



**ON THE NEW COVENANT,  
CHURCH, WORSHIP & PRAISE**

By

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# CHAPTERS

Introduction	3
The New Covenant	4
The Church	8
Worship	13
Praise	16
Reasons For Praise	23

# Introduction

I mentioned in the first installment of *Teaching Notes* that the series would be based on some of my teaching notes from the 1970's. One of the things I like to do from time to time is compare what I'm teaching now to what I taught decades ago. It goes back to what Paul wrote Timothy about holding fast "the pattern of sound words." As teachers of God's Word, are we holding fast to the pattern of sound words that Jesus and His apostles gave us? Are we standing on solid ground when we open the Bible and teach the Gospel of Christ? Are we growing in our spiritual knowledge and understanding in the right direction? My hope and prayer is that we are.

[These notes are from 40 years ago when I spoke to a group of pastors.

The notes are in outline form.]

# The New Covenant

I believe that an essential aspect of the Christian faith and ministry is to understand the covenant we are under.

The Apostle Paul taught that the Old Covenant was a fading one that brought condemnation and death, while the New Covenant brings life, righteousness, and a lasting glory (2 Corinthians 3:6-11). Paul plainly states that –

- we are being led by God into triumphal procession (2 Corinthians 2:14)
- we are the aroma of Christ, the fragrance of the knowledge of Him (2 Corinthians 2:14-15)
- to the perishing we are the smell of death – to the saved we are the fragrance of life (2 Corinthians 2:16)
- our competence comes from God and not ourselves (2 Corinthians 3:5)
- unlike Moses who veiled his face to hide the fading glory from the Israelites, we are being transformed into the likeness of God with ever-increasing glory and need not wear a veil (2 Corinthians 3:12-18)

- we are able to renounce secret and shameful ways, don't have to use deception or distort the Word of God, and are able to set forth the truth plainly (2 Corinthians 4:1-2)
- rather than look into the fading face of Moses, we can look into the glorious face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:5-6)
- this amazing treasure has been placed in jars of clay (the Christian) to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us (2 Corinthians 4:7)
- we carry around in our bodies the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our bodies, and we are constantly being given over to death for Jesus' sake so that His life may be revealed in our mortal bodies (2 Corinthians 4:10-11)

For a few years after my conversion I tried to live and minister in the strength of the Old Covenant. I was terribly frustrated with the constant feelings of failure and spiritual impotence. Though I prayed and tried to believe that God would answer, I really placed my faith in my own abilities. Thus, my ministry was heavily oriented toward what I could "make happen." It had the smell of death rather than life (flesh vs. Spirit).

I related strongly to what happened to Paul after his conversion. He started preaching in the synagogues that Jesus was the Son of God to the amazement of the people in Damascus. They knew his prior reputation and couldn't understand his change. Paul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews. However, the Jews conspired to kill Paul, so his friends took him by night and lowered him over the city wall in a basket (Acts

9:22-25). I relate to being a basket case. Paul went to Jerusalem and boldly spoke in the name of the Lord. He debated with the Grecian Jews and they also tried to kill him. The apostles learned about it and took Paul to Caesarea where they shipped him back home to Tarsus (Acts 9:26-30).

The very next words in the biblical text are significant –

“Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.” Acts 9:31-32

Paul’s early style of ministry was Old Covenant, everything coming from him, and the work of God had suffered. After he left the scene, the work prospered again.

I’m certain that Paul was ministering in the Old Covenant because of something he related in Acts 22. He was standing before a great crowd of Jews in Jerusalem making his defense. He gave them a personal testimony of his previous persecution against Christians and his startling conversion. In this defense he spoke of the time in Jerusalem that I quoted from earlier. Paul went to the temple to pray, was in a trance and saw the Lord saying to him –

“Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.’ So I said, ‘Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You.

And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’ Then He said to me, ‘Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.’” Acts 22:18-21

Notice that Paul’s trust was in his own strength — everything coming from Paul. The Lord’s answer was so insightful – “Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.” In essence, I believe God was saying, “Paul, I’m going to send you someplace where everything will have to come from Me!” That is God’s primary message to us as New Covenant believers: “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God.” (2 Corinthians 3:5)

In conclusion, let me quote from Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:30-33 –

“If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.” 2 Corinthians 11:30-33

# The Church

“I will build My Church.”

These are the words of Jesus Christ to Simon Peter. Jesus would build His Church and use Peter in the foundational process. We discover this in Acts 2:14-41 where Peter is the primary tool God used in building the infant Church on the Day of Pentecost.

- The Greek word for “church” is *ekklesia* and means “a calling out of.”
- An *ekklesia* is a called out assembly.
- A church is an assembly of the Lord’s people who have been called out of the world’s population.

