

Introduction:

- *"And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."* (Luke 22:20, ESV)
 - Hebrews 7:22; 8:6 a better covenant
 - Hebrews 8:8 I will make a new covenant. Hebrews 8:13; 9:15 new covenant
 - Hebrews 12:24 Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant.
 - Hebrews 13:20 everlasting covenant.
- When was the last time that you read the terms and conditions of an app? An internet sight? etc. Studies show that people would rather read a phone book than actually read the terms and conditions. I.e. As a joke one company include the signing away of your first born. This company was studying how many people actually read the terms and conditions.
 - I think many believers approach covenant that way. I heard this morning that the average believer, 18-24, reads their Bible just three times a year.
- Let's talk about the fog of covenant.

I. The Fog of Covenant

- A. Would you say tonight that you have a very clear understanding of covenant?
 1. I.e. I find it interesting when the weather forecaster is talking about fog they often describe it in terms of 'visibility.' Visibility one mile...visibility a 1/2 mile...no visibility.
 2. As a pastor, I often feel like when I preach on covenant the Holy Spirit gives me a forecast before preaching. "Visibility one mile...visibility 1/2 mile...no visibility! I have yet to get an 'all clear' forecast.
- B. What is it about covenant that makes understanding it so foggy?
 1. I would say covenant is foreign to us because it is not part of our culture as it is in many parts of the world. I.e. In African nations you find people far more familiar with covenant because they practice it all the time. In America we understand contracts which are far different than covenant.
 2. I would say that covenant is foreign because the Bible is not really clear on it. In the Bible we find the topic of covenant everywhere! We read of covenants made but it is never really defined.
 - a) Part of that reason may be because the people understood covenant so well it did not need to be defined. Words associated with covenant are very common. I.e. If I say touch down, punt, kick off, 1st and goal, quarterback, defensive end, etc. What am I talking about? Football. By the words I use you know what sport I am talking about.
 - b) Covenant in the Bible is much the same way. The Bible uses words like: love, kindness, loyalty, mercy, faithfulness, friendship, oath, treaty, blessings and

- curses, etc. When these words are used we are talking about covenant.
3. We as pastors have failed to understand covenant ourselves and therefore we have we have taught covenant in very weak ways, full of cliches.
 4. We have taught the what of the term covenant but not the 'why?' of covenant.
 5. The fifth reason that covenant lacks visibility is that Satan does not want the church to reach the understanding of how powerful covenant with God is to the believer.
- C. How many of you would like to understand covenant better or more fully? May I read to you several translations of the same scripture.
1. *"The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant."* (Psalm 25:14, ESV)
 2. *"The Lord is a friend to those who fear him. He teaches them his covenant."* (Psalm 25:14, NLT)
 3. *"The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them."* (Psalm 25:14, NIV)
 4. *"The secret of the Lord is for those who fear Him, And He will make them know His covenant."* (Psalm 25:14, NASB95)
 5. *"The secret [of the sweet, satisfying companionship] of the Lord have they who fear (revere and worship) Him, and He will show them His covenant and reveal to them its [deep, inner] meaning."* (Psalm 25:14, AMP)
 6. The key according to Ps. 25:14 is the fear of the Lord...or reverence for the Lord. When we reverence the Lord, the Lord:
 - a) Makes His covenant known to us.
 - b) He teaches us His covenant.
 - c) He will make/cause us to understand and know His covenant.
 - d) The Amplified Bible: *"He will show them His covenant and reveal to them its [deep, inner] meaning."*
 7. To 'lift the fog' requires of us to live in the fear of the Lord, reverencing Him. Or another way: No reverence God no revelation of covenant. I am believing that tonight we start a new journey together and individually towards understanding covenant.

II. Covenant The Foundation of Our Christian Faith

- A. The foundation of Christianity is based on our covenant relationship with God.
 1. It is out of that covenant that we worship, pray, believe and walk with God.
 2. Covenant allows us to stay in communion with God, walk with Him in confidence, and trust Him in all things great and small.
- B. Reasons for covenant. There are basically three reasons for covenant that we find in the Word of God and in secular historical records (much of our understanding of covenant comes from secular historical records.)

1. First, is to establish a love relationship.
 2. Second, is to end dispute between enemies.
 3. Third, is to establish a relationship in which a more powerful side offers to cover/help/protect a weaker side.
- C. What is covenant?
1. Hebrew is 'berith', which means 'to cut; or to bind together in obligation.' It is used nearly 300 times in the Bible and most times is translated 'to cut.'
 2. Covenant is: *The Blood Covenant, James Garlow.*
 - a) an all encompassing agreement between two parties with clearly outline perimeters and promises.
 - b) A mutual understanding between two person who bind themselves together with a specific obligation to fulfill.
 - c) The giving of ones self or a group of individuals into lasting union together for life and unto death.
 - d) Entered into so as to complement strengths and weaknesses
 - e) A tangible expression of love and trust.
 - f) A relationship that will require blood to be shed to reinforce the seriousness of the bond.
 3. A contract of ink cannot compare to a covenant entered into by blood.
 4. The Hebrew word for working out of covenant is 'hesed' – faithful loving kindness, it is the active pursuit of wanting to bless one's covenant partner. It is tenacious and unending.
- D. Malcolm Smith, *The Lost Secret of the New Covenant*, writes:
1. *"A covenant is a binding, unbreakable obligation between two parties, based on unconditional love sealed by blood and sacred oath, that creates a relationship in which each party is bound by specific undertakings on each others behalf. The parties to the covenant place themselves under the penalty of divine retribution should they later attempt to avoid those undertakings. It is a relationship that can only be broke by death."*
 2. May the 'fog lift!' Covenant *"is a word that describes God's relationship to you and me. Through covenant He outline specific requirement and spectacular promises of what will happen if we follow His ways."* *ibid.*

Conclusion:

- Jesus lift the fog of our understanding that we may know you more and that we may better understand the covenant that You cut with us. Help us to walk in the fear of the Lord.