

# **The *Doctrine* of Family & Covenant Keeping**

Family camp Providence Reformed Church

Michewana

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# Psalm 78

- *'Keep the covenant', 'Live by the law'*. Verse 1, 5, 7c, 10.
- All Israel, including children. Verse 1, 6.
- Impossible. Verse 8.
- Problem. Verse 8,22. Their heart, No faith (trust). No love.
- Wise counsel what to do. Verse 2-4, 7b, 11-16

# What is a covenant?

- The word 'covenant' appears 299 times in the Bible. Related words as 'promise', 'testament' also very often. The concept of the covenant appears everywhere in the Bible.
- Definition: 'an agreement between two or more parties with binding commitments, by which they enter into a relationship.'
- Many covenants in the Bible. Between persons, nations and with God.
- Some characteristics:
  - Mostly mutual conditions. Sinai.
  - Mostly mutual promises. Confirmed by oaths. Ebal and Gerizim.
  - Mostly blessings on keeping the covenant and cursus on breaking the covenant.
- Covenants with God:
  - Covenant of works (creation). Paradise.
  - Covenant of grace. Paradise, Noah, Abraham. David, Prophets (new covenant), Christ.

# Covenant of works

- Covenant of works (or creation)
  - WCF 7.2 *'life was promised to Adam and in him to his posterity upon the condition of perfect and personal obedience.'*
  - Promise: life.  
Tree of life (sacrament)
  - Condition: personal and perfect obedience to God.  
Warning: Tree of good and evil.
  - Curse: death.
  - This covenant is broken.
    - The promise is unreachable. Angels block the way back.
    - The condition can not be met anymore.
    - The curse of death came to all humankind. Isaiah 24:5. No exception. No escape.

# Covenant of Grace

- WCF 7.3 *'Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace: wherein he freely offered unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.'*
- First covenant with righteous people. Second with sinners! Covenant of Grace
- Righteousness by faith
- Jesus is the Mediator of this covenant. Paid the penalty (Passive obedience). Lived righteous life (active obedience).
- Jesus met the conditions of covenant of Grace.
- God accepts His obedience as a substitute for every sinner coming to Him in repentance and faith.
- Through faith, by grace, no longer under the curse of the covenant of works!
- Through faith, by grace, blessing of life
- Administrations: Paradise (Gen 3:15), Noah, Abraham. David, New Covenant (Prophets), Christ.

# Members of the covenant

- Gen 17:7, *'And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.'*
- Children included, receive sign/seal of the covenant, circumcision
- Acts 2:39, *'For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.'*
- Children included, receive sign/seal of the covenant, baptism.
- Families are important in the covenant!

# Covenant obligations / Keeping covenant

- Faith

- John 3:16 *'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'*
- John 6:28-29 *John 6:28-29, 'Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.'*

- Evangelical obedience

- John 15:10, *'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.'*

- Good works

- James 2:17, *'Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.'*
- And verse 20, *'But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?'*

# Relationship work and faith

- Saved by Grace alone! No works, no merits! Covenant is covenant of Grace, one-sided by God.
  - Romans 9:16, *'So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.'*
- But without the fulfilment of these three conditions there is no salvation. No covenant blessings, but curse.
- Faith. Instrument. Empty hand. Without faith. Covenant members, but not living covenant member.
- Obedience and good works. Consequential conditions. Follow on grace. Rewarded by grace, through Christ!

# Benefits of the covenant of Grace

- All that is necessary for life and salvation. HC Q&A 1

## Conclusion

- Covenant focusses on the believer and his children.
- The family plays an important role in keeping the covenant: faith, obedience, and good works.
- How?