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THE VALUE OF A COVENANT WITH GOD
by Paris Reidhead

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Summary: The value of a covenant with God is that it establishes God's character and promises, provides a means of understanding God's will and expectations, and offers a means of experiencing God's blessings and benefits.

Duration: 34:50 Topics: "Covenant"
Scripture References: Exodus 15:26

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DESCRIPTION

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In this sermon, the speaker discusses the journey of the Israelites after their miraculous escape from Egypt. They face a new challenge when they reach a water source that turns out to be poisonous. Moses realizes the danger and cries out to God for help. God shows Moses a tree, which is reminiscent of the Passover lamb in Egypt. The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the conditions that come with God's promises and the value of a covenant.

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CONTENT

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We are in the midst of a series of messages on the very important subject of faith. Today we are dealing with the theme, the value of a covenant with God. Our text is found in Exodus 15 and verse 26.

It has just been read for us. It is a temptation to talk to you this morning about the very important subject of the Jehovah compound name that is given here. I am the Lord that healeth thee.

But all I will do is make reference to it in the anticipation that

someday in the near future we can talk more completely about it.

Suffice

it to say that faith rests on two foundation stones. First, who God is.

And second, what God says. The first is his character and the second is

promises. Now, in order that there might be no misunderstanding, and by

the way, the only way you can avoid misunderstanding is to have a clear understanding.

And because most of us have marvelous memories, but sometimes very short, it's important that those understandings be written. And so I'm suggesting to you that God, who knew us so well, having made us, found that it was to our benefit, as well as to his honor and praise, that he

should embody his promises in covenants. Now, the word covenant, what does it mean? It's an Assyrian or a Babylonian word, and originally it meant a bond or a fetter.

Something that tied two people together. Generally speaking, we think of

it as a contract between two parties who are each acting freely on their

own for the purposes that are stated in the agreement. In the early period that we have here in the Pentateuch, a covenant was an agreement

frequently between two tribes or two clans or between individuals to protect them and to achieve whatever the agreement was that they had.

For instance, Isaac made a covenant with Abimelech, and it was to protect Isaac and also to protect Abimelech. Laban and Jacob had a covenant. Jacob was much more faithful in observing it than Laban was, but still they had a covenant.

They had an agreement. And finally, that one, you know, may the Lord watch between thee and me while we are absent one to another. In our youth group, we had to close every meeting with that.

It was a covenant, all right, but really what it was, was this. I don't

trust you for one minute. I wouldn't turn my back on you.

And so I'm just calling God to keep his eye on you because he's the only

one that can. You're a rascal. Well, I think they both felt they were somewhat rascals, and so they needed it.

It was a covenant, all right. Oh, God, you watch out for us because we don't trust each other with each other. But that's not the kind of a covenant we have here in the 26th verse.

The main object of these biblical covenants was the promotion of peace and safety. After all, the natural condition of the time was that of war. We read a great deal about how peaceful and loving were some of the individual groups in Europe.

For instance, I happen to be an Anglo-Saxon mongrel, that is, English, Irish, a little Welsh, and Scottish. Now, that doesn't make me a British mongrel. I don't know what does.

No choice of mine, just a natural selection of ancestors through the years. And I happen to know that until the Normans came from France to England, 1066, William the Conqueror, Great Britain was just an island of warring tribes fighting with each other on sight with tribal markings that were distinctive. And if they caught one of the Yelane out in one of the other tribes, he was gone or he was dead.

And it was the coming of first the Anglo-Saxons helped a little, and then later on when the Normans came and brought a semblance of national life and order, there was a change. Well, now back in the Old Testament time, these were tribes of people, these were clans, these were families, and each coveted what the other had. The land they had, the cattle, the sheep, the camels, the gold, the women, the slaves, whatever it was that a clan had, the neighbors wanted, and so warfare was the normal state.

And thus the covenant was for the purpose of peace. Hence we find in Numbers the 25th chapter in the 12th verse, Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him, and this is God speaking, my covenant of peace. And in Isaiah 54 10, For the mountain shall depart, and the hill shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.

Covenants were made for mutual support, for protection, for fulfillment of common obligations made freely by agreeing or contracting parties. And so God used what the people were accustomed to use. He used a covenant when he began to deal with them.

Now the word religio or religion literally means to bind or to form a

bond that ties together and unites. That's what religion literally means. In Deuteronomy the 29th chapter in the 12th verse, we read that thou should enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day.

Accept this binding, this religio, this tying together. Now what were the essential conditions? I mentioned them, but I want to summarize them because they apply to the one that's before us now. The mutual understanding of the terms and conditions, the obligations, and the benefits.

