

## Covenant Life

- Our next prayer meeting is Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup> at 3 PM. We plan to have Children's ministry, but Formation teachings are on hold while we discern the next series.
- **Youth Ministry RESTART!** - We had a wonderful retreat on August 24<sup>th</sup> with over 60 youth attending. It was a great kick-off to the restart of our High School and Jr. High Ministries. **The next event will be a Swim Party** at the Peterman's from 12pm-4:00pm. All 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Graders are welcome! You can learn more about this ministry by contacting Pati Hidalgo or Josh Reichert at [high-school-ministry@GodsDelight.org](mailto:high-school-ministry@GodsDelight.org).
- At the prayer meeting last week, the Lord spoke a strong message about praising, thanking, and worshiping Him. The Lord is always providing for us. If we rest in his shadow and remain available to the Holy Spirit, He will reveal Himself and send us forth. The prayer meeting [audio](#) and [transcript](#) are available on our website at [GodsDelight.org](http://GodsDelight.org).
- Your ongoing financial support to the Community is sincerely appreciated. Please donate online [here](#) or mail your donations to P.O. Box 225008 Dallas, TX 75222.

**Reflection** (Readings: Deut. 4:1-2, 6-8; Psalm 15; James 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27; and Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23)

In the readings for today, the Word speaks to us of the importance of obedience to the Father's loving will and commands that bring life. Moses enjoins on the Hebrews the Lord's statutes and commandments, "that you may live, and may enter the in and take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you." He exhorts the Hebrews to neither "add to" nor "subtract from" these statutes and commandments.

Psalm 15 poetically reminds us of what it means to obediently keep the commandments and promises that, "whoever does these things will never be disturbed." The apostle James strongly admonishes the first-century Christians (and Christians today) not to "delude ourselves", but to "BE DOERS of the Word and NOT HEARERS ONLY."

In the Gospel of Mark, the apostle contrasts the false obedience of the self-righteous Pharisees and scribes with Jesus' loving teaching of the obedience of the heart. Quoting Isaiah he challenges us, "This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me; teaching as doctrines human precepts." Jesus' true followers guard their hearts by loving obedience to the Gospel of love no matter what comes our way. We understand that it is not anything that the

world throws at us that makes us unclean, but the things that come out of us that defile us.

In my walk with the Lord, I have found that it is so easy for me to rationalize my selfish disobedience to the Gospel of Love. I find myself falling into empty ritual obedience instead of heartfelt love. I rationalize the ugly things that come out of me with lazy excuses such as "that's just the way I am." Sometimes I even dismiss my sin or disobedience because I had "good intentions".

It is clear that Jesus does not want our sacrifices and rituals but wants our hearts. His holy love beckons us to freely return his love with our whole hearts. To do so, we must be honest with ourselves before the Lord regarding our disobedience to his Gospel of love which leads to life. This requires that we confess and repent of our sins and allow His love and forgiveness to transform us. The Scriptures promise that He is always faithful, even when we are unfaithful.

Let us pray, "Jesus, thank you for loving me. I offer you my whole heart this day and cast into the ocean of your mercy all of my sin and disobedience. I submit to you everything within me that resists you and your perfect love and that you make into the child your heavenly Father created me to be from the beginning of time. I trust that You will not abandon me to my weakness, but invite Your Holy Spirit to continuously dwell in me and help me to bring as many as possible into a loving relationship with You! Amen"

God Bless,  
Mike

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