



Spring TIM Talks

Dates: April 28-30, 2024

“Cutting Covenants -- God’s Relationship with Humanity”



“Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!”
-- Psalm 50.5

The Spring TIM Talks (April 28-30) will focus on covenants their use in the biblical witness, especially as they are used by God to enter into solemn and binding relationships with humankind.

In Genesis 9, the Rainbow is appropriated by God as a sign of the Covenant.

These will be some of the topics we will explore:

What is a Covenant? The dictionary defines “covenant” as “a usually formal, solemn, and binding agreement between two or more parties -- especially for the performance of some action.” You could think of it as a contract “on steroids”: a formal, solemn, and binding agreement that has more power and force than the legal license you “agree” to or “accept” without even reading the details of this legally binding agreement to download software updates for your cell phone.

In the biblical witness, covenants (whether between individuals or between individual and God) are regularly accompanied by a sacrifice which recognizes and validates the solemnity and formality of this binding agreement. In Genesis

21.27, for example, Abraham and the pagan king Abimelech enter into a covenant at Beer-Sheba. Jesus, in pouring out the cup at the Last Supper, reflects on the new covenant which will be inaugurated through his death on the cross.

Why Do Covenants Matter? In the Bible, covenants are a preferred form of binding agreement. The formality related to their nature suggests that they relate to significant and solemn commitments -- commitments that must be taken very seriously. The covenants God makes with humankind help us to understand the significance and investment God invests in these relationships. They also challenge us to respond in a reciprocal way.

What Do Covenants Teach Us? To me, this is the most interesting question and one we will devote the most time to exploring during our time together. If you want to know what is important to an organization or group, look at the stipulations in their covenantal agreements. We had some friends who decided that living in a particular golf community was not for them because the restrictive covenants prevented them from doing all the seasonally goofy sorts of self expression (like celebrating Spring with a lawn full of plastic pink flamingos) that they loved. "The whole focus was on the Home Owners Association's greatest value -- conformity. We just couldn't handle it."

What matters to God? As we look at the different covenants God makes with people in Scripture, we will soon discover a kind of matrix of divine values. The covenant God makes in Genesis 9, for example, celebrates the divine value of abundant life for all creation as well as God's own pledge to creation of constancy and mercy. Our study of covenants will help us understand those things that matter to God.

Join us **April 28-30** for this time of in depth study and great Christian fellowship. As always, our time together will include good food and good fellowship. Full and partial scholarships are available -- so don't let the cost get in the way of your participation. Email timothy@glacercamp.org to register.