The term *ekklesia* is used in the New Testament in the local sense of a group of Christians in one city –

- Acts 5:11; 8:1; 13:1; 15:22; 18:22
- 1 Corinthians 1:2
- 2 Corinthians 1:1
- Romans 16:5
- Colossians 4:15
- 1 Thessalonians 1:1
- 2 Thessalonians 1:1
- Philippians 2

- Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14

The term *ekklesia* may also be used in the universal sense of all believers

–

- Matthew 16:18
- Acts 9:31

To bring this into my own situation today –

- I think of my local church as an *ekklesia*.
- I think of all true churches in our region as an *ekklesia* (similar to the churches in Galatia).
- I consider all true churches in the United States of America as an *ekklesia* (similar to the churches of Asia).

Though I can change membership from one local church to another or even be without membership in a local assembly, I believe I am always in the larger assembly of God's Church. However, all biblical evidence points to the need for every believer to be in a local church as a responsible and active participant.

I think an *ekklesia* in the best sense is where God's people are physically assembled together for the purpose of –

- worship

- praise
  - instruction
  - training
  - spurring one another on to love and good deeds
  - a mutual ministry of strengthening one another under the proper leadership and form into a unified body of love (1 Corinthians 14:26-40; Ephesians 4:1-16; Hebrews 10:24-25; 13:17)
1. The church grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work (Ephesians 4:16)
  2. The Holy Spirit has given gifts to men for the work of the ministry and the edification of the body (1 Corinthians 12:1-31)
  3. Jesus places us into areas of service while God gives us the energy to function properly (1 Corinthians 12:5-6)
  4. As we use our spiritual gifts in the Lord's place of service depending always upon the energy and power of God, the Holy Spirit works through us for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7)

Some of the gifts given to members of the Body are speaking gifts while others are non-speaking (e.g. serving) –

- If we speak, we should speak the very words of God.
- If we serve, we should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 4:10-11)

- God has not given His children gifts so they could gain personally from them, but so they could bring honor and glory to the One who gave them.
- We should each check out our use of His gifts to be sure we are speaking only His words and serving with only His strength to His glory.

Jesus has given gifted men to the church to help the church grow and become a unified body –

- Apostles
- Prophets
- Evangelists
- Pastor-Teachers (Ephesians 4:7-11)

These men are given to the Body of Christ to –

- Equip
- Train
- Prepare saints for the ministry God gives each one of them to do (Ephesians 4:12)

The leadership and government of each local *ekklesia* is to be elder-overseers and deacons (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9).

The Apostle Paul puts the title of elder-overseer together in Titus 1:6-9 –

- elder (*presbuteros*) refers to what the leader is
- overseer (*episkopos*) refers to what the leader does
- An elder-overseer is to be ordained (*kathistemi*) and shepherd the flock of God as a willing and eager servant (1 Peter 5:1-2).
- An elder is not to lord his position over those entrusted to his care, but use the position as an opportunity to be an example to the flock of God (1 Peter 5:3)

The term deacon (*diakonos*) refers to someone who serves another. It's difficult to decipher a job description for deacons out of the New Testament, but they served the various needs of the body as directed by the elders. The seven men chosen in the early Jerusalem church to distribute food daily to the widows may be prototype of the deacon.

I am overwhelmed and awed at receiving salvation from a gracious God and being gifted to lead and instruct God's people. My desire is to see those entrusted to my care presented mature and complete in Christ.

“To this *end* I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.” Colossians 1:29

# Worship

One of the most important responsibilities and opportunities for Christians in the Church is to **worship** God in spirit and in truth.

“Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; Talk of all His wondrous works! Glory in His holy name; Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord! Seek the Lord and His strength; Seek His face evermore! Remember His marvelous works which He has done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth, O seed of Abraham His servant, You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!” Psalm 105:1-6

[You can read more about the history of this worship Psalm in 1 Chronicles 16.]

- Give thanks to the Lord
- Call upon the name of the Lord
- Make known the deeds of the Lord
- Sing to the Lord
- Talk about the wonderful works of the Lord
- Glory in His holy name
- Let the hearts of those who rejoice who seek the Lord

- Seek the Lord and His strength
- Seek His face evermore
- Remember the marvelous works, wonders, and the judgments of His mouth

Worship involves the mind (Psalm 105:1, 5)

- We actively think about the Lord
- We focus our thoughts on Him as He has shown Himself to us in His works and His Word

Worship includes –

- Meeting God in the Bible
- Actively receiving, understanding, considering, remembering, and believing what God has spoken and done

Worship involves the emotions (Psalm 105:2-3)

- When we meet God in His Word, and understand His message, our hearts are moved to praise Him.
- Our faith in Christ brings joy!

