Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Abraham: The Old Testament Pattern of Saving Faith, Part 3
Scripture: Romans 4:13–17
Code: 80-348

Let's open our Bibles tonight to the book of Romans, and what I'm endeavoring to do is to take you through Romans 4 and 5, we started really in chapter 3, but looking at the doctrine of salvation in this great section of Paul's writing. I know that many of us are familiar with this. I'm very familiar with it. I know that for many of you it is rehearsed again and again and again. Even on a Sunday night like this, you heard the doctrine of salvation explained to you in one way or another four times already by the testimonies of those who were baptized. When you go to a Bible study or when you go to a class or an FOF group, you will hear a true explanation of the gospel. We're committed to that so that not only can people hear the true explanation of the gospel and be saved, but those of us who are responsible to proclaim the gospel can know how to present it accurately.

In chapter 4 of Romans, we are finding Abraham to be the model of salvation by faith by grace. It may surprise some people, it would surprise Jewish people that Abraham is the model of salvation, salvation proclaimed by Christians in the New Testament, but it is nonetheless true.

As we approach the text tonight, I wanted to look at verse 9 and read down through verse 17, I want to set it in your mind. Romans 4:9, “Is this blessing then on the circumcised or on the uncircumcised also for we say faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness? How then was it credited, while he was circumcised or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised but while uncircumcised and he received the sign of uncircumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised that righteousness might be credited to them. And the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also fall in the steps of the faith of our father, Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.”

Just to stop there and say the simple point is Abraham's salvation had nothing to do with circumcision because righteousness was credited to him before he was circumcised. And that's in the perspective of the Jews, a revolutionary idea because they connected salvation to circumcision. Abraham was given righteousness from God, justified, declared right before God before he was ever circumcised.

And then starting in verse 13, reading down to verse 17, “For the promise to Abraham, or to his descendants, that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith, for if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified. For the Law brings about wrath. Where there is no Law, there also is no violation. For this reason it is by faith in order that it may be in accordance with grace so that the promise will be

guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham who is the father of us all. As it is written, the father of many nations have I made you in the presence of him whom he believed, even God who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist."

Now that little text that I just read to you takes us to another very important consideration. Abraham was declared righteous by faith, apart from circumcision. He had not yet been circumcised. Here we learn that Abraham was declared righteous apart from the Law because the Law had not yet been given. So, he didn't earn his salvation by circumcision, a ritual, or a rite, and he didn't earn his salvation by keeping the Law, the Law had not yet been given.

The clear message of the Christian gospel is that salvation is by faith and grace, not by rite and law-keeping. This is the very opposite of the religions of the world. In India there is a festival that occurs periodically called The Ard Komph Mala(????), you may have read about it. It takes place at the conflux of the two great rivers, the Gangi(??) River and the Emana(?) River called the fabled waters of the Pramog(??). It is led by holy men of the Hindu religion called Digombar(?) Sadus(?). These holy men lead it with a stark naked parade to the water, followed by millions of Hindus that are going into this convergence of these two rivers. It is the world's largest religious event, millions of people dipping in the fabled waters of the Priogue(??) Disregarding the heavy expense of getting there and the difficult journey and the massive amount of people, and by the way, the chilling water...they come from everywhere, rich and poor...and in that event, all the caste barriers that usually exist in India are waived and everybody has a right. There are many who begin their journey months before the event to get there, fakirs, as they're called, sit on spiked beds, ascetics meditate on hours sitting on their heads. Worshipers pierce their tongues to sentence themselves to eternal silence. Some kill the use of their limbs permanently by tying them in one position until they atrophy. Others blind themselves purposely by staring directly into the sun. You may have seen some of the photographs of this shocking sea of millions of people on the river bank. What are they doing there?

The Regveta(??) says, and I quote, "Those who battle at the conflux of the Black and White River, the Gangi(?) and the Umara(?) go to heaven. Amahabara(?) says, quote: "The pilgrim who bathes at this place wins absolution for his whole family, and even if he has perpetrated a hundred crimes, he is redeemed the moment he touches the Gangi whose waters wash away his sins," end quote.
So, all along the water's edge are erected shaving booths where the deeply devout strip themselves naked and then shave off all the hair on their body. The shaved hair is then dumped into the already filthy river and they are told to say, quote: "For every hair thus thrown in, you are promised a million years residence in heaven," end quote.

