

Better Covenant with Better Promises

From: Overcoming the Overwhelming:
A 40-Day Journey toward Rediscovering Faith in God

Taken from Day 37: A Better Covenant Based on Better Promises
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In Day 37, the benefits of the New Covenant are discussed. Here are just a few.

They Shall All Know Me

Consider how many sermons have been preached and how many songs have been sung that express the desire to know God or to know Him more. So needlessly we long and weep for this glorious provision which we have already been given in this New Covenant. We know God.

Hebrews 8:11 KJV

*And they shall not teach every man his neighbor,
and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord:
for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.*

It is entirely delightful to me that the word for “not” is our dear friend **oume**. Remember that **oume** is a double negative which strengthens the denial. We will not, will not ever again teach each other to “know the Lord”. Why not? Because we already know Him.

The wording in Jeremiah (Hebrew), from which this passage is quoted, is also very revealing.

Jeremiah 31:34 KJV

*And they shall teach no more every man his
neighbour, and every man his brother, saying,
Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the
least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the
Lord.*

The Hebrew word for “more” is “**ode, ode**” and means “again, repeatedly, still, more: – again, all life long, at all, besides, but, else, further (-more), henceforth, (any) longer, (any) more.” Under the

New Covenant, His promise is that we will not (and thus, need not) repeatedly (all our lives long) teach each other to know the Lord.

During our early adult Christian education, we were continually taught to not only know the Lord but to know Him more. This left us with an unsatisfied longing for something that we already had. Please consider the psychological conflict this engenders.

Beyond the unnecessarily taught need to know the Lord were the endless things we needed to do in order to know Him and to know Him more—a very long and ever-expanding list.

When we stop *trying* to know the Lord or to know Him more, and we recognize that we already know God, we can begin to enjoy this promised grace. We know God, and I should add that the idea that some of us know God more than others is also off-kilter, for He adds, “from the least of them to the greatest.” Yes, it is entirely possible that someone who has walked with the Lord long and studied the Bible for more years will know more *about* God and clearly have more experience with God, but we are all on an equal plane when it comes to knowing God. Glory to His name. What a glorious blessing to know the living God. What rest!

Paul wrote about knowing God, but the church has mostly misinterpreted what he said. You have likely heard this passage used to show that we still need to know God or know him “more”, but read it again, and notice what it was that Paul said he did (in the past before he was a Christian) to know God.

Philippians 3:4-11

*If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: ⁵circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in Him, **not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in***

Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; ¹⁰that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, "if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Paul gave up his self-righteousness which he derived from obeying the law, for the righteousness which is only by faith in Christ—in other words, he put his faith in Jesus (was saved) so that he could know Christ. It's perfectly clear here. When we believe in Jesus, we know God.

For

The word “for” connects what has been previously said to the reason stated that follows. In other words, “because” He is merciful to our righteousness and He remembers our sins no more: God writes His law in our hearts; He is our God; we are His people, and we know Him. None of these things would be possible if we were not permanently forgiven.

I Will Be Merciful to Their Unrighteousness

The word for “merciful” used here is not the normal word used for “merciful” elsewhere in the New Testament. The only other time this word is used, it is in the sentence, “*Far be it from you.*” The concept of our sins being moved away from us is not uncommon in Scripture, but the author could have simply put it in those terms if that's what he meant. Perhaps we would do best to go back to Jeremiah, who first gave this prophecy. He wrote, “I will forgive their iniquity”, and this is a fair interpretation.

Yet, surely, if He was merciful to our unrighteousness when we were His enemies, He will be merciful to us now that we are His children.

Romans 5:19

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

Their Sins and Lawless Deeds I Will Remember No More

What a beautiful thing it is to know that He not only forgives our iniquities but that He will never ever again bring them to his remembrance. Believers in Jesus want to please God. We don't desire to sin. If we do sin, though, we are already forgiven, and God, who is our God, will never turn His back on us.

The reason this promise is so powerful and how it applies to overcoming the overwhelming is this. Often when we are suffering trials or sudden storms arrive, the enemy will bring to our remembrance some area in our lives where we are falling short. Because we've had it drummed into us that God sends hard times to purge us of our sins or that He ignores our prayers when we fall short, we are tempted to think these hard times are from God. This can cause us to accept them instead of fighting. When we finally fully see the truth that God is not keeping a record of our sins and that He is not bringing them to His remembrance, we can confidently fight against the lies and accusations of the enemy and stand in the time of trouble.

Romans 4:5-8

*But to him who does not work but **believes** on Him who justifies the ungodly, his **faith** is accounted for righteousness, ⁶just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:*

⁷"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,

And whose sins are covered; ⁸Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not (oume) impute sin."

