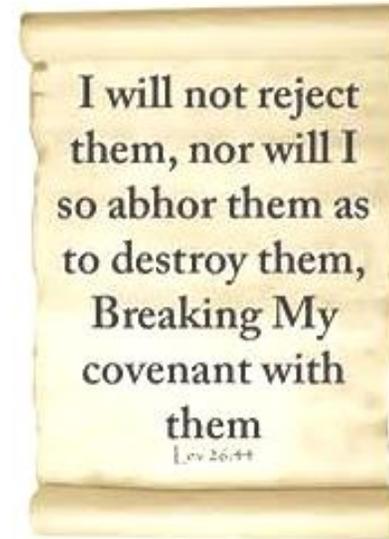


TODAY'S MESSAGE: *“Covenant in Christ”*



“(We) come to fullness in Christ, the head of every ruler and authority.” Col 2:10



According to my Encarta Dictionary... a Covenant is
“a solemn agreement that is binding on all parties.”

Should one party fail to uphold their end of the agreement,
the other party is released from their obligations forthwith.

For the 2nd party to recover the losses caused
by that delinquency... becomes another story.

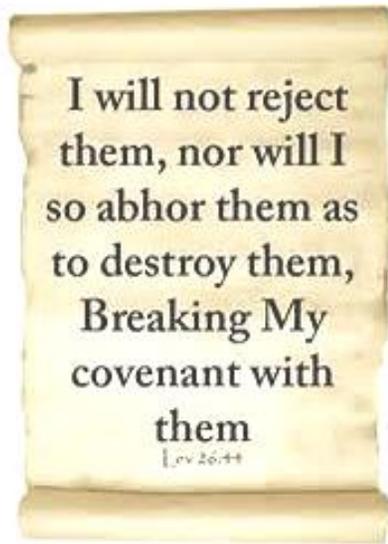
It often involves a lawsuit... however,
it may be less costly just to walk away.

Sometime in the next month or so, I'll be making
a Covenant with SSUC & Four Winds Presbytery
that governs our relationships with one another.

Neither of these covenants, the legal one
nor the UCC, is as “gracious” as the one
that God makes with the People of Israel.

Many things about Leviticus are anachronistic:
cultural “norms” with meaning for another time,
but the one I cited at the opening of my message,
is a Holy Promise that is unbounded, beyond time.

No matter what we do, God will continue
to hold fast to the Covenant with Is-ra-el,
those who struggle with God and survive.



PAUSE

We all witnessed the US election almost two weeks ago,
and have now had a dozen days to think on the outcome.

1) The very System that Trump vowed as being
“rigged” against him is what got him elected.

Hilary got more votes but the electoral
“System” gave Donald the Presidency!

2) Almost ½ of the eligible voters stayed home;
this, more than the outcome, is an indication
of how disaffected people are by that system.

So... about ¼ of those eligible to vote,
elected someone to be their president.
The very one who trumpets, “*The system is rigged against me,*” got elected
by a system that can do so with almost
¾ of eligible voters “not voting” for him.

3) And, the very rhetoric that motivated that ¼
of eligible voters who voted for him to do so,
was outside of the realm of the US President!

- he cannot make Mexico build a wall,
- he cannot arrest and imprison Hilary,
- nor can he throw out all the Muslims,
- let alone legislation of consequences
for the women who have an abortion.

The irony is overwhelming!

“*Veni, Vidi, Vici,*” said Julius Caesar, 2100 years ago.
So Trump, 12 days ago, “*I came, I saw, I conquered.*”

Julius Caesar’s words were backed with “*Actus,*”
the Donald is not capable of “*delivering*” on his.

Covenant promises made to the electorate,
evil as they are, can’t be kept by the Donald.
Even more irony... irony, drenched in tears;
millions support his agenda. Hence the tears.

PAUSE

Two other covenant promises made by the GOP and supported by the Donald, are more possible:

- appointing conservative Supreme Court judges
- repealing & possible replacement of Obamacare

these will eventually lead to less progressive legislation and reduced access to health care.

more tears... more tears... more tears....



