you...I know you’ve come out of the Old Covenant positionally, but have you come out of an Old Covenant mindset? Or do you still secretly long to go back to Egypt and have somebody tell you what to do so you can check off the work load?

- We’ll talk more about this at another time, but the natural mind of man is always wanting to live by the “knowledge of good and evil” rather than living by the life of the Son of God. We’d always rather live by what we think we know.
- All the religion of the world...inside and outside the church...is simply living by the knowledge of good and evil.

That is why Paul is always praying that we’d have spiritual understanding. Of what? Of the covenant relationship in Christ. That is why He’s always praying for Christians eyes to be opened to the true knowledge of the Lord.

And that is why Paul's description of our warfare is always having to do with:

- tearing down stronghold of the mind
- casting down things that have raised up against the true knowledge of Christ
- fight the god of this age who has blinded our minds from seeing the gospel

Why Paul? Because we don't understand the covenant. We don't understand that we have been joined to Christ and are to abide in His life, bringing for an expression of His life. We don't understand that we are in a living organic union with the Son of God. And that that joining is the agreement of the New Covenant. And if we don't understand the covenant agreement, what chance to we have to walk in it, experience it.

Let me just illustrate for you, through one more analogy, just how much I believe that most of us don't really understand this covenant understanding.

Lets just go back to our hand analogy. Now we all know that I am in an organic union of life with my hand. It doesn't even makes sense for my hand to operate independently of my life and my will.

But lets just say, for the sake of this analogy, that my New Covenant hand grew lips. And then it turned and said to me..."oh Jason, what I wouldn't give to be close to you. I just wish you would come visit with me".

Now, after I got over the shock of my hand talking, I would turn to my hand and say "hand, there's obviously been some misunderstanding. I really appreciate your heart in saying that, but if you saw clearly, you would understand that you are joined to me and I am joined to you. In fact, my very life is flowing through you".

And then the hand turns back to me and says "Jason, what do I have to do to get closer to you. I'd do anything". And I would again say, "I appreciate your heart, but you obviously don't comprehend that you cannot do anything to get closer to me. You just don't comprehend our union".

And then the hand says "yes, that's all very nice. I've read about that in some book, but **lets get practical**. I want a prophetic encounter with your life!" And I would say "there's nothing more practical then you simply manifesting my life in all that you do. That's all that I want from you, hand"

And then my hand says "ok, Jason...you stay there, and I'm going to go and do a bunch of good works for you. Then maybe you'll listen to me." And then I say to my hand "you know, you can try to go and do a bunch of good things for me. But all that I want you to do will simply be the manifestation of my life within you. In fact, there is no such thing as a good work unless I'm the author of it. Apart from me, you can do nothing good".

[Doesn't that sound like something Jesus said?]

And then my sad hand drops its head in sorrow and says "can't anybody give me a practical instruction manual on how to fulfill me spiritual potential...this guy wont give me anything practical.

You see, the purpose of my hand is to manifest my life in the world. The purpose of the body of Christ is to manifest His life in the world, not our own.

What was wrong with my hand? (besides the lips) It had a misunderstanding of the nature of our relationship. Its failure to operate according to covenant relationship was the result of a huge misunderstanding of that relationship. There wasn't an agreement between me and hand about how we moved as one. There wasn't a common foundational understanding that it was "no longer hand (by its self), but Jason". The hand had been grafted into Jason, but still thought it was separate. The hand had died of self life and its new life was hidden in Jason. But it still thought of itself alive separate from Jason. And so it acted out of its comprehension.

My hand had an Old Covenant mentality. It was looking for the letter of the Law. It was wanting to serve as one separate, not live as one joined.

What if my hand and foot and ear and tongue all got together and talked about how they should each operate for me based on what they thought was best in any given circumstance. Can you imagine the mess that would make for my body? Can you imagine how that would be such an inaccurate portrayal of my life. If I wasn't in control of my members...and they sought to express me on their own.

And what if all of my body parts tried to get along based upon how they related to each other...and not according to how they were all filled with and responding to my life? What if it was..."ok hand, you scratch my foot right here, and tongue, tell me what think Jason is wanting". That's nonsense. It would be impossible for there to be any semblance of unity or cooperation unless my life, flowing through them, was seen as the common ground.

Does that maybe help explain the situation we're in in the church universal?

All of this is just to try to break apart some of our Old Covenant thinking...where we are misunderstanding the New Covenant and trying to relate to God according to the Old. I know that we don't even realize that that is what we're doing at times. So I'm trying to use some biblical analogies (Paul's analogy of the body) to expose some of our misunderstandings.

A concluding statement – the New Covenant is an understanding or agreement by which we relate to God in Christ. To the extent that we misunderstand that agreement we will not experience that covenant relationship.