

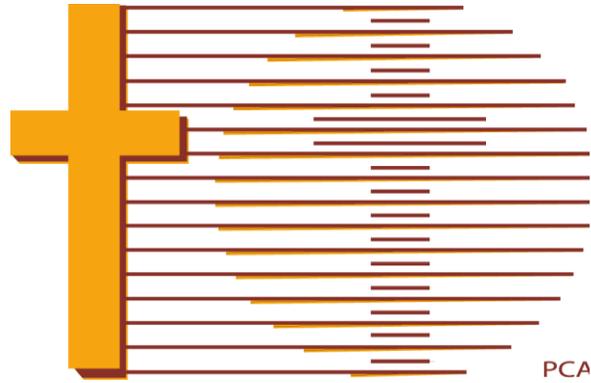
# **AN INVITATION TO CONSIDER**

**1st Presbyterian Church**  
*Of Montgomery*

***Restoring God's Covenant  
& Its Promises***

A prayerful pursuit of God's promises in Christ

# 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church



*of Montgomery*

[www.1stChurchMontgomery.com](http://www.1stChurchMontgomery.com)

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**1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church**  
***Restoring God's Covenant & Its Promises***

*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people*  
~ Hebrews 8:10

***A Tale of Lost & Found***

It was a sad and hopeful time. Young king Josiah sat on the throne and God's people were sorely oppressed. Their fathers and grandfathers had forgotten their God and His covenant promises. Living off the blessings of their faithful forefathers, they gradually abandoned their faith in the Lord God. They still maintained the outward forms. The Temple was still there and some form of worship was conducted. The people still thought of themselves as the people called by God's name. Yet it was all outward show. In their hearts they really didn't know what it meant to be God's people. Nor did they have anyone to teach them.

Then Josiah became king - a young man whose heart was dedicated to God, who surrounded himself with godly men, men who remembered something about God's covenant with His people. Diligently they worked to restore the covenant and its promises to the people. But their efforts were hindered by one giant loss - the Bible had been lost many years earlier. They had heard that God recorded His covenant in a book, but no one remembered ever seeing a copy of it. Then one day while they were cleaning out junk that had accumulated over the years in the back of the Temple, they came across a very old book. That's right, they found the Bible, the record of God's covenant with His people and all the promises of blessing on them and their children!

Their work of restoration took on a whole new life. And for a while, God's people enjoyed once again the covenant and its promises.

***Another Tale of Lost & Found***

We live in the midst of another Josiah generation. Many of us are tired of a faith that promises lots, but delivers shoddy imitations of the pleasures found in this world. We hunger for a faith that understands the way the world really is. We long for a faith that transcends the mediocrity and empty promises of this world. We want a restoration of God's covenant of grace and its promises.

Many of our forefathers have forgotten what it means to be a Christian. Enjoying the blessings of the faithfulness of previous generations, they got lost, and thought that the successes of this world were the fulfillment of the promises for the next. They've maintained the outward forms - most Americans still call themselves by Christ's name, Christian (= little Christ). Yet they've forgotten what it means to live in the covenant. They've forgotten how to do it. And they've forgotten to pass it on to their children.

Lest you think harshly of them, they're not entirely to blame. You see they too lived in a period when the Bible was lost. The intellectual challenge to the Bible known as Higher Criticism came to their churches in the late 1800's. By the early 1900's this Bible-destroying principle took over the teaching of most of their pastors. Many of these men of God saw the danger and tried to respond to it. But their answers accepted too much of their opponents' presuppositions. The result was that instead of restoring God's people to their understanding of the covenant and the enjoyment of its promises, this era of preaching only added to the confusion of God's people.

Today, those who consider themselves faithful Christians, evangelicals, really don't know what to believe about Christ and how He wants His people to live. Instead of growing in the grace that produces holiness and joy, evangelicals have become evan-jellyfish - anything goes as long as it seems to work and makes me happy. But still the tiredness, the hunger, and the longing remains.

But God is not pleased to leave His people in such a state. He is not pleased to leave them with a mediocre, empty, and less than abundant life (John 10:10). He has begun to stir up the hearts of many of His people. Numerous voices have risen in the Church calling for another reformation, a restoration of God's covenant and its promises. God has promised that what was lost can be found again (1Ch 28:9). We are a church that believes in this promise. We are a group of God's people who have chosen to seek Him, knowing He has promised we will find Him. We are a covenant community that has added its voice to the call, "a restoration of the covenant and its promises!"