PAUSE

We (humanity & all creation) are participants in a Covenant that came to fullness in Christ, who is Sovereign of every ruler and authority!

The covenant is 1st made with the mythological Adam & Eve & Noah, then with Abraham & Sarah both of whom laughed at the promise of a child.

Through both Ishmael & Isaac, it is passed to their children & grandchildren... forever.

And when challenged on his generosity, Jesus said,
“Other sheep have I that are not of this fold.”

I would like to share a short reflection from a lecture by Farid Esack, delivered @Auburn Theol. Semin’y in 2001.

“In Dec. of 1962, Martin Buber invited 25 Israeli teachers to his home to discuss some of the problems they faced teaching. The chair of the group opened the discussion by recalling that Buber, a Jewish Education philosopher, had himself described teachers as representatives of the world & messengers of history to the child, and how building faith in the world wherein people live was the aim of education; the chairperson went on to ask how - after the holocaust - can Jews hope to have the same faith as before?”

*“Another spoke of how that crisis had made it difficult to grasp what the goals of her new generation might be. ‘I do not see the light wherein I am supposed to exist,’ she said. ‘Simply to exist - how one can survive - is not enough,’ Buber replied, ‘that’s a fundamental question for all life.’ ‘For what, or to what end, goes beyond mere survival.’ But then, we know that Buber’s entire existence was a quest for what he described as ‘Hasidic humanism,’ one rooted in *hesed* (lovingkindness) often expressed as an ‘I-Thou’ way of relating to one another.*

“The nature of the world wherein we live today with the potency of our weapons of destruction... means the fate of humankind is ‘irretrievably interwoven.’ with no ‘selective existence’ for any particular community; the cake of humankind is beyond unbaking. We cannot now separate the sugar from the flour or the water... we sink or swim together. A vague and

sentimental attachment to ‘the clan’ is not going to see us through the turbulent future of a world, now threatened by the gradual re-emergence of Nazism, environmental devastation, and a triumphalist New World Order based on the ‘exploitation’ of the other Two-Thirds World.

“There’s many ways of dying,” concludes Farid, “but only one way to live: through ‘discovering’ what the other is truly about... and what we have in common in the struggle to recreate a world of justice, a world of dignity for all the inhabitants of the earth.”

Farid Esack is the author of, *Qur’an, Liberation & Pluralism (1996), On Being a Muslim, Finding a Religious Path in the World Today: (1999)* and *Introduction to the Qur’an (2006)*, published by Oxford: One World

PAUSE

Fascinating, isn’t it? Farid Esack, Islamic Scholar, is citing Buber, a Jewish Philosopher of Education, in the same generation, wherein the Western World displays groundswells of rejection toward the other.

And a man playing on the fears which underpin that rejection, is now President of the U. S. of A.

Little wonder there’s protest in the street.
Too little too late! You should have voted.

“Beware that no one takes you captive through empty deceit, according to the elemental spirits of the universe... and not according to Christ,” ...warns Paul.



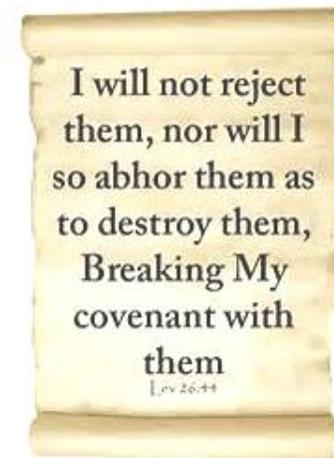
Shepherds of 800BCE like many shepherds of today have taught their flocks to be afraid of almighty God.

Their rule was as corrupt as their theology
Obey... and you go to heaven after you die.
Disobey... and you will burn forever in hell.

Some even taught this heaven & hell thing as God’s plan.
From the start, some are predestined to obey, others not.

No wonder they scattered far and wide,
abandoning those unfaithful shepherds.
But Yahweh God doesn’t abandon them,
instead... calling new, faithful shepherds.
No-one will be dismayed. No-one left out.

All belong to God’s family. And all are embraced in the holy covenant



“(We) come to fullness in Christ, the head of every ruler and authority.” Amen