

Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

Series: Covenant: God's Way of Relationship



A Teaching Sermon: "The Covenant of Creation, Part Two"

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A covenant is a bond in blood sovereignly administered. A covenant is characterized by a bond, a binding oath, signs and seals, cutting, a bond in blood, life and death, provisions, and in the case of God's divine covenants, it is unilateral. God's multiple bonds with His people unite into a single relationship. Details may vary, but the covenants of God are one. By structure and by theme, God's covenants are one.

Each successive covenant builds on the previous relationship, continuing the basic emphasis already established. In the progression of the covenant of grace we can find a unity in historical experience as God deals with His people.

The framework of covenant is "I will be Your God and you will be My people." God is with us.

Last week we began looking at the Covenant of Creation. By the word of His mouth God created all that is. He declared it good. He created humanity, male and female, in His own likeness and image. He established a unique relationship between Himself and what He created. He also spoke to man and determined man's role and responsibilities. He also established unilaterally and sovereignly a life-and-death bond.

The covenant of creation is so-called because of the general aspect of the broad responsibilities of humanity to the Creator and then the focal point of the specific responsibility of man arising from the probation or testing command instituted by God.

The general aspects of this covenant are found in Genesis 1.26-28, Genesis 2.1-3, and in Genesis 2.15-18.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image: in the image of God He created him: male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Genesis 1:26-28.

"Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because in it He rested from all the work which God had created and made." Genesis 2:1-3

God provided creational orderings and holds humanity accountable for obeying the ordinances embedded in creation's structure. These orderings are considered inviolable and inherent in the structure of the world as God ordained it.

The first ordinance is the institution of the Sabbath. It begins with the pattern of God's creative activity with the structural order of six and one.

The Sabbath principle is abiding. We are to keep the Sabbath holy, refrain from work, restrain ourselves from employing others. We are to find re-creation and refreshment in the Lord and renew a right spirit within us. When our society disrupts the Sabbath principle, we bring disaster upon ourselves.

The second creation ordinance is that of marriage. God saw that it was not good that man should be alone (Genesis 2.18) and so formed an appropriate helper. Marriage is sanctified by God, ordained from the time of creation.

And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone: I will make him a helper comparable to him." Genesis 2:18

The original woman was formed from a part of her husband. Each subsequent man must leave his parents and cleave to his wife, thus constituting these two people as one. (Genesis 2.22-24)

Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man, He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. Genesis 2:22-24.

The oneness is not merely physical but refers to the abiding condition of union achieved in marriage. "Being one flesh" implies an interpersonal fusion arising out of two and only two entering into such a covenant of companionship. One man is to be joined to one woman. (Matthew 19.6, Mark 10.6-8, Ephesians 5.31) Marriage unites two people.

The internal order is that the woman was created for the man (1 Cor. 11.9). The woman corresponds to the man and so is appropriate help. The woman is not lesser for both male and female are created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1.27). She corresponds because she is equal in personhood.

In heaven there is no marriage (Matthew 22.30). In the consummate state the woman's role as helper comes to an end. In that state the woman enjoys consummation in her own completeness. Prior to that she shares with the man the responsibility to subdue the earth to the glory of God. She joins in the task of forming a culture glorifying to the Creator. Thus in the gospel there is neither male nor female. (Galatians 3.28)

In 1 Corinthians 7:1, Paul sets the creational Genesis 2.18 beside his own "it is good that a man not marry" due to the present distress. Thus a man or a woman may remain unmarried.

All of creation originates from God. Man and woman are mutually dependent or interdependent. The man is to love as a saving head of the wife and family. The man remembers that life comes from the woman in childbearing. In this she helps fulfill the creation mandate to multiply and fill the earth. She is to respect her husband. He is the "house band."

Polygamy, divorce, and homosexuality all contradict the creational order of marriage. Sexual aberrations result in judicial abandonment by God (Romans 1.26, 27). God accomplishes His purposes of redemption in conformity with creation. Marriage has binding significance on man-in-redemption. Marriage mirrors the relationship of Christ and the called-out-ones, His Bride.

The third creational ordering is that of labor. Meaningful rest comes after meaningful labor. There is a constancy to labor, a cycle to it. If there are consequences to breaking the law of the Sabbath, there are also consequences to breaking the law of labor. Six days of labor are both a duty and a blessing.

God blesses us with the desire, ability, and means to work. He gave humanity a creation mandate (Genesis 1.27, 28) to subdue the earth and rule over every living creature, not in domination, but in dominion. We are to bring out all the potential within the creation in order to offer the most glory to the Creator. We are to cultivate and keep the garden (Genesis 2.15). We are to see labor as a principal means by which we enjoy the creation. We are to have a proper respect for work. (2 Thess. 3.10-12) Work or labor provides meaningful structure to our existence and is a blessing from God. Sometimes a person has to get very sick or very tired to come to the realization that work is a blessing to be enjoyed. It gives us purpose and definition.

Jesus said that his meat was to do the will of His Father and to finish His work. He was about His Father's business. Jesus came from heaven to earth with a work to do. He didn't sit around idly and expect things to come to Him. He worked. He labored for the meat that doesn't perish. He told us to pray for laborers for the harvest. He told us to be busy in the work of the kingdom. We are to use our talents and gifts and everything God has given us to maximum potential for God's glory. Get busy. Get going.

In addition to the Sabbath, marriage, and labor, **God gave a specific command to Adam, humanity's federal head.** He was not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2.16, 17).

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Genesis 2:16, 17

This was the focal point of man's testing. This is not some spiritual things going on separate from the cultural mandate. God works in the whole of life. Covenant is a total-life relationship. By the time of the new covenant in Christ we will see that the mandate to preach the gospel to all creation merges with the mandate to form a culture glorifying to the Creator.

The tree stood in the midst of the garden of God as a reminder to Adam that man is not God. Man is not to determine in his own selfhood what is good and what is evil. What God says is good is good and what God says is evil is evil. Adam is God's vicegerent, a trustee as it were. He may have the world under his dominion, but remember who is Creator. God gave Adam everything to enjoy. Only one thing was forbidden, but it is still a radical obedience. Bountiful blessings are not to be confused with the position of Creator. **No one but Adam had this choice. He had the ability to choose submission to God's word on that basis of "God says" alone.**

Israel faced this test in its wilderness wanderings. The purpose was to learn that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Deut. 8.3). Existence depends on God, on fellowship with the Creator. **God orders life.**

Jesus knew that (Matt. 4.1ff). Jesus repulsed Satan's temptation to misuse power and position for personal gratification. Jesus is the Son of God but He did not use His rightful powers to alleviate discomfort arising from God's providential orderings. God orders life.

Radical obedience provides the key to blessing under the covenant of creation. Obey the Word of the Creator purely for the sake of obedience, and life in perpetuity will be Adam's and his posterity. Adam radically disobeyed and violation of the covenant resulted in death. With his disobedience, Adam was denied access to the tree of life. He no longer had the ability to be sustained in the condition of covenantal blessing and life. He had no way of relief from the death curse within himself. He was in an estate of sin and misery, an estate of total depravity. He could not save himself and neither can anyone from his posterity save themselves. Salvation, a return to the Father, would have to come another way, by grace.

But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:4-7 NKJV © 2020 Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

Blessing the Lord Jesus Christ, the Promised One, who heals, saves, and delivers,

Mary Craig

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“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.”
Revelation 21:7

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