It wasn't a covenant unless both parties were to benefit. Each had something they wanted, each had something they sought, and so each understood the terms and the conditions, the obligations, and the benefits, and they formed a covenant. That's how in some areas of the world marriage is treated.

For instance, in some places no divorce is ever permitted because they say it is not a legal agreement between two parties that can be severed by the action of the state. It is a covenant before which God is the third party, and therefore it is not subject to a legal action. But they understand the meaning of the word covenant in the right and the use of it.

Now the mutual community of feeling and sentiment had to exist. Both had to want it. If they didn't want it, they couldn't have it.

You couldn't make a unilateral covenant. You couldn't make a covenant and impose it on somebody. They had to want it in order for it to be effective.

Now God wanted to make a covenant with man, and so in Deuteronomy the 28th chapter, he gives us a long list of benefits that we saw last Lord's Day in our study together on this matter of the curse of the law.

I will bless you in your basket, in your store, in your land with your flocks and your herds. I'll bless you if you obey me, and you will have these curses come upon you if you disobey me.

Benefits? God sought to have a complete understanding, sharing of sentiment. We want to have this covenant, and he calls the Torah, he calls the Old Testament, the words of the covenant or the book of the covenant. Now we're coming down to this 26th verse.

This is a covenant made between God and his people. It is one that continues on. It has no time frame.

It's simply a covenant of those that prepared to accept and to make it.

Wasn't one for a given, any given time. It's here, and it's the revelation, the name of God.

As long as he continues to be Jehovah Rophi, Jehovah Rapha, the covenant can endure. When his character changes, when his promise changes, when he changes, then you can expect the covenant to be withdrawn. But it's one based upon the nature of God, the character of God, as well as the promises of God.

So I want you to understand, we're not, this isn't a history lesson. This is current events. We're not just talking about the great I used to be or the great I'm going to be.

We're talking about the great I am. Because remember, the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the new. Well, what is the word Jesus? It's made up of two elements.

It's Jehovah compound. Jesus is the first, the first two letters in it, J-E, would be from Jehovah. And the last are from Shua, Jehovah Shua, the Lord our Savior, shortened to Jesus.

He is Jehovah Shua, the Lord our Savior. Now, in this he is Jehovah Rapha, the Lord our Healer. Now, there are other compound names.

We won't dwell on them because they deserve far more time than I can give them at the moment. The covenant, as I said, was always instigated by a problem, by a potential danger, by a threat, or by an actual experience of danger, threat, and loss. Now, the Israelites have just had a marvelous experience.

First, they have been in Egypt the night that the angel of death came through. And they saw the firstborn of the Egyptians slain and their firstborn spared because the blood was on the doorpost, on the lintel and on the sides of the door. They have just escaped from the armies of Pharaoh going across on dry land while the waters closed in and Pharaoh's army was destroyed.

They have had marvelous testimony of God's power and God's love and God's saving grace. And now God wants to take this mixture of people

that have no national cohesion or life and he wants to make a people that are going to be for his praise. And so what happens? They leave the shores of the Red Sea and they march for three days and they don't find any water.

And finally, they come to water and they taste it and it's poisonous. They're in trouble. They're in danger.

There's a threat. And Moses recognized it and Moses realized that what the armies of Pharaoh didn't do and God wouldn't let them do, that little stream or puddle was going to do if something wasn't done about it. Because it looked innocent enough but that stream, for whatever it was that poisoned it, could destroy this people whom God had saved.

And so Moses went to God and he cried unto the Lord in behalf of the people and the Lord showed him a tree. Now he'd already seen that tree back in Egypt that night when God said to Moses, tell the people to slay the lamb and catch the blood and take the hyssop and put it on the lintel, the board, over the door and on the side post of the door. And what happens if you take those two side posts and you bring them together and you slide the lintel down about a little, a foot or so, what do you have? You have a tree.

You have a cross. That was a finger of God's type and shadow pointing down to the time when they would take the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, slay him on a tree. His blood would be sprinkled.

That was God's sermon in blood and hyssop and in wood. Now what are they doing? They've come to a stream. They're redeemed from Egypt.

They've been delivered from the armies of the enemy. Is there going to be some other basis of their life? What's God saying to them? That same tree that brought deliverance back there, that lintel and door post. Now Moses, he showed him a tree and he said, you cut that tree down and you put that tree in the water and the water above the tree will be poisonous and the water that flows through the tree will be pure and sweet and they can drink it.

Now he said, well, I wonder what chemicals there were in that tree to take away the poison of the water. I'll tell you, the same chemicals that were in the blood of the lamb that kept the angel of the Lord from

slaying the firstborn unto the house. That's what the chemicals were in the tree.

