Sermon Highlights

The Foundation of the Church: Understanding God's Kingdom Plan Through the Book of Acts

Sermon Summary:

This sermon introduces the Book of Acts as a divinely inspired bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles, demonstrating how the Holy Spirit orchestrated the formation of the early church. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes the importance of treasuring Scripture and recognizing how God has systematically revealed His Word. The message explores three distinct entities in God's plan: the overarching Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Israel (currently in reserve until the millennial reign), and the Church as the mysterious bride of Christ. The sermon highlights that while God's methods of working with humanity have varied across different dispensations, salvation has always been through faith in Christ's sacrifice alone. Pastor Bruce Gordon challenges believers to recognize their privilege in having access to God's Word and to understand that being a witness for Christ may require martyrdom, as it has for countless believers throughout history and especially in modern times.

Key Points:

- The Book of Acts is essential for understanding how the church transitioned from Jesus' ascension to the formation of congregations mentioned in the Epistles

- Luke wrote both the Gospel of Luke and Acts as a two-volume work, providing an orderly account of Christ's humanity and the early church

- The Holy Spirit is the primary actor in the Book of Acts, making it more accurately "The Acts of the Holy Spirit"

- Modern believers are blessed beyond measure with access to Scripture in multiple translations and formats

- Jesus presented Himself alive after His resurrection with many infallible proofs, including physical scars that He will bear eternally

- Three distinct entities exist in God's plan: the Kingdom of God (overarching), the Kingdom of Israel (future millennial reign), and the Church (current mystery)

- God has always saved people the same way—by faith in Christ's sacrifice—whether looking forward or backward to the cross

- Dispensationalism refers to God working differently in different ages, not saving people differently

- The word "witness" in Acts 1:8 comes from the Greek word for "martyr," indicating the cost of testimony

- More Christians have been martyred since 2000 AD than in all previous centuries combined

Scripture Reference:

- Acts 1:1-8 (primary focus)

- Luke 24:50-53 (parallel passage)

- Supporting references to Romans, Hebrews, and various Epistles

Stories:

- The account of Doubting Thomas putting his finger in Jesus' nail prints to verify the physical resurrection

- Peter's vision of the sheet with unclean animals descending from heaven, demonstrating the end of Old Testament dietary laws

- Reference to the disciples asking Jesus if He would restore the Kingdom of Israel at that time, showing their limited understanding

- Contemporary testimony about tens of thousands of Christians being murdered for their faith in recent years