

New Relationship – The day of Covenant

(Gen 12 :1-9, Ps 100, Col 2:6-15, Mt 11;28-30)

The triune God of the Bible is a God of blessing and He loves us and wants to bless abundantly all those who come to him in faith. The Bible says that He rewards every one who earnestly seeks Him (Heb 11:6). The question is are we seeking God or His blessings? The giver or the gifts? Does not everything that belongs to the father belongs to his children also? Even before we ask God has a plan to bless us. The Bible says that God blessed Adam and Eve to be fruitful, increase in number, fill the earth, subdue it and rule over (Gen 1:26).

We are blessed to do God's work. But we want God to bless us even though we don't care to do what He wants us to do. That's why the Psalmist says , "**Blessed are they who keep His statutes and seek Him with all their heart**" (Ps 119:2). The Bible is God's eternal covenant to bless His people .The three dimensions of this covenant are

1. I am your God .
2. You are my people.
3. I dwell among you.

In his presence is fullness of joy: at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore (Psalm 16:11). If we have that relationship with God as His people there will not be anything lacking for us not only this year but forevermore. The Bible also tells us that God is the Father of all because it is He who has made them. Luke traces the genealogy of Jesus the Son of God to Adam the first son of God . All the people who have come from this one man Adam are his children . But they have chosen to disown their father . God has a plan to make them his children through His Son Jesus Christ. God sent Jesus on this mission and Jesus began to fulfill that mission as child of eight days.

If we celebrate 25th December as the birthday of Jesus then New year day will be the day of Circumcision of the Lord. On the day of his baptism Jesus had set out on fulfilling the mission after he was anointed with the Holy Spirit.

In today's Epistle lesson Paul speaks of baptism in relation to circumcision .If circumcision is the sign of the Old Covenant God made with his people, Baptism is the sign of the New covenant that identifies a person with the family of God. Therefore God is giving us yet another chance to make a covenant with him through Jesus Christ.

God is asking all those who make a covenant or renew their covenant, to take his yoke of discipleship and start learning by the study of the scriptures to be approved unto God as good servants who have done well(2 Tim 2:15). This is today's gospel lesson . In the Old Testament lesson God is asking us to set out on a spiritual Journey of a mission to the heavenly city by going through the world and bless it as channels of blessing . This is the message of God on the first day of this year. **Let us say yes to God like Abraham and be blessed to be a blessing to many.**

The Epistle lesson :Col 2:6-15
Sons and daughters of God through Christ our Savior

For those who are in Christ Jesus every day, every month and every year is new. Until we receive Christ as our personal savior and Lord, many people may wish us happy new year but we will be still in the old year or the old era of sin , darkness, death and with out any direction for life. The old things pass away and we become new only when we receive Christ into our hearts as our Lord and savior(2 Cor 5;17).Then all the heavenly blessings are ours. Jesus fulfilled the Law with all its regulations and redeemed us from the Law. So we are no more under the Law or the Old Covenant. Our obedience is not just to the letter. Mere circumcision with out whole hearted devotion to God is of no use. That's why Moses asked the Israelites to circumcise their hearts and obey God and stop being stubborn and stiff necked(Deut 10:16)

When we receive Christ that is when we confess our sins and ask him to come into our hearts ,He will cleanse our hearts with His blood (I Jn 1;9,7). What all God the Father had promised through the prophets ,Jesus would fulfill them. He will do a heart transplant as prophesied by Ezekiel (Ez 36:26,27) and gives us a **new heart** in the place of the stony stubborn heart . This is the spiritual circumcision Christ will do to our hearts by the Holy Spirit baptism. When we put our faith in God through Christ , that is believe in the Gospel of our salvation that Christ died for our sins according to scriptures, was buried and rose again according to the Scriptures and invite him to come into our hearts we will be united with Christ in His death and resurrection .This identification with Jesus is the Holy spirit baptism, by which we have been given the fullness of the divine nature of God . The old sinful nature of pride and selfishness i.e. the "I" dies and Christ begins to live in us by His spirit(Gal 2:20). God no more looks at us as sinners but saints in Christ Jesus. That doesn't mean we have

become saints immediately. But the process is set into operation as we continue to live in Him, rooted and built in Him .We begin to grow in faith by our obedience to Jesus and become strong day by day by learning at His feet as we are taught by our Master about true living of overflowing thankfulness . This is the Gospel lesson.