It wasn't in the tree. It was in the one of whom the tree spoke of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who was to come. He is the tree that's coursed into the stream of human experience.

But on the one side of it is poisonous and death and on the other side life and joy and peace made possible through his poured out life. And it's that tree, the tree of the Lamb of God, that's put into the stream that day. And what is it saying to us? God is making a covenant with us in the person of his Son, this one of whom all the types and shadows speak, saying that the one who delivered us from the penalty of sin is the one who's going to deliver us also from the curse of the law and from the diseases of the Egyptians.

And he gives a name at that point. And the name is, I am the Lord that healeth thee. I am Jehovah Rapha.

That's his character. He's a healing Jehovah. And that's his promise.

I am the Lord that healeth thee. But every promise in the Bible is conditional. But one, there's only one problem that has no conditions on it.

And even that has conditions. But the one problem, one promise that has no conditions is this, after death, the judgment. God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world by that man whom he has appointed, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God. That one dealing with judgment, that's the problem. Other than that, all the promises in the scripture are conditional.

And we're often so concerned about the promises, we forget the conditions and thus we miss the blessing of the promises. That's the value of a covenant. Everybody understands the policy.

You know, some organizations are run on the basis of whim and fancy. It's awful hard to work under those conditions, isn't it? You never know what the boss is going to do because every day he gets a new whim, a

new

fancy, a new idea. He's going in 73 directions at once.

I find it's awful easy to work if the policy is established and we know where we're going. Then we have no difficulty. Well, God knows that too.

And so God puts everything into policy and he calls the policy law or he calls the policy covenant. He says, if you'll do this, then I'll do this. And we must remember that all the promises of God, yea and amen in Christ, are conditional promises.

Here it is. Listen to it. And God said, if thou will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God.

That's the first one. Hearken. You'll hearken.

And the second, and will do. Well, it's not enough to hear. And will do that which is right in his sight.

Now that hearkening, he wanted to get really get across, didn't he? So what's he, he repeats it. And will give ear to his commandments. I think he figures that we're all got a little bit of wax in our ears.

A little, we're a little hard of hearing. And so he said hearken and then he said give ear. As much as to say, I'm really all not that sure you really understood what I was talking about.

And then, and keep. First he said do what is right and now he says keep all his statutes. If you will do.

If you will hear. Then, then benefits I will not bring or allow to be brought upon you the diseases of Egypt's conditions. Diligently hearken unto God's voice.

Give ear to his commandment. Do that which is right in his sight. Keep his statutes.

Now God has ratified this covenant by Moses cutting down a tree and putting it in the water. And the water on one side is bitter and on the other side is sweet. And as we've said that tree is the foreshadowing

of
the one Christ who has redeemed us from the curse of the law being
made
a curse for us for curse it is everyone that hangeth on a tree.

John G. Lake back in the early 1940s when he was late in the years of
his ministry had been greatly honored by God as one who proclaimed the
Lord our healer wrote this I want you to see that when men take upon
themselves faith in the eternal God for healing they enter into a
covenant relationship with God. God has put himself on record and
given
eternal pledge as to his faithfulness concerning the covenant we are
invited by him to become partakers with him in that covenant.

You today but you say well look what it says it says if thou wilt
hearken well I can do that and we'll do that which is that's where the
hard part comes in give ear yeah I think I can handle that and keep
all
his statutes how can I do that well I don't believe the God of the
Bible
has ever given us any reason to think he's a monster and anyone who
would command people to do that which they couldn't do even with his
power and help and grace and would punish them for not doing what they
couldn't help doing he would be a monster but he said there is no
temptation overtaking you but such as is common to man and God is
faithful will not suffer you to be tempted about what you are able but
will with the temptation make a way of escape that you may be able to
bear it now if you should find and

you probably will find that you haven't hearkened or given ear and you
haven't done and you haven't kept God has made provision what did he
say
he said judge yourself that you be not judged let him let the wicked
forsake his way in the unrighteous man is thought and return unto the
Lord and he has said also confess your sins and he is faithful and
just
to forgive us your sin forgive your sins and cleanse us from all
unrighteousness that's part of the covenant that's included in the
covenant so you say well I haven't perfectly kept the law but God has
made that covenant to have other elements in it as well now there are
three aspects to the covenant the first one is divine healing when we
are sick we can go to Jehovah Rapha to ask him to heal us but there is
something perhaps even better

than being healed that's divine health that to keep us from getting
sick
you know I think every day that we awaken well we ought to have a
praise
service right there at our bedside praise God I'm awakening well and
strong today let the redeemed of the Lord say so whom he's redeemed

