

Gleaner's Sunday School Lesson at First Baptist Church July 14, 2024

Unit: Promises We Can Count On: We live in a world of broken promises: marriages fail, politicians make promises never kept, and businesses back out of agreements. The Bible declares God keeps His promises. Over 6 weeks, we have been studying six of the faithfully kept promises God made to His creation. His word tells us that God fulfills all His promises through Jesus. This is the final session in our unit. Hopefully, you have been challenged to keep Your promises as we point others to our faithful, loving Father..

Session #6: God's Promise of a New Covenant (p. 87)

Scripture: Primary Source: *Bible Studies for Life, the Senior Adult Personal Study Guide* Summer Edition 2024 or open your Bible to **(Jeremiah 31:31-34; Luke 22:14-20)**

Prayer: Father God, We praise Your holy name and thank You for the greatest gift on earth sending Jesus to redeem our sins and assure the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Make us worthy and grateful for these gifts that bless us beyond measure. We pray for healing for the weak or sick and peace and comfort for the grieving. Forgive our failures Lord and restore us. In Jesus' holy name I pray, Amen.

Question #1 (p. 87) When was the last time you were really excited by something new? Our author provides his observations related to *newness* and how things will eventually grow old or out of style. However, God has promised us something new that will last forever: an unending relationship that begins when we place our faith in Jesus Christ. Fads and trends will come and go, but the new life God offers us will never fade. The abundant life Jesus offers begins when we choose to trust Him (John 10:10).

Point: God promised a new eternal life in Christ.

Setting: The Israelites had a cyclical relationship with sin and covenant renewals. On many occasions the people celebrated spiritual revivals only to fall back into sin. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God said He would provide complete forgiveness through a "new covenant" that was different from all previous ones. It would involve a permanent heart transformation. We will also look at Luke's record of Jesus's gathering with His disciples the night of His arrest when Jesus teaches that the New Covenant will be established by His giving of Himself. It will be written in His blood.

Historical Background: Following Solomon's death in 930 BC, the northern kingdom, Israel, sinned against the Lord and received judgment by Assyria's invasion in 721 BC. Jeremiah prophesied during the last days of Judah, the southern kingdom. God admonished the people for breaking His covenant, and said if they failed to repent, they were headed for exile in Babylon. Sadly, they did not turn back, so God brought King Nebuchadnezzar's armies in 586 BC who conquered Judah and destroyed the temple. It was the darkest hour in Old Testament history. Jeremiah announced this was not the defeat of God, and God would move ahead with a new covenant. Despite the historic division, the new covenant would bring Israel and Judah back into one nation.

Read Jeremiah 31:31-32 (p. 88) A covenant unlike any other.

Verse 31, 32: Jeremiah said the message he brought was directly from God who promised that the new covenant would differ greatly from the one given to Moses and the people. God said: it was made **on the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt—my covenant that they broke even though I am their master...I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and house of Judah.** The people broke God's Mount Sinai's commands time and time again despite His faithfulness to them.

Question #2 (p. 89) Why was there a need for a new covenant?

Read Jeremiah 31:33-34 (p. 89) The new covenant featured an important difference in our relationship with God.

Verse 33: The new covenant was necessary because Israel failed to keep the old covenant. **God said He would make this covenant with the house of Israel after those days—** God's commands were something external to them since they were written only on stone. In this covenant God said...**I will put my teaching within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.**

Verse 34: God planned a personal relationship with personal knowledge of Him **from the least to the greatest of them. He declared: I will forgive their iniquity and never again remember their sin.** God's gracious forgiveness makes it possible for believers to have a right relationship with Him. Our relationship is personal, internal, and based on His great and loving kindness. .

Question #3 (p. 91) What's the good news in this new covenant?

Read Luke 22:14-20 (p. 91) The new covenant is not mediated to us through rules and commands; instead, it comes to us in a Person.

Verse 14: **When the hour came,** It was time for Jesus to bring His mission to a close that would usher in the new covenant. **He and the twelve apostles sat down...**

Verse 15, 16: Jesus knew what lay ahead, but His disciples did not. Jesus was eager to share the **Passover** meal with them **before He suffered.** Jesus would face arrest, condemnation, and crucifixion. God's grand purpose of salvation was about to be accomplished. Jesus instructed His disciples to partake saying: **I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.**

Verse 17: The Passover meal included both bread and wine. As Jesus took each one and **blessed it,** He infused them with new meaning. Now, the bread and wine anticipated God's ultimate saving event that was about to occur. **Then He took a cup, and after giving thanks, he said, "Take this and share it among yourselves.**

Verse 18: Then Jesus said, ...**from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.** Jesus was again speaking of His impending death; Jesus looked to when the kingdom of God would come in all its fullness and all God's people would celebrate by sharing the messianic banquet.

Verse 19: Unleavened bread was used in the Passover meal to remind the people of their deliverance from Egypt. The bread became synonymous with affliction. **This is my body given for you** can be associated with suffering and refers to Jesus' sacrifice, atoning death on the cross for all who will put their faith in Him as Savior and Lord. **Do this in remembrance of me** can have the meaning of observe or obey, as well as keeping or celebrating. For Christians, the breaking of the bread and drinking of the cup symbolize Jesus' sacrificial death that provides salvation for all who repent and believe. We remember our Lord's great sacrifice for us while we await His return.

Verse 20: In the same way He took the cup and said, **This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.** The new covenant was established through the death of Jesus. It relates back to the prophecy of Jeremiah. The cup represents the sacrificial blood of Jesus which inaugurated the new covenant.

Question #4 (p. 93) How does the Lord's Supper reflect the new covenant?

Question #5 (p. 94) How is what we have in Jesus superior to the old covenant?

Summary: The Lord always has a plan that will benefit us as His people and glorify Him as God. Any breach in our relationship with the Lord is a result of our infidelity, not His. The Lord doesn't give up on us. Our relationship with Him is personal, internally based on His grace and loving kindness. The Lord has provided us with direct access to Him, and His gracious forgiveness makes it possible for us to be with Him in a right relationship. Jesus willingly gave His life in fulfillment of the plan and purpose of the Father to bring about the new covenant. We take the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus, who gave Himself for us. Jesus poured out His life that we might have a new and everlasting covenant relationship with God through the forgiveness of our sin.

Engage (p. 91) Review these promises about the New Covenant. Mark the phrases that stand out to you as particularly meaningful this week. On the lines below, note the ways God is teaching Your heart and growing you to value these truths.

- *I will put my teaching...on their hearts*
- *I will be their God and they will be my people.*
- *They will all know me.*
- *I will forgive their iniquity and never again remember their sin.*

Live it Out (p. 95) One great advantage of the senior adult years is not being so caught up in the constant desire for new things. We've learned that nothing stays new for long, except for the new life God gives us in Christ that lasts forever. Consider ways you can live abundantly in the newness of life God promises through Christ.

- Get rid of something old.

- If financially able, buy something new for someone else.
- Share a meal with someone you might not normally eat with.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, Thank You for Your willingness to make a way for sinful people like us to have a personal relationship with a holy God like You. Because of You, we have a future and a hope that spans all of eternity. Help us remember the price You paid and let that remembrance compel us to Honor You in all we say and do.*

Watchword: *May the Lord watch between thee and me while we are absent one from another.*