Once the most acceptable gift to give at an event like that was your life and religious suicide was a part of the festival. It was said, quote; "Whoever wishes to be born in heaven ought to fast down to a grain of rice and then drown himself in these waters," end quote.

So you starve yourself to death and then if you're still alive, you drown yourself. Why do they do this? They believe bathing in these waters washes away all the pollution of sin. Millions come, spiritual hunger. One Hindu source says, “Those who come and enter into this rite, depart with peace in their hearts and renewed faith.” Really, what a hellish damning tragic system of Satan's designing.

But Satan designs all kinds of religions like that, system of ritual, systems of ceremonies, systems of works, systems of an external kind of nature that are supposed to grant forgiveness and heaven. It's a shocking thing to see actual pictures of this, but it should be no less shocking to consider any kind of religion that promises a salvation to those who go through certain rituals and certain works.

Jesus faced it in the Judaism of His own day. Judaism, the true faith of the Old Testament, which was salvation by grace through faith, as illustrated in Abraham, had long been lost and in its place, Pharisaism had come, a system of legalism. Jesus confronted it by saying in Matthew 15:8, “This people...quoting from Isaiah...honors Me with their lips but their heart is far from Me.” Verse 9, “In vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.” In vain do they worship Me. It is useless.

And that is what is in the mind of the Apostle Paul as he writes in Romans 3 through 5. To present this great treatise on the fact that nobody is going to be saved by some ritual or some noble, moral effort, or religious activity, salvation and heaven are available but not through any external action, only by grace through faith and that faith in the true and living God who has now revealed Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is therefore no salvation apart from Jesus Christ. And while Abraham did not know of Jesus Christ, he certainly wouldn't have known anything about His life or death or burial or resurrection, he did know that salvation comes by faith alone, and he believed that, and he believed that God was a God of grace who would give salvation to a sinner who knew he couldn't save himself. So Abraham becomes the model of justification by faith.

Now as the chapter that we're looking at kind of breaks up a little bit, the first portion, verses 1 to 8, tells us Abraham was justified by faith, not works. The second section, verses 9 to 17, which I just read, says that Abraham was justified by grace and not by Law. Now in what I read, I want you to look at verse 16, it's really the key verse. “For this reason, salvation is implied there, by faith in order that it may be in accordance with grace...in accordance with grace. It is not earned, it is a gift of grace.” Grace by very definition is something unearned. When God gives grace, it is free favor to undeserving sinners. And that, of course, is what Ephesians 2:8 and 9 says, “For by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God not of works.” Abraham was not made righteous by works, he was not made righteous by circumcision, he was declared by God to be righteous before he was ever circumcised. He was declared by God to be righteous before the Mosaic Law was ever given. Yet by the time you get to the New Testament era, the Jews believed that salvation comes by circumcision and Law keeping. And in neither case did Abraham fulfill the

requirement. Declared righteous, Genesis 15:6, by God before he was circumcised and before the Law was even given.

And the whole point of this is that statement in verse 16. God designed salvation by faith alone in order that it may be in accordance with grace. Why? Because then the salvation being an act of the free gift of God gives all glory to Him...gives all glory to Him. God is worthy to receive all glory because salvation is completely a free gift of grace, unearned by any sinner.

Now remember again, by the time you get to the New Testament era, the Jews don't buy this at all. In Acts 15:5 at the Jerusalem Council, you had some of the sect of the Pharisees who had supposedly believed and they stood up at the Jerusalem Council and they said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and direct them to observe the Law of Moses.”

Wow! They have to be circumcised to be saved, they have to go through the ritual and they have to observe the Law of Moses. Even though they had come to some measure of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, they were unable to divorce themselves from the brainwashing of a lifetime of believing that salvation was connected to circumcision and Law-keeping.

And so, as we come to verse 13, we have done with the circumcision issue in verses 9 to 12, and now we're going to look at the issue of Law. Now the key word here in verse 13 is the word “promise.” “For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law but through the righteousness of faith,” not through the Law but through the righteousness of faith. Key word, promise....promise. Abraham was justified...listen...not by anything he did, not any ritual, or any law-keeping, he was justified because he believed the promise of God. He believed the promise of God. God justifies the ungodly who believe His promise.

