

# “God’s Plan For You”

Mark 10:32-45

The Lord speaks through the prophet Jeremiah, and He says: “A time is coming when I will make a new covenant...It will not be like the covenant I made with [Moses].” It is going to be like the covenant I made with Abraham. Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness. Keeping consistent with the loving and merciful nature of God, He says, “I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more.”

More than 600 years before Jesus drank the cup of suffering and died on the cross, Jeremiah told the people that a new covenant had to be established. While at my first church in Mellen, during Lent, the three churches in town would take turns hosting a Wednesday morning Lenten breakfast. After the food was served, there would be a speaker. One year, the pastor from the Congregational Church spoke and said something to the effect of: “Wouldn’t it have been wonderful if the people had only listened to Jesus, repented of their sins, followed His teachings, and not caused Him to suffer in the way that He did?”

I would always offer to take the final two weeks of breakfasts so that I would have time for rebuttal. There is a major problem with thinking that

things would have been better if the people had not crucified Jesus? Jesus had to be crucified. That was the plan ever since God spoke to Adam and Eve in the garden. There was no second option. The ransom price had to be paid. Jesus tells the disciples: “and what shall I say? ‘Father save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.”

A new covenant had to be established, and you cannot establish a covenant without blood being shed. When God made His covenant with Abraham, he told Abraham to sacrifice a heifer, a goat, a ram, a pigeon, and a dove. The animals were cut in half and laid on the ground. Blood was shed. Then Abraham fell into a deep sleep and the Lord told Abraham that his descendants would be slaves in a foreign land for 400 years, but that the Lord would rescue them and establish them in the land of Canaan: the Promised Land on which he was sleeping.

God made another covenant with Abraham through circumcision. Blood was shed. God made a covenant with Moses and the Israelites on Mt. Sinai. Moses was instructed to sacrifice some young bulls. Half of the blood was sprinkled on the altar of the Lord. Half of the blood was put in bowls and, using the stalk of a hyssop plant, Moses sprinkled that blood on the people. (And from that point on people wanted to sit in the back pews.)

When it came time to fulfill the Word of the Lord spoken through the prophets, when it came time for the new and better covenant to be

established, blood had to be shed.

Jesus tells His disciples at the Last Supper: “This is the new covenant in My blood shed for you for the remission of sins.” This new covenant of forgiveness only comes through the blood of Christ. Sins would not be paid for and Satan would not be defeated by the people of this world being nicer to one another – or being nicer to Jesus back in the day.

Jesus had to be lifted up on the cross, and His blood had to be spilled onto the ground. In doing this, sin, death and Satan were all defeated; the new covenant was established; the new covenant was fulfilled; and the good news is that the iniquity of all of our sins was paid for.

It was not through simple water that our sins were washed away in Baptism. It is not through mere bread and wine that we receive forgiveness, life, and salvation. It is through the living Word of God, joined with that water (Scripture tells us we were washed in the blood of the Lamb); it is through the Word of God (the broken body and shed blood of Christ our Lord), the Word made flesh, in, with, and under the form of bread and wine.

As we hear Christ say in the Gospel of Mark, “The Son of Man *will* be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they *will* condemn him to death . . . And they *will* mock Him and spit on Him, and flog Him and kill Him.” This was the plan. The wages of sin is death. Sin cannot be covered unless a sacrifice is made.

Jesus says elsewhere, “But I, *when* I am lifted up from the earth, will

draw all men to myself.” Just last week in our Gospel reading, we heard Jesus say, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so *must* the Son of Man be lifted up.” Through that sacrifice establishing this new and better covenant, God has fulfilled His promises; He has forgiven all of your iniquity and He remembers your sin no more.

In our confirmation class, I always make it a point to teach them what the word iniquity means. What is iniquity? Simply, it means guilt.

You are forgiven the guilt of your sin. You are not innocent – you are still a sinner, but you are declared “not guilty” by God who is the final judge. This is the doctrine of justification. Sinners are declared justified by God. Your sins are placed on Christ who carries them to the cross and grave. His righteousness is placed on you.

From the beginning, God had a plan to rescue you and all of Adam’s children from the Fall into sin. The sacrifice of His perfect Son – the blood of Jesus, the death of the Son of God was the only sacrifice suitable to fulfill the Law of God. That was the plan. “The Son of Man *will* be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they *will* condemn him to death . . . And they *will* mock Him and spit on Him, and flog Him and kill Him.”

That was the plan, because God had promised, “I *will* forgive their iniquity, and I *will* remember their sin no more.” Rejoice that you are included in God’s plan. Amen.