### ***Redemption - It's Not Just Fire Insurance***

Redemption begins with God's promise to save His people from their sins and the just punishment those sins deserve. He does promise, through the person and work of His Son Jesus Christ, to save His people from the fires of Hell their sins so justly deserve. But redemption is more than this. It's not just a fire insurance policy that we get to cash in when we die.

Redemption also includes the promise of His presence in our lives in this life. Redemption at its heart is about the restoration of our relationship with God - we are His people and He is our God.

When God saves us He enters us into His family, the Church. And like every family, God has a particular way of life for His children. This is the covenant of grace - the way of life for the Christian. This life is both simple and profound.

### ***A Simple Life***

The Christian life, the life of the covenant of grace, is much simpler than many churches make it out to be. Instead of filling our lives with activities we hope will make God happy, and we hope will receive His blessing, the life of the covenant is lived by faith.

We learn more and more to walk by faith – to trust in Christ and the complete sufficiency of what He's already accomplished for our redemption. Literally there is nothing left for us to add. All such striving in the Christian life is a waste of energy, a denial of God's covenant promises, and a loss of the joy that already belongs to those in God's family!

We learn more and more to bear the fruits of repentance – to say no to the remaining sinful desires, demands, and deeds still residing in our flesh. This is not a matter of maintaining our righteousness, for that is already secure in Christ. Rather, it is a matter of enjoying the freedom from our former slavery – Christ broke sin's shackles, He snapped its chains, and we no longer need live in the misery of that slavery anymore!

We learn more and more to live in worship – to live our lives in the presence of God. Instead of requiring hours and hours of service in churchy activities of questionable value, God simply calls us to daily worship. In the same way we live by daily feeding our bodies material food, so God teaches us to daily come to Him for spiritual food – daily private devotions, daily family worship, and weekly gathered worship as His covenant family!

The Christian life, the covenant way of life as taught by God, is simple. Yet it's not simplistic.

### ***A Profound Life***

The way of covenant life is profound. God has called us to be holy as He is holy (1 Peter 1:15). And His covenant promises us that this is not a burden on our shoulders, but His. For God promises to make us like the model of perfect human holiness, His Son Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:4).

Thus we expect and experience what the world neither knows nor enjoys – the on-going redemption of our lives. In the covenant way of life: sinful habits are ruined, ugly mannerisms are renovated, and demeaning behavior is replaced. In the covenant way of life: men and women learn the wonder of living as brothers and sisters in God's restored family; fathers learn the joy of sacrificing for their wives and raising their children in the admonition of the Lord; wives learn the satisfaction of submitting to their husbands and loving their children for the Lord; children learn the glories of obeying their parents and trusting in the promises of the covenant of grace and its Promise-Fulfiller, even Jesus Christ!

The Christian life, the way of covenant life, is simple and profound. And it can be found, again.

### ***Restoring What's Been Lost***

We are a group of families who are learning to restore our lives to God's covenant and its promises.

- We are remembering: learning from God's Holy word exactly what Christ has done for us, what He will do for us when He returns, and what He does for us now in this life.
- We are repenting: learning to turn from all forms of self-dependence and self-sufficiency, and instead trusting more in Christ and His sufficiency for all of our lives, today, tomorrow, and forever.
- We are reforming: we are learning how to conform our lives to His word, removing the excess baggage the way of life the world teaches, and enjoying the blessings of simplicity.

And we are teaching this covenant way of life to our families!

### ***An Invitation***

If God has called you to another part of His family, to be a member of another local church, then our invitation to you is to meditate on these things, and to seek our Father's blessing where He has planted you.

But:

- If you are tired of a faith that promises lots, but delivers shoddy imitations of the pleasures found in this world,
- If you are hungry for a faith that understands the way the world really is,
- If you long for a faith that transcends the mediocrity and empty promises of this world,
- And if you want this for your family too . . .

Then we invite you to visit and prayerfully consider whether or not God is calling you to join us. He is our God and we are His people. We are seeking Him, and He promises we will find Him.

**We are 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church –  
*restoring God's covenant and its promises!***