Sermon Highlights

The Benefits of Justification: What Believers Receive in Christ

Summary:

Drawing from Romans 5:1-11, this sermon explores the practical and spiritual benefits that flow from justification by faith in Jesus Christ. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes that salvation is not earned through church attendance, good works, or religious ritual, but is received by faith and results in a transformed life. Using the connecting word "therefore" as a bridge from Paul's earlier argument in Romans, the sermon presents ten distinct benefits that belong to every genuine believer. Pastor Bruce Gordon stresses that true redemption produces visible change in a person's life, and that Christians should learn to live in the peace, access, and joy that their standing in Christ affords them. Throughout the message, the sermon challenges believers to embrace patience in tribulation, develop godly character, and allow the love of God poured out by the Holy Spirit to overflow into compassion for others.

Key Points:

- The word "therefore" in Romans 5:1 connects the benefits of justification to Paul's earlier argument that both Jews and Gentiles are made right with God through faith in Christ

- Salvation is not produced by church attendance or good works, but believers are saved unto good works, and genuine redemption results in a changing life

- Ten benefits of justification are identified in Romans 5:1-11: peace with God, access to God by faith, a secure standing in grace, the ability to rejoice in hope, the capacity to endure and even glory in tribulations, the assurance that hope does not disappoint, the love of God poured into the believer's heart, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, deliverance from the wrath of God, and salvation through the life of Christ

- A believer's standing before God never changes because it is based on Christ, not on the believer's fluctuating spiritual state

- Tribulation produces perseverance, perseverance builds character, and character reinforces hope, making trials a necessary part of spiritual growth

- The church today lacks sufficient teaching on right living and the expectation that believers will grow and change to reflect the image of Christ

- Christians should live in a continual state of prayer and communication with God, not limiting prayer to formal settings

- Believers are saved from the future wrath of God, including the tribulation period that follows the rapture of the church

Scripture Reference:

- Romans 5:1-11, in which the apostle Paul describes the peace, access, hope, endurance, love, and reconciliation that belong to those who have been justified by faith in Jesus Christ

Stories:

- Pastor Bruce Gordon uses the illustration of calling the White House switchboard and being denied access to the President, contrasting it with the immediate and certain access a grandchild of the President would have, to illustrate the believer's privileged access to God through Christ

- The story of Job is referenced to illustrate that tribulation in a believer's life must first pass through the permissive hand of a loving God before it can touch them

- Pastor Bruce Gordon describes watching children freely rejoice and respond during worship, contrasting their uninhibited joy with the stiffness adults often bring to church, to challenge believers to express genuine rejoicing

- Pastor Bruce Gordon uses the humorous illustration of waiting at a green traffic light and counting to ten before moving, to illustrate how impatient modern people are and how that impatience carries over into their relationship with God