Back in chapter 4 and verse 5, “It is not the one who does some kind of work but the one who believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.” What is it that Abraham believed? He believed the promise. The promise of what? A promise of salvation in all its fullness. He believed that when God disclosed to him a covenant, that God would keep his promise. Justification then is believing in a promise. It is to say it is believing in something that is immediately not realized. The promise, I think, in verse 13 refers to the Abrahamic Covenant.

I don't want to get caught up in all the details of this, but just to give you a kind of overall sense. When God brought Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees and when God decided sovereignly to identify Abraham as the father of the people as we now know as the Jews, in chapter 12 of Genesis, God made a promise to him. He promised him a number of things, reiterated it in chapter 15, reiterated it in chapter 18 of Genesis, and again in chapter 22 and then reiterated the promise that He had given to Abraham to the sons of Abraham, the patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

Abraham understood this spiritual promise. That's why in Hebrews 11:10 it says He looked for a city that had foundations, whose builder and maker is God. He was still looking for the fulfillment of these promises.

Now the promise can be summed up in verse 13 in the phrase that he would be heir of the world. That is a fairly large promise. Heir of the world...wow! What an amazing promise that is. How do you break that down? What do you mean you'll be heir of the world?
Well in the simple sense it means that in the end, you will be...to borrow a New Testament language...a joint-heir with Christ and you will inherit everything that is Christ's. That's the New Testament view of it. We who come to God by faith, we who believe the promise of salvation will inherit everything...everything. Everything is ours in Christ. First Corinthians 1:30, “By His doing you are in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”

And not only all those spiritual benefits, but we become heirs of the world. So many people today are worried about what's going to happen to the earth, caught up in all these efforts to save the planet based upon a whole lot of mis-information to start with and based upon some pretty ridiculous assumptions that they're in charge of the perpetuity of the universe and the earth. The fact of the matter is, those of us sitting here who don't buy in to any of this are the true heirs of this planet and the whole universe. That's a staggering thought, isn't it? One day the New Heaven and the New Earth will belong to us.

But when you go back to the promise that was made to Abraham, you go back in to Genesis 12, Genesis 13, Genesis 15, Genesis 18, there were several components. Number one, the land. Abraham was promised land...the land we call the land of Canaan. It actually was a lot more vast than Israel possesses now. Israel is only in a little portion of it. It stretched basically to cover the entire Middle East. The book of Joshua tells us that this came to pass as Canaan became the possession of Abraham's descendants, but that was just sort of down payment on the whole world because Abraham was an heir ultimately of the world, like all other believers.

Part of the promise was the land. Another part of the promise was a great nation. Genesis 13 and 15 and 18 build on the promise that God would give to him a seed and out of that seed would come a nation that would number like the sand of the sea and the stars in the heaven. Exodus shows us the beginning of the realization of Abraham's seed, the history of the Semitic people.

The third component in the Abrahamic Covenant was the promise of the blessedness of the world coming through them. Genesis 12:3 says, “In you shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” And that is why in verse 17 he's called the father of many nations. He is really the father, the spiritual father of all who have been blessed in all the nations.

So he was made these vast promises of a land of a people, a nation, and being the source of blessing to the whole world. Later on in Romans 9, Paul shows how this is true because it is through t he people of Israel that the Messiah comes, the doctrines come, the covenants come, the scriptures come, the promises come all through the people of Israel who are the authors of holy Scripture.

But most importantly in capping off the promises, inside THE promise, the Abrahamic Covenant, is the pledge of the Redeemer...the Redeemer. I believe Abraham knew that there would be a greater than Isaac, that he knew there would be one who would surpass that son. In John 8:56, Jesus said, “Your father, Abraham, rejoiced to see My day and he saw it and was glad.” I'm glad the Lord said that. That needs to be in there to help us to understand what was in the promise. The Redeemer was in the promise.

Turn to Galatians chapter 3 for a moment. How and where did he see the Redeemer in the promise? Well in Galatians 3 verse 16, “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham, the promises in the promise, the promise of the land, the promise of the nation, the promise of being the source of blessing to the whole world. They were spoken to Abraham and to his seed.”

