

Our Mission:

To share Christ with the world
and grow disciples for Jesus



Loving God and Loving Neighbor as Ourselves

Background:

Here we have the language of a new covenant. God promises a restoration of the House of David, as well as the restoration of the Law. It will be written on the hearts of his people Israel. This will all happen, not because we have deserved it, for we were the ones to break the covenant. God chooses instead to forget, or to forgive our sin, and restore the relationship with his people.

Theology Connection:

This text is very familiar to many Christians. We see the prophet pointing to Jesus as the means by which the new covenant is established. In Christ we are restored as well as forgiven. Yet the exiles upon their return from Babylon believed the means of living into this new covenant was to make the Law their king. Once again, we are confused, substituting the law for God. Even today, we can craft our theology, our piety, or even our bibles into our king. We are constantly looking for some way we can manipulate God rather than simply trust in divine goodness.

Application:

Luther reminds us that faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit. While we can nurture this gift through the reading of Scripture or participation in the community of faith, nonetheless, faith is not something we manufacture for ourselves. Therefore, we should take no pride in it. If we accept this to be true, might our response be to search for the kernels of faith in others as well? Rather than judging another as Christians are often accused of doing, might we find ways to affirm God's work in their lives?

The Text: Jeremiah 33: 14-18, 31:31-34

33: 14-18

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah. “In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior.’

For this is what the Lord says: ‘David will never fail to have a man to sit on the throne of Israel, nor will the Levitical priests ever fail to have a man to stand before me continually to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings and to present sacrifices.’”

31:31-34

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

ADULT

We know that we are often judged by what we produce. We are judged for being a good employee or perhaps a good spouse. Yet it would appear that God wants to start with the heart. What is our motivation? What is our desire? What is our passion? As we acknowledge these, how might we utilize them to live into the vision of God's Kingdom in our midst?

YOUTH

Please read Jeremiah 33:14-18, 31:31-14

What covenant is being replaced in this text, and what evidence does the text provide for your answer?

How does God describe the way His people acted with the Old Covenant and what consequences did this bring for Israel? What is new about the new covenant and what is the same?

What does the word covenant mean to you?

How have you experienced God's law written on your heart?

And finally.... Verse 34 describes equality based on forgiveness of sins. How have you seen that in your own life?

Let us pray:

Dear God, please help keep us grounded in our faith so we can understand your law and practice living it. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

CHILDREN'S

The Bible is full of promises from God! In our passage today, the Lord makes a special promise to the people of Israel and Judah. God promises to take care of the land through David and his family in order to keep the people of Judah and Jerusalem safe. Here is what the Lord said, "Someone from David's family will always sit on the throne. And he will rule the family of Israel. And there will always be priests from the family of Levi. Those priests will always stand before me, and they will offer burnt offering and grain offerings. And they will offer sacrifices to me."

Think:

1. What did you learn from this story?
2. What can you do to give glory to God?
3. What promises has God made to you?

Remember:

God wants you to be a special part of His family! Spend some time each day focusing on the Lord and all His wonderful promises!

Pray:

Dear Lord,

Thank you for promising us eternal life through You. We know that our only hope of salvation is through You. Please help us to bring glory to you throughout this week in the things that we say and do.

In Jesus' precious name we pray, amen.