

Covenant & Commitment

A four-week series
on Covenant Membership



Covenant & Commitment:

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1. Covenant: A Living, Breathing Thing
2. Covenanting with Christ & the Church
3. New Covenant, Renewed Vision
4. Covenant as Christian Discipleship



Covenant: A Living, Breathing Thing

A Summary & Review

- Covenants are personal and deeply spiritual
- Covenants are public (announced & given a sign/symbol)
- Covenants, while messy at times, are living and active—requiring constant attention and care
- Deliberate renewal is required to keep a covenant alive, healthy, and productive (a blessing to others)
- Covenanting with God and others begins with a commitment to **belong, believe, and behave** in a way that honors the mutual trust that's been made

So What's Involved in a Covenant?

1. Counting the cost before entering into a faith-relationship and belonging to one another (e.g. ability to trust, sacrifices, benefits, long-term effects, etc.)
2. Entering into the covenant and being forever changed by the relationship (e.g. new identity, new family, a new shared destiny/future, etc.)
3. Continually investing (time, energy, money, etc.) to maintain a healthy relationship, and intentionally renewing vows through a living & active display of love

Signs of the Covenant

- Old Testament – circumcision, obedience to the Law
- New Testament – baptism, obedience to Christ/Spirit

In the New Testament (Covenant)...

Believer's baptism is the initial outward sign of an inward transformative reality. First step of obedience.

Communion or Lord's Supper is an outward sign and renewal ceremony of the entry sign/vows of baptism

These **NT practices**, which include faithful presence and ongoing ministry in the church, keep our covenant alive

Hebrews 8:6-7 NIV

⁶ But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs [Moses—Law] as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.

⁷ For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another.

Hebrews 8:8-9 NIV

⁸ But God found fault with the people and said:

“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.

⁹ 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 did not remain faithful to my covenant,
and I turned away from them,
declares the Lord.

Hebrews 8:10-12 NIV

¹⁰ This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord.

I will put my laws in their minds
and write them on their hearts.

I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

¹¹ 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.

¹² For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more."

Hebrews 8:13 NIV

¹³ By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.

“What these words in verse 13 mean is that the law’s work is finished when men and women come to Christ. It could not make them perfect, but they have now come to One who can! There is no longer any need for law to work its condemning work in a believer’s life. Awareness of sin is now the work of the indwelling Spirit, not to condemn, but to restore us, when we repent, to useful and fruitful service.”

Ray Stedman, *Hebrews* (IVP Commentary) pgs. 91-92

“He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

Paul, 2 Corinthians 3:6 NIV

Jesus, Gospel of Matthew 26:26-30 NIV

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.”

²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you.

²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

³⁰ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Luke 22:19 “do this in remembrance of me”

Acts 2:38, 40-42 NIV

³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized... ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 2:43-47 NIV

⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Paul, 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 NIV

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Paul, Ephesians 2:19-22 NIV

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Jesus, Gospel of John 14:6-7 NIV

⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

v. 6 λέγει αὐτῷ Ἰησοῦς·

Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωή·

Matthew 28:16-20 NLT

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted!

¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Covenanting with Christ & the Church

A Summary & Review

- *Covenant membership* in the local church is how the new covenant with Christ and his disciples is expressed
- Believer's baptism is the first step of obedience upon deciding to follow Jesus—marking entrance into covenant
- Communion (Lord's Supper) is a renewal of the baptismal vows you made when you first decided to follow Jesus
- In covenant we submit ourselves to one another (accountability), but it's the Spirit that convicts & corrects
- While we unashamedly confess the exclusivity of Christ, we covenant in grace and extend the invitation in love

A wooden chalice stands on the left, and two slices of bread are on the right. The background is a warm, textured orange-brown.

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Sermon audio & slides in PDF can be downloaded at:
www.christiansburgmennonite.org