from
the hand of the he's given you his health for today why wait till
you're
sick and then have to be healed in order to praise him read psalm 107
here they were sailing along they had blue sky and they had a fair
wind
and they didn't praise the Lord so he just and the blue sky became
gray
and the the sea rose and they cried to the Lord and he delivered them
and then they praise him stupid sailors why didn't they praise him
when
the sea was fair and calm why wait till there has to be a terrible
typhoon from

which they barely escape with rigging gone and spars down and mass
broken why when they what he wanted was to recognize our dependence
upon
him yes divine healing but one step above it could be health that's
what
he gave them there if they later on they have a problem we'll talk
about
that later when they're bitten by the serpents and they looked and
they
were healed of the deadly disease from the serpents they could have
all
taken that water their thirst and had to have been healed of the
poison
but he's purified the water he can give health as well as healing and
then there's one step above that and that's divine life when august
helpers and his wife were talking driving with dr a.c sneed who had
lost
one lung in an operation and then they had to take out half of the
second lung and he

had a quarter of a lung and for all those years as foreign secretary
of
the christian missionary alliance he had one fourth one half of one
lung
and just he said to me when i became pastor he was one of the elders
of
the tabernacle of new york we had some lovely days together and he
said
you know brother paris i have not asked the lord for healing because
he's healed me i'm well i have to ask him for life every day i live by
his life august helpers and mrs elfers were with us needs driving
through or an annual council i don't remember just where it was but
they
came to a little city in western pennsylvania and dr sneed said
brother
helford when we come to the town stop at the hotel will you i'm quite

weak they stopped he went in he rented the room in the hotel for a couple of hours and he

went in to be alone with the lord and when he came out his color was improved strength was regained ready to go on he said you see i have to

take my life from the lord breath by breath and i've been so busy breathing out these last days getting ready to go to council that i haven't had time to breathe in his life and i had to get along with him

divine healing divine health divine life what did paul say i am crucified with christ nevertheless i live yet not i but christ liveth in

me in the life i now live in the flesh i live by the faith of the son of

god who loved me and gave himself for me christ liveth in me who is christ he's jehovah rapha oh did you know that do you know that that the

lord jesus christ who compels us by his spirit is jehovah rapha and he wants to be our life our

healing you say well why isn't everybody healed i haven't found the answer to that yet but i have found that the value of a covenant is that

if we understand our responsibility and we seek and do it god will honor

us and god will meet us billy brennan was a baptist preacher in a little

independent baptist church in jefferson bill indiana he worked as a as a

forester for the state of indiana and god led him to preach and start a

little church and he was one of the first i ever knew who was a baptist

who knew anything about the gifts of the spirit and the gift of the word

of knowledge was in operation and he was in a meeting somewhere one night and he his people had come asking him to pray for them and billy branham this little forester from indiana was standing there and this man came and

god spoke to him and he said brother come with me and they went over away from the microphone where no one could hear and he said such and such a day such and such a place such and such a car of such and such a

make and such and such a year and such and such a color you did so and so and the man began sobbing because if god knew all about it he had no

hope of deceiving anybody and so he fell on his knees and he put his face down on the floor he began to sob because he'd been found out he

knew this little fellow that come from jefferson indiana had no way of knowing you see if god was there and god was in billy branham and uh and

god told him and what happened he can the man confessed his sin acknowledged that he had never been born again received the lord jesus christ as his lord and his

savior and he said that's all right that's enough god has given peace to

my heart and billy bradham said but we haven't prayed yet for your said

i got enough no let's just finish it and so that simple childlike prayer

and the man was wonderfully healed covenant keeping god what's the value

of a covenant if my people are called by my name will do what i told them to do then i will do what they need and want me to do the value of

a covenant as you know the terms and the conditions for the blessing and

the benefit heavenly father how great we are grateful we are that thou art not capricious and whimsical and thou dost not deal with us one way

one day in another way the following but thou art eternal unchangeable thy promises are all gay and amen in christ the conditions remain thou art an

unchanging and an unchangeable god and so today we ask that we may recognize the value of this covenant and that individually and personally alone in some closet of our choosing we will make it covenant

with thee that the lord jesus christ jehovah rapha is to be our healing

is to be our health is to be our life that our lives redeemed by his poured out life might be lived to the greatest possible glory and honor

and praise of his worthy name worthy indeed is the lamb would slay to receive riches and honor and glory and majesty and power and dominion and praise now and forever oh that we might recognize jehovah rapha as jehovah shula the one who is jesus jehovah our savior is also jehovah our healer and that we might take life from him health from him and healing from him that he might be

everything all in all to us with that end lord we ask thee to seal a meditation upon thy word in his worthy matchless name amen

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