Sermon Highlights

Faith, Not Works: The Ground on Which All Are Saved

Summary:

Drawing from Romans 4:13-25, this sermon examines Paul's argument that salvation has always been grounded in faith rather than human effort or religious observance. Using Abraham as the central example, Pastor Bruce Gordon demonstrates that righteousness was credited to Abraham before the law existed and before circumcision was given, proving that no external religious act can bring a person into right standing with God. The sermon addresses the danger of works-based religion, whether expressed through Jewish law-keeping, circumcision, or even Christian ordinances like baptism, while affirming that these practices hold their proper place as acts of obedience rather than means of salvation. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes that God's promises are sure precisely because they rest entirely on God's power and faithfulness, not on human performance. Both Jew and Gentile stand on the same ground before God, saved by the same faith, sealed in Christ as Noah was sealed in the ark.

Key Points:

- The promise made to Abraham was through the righteousness of faith, not through the law, because Abraham was counted righteous long before the law or circumcision was given

- Works-based religion makes faith void and the promise of no effect, because where there is law there is judgment, not assurance

- Salvation is by grace through faith so that the promise is sure, since placing it on human effort introduces uncertainty

- Abraham is the father of all who believe, both Jew and Gentile, because both are saved on the same ground of faith

- Abraham's faith was not weakened by his circumstances but was fully convinced that God's power was sufficient to do what God had promised

- Righteousness was imputed to Abraham, meaning credited to his account though he had done nothing to earn it, and this same imputation applies to all who believe

- God is a supernatural being who works outside human schedules, limitations, and expectations, and the church loses its power when it loses sight of the supernatural work of God

- The believer is sealed in Christ just as Noah was sealed in the ark, and once God shuts that door no man can open it

- Christ was delivered up for our offenses and raised for our justification, carrying sin to the grave and becoming the ground of the believer's right standing before God

Scripture Reference:

- Romans 4:13-25, which covers the promise to Abraham coming through faith rather than law, Abraham's unwavering belief despite his and Sarah's age, the imputation of righteousness, and Christ's death and resurrection as the basis of justification

Stories:

- Abraham and Sarah receiving the promise of descendants despite being approximately one hundred and ninety years old respectively, with Abraham looking at the stars as a sign of God's creative power and choosing to trust God's word rather than his own failed attempt to fulfill the promise through his own means

- Noah and his family being shut inside the ark by God, sealed from the judgment outside, used as an illustration of the believer being sealed in Christ and secured from the wrath that falls on those outside

- A question submitted to a podcast by a man who had attended seminary, pastored a church, and served as an elder but had never been baptized, used to illustrate the proper place of baptism as an act of obedience rather than a means of salvation