

First Saturday of Lent – 2/16

"And today the Lord is making this agreement with you: you are to be a people peculiarly His own, as He promised you; and provided you keep all His commandments, He will then raise you high in praise and renown and glory above all other nations He has made, and you will be a people sacred to the Lord your God as He promised" (Deuteronomy 26:18-19)

Approximately every nine months, whether we want it or not, spring will come to those living in the moderate climates. It may arrive a little early or a little late but we can depend on its arrival.

Unfortunately there is a lot in life that is not nearly as dependable as the seasons, and human relationships seem to be particularly unreliable. Archeologists have discovered the records of contracts and legal agreements in some of the earliest human civilizations. These records testify that apparently a handshake or verbal promise was often not enough. Unlike the seasons, the human promise could not necessarily be counted on, even for those living in ancient times. The human history of broken treaties unfortunately seems to indicate that written contracts did not insure that a commitment or agreement would be upheld either.

In this reading from Deuteronomy we find that God wants to enter into a contract with us, a promise with us. He doesn't have to do this but it seems that He will try anything to help us become more faithful. Perhaps if He spells out for us what we need to do and what He will do in return then we will realize what a good deal this is for us. Perhaps we will work at upholding our end of the bargain.

All that we need to do in order to be raised up high is to follow God's commandments. Christ made it very easy for us to remember them when He honed them to just two: love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself. If you do that then heaven will be yours!

How often we break this contract. How often humanity forgets this agreement. Perhaps we don't trust God enough. Perhaps we think that this promise is too good to be true. Perhaps the long-term benefits seem too far away and immediate gratification is just too alluring.

Fortunately for us God didn't right an escape clause into His part of the contract. He will honor His side. Maybe today is a good time to start honoring our side?

Reflection Questions

- 1. How does my love of God and neighbor influence my daily actions?*
- 2. What kind of covenant is God calling me to enter into?*