Here Paul says he doesn't say to seeds as referring to many, but rather to one and to Your seed, that is Christ. And so Paul says that Christ is the real seed and in Him comes the salvation to Israel and through Israel that blesses the world. That's why verse 29 is true, if you belong to Christ, you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise. All who come in faith are the children of Abraham. We are Abraham's seed by faith but more importantly, there is one seed that came from Abraham who is the source of the salvation of all the rest of Abraham's seed.
What is promised in the Abrahamic Covenant, land, a nation, blessing to the world, the key to the promise, is the Messiah, the Christ. Abraham saw his day and rejoiced to see it.

What did Abraham believe then? He believed in the promise of God, of salvation, a salvation that would make him an heir of the world, a salvation that would include land, a nation, blessing to the world, most importantly the seed, the promised seed.

Did Abraham connect that with Genesis, the seed of the woman who would come to bruise the serpent's head? I'm sure he did...I'm sure he did.

So God gave him a great promise, a salvation promise. It's the same promise to us. We have a Savior and we're among those who have been blessed, among the nations of the world who have been blessed and through us we carry the gospel and therefore become the source of blessing to the world. We have become the people of God. One day we will inherit the earth in the millennial Kingdom and then finally the Hew Heaven and the New Earth.

Now what is important about all this salvation promise? What is essential about it is it did not come by the Law....it did not come by the Law. Verse 17, “What I'm saying is this, the Law which came 430 years later...Galatians 3:17...the Law which came 430 years later does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on Law, it is not longer based on a promise. But God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.” It's so critical.

Abraham could not have been justified by keeping the Mosaic Law because it wasn't given for 430 years. That's the argument. It can't happen when there is no Law. And before the Law was ever given, there was already a promise in effect that when the Law came, verse 17, go back to it, it didn't invalidate a covenant, namely the covenant called the Abrahamic Covenant which is a grace covenant, it didn't invalidate that covenant previously ratified by God so as to nullify the promise.

You could say, “Well wait a minute. When the Law came, the rules changed.” No...no. “For if the inheritance...verse 18...is based on Law, it's no longer based on a promise. God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.” You understand how that relates to us, that salvation is not based on circumcision for us or some ritual, even baptism, it's certainly not based on moral behavior and obedience to the Law.

Salvation for Abraham was based on a promise. Salvation for us is based on a promise. It is a sovereign promise, it is a gracious promise. It is given to people who do not deserve it. Abraham was given righteousness. He was declared righteous, declared just, he was justified because divine righteousness was imputed to his account simply because he believed that God was a God of salvation.

It is still so. God promises to give you salvation. He promises to give you the world, to inherit as a joint-heir everything that is Christ's. Salvation is universally by promise, not by Law.

The Apostle Paul, you'll remember, tried hard to be saved by the Law, didn't he? He even met the requirement of circumcision, Philippians tells us in chapter 3, “He was circumcised the eighth day.” It also tells us that he was zealous keeping the Law and tradition. In fact, as far as the Law was concerned externally, he was blameless and he looked at it all when he met Christ and considered it all manure.

So how does righteousness come? Let's go back to Romans again...if you're still in Galatians. It comes apart from the Law. For if those...verse 14...who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void. There's no point in faith if you have to earn it. And the promise is nullified because the promise was given to someone before the Law was ever revealed.

In other words, the original condition of salvation is faith. If another condition is established, then the original condition is invalidated and the promise is void. Now that is exactly what legalists believe. That is exactly what all the false religions of the world believe, that you have to earn it, and that makes faith empty and useless and the promise nullified. What it's...what it's saying is, the whole biblical basis of salvation which is faith and grace based on promise collapses if the rules have changed. If once Abraham was declared righteous before God by simply believing the promise and became an heir of the world, the Kingdom and all that God possesses, but now once the Law has been given there's a new way, then the whole structure of salvation by promise collapses...it's void, it's empty. One writer says, “Faith is able to receive anything that God promises but if the allotment is to be enjoyed by means of a Law which Abraham had not and which none of his children ever kept or any other Law, faith is cancelled and a promise with an impossible condition is nullified.

