Sermon Highlights

Bearing One Another in Love: The Word of God as Our Guide to Christian Community

Summary:

Drawing from Romans 14 and 15, this sermon calls believers to live in loving, patient community with one another, particularly emphasizing the responsibility of spiritually mature Christians to bear with and gently lift up their weaker brothers and sisters rather than crush them. Pastor Bruce Gordon stresses that the Word of God is not merely a historical or informational document but is the living voice of God speaking directly to each believer's heart. Through consistent, open-hearted engagement with Scripture, believers find patience, comfort, and hope -- the very things needed to sustain the Christian life. The sermon also calls the church to speak with one unified voice to a hopeless world, receiving the lost as Christ received us, and trusting that God is actively shaping each believer into the image of His Son.

Key Points:

- The Word of God is God Himself speaking directly to His children, and believers should approach Scripture with open hearts, expecting to hear from heaven rather than waiting for supernatural signs

- Spiritually strong believers are called to bear with the weaknesses of younger or less mature believers, not by lowering God's standard, but by gently coming alongside them and helping them grow

- The goal of Christian unity is that the church might glorify God with one mind and one voice, presenting a clear and compelling witness to a lost and hopeless world

- Romans 15:4 teaches that Scripture was written to produce enduring patience and comfort, which together generate hope -- something the world desperately lacks and cannot find apart from Christ

- The lost should not be asked to clean themselves up before coming to Christ; believers are called to point people to Jesus, who receives sinners as they are and transforms them through the ongoing work of sanctification

- God had the Gentiles on His heart even throughout the Old Testament, and just as Israel was called to be a priesthood to the nations, the church today is called to be a royal priesthood declaring who Jesus is to the world

- The process of sanctification, though sometimes painful, is purposeful -- God is actively conforming each believer into the image of Christ

Scripture Reference:

- Romans 14:20-23, where Paul warns against destroying the work of God over matters of liberty and emphasizes that whatever is not from faith is sin

- Romans 15:1-13, the primary passage, covering the call to bear with the weak, the example of Christ as servant, the purpose of Scripture in producing hope, and the inclusion of the Gentiles in God's redemptive plan

- Romans 8:29, referenced in relation to believers being conformed into the image of Christ

Stories:

- Pastor Bruce Gordon recalls his mother scrubbing him and his brother clean as boys, using it as an illustration of how God's sanctifying work in a believer's life may be uncomfortable but is purposeful and loving, aimed at producing something clean and worthy

- Pastor Bruce Gordon references the daily morning prayers of a devout Jewish man, who thanks God that he is neither a woman nor a Gentile, as an illustration of the exclusionary mindset that the gospel overturns by revealing God's heart for all people

- Pastor Bruce Gordon describes the emptiness of sinful lifestyles -- the drunk who wakes up needing another drink, the person living an immoral life who feels alone the next morning -- to illustrate that the lost already sense the hopelessness of their condition and need to be offered the hope found only in Christ