The Gospel lesson :Mat 11:25-30
Students of God through Christ our teacher

Many swamis and gurus are offering courses these days in the art of living . The funny thing is they want to teach about life with out knowing what life is . Who can give the authentic definition of life, but God the author and source of life ? Jesus is the Life(Jn 14:6). He also gave the divine definition of life that is eternal ,abundant and victorious and is inviting all to learn the art of true living that is blessed , bountiful and blessing to others. The invitation from the divine Guru is to come to Him, take his yoke and learn from Him humility(to be poor in spirit) that gives us heaven and meek ness that gives the earth. Heaven and earth are ours, What more we want?

The yoke almost looks like a cross. No body can be the "Sishya" of the divine guru with out taking his yoke , i.e. the cross and make a covenant with him to follow daily. Living is a daily affair, not a Sunday ritual till we go to the home of our eternal rest. In the Bible we are asked to do three things daily. Carrying the cross to be victorious is the second thing we have to do . The first thing is watch daily at his doors. and listen to him waiting to be blessed(Pr 8:34). The third thing is to proclaim the gospel of salvation daily(Ps 96:2) .

God the Father is well pleased when we accept Jesus as our personal savior and decide to follow Him. That also brings praise from God the Son Jesus because we have become wise unto salvation. Jesus is our divine wisdom, righteousness ,holiness and redemption. In the beginning of the year we always plan to do so many things .That is indeed good. But we need to make plans to acquire the much needed wisdom of God that comes through the knowledge of Jesus Christ. We need to make a resolution to set time to read, study, memorize and meditate on the word of God (The Bible)(Deut 17:19-21, Is 34:16, 2 Tim 2:15, (Pr 7:1-2, Josh 1:8).May we all enroll ourselves for the degree WDGFS(Well done good faithful servant) in the Jesus Open University of Life(Mt 11:28,29) by deciding to follow Jesus as His disciples and work out our salvation with fear and trembling(Phil 2:12). To get this degree WDGFS every disciple has to work out on a project in the mission of God and submit a Project report of how he

has used his time, Talents and treasure. We find in the 11th Chapter of Hebrews those who got WDGFS by working well on various projects in the mission of God . In today's Old Testament lesson God is asking us to work out on a project like Abraham to be a channel of Blessing where ever we live.

The Old Testament lesson : Gen 12:1-9 Stewards of God's blessings through Christ Our Master

One usual practice of our New year worship services is taking promise cards. Very few remember that promise after some time . The Bible is the book of great and precious promises of God .He gave these promises for us to claim all of them by faith and participate in His divine nature and escape the corruption in the world because of evil desires(2 Pet 1:4). Those who do not know their God will be satisfied with one promise. If we are in Christ Jesus, beginning from the promise given to Abraham in this passage , "I will make you..., I will bless you .." every promise is ours, not just one promise that is there in the promise card we take today. Remember we are heirs to all that is promised to Abraham in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:28). All that is promised to Abraham can be given the caption

" Eternal life that is abundant and ever victorious".

But the question is do we want this blessing to keep it for ourselves or will we give it to others? Desiring all God's blessings for ourselves is living for ourselves. Spiritual children of Abraham should no longer live for themselves but for the one who died for them and was raised again(2Cor 3:15). That is what is becoming an new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Cor 5:17)

God is ready to bless us and make us blessing ? But are we ready to leave the Ur of our dear idols, old ways and self and set out on a spiritual Journey of mission like Abraham , holding on to the promise of the word of life (The Bible) to bless

the world which is full of people who are

1. poor physically to some extent but destitute spiritually,
2. prisoners of Satan by their addiction to drinking and drugs,
3. blind to spiritual realities of eminent death and hell with out Christ, and

4. oppressed by the heartless fellow human beings

with the Gospel of Jesus Christ that can make

1. the people rich of His glorious riches of His inheritance,
2. set them free from sin ,self and Satan
3. give them not only sight to see spiritual realities but a vision of God
4. release from all the powers that keep them oppressed and bound
5. and make this 2010 ,the year of the Lord's favor.

This is the mission on which Jesus has come and is sending us into the world .

May God help us to be channels of all His blessings ! Wish you happy bountiful, victorious and blessed new year !

Life Application :

1. Confess all sins and deeds of old nature to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ and to be made new.
2. Receive Christ to be saved and receive heavenly inheritance.
3. Follow Christ as his disciples to be made by Him to fulfill his mission to bless the world.
4. Meditate on the life Abraham to live a life of faith like him.