In other words, if the promise now becomes conditional on Law keeping, we're all damned. The Law can never bring the promise cause it has no power to make men obey it. Through the years I have, from time to time, taught an entire lesson on what the Law cannot do, a long lesson on that. I think I have 20 points. The Law gives you no help. The Law gives you no strength. The Law gives you no assistance. The Law doesn't aid you, you're on your own.

If legalism and Law-keeping were ever meant to be the principle of justification, the entire plan and program of salvation which God identified at the very outset would crumble. It would mean that Abraham was not justified by faith, or if he was, nobody after the Law is. And that, of course, raises the question, then why the Law? Which is the issue in verse 15. What does the Law do?

We're talking here about God's moral Law, for the Law brings about wrath. But where there is no Law, there also is no violation. If you don't have any laws, you can't break them, right? So God gave the Law in order to manifest the violators. The criminals were all there but they aren't deemed criminal until the Law is given. The Law can't save, all the Law can do is condemn. And again, that is the message of Galatians 3 verse 10, “For as many as there of the works of the Law are under a curse, the curse is everyone who doesn't abide by all things written in the book of the Law to perform them.”

So what the Law does is curse you and condemn you and damn you, and that means to bring wrath, to produce wrath. It doesn't produce salvation, it produces divine wrath. The Law works wrath because it curses those who can't keep it, making them guilty of violations and set for judgment. The Law condemns everybody who is not absolutely perfect.

The Law does something else, corollary to that. The Law not only condemns the sinner but strangely enough, according to Romans 7:7 to 10, the Law even incites sin. It even activates sin. Paul says that and he doesn't hold anything back, he gives it personal testimony. Is the Law sin? Romans 7:7, “May it never be, on the contrary, I wouldn't have come to know sin except through the Law, that's its first

function, it reveals sin and therefore produces wrath and judgment. I wouldn't have known about coveting if the Law hadn't said, ‘You shall not covet.’”
Further, sin taking opportunity through the commandment produced in me the coveting of every kind. Well that's the second thing the Law does. You make a rule and that rule will incite the sinful heart to violations. Tell a sinner he can't do something and you just raise his motivation to do it.

We all deal with that with our children, right? They're often tolerable until you give them a command not to be violated and then something in them desperately needs to violate that. That's just part of the human heart. So the Law in itself is not bad, the Law is good in that the Law raises the issue of sin to a level where it cannot be ignored.

So the Law brings about wrath. The Law produces a curse that there weren't any Law...there wouldn't be any violation of any Law.
Now here's the goal of his reasoning in verse 16. “For this reason it's by faith.” What reason? “In order that it may be in accordance with grace.” That's the only way we could ever be saved. You can't earn salvation, justification by rite and ritual, you can't earn it by law-keeping. So it has to be by faith and it has to be a gift of grace. There's no other possibility because by the deeds of the Law no flesh can be justified, as we saw in chapter 3. All we're going to do is end up cursed. The promise of justification and the inheritance that comes with it, the promise of all the blessings of eternal glory come only by grace so that the promise, verse 16, will be guaranteed.

Look, if it's by works, nobody gets a guarantee, right? If you have to earn your justification by works, it's up to you to earn it, then it's pretty obvious that you could forfeit it. If you did something to stop earning it or to default, no it is consistent with bad theology to say both sides of that. Those religions that teach you earn your way don't teach having once earned your way, you're secure forever. They don't teach that. Even forms of Christianity that we call Arminian in their theology for Arminius, Pelagian, semi-Pelagian views that say it's completely up to us to believe on our own, it's completely up to us to accept the gospel on our own. It's something we have to do.

Don't believe that having done that once, you're secure forever. One of the tenets of Arminian theology is you come on your own power and you could lose your salvation by disobedience. And so there is no real guarantee of the promise. But when it is by reason of faith and in accordance with grace, the promise is guaranteed.

Guaranteed? How widely is it guaranteed? Well he says it is guaranteed to all the descendants...to all the descendants, to all the spiritual sons of Abraham who come by faith, there is a guarantee of the promised inheritance. Peter says it's undefiled, fadeth not away, as you heard in testimony a moment ago. It's a guaranteed inheritance.