Worship involves the will (Psalm 105:4)

Genuine worship results in obedience –

“Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”

- The believer fellowships with the Lord as His Word is presented, received and understood
- The believer responds to the Lord with rejoicing and praise
- The believer desires to do God’s will as revealed in the Scriptures

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” John 4:23-24

May we be true worshipers of God, worshipping Him in spirit and truth.

# Praise

**Praise** is a vital aspect of worship. What is the purpose of praise?

**Praise** – To glorify God by rehearsal and remembering His loving mercy and marvelous deeds.

Key word – “**remember**”

“On that day David first delivered *this psalm* into the hand of Asaph and his brethren, to thank the Lord: Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; Talk of all His wondrous works! Glory in His holy name; Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord! Seek the Lord and His strength; Seek His face evermore! Remember His marvelous works which He has done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth, O seed of Israel His servant, You children of Jacob, His chosen ones! He *is* the Lord our God; His judgments *are* in all the earth. Remember His covenant forever, The word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, *The covenant which* He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac, And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel *for* an everlasting covenant, Saying, ‘To you I will give the land of Canaan As the allotment of your inheritance,’ When you were few in number, Indeed very few, and strangers in it. When they went from one nation to another, And from *one* kingdom to another people, He permitted no man to do them wrong; Yes, He

rebuked kings for their sakes, *Saying*, 'Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm.' Sing to the Lord, all the earth; Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples. For the Lord *is* great and greatly to be praised; He *is* also to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples *are* idols, But the Lord made the heavens. Honor and majesty *are* before Him; Strength and gladness are in His place. Give to the Lord, O families of the peoples, Give to the Lord glory and strength. Give to the Lord the glory *due* His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth. The world also is firmly established, It shall not be moved. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; And let them say among the nations, 'The Lord reigns.' Let the sea roar, and all its fullness; Let the field rejoice, and all that *is* in it. Then the trees of the woods shall rejoice before the Lord, For He is coming to judge the earth. Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for *He is* good! For His mercy *endures* forever. And say, 'Save us, O God of our salvation; Gather us together, and deliver us from the Gentiles, To give thanks to Your holy name, To triumph in Your praise.' Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel From everlasting to everlasting!" 1 Chronicles 16:7-36

"Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with

lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good *things*, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The Lord executes righteousness And justice for all who are oppressed. He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel. The Lord *is* merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive *with us*, Nor will He keep *His anger* forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities *his* children, So the Lord pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we *are* dust. As for man, his days *are* like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone. And its place remembers it no more. But the mercy of the Lord *is* from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children, To such as keep His covenant, And to those who remember His commandments to do them. The Lord has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word. Bless the Lord, all *you* His hosts, *You* ministers of His, who do His pleasure. Bless the Lord, all His works, In all places of His dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul!" Psalm 103

Remembering can aid in emotional and spiritual struggles –

“As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night, While they continually say to me, ‘Where *is* your God?’ When I remember these *things*, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, With the voice of joy and praise, With a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast. Why are you cast down, O my soul? And *why* are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him *For* the help of His countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me; Therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan, And from the heights of Hermon, From the Hill Mizar. Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; All Your waves and billows have gone over me. The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, And in the night His song *shall be* with me— A prayer to the God of my life. I will say to God my Rock, ‘Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?’ As with a breaking of my bones, My enemies reproach me, While they say to me all day long, ‘Where *is* your God?’ Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.” Psalm 42

What kinds of things should we remember?

“Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:3-14

“And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:1-13

- We are important to God.
- Our lives have meaning and significance because of Jesus Christ.

“REMEMBER ALL OF HIS BENEFITS”

Let us bow our heads and give silent thanks to God and praise Him as we remember His benefits.

# Reasons For Praise

We now look at six reasons for your church to praise the Lord.

*(Reason 1) For being seated at our Father's table.*

- Of salvation
- Of abundant living
- Of blessed fellowship

With God: The Father, The Son, The Holy Spirit

With our brothers and sisters in Christ

*(Reason 2) For our families*

- For husbands and fathers
- For wives and mothers
- For children
- For grandparents

(Reason 3) For our church

- Teaching the fundamental truths and life-changing principles of the Word of God
- Worshipping God in spirit and truth

(Reason 4) For our pastor

- His love
- His dedication
- His standards
- His decisions

(Reason 5) For our nation

- Religious freedom
- Great heritage
- Exciting future

(Reason 6) For the coming revival

- In hearts
- In families
- In churches
- In communities
- In nations

[Thank you for reading these teaching notes from 40 years ago. My prayer is they will be a blessing to you and your ministry.]

[Scripture for this Ebook updated from KJV to NKJV in 2017]

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