

A new heart

Sermon on Sunday of Exaudi

Jeremia 31, 31-34



*31 "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, " declares the LORD. 33 "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

*34 No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more*

On May 8, 2020, the day of unconditional surrender of the German "Wehrmacht" in the year 1945 was commemorated. And thus also that the world was liberated from the terror of the Nazi regime. The question is: why did so many people have to die before signing this unconditional surrender? Even if the same treaty had been signed a year prior to this, many millions would have been saved! Furthermore we have to ask the question, why people are doing things, which have absolutely no benefit for anyone at all? If we get to the bottom of this question, we always come back to the same problem ... People don't just divert from a path they have set their mind on, IN particular if that same road is an evil one, they do not depart from it. If lust or sin has taken hold of a person, there is usually no going back. Even if the road so chosen seems extremely unreasonable. You can see that again and again in the history of the Bible. One can there ask the same question: Why did the people of Israel rebel against God? Did God suppress them? Did He exploit Israel? Or were they mistreated in any way? No. All the time, God took the people of Israel by the hand like a dear father and led them through all the dangers. Rescued them from captivity in Egypt and brought them to the land where milk and honey flowed. Why then this rebellion against God? The same can be asked at the very beginning of creation. Adam and Eve had everything they needed. Why did they willfully act against God? Even if they knew that their actions would only bring death? Looking back, we can scold the Israelites, Adam and Eve, and many other people in the world. But it gets really difficult when we look into our own hearts and see exactly the same laws that happen elsewhere in the world there. "Why did I do this?" ... Do you know this despair and discouragement too? Have you ever done something that you bitterly regretted? Something which you cannot understand until today? What is behind all this is the ancient rebellion against God. If sin grips us, we are hopelessly lost. We are drawn into the pit and there is no salvation for us. In the time of the Old Testament, when once again the nation of Israel had fallen into such a pit, God started a new contract. When signing any contract, both partners must want to sign such a contract. . In most contracts, both partners have to promise something. In the case of the Old Testament, God's people had to promise to keep the commandments. God would bless them for that. Such a contract can only really work if both

partners want this same contract. If one of the two partners does not really want the contract, difficulties will arise again and again. And that was exactly the problem with the contract between God and the people in the Old Testament. People didn't want to make a contract with God. They also didn't want God. They preferred to make themselves God. And that was the basic problem with Adam and Eve too. And every time we get caught up in sin again and do something that we will later regret, it's basically the same problem. We want to overthrow God and prefer to be God ourselves. In the course of human history it became increasingly clear that such a contract between God and his people cannot and will never work. After the people were in a bitter situation once again and they had left God, God's word came over Jeremiah: "Behold!" God said ... Whenever we hear this word "BEhold" in the Bible, we may know that something very important is coming. "Behold!" And what God announced this time was a whole new covenant. This covenant would no longer be like the many old contracts between the people and God that were repeatedly broken. God would no longer want to sign with an unreliable partner. No! The new thing would be that God would unilaterally make a covenant. From then on, God would no longer hope for a just partner. He would be the just partner himself. God himself would give up part of himself and pour part of himself into the hearts of men ... Many years later and shortly before his crucifixion, Jesus took the cup and said: "This is the New Testament in my blood!" Jesus fulfills all that Jeremiah spoke of. Jesus was the perfect will of God. Jesus was in person ... the new contract of God. He lived exactly what God wanted. He fulfilled the contract between God and man. And ultimately, He sealed this contract through his death and resurrection. His blood was poured out and was thus the new contract between man and God. Henceforth, our relationship with God would only ever go through this gate: Jesus' resurrection and death is the New Testament between God and his people. In Jesus another law would operate. I am not asked to do God's will. I am also not forced to surrender without commitment to God's omnipotence. In Jesus, however, I recognize God's will completely and recognize that this will is good. God's will is good for me! And through the Holy Spirit that God poured out into people's hearts, God will actually no longer be alien to people. Jeremiah sees all of this in advance and says: People will simply do what God wants ... on their own. Each would volunteer to do what God's will would do. In the days it will not even be necessary to say to the people: "Know the Lord!" Because they will recognize Him all by themselves and they will know what is good for them.

Jesus Christ is the foundation of the new covenant between God and his people. In any human relationship, people can only engage in a relationship if you can be sure that it will be good. When a relationship is broken, it is all the more difficult to bring healing back. What God gives us in Jesus is this new foundation! Do you feel that your relationships between other people are broken? Then let Jesus go ahead! Do you feel that your old mistakes weigh on you and you are impure and do not fit to God? There is a new creation in Jesus, you don't have to look to your old life! Do you feel you can't pray? Pray in Jesus' name! In everything we do or leave, Jesus should always go first. Exactly as He preceded us in the resurrection, so in all of life. And if I stand before God one day, then Jesus should also go there and be my firm hope. He is already there and speaks to God for me. Amen