Guaranteed to whom? To all the descendants. And then he splits them out, “Not only those who are of the Law, Jews...Jews. Not only to Jews but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, Gentiles.” Abraham was not a Jew. Abraham was a Chaldean Gentile. So Abraham didn't receive justification by being a Jew, being a circumcised Jew and being a law-keeping Jew. And yet the Jews of the New Testament era thought that that's exactly how you receive justification by being a Jew, being a circumcised Jew, being a law-keeping Jew. It's not by Law, it's by grace and thus the promise can be absolutely guaranteed to all Abraham's spiritual descendants whether they are of the Law, meaning the Jews who have the Law of God, or whether they are simply of the faith of Abraham, that is Gentiles who don't necessarily have the revealed Law of God.
As a footnote, by the way, in Romans 2 he says they do have the Law of God written in their hearts which holds them accountable and from which the Holy Spirit can certainly reveal their sin. But also, God having revealed His Law on the pages of Scripture, made Israel responsible to proclaim His Law to the whole world as He has made the church responsible to proclaim His Law to the whole world today so that men can see their sin against the revealed Law of God.

The intention then is that salvation is by grace alone because that's the only way men could ever be saved because no one can keep the Law. And once you come by faith, it is a gift of grace, the promise can be absolutely guaranteed to everyone, Jew and Gentile. Isn't that how Paul began his gospel? “I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, the power of God and to salvation to all who believe, to the Jew first, also to the Gentile.”

Verse 17, “As it is written...this is parenthetical...a father of many nations have I made you.” The eternal purpose of God in justifying Abraham was to make him the prototype of salvation by faith in a promise given by grace to an unworthy, ungodly, undeserving sinner. And in that sense, the spiritual sense, he is a father of many nations because there have been many in many nations who have come to salvation by faith that is like Abraham's.

Abraham believed, verse 17 speaks of the one in whom Abraham believed, even God. That is the heart of it, folks. Salvation comes by faith and what do you mean by faith? By faith in anything? No, by faith in God. To whatever degree that God had revealed Himself. To what degree did Abraham understand God? He understood Him as the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which doesn't exist. He understood Him as the Creator/God and the life-giving God.

What do you mean he understood God as the one who gives life to the dead? Well, somebody might say he knew that Sarah's womb was dead and he was passed the capability to produce a child and in that sense God gave life out of two dead people. I think it was more than that. I think you remember in verse 22 when he took Isaac up to the mountain, laid him on the altar, he put him there because the Lord had said to put him there and then you kill him. And he lifted up the knife to plunge it in his heart. Why would he do that? Hebrews 11 says because he believed in God who raises the dead. And so he believed in the God of creation and the God of resurrection.

He believed everything that had been revealed about God. He also believed that God was the only hope of salvation for himself, that he as a sinner had nothing in his own life that could commend him to God. And so he came to the God that he knew to be the God of creation and the God of resurrection and he pled with that God to be gracious to him, forgive his sin and to some degree he knew that the fulfillment of the promise was not locked in Isaac only but in a seed far down history. John 8:56, “He saw his day and was glad.” He knew that if Isaac wasn't the sacrifice, there would be a final and complete sacrifice.

So Paul so magnificently tells us that salvation is by faith, not works; grace, not Law. Let's bow in prayer.

Lord, as we covered this tonight again, it's just so wonderful to see the consistency of Scripture. We're just grateful and blessed. Saints through the history of the church have fully understood this. I think of the wonderful testimony of John Bunyan in his remarkable work called Man's Soul, so many centuries ago talking about how Prince Emmanuel arrived in the city of Man's Soul and set all the unworthy sinners free. This has always been the message. We thank You for the testimonies we've heard tonight from those who have been brought to the place where they understand that their salvation rests only in faith and grace. Lord, help us to spread this message. Help us to love this truth. Help us to embrace the promise that is our promise of an eternal inheritance, undefiled, preserved for us, that never fades. We will inherit the earth as we were promised, even though we are bankrupt in ourselves we will inherit the earth. We will inherit the Kingdom. Even though we are sinful, we will become eventually more than just righteous by declaration, we will become righteous by recreation. We thank You, Lord, that Jew or Gentile, anyone who believes can become in this sense a follower and a child of Abraham, following in the prototype of his faith. Be gracious, Lord, to those who have not yet embraced Christ and may that be the miracle that happens to them, even this day. We pray in His name. Amen.

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