

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 & Commitment

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
- God's faithfulness displayed in the new covenant should propel us forward in commitment to his church

Covenant as Christian Discipleship

According to the New Testament (Covenant), what does “radical” obedience to Christ look like?

As disciples, we are *learning* to...

- Daily deny ourselves
- Repent of sin (worldly thinking & behaviors)
- Walk in the way of Christ, instead of flesh & culture
- Love Jesus above all, at times parting with things
- Place faith (trust) & hope in God, in things unseen
- Walk the narrow path of the Kingdom
- Commit to Christ’s body, the church

Paul, Romans 12:1-2 NLT

¹ And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.

² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Being Disciplined by the Culture

From Faith to Doubt

From Love to Insecurity

From Rest to Exhaustion

From Community to Individualism

From Contributing to Consuming

“Ultimately each church will be evaluated by only one thing. Its disciples! Your church is only as good as its disciples. It does not matter how good your praise, preaching, programs or property are. If your disciples are passive, needy, consumerist, and not moving in the direction of radical obedience, your church is not good.”

Neil Cole, *Search & Rescue: Becoming a Disciple Who Makes a Difference* (pg 185)

“Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.”

Romans 12:2 MSG

Romans 12:3-5 NLT

³ Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. ⁴ Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, ⁵ so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

Romans 12:6-8 NLT

⁶ In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. ⁷ If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. ⁸ If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

Romans 12:9-13 NLT

⁹ Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.

¹⁰ Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. ¹¹ Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. ¹² Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. ¹³ When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

Matthew 16:24-26 NIV

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?”

Luke 14:25-27 MSG

One day when large groups of people were walking along with him, Jesus turned and told them, “Anyone who comes to me but refuses to let go of father, mother, spouse, children, brothers, sisters—yes, even one’s own self!—can’t be my disciple. Anyone who won’t shoulder his own cross and follow behind me can’t be my disciple.

Luke 14:28-30 MSG

“Is there anyone here who, planning to build a new house, doesn’t first sit down and figure the cost so you’ll know if you can complete it? If you only get the foundation laid and then run out of money, you’re going to look pretty foolish. Everyone passing by will poke fun at you: ‘He started something he couldn’t finish.’

Luke 14:31-33 MSG

“Or can you imagine a king going into battle against another king without first deciding whether it is possible with his ten thousand troops to face the twenty thousand troops of the other? And if he decides he can’t, won’t he send an emissary and work out a truce? “Simply put, if you’re not willing to take what is dearest to you, whether plans or people, and kiss it good-bye, you can’t be my disciple.”

Kiss it Good-Bye!

What needs to go in order to commit, or renew your commitment, to following Christ in faith (trust)?

- Competing allegiances (idolatry)
- Unhealthy relationships with unbelievers
- Identity-forming hobbies, desires, passions, etc.
- Cultural assimilation with “patterns of the world”
- Busyness acting as violence on time (stillness/silence)
- Procrastination and excuses that delay obedience

Hebrews 10:19-22 NLT

¹⁹ And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. ²⁰ By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. ²¹ And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, ²² let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

Hebrews 10:23-25 NLT

²³ Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. ²⁴ Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. ²⁵ And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

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.

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