

**~Other Speakers S-Z: Victory Over Sin:**

God's New Covenant with us can be summed up in one powerful statement: It is his irrevocable promise to deliver his people from the dominion of sin - through the power of the Holy Ghost!

This New Covenant does away with all of our puny efforts to please God through our flesh. It is the end of all our striving to overcome sin, whether through determination, strength, reasoning or any other works of the flesh. In short, God's New Covenant takes the pressure off of us - and places it all on him!

Through this covenant, the Lord says, "I will no longer ask you to bring me a godly heart. Instead, I will remove your heart of stone - and I'll put in you a new heart, one that has a desire for me. I will cause you both to will and to do my good pleasure, through the power of my Spirit!"

In simple terms, the New Covenant is the end of the "can do" man. This is the man in us who says, "I can do it all, in my own power and strength. If I can just spend enough time in prayer and Bible study - if I can just think through my problems - I'll be able to make changes in my life."

God's New Covenant says goodbye to this old, "can do" man - and it introduces the "new man," who says, "I can't do anything in my own strength. I don't have the power to effect any kind of godly change in my life. But I can do everything through the power of the Holy Spirit!"

One of the most important things I've learned from my study of the New Covenant is that it is the secret to having an overcoming life in the last days. As the time of Christ's return draws near, the devil is going to open up the floodgates of hell against God's people. He will let loose wild, demonic powers such as the world has never seen.

We see this happening already within the walls of the church. Satan has infiltrated God's house with subtle lies, false doctrines, demonic teachings - and undiscerning Christians are swallowing it all. At this moment, multitudes of deceptions and heresies are swirling through the church. I ask you - how will believers be able to stand in such times?

The Lord answers us by promising to take on the problem himself. He assures us, "Don't be afraid. I'm going to take this matter into my own hands. I will empower you against every onslaught of the enemy. And I will do it through my New Covenant with you!"

Deut. 30:6 "And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, that you may live."

Jer. 24:7 "And I will give you a heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and you shall be mine, and I will be your God: for you shall return unto me with your whole heart."

Jer. 31:31-34 "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with you: Not according to the covenant that I made with Israel, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with you; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in your inward parts, and write it in your heart; and I will be your God, and you shall be mine. You shall know me, for I will forgive your iniquity, and I will remember your sin no more."

Jer. 32:39-41 "And I will give you one heart, and one way, that you may fear me for ever, for your own good, and for your children after you: And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, that I will not turn away from you, to do you good; but I will put my fear in your heart, that you shall not depart from me. Yes, I will rejoice over you to do you good, and I will plant you in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul."

Ezek. 36:25-27 "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them."

There is a life in Christ where there is no sense of guilt and shame before the God who knows every thought

that passes through our mind, every word on our tongue and every act we do.

Look at the above verses. These are incredible words. How does one get this life? What do I have to do? We may have been taught since becoming Christians that there was a price to pay, or a dedication to make in order to get something from God. What was the price tag here, what do I have to do receive such a life? Please read the passages over and over to search for what the enormous price tag. You will find Nothing! No price tag. Instead what stands out is the reiteration of "I will" throughout the passages. The above verses plainly state that it is God's intention to do these things and there is no price tag for anyone to pay. This is the nature of true faith. Faith does not originate in your making promises with ever increasing intensity and determination, promises that you have no hope of keeping. Nor was it in you vowed intentions to be a better a Christian for Him. Rather it is in simply saying thank you to the promises He has made, submitting to His intention for me. No longer was my starting point me but Him and my part was not say, "I promise to try harder" but to respond to Him and say "Yes! Do in me even as You have said."

You will find great joy sweeping through you enire being, and you will be excited about the Gospel. You can reveled in your newfound God who had made the promises and was responsible for keeping them. You can know life in Christ that you had never dreamed possible. No longer will you get up to pray to somehow win God's favor, but because you want to know this incredible God who made promises to a person like you in your exact conditation!

You can be free forever from makeing promises to God that you can never keep. You can now say, "God, you made the promises~ You keep them and I thank You for it! Amen. " You can truly rest with the joy of God in your heart.

This is the KEY to true victory and life. Even after seeing this, you may have many ups and downs, falls and failures in my walk with God, but what you see here will stick with you forever. It is like a strike of lightning on a pitch-black night, for a moment everything had been clearly seen and could not be forgotten. You are being led by the Spirit to rest my life on the covenant oath of God.

This is the first step in living the Christian life. It is also the energy behind every step; we never graduate from that state of helpless dependence upon Him. We will never be able (and God never intended that we would be able) to achieve the promises of the covenant in our own strength or will power. We are utterly helpless to bring them to pass, make them happen by resolve, dedication or twelve step programs. We invoke the God who has made covenant swearing by Himself to achieve all of this in our life. We thank Him for His mercy in giving us the covenant but now call upon His faithfulness to keep it.

So we do not attempt to cleanse ourselves, but lay before Him the case of our sins and weaknesses, our idols and filthiness and call on Him to do what we never can achieve by our promises - wash us and cleanse us from it all.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

Faithfulness is one of the great covenant words of Scripture. In forgiving us He is being faithful to the covenant, to Jesus the covenant representative, to whom He has sworn that He would remember our sins and iniquities no more.

He it is who must write the Law upon our hearts and minds, place His Spirit within us and cause us to walk in His ways. We lay our weakness and the pull of the flesh before Him and say plainly that this is Your work to draw me into Your ways. The entire Christian life is lived out on the sure foundation of His faithfulness to His covenant word, that He will do in us what He set out to do.

"...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6)

"God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:9)

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful." (Hebrews 10:23)

In covenant oath, God has taken it upon Himself to conform our entire person to the image of the Lord Jesus, to write His law upon our hearts. Most of us at least act as if it is entirely on our shoulders; we have to attempt achieve our sanctification while God is the Judge who grades our poor efforts.

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it." (1 Thessalonians 5:23,24)

Our feelings about our salvation ride a roller coaster as temptations and trials whirl about us. The anchor that holds us steady is not faith in our will power or the constancy of our feelings but His faithfulness by which He has promised to save us.

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Our shield in the day we battle with the powers of darkness is utter reliance upon His faithfulness. We are shielded by His resolve to save and keep us. If we were shielded by our resolves our shield would be made of cardboard! We have invincible armor when we are sheltered behind the oath of God.

"He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart." (Psalm 91:4 NIV)

His faithfulness stands guard over us whether we are awake or asleep keeping us from the powers of darkness. We walk without fear knowing that He has sworn with covenant oath to keep us.

"But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one." (2 Thessalonians 3:3)

Understanding the oath of God takes all of the pressure and tension out of life, and introduces us into the rest of God. The whole burden of bringing the promises of the covenant to pass in our lives is upon God. Instead of laboring to exhaustion trying to please God we live in the rest of faith in His faithfulness.