

*But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. Heb. 8:6*

As we ponder these words I'm sitting in the friendly confines of the ER at All Children's Hospital. Yes, Penny is back with issues that appear to be unrelated to COVID 19. Life goes on for people outside of the pandemic. In fact, I know that many of you are facing challenges unrelated to the virus. Life goes on and learning which challenges to tackle and which to set aside for a time is important.

Certainly, the biggest problem that any one of us faces is sin. It's the underlying cause for any other problem or issue that one faces be it a full-blown pandemic or the life clean up necessary after a so called little white lie. For His part God had a plan to save people from that sin from the moment of the Fall. He revealed that plan first in a curse spoken to the serpent there in the Garden, then through a series of Covenants with people like Noah and Abraham before enacting His Old Covenant with Moses and then finally sending His Son, Jesus, to fulfill that covenant and usher in a new one.

We have moved into the middle section of Hebrews where the author shows how superior the New is to the Old through the Scriptures themselves. The Old, which was gracious, paved the way for the New. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days declares the Lord; I will put my laws in their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God; and they shall be my people." The author writes, quoting Jeremiah.

You may recall that when Jesus was here the people often compared Him to Jeremiah. He is our Prophet, Priest and King beyond a doubt and Hebrews does a great job of flushing that out for us. Our section closes with a very significant reminder, "In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete." I often encounter people who are attempting to keep the old covenant or who act as if parts of it are still in effect. Honestly that would be like me going to my first car lender in order to make a payment. The lender doesn't even exist anymore but even if it did they wouldn't take my money, that debt is already paid in full.

When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the debt of your sin, in full. That's exactly what "It is finished." means. By virtue of your baptism into that death God has put his laws into your mind and written them on your heart.

As we move towards our second weekend in exile as a congregation, I have a request for you. Please keep all medical personnel in your prayers. During the writing of this devotion test

results have come back, medicine has kicked in and it looks as if Penny and I will be heading home later this afternoon, disaster averted. The workers here though are taking time away from their families to heal us when we are sick. When they go home, they are quarantined, unable to have physical contact with their children, their spouses, their friends. It's a great sacrifice that they are making. Like any such sacrifice it is patterned after the perfect Sacrifice of God the Son Jesus. So please pray for them as you fix your heart and mind on Him.

Have a great day, full of God's grace.