

Sign Of The Promise

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[0 : 00] Please take your Bibles and open them up this morning to the book of Genesis. And we're in chapter 17 this morning. Genesis chapter 17. If this is your first time with us or first time in a while, we're walking through the book of Genesis and we've come to chapter 17.

If you don't have a copy of God's Word with you, that's okay. We should have one in a seat back nearby, somewhere close by you, and you're welcome to use that copy of God's Word this morning. But we're in Genesis chapter 17, and when you've found it, let's stand in honor of the reading of God's Word this morning. When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, I am God Almighty.

Walk before me and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly. Then Abram fell on his face, and God said to him, Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.

No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.

[1 : 17] And I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you, throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

And I will give to you and to your offspring after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.

And God said to Abraham, As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you, throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you.

Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised.

Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised.

[2 : 17] So shall my covenant be in your flesh, an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, shall be cut off from his people.

He has broken my covenant. And God said to Abraham, As for Sarai, your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her.

I will bless her, and she shall become nations. Kings of peoples shall come from her. Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old?

Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child? And Abraham said to God, Oh, that Ishmael might live before you. God said, No, but Sarah, your wife, shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac.

I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly.

[3 : 23] He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year.

When he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. Then Abraham took Ishmael, his son, and all those born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house.

And he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him. Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael, his son, was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

That very day, Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised. And all the men of his house, those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever. Father, we praise you for your word. And we pray this morning that as we look at promises made, God, would you give us patient faith.

[4 : 30] Lord, would you lead us to walk before you and be blameless. And ultimately, Father, would you lead us to look to Christ by faith this morning. And it's in his name that we pray. Amen. You may be seated.

Tomorrow is kind of a big day for me. I shared in the Grow Class hour this morning in Sunday school that tomorrow is going to mark thirteen years of marriage for Amanda and myself.

Our marriage has officially entered the teenage years. For some of you, that's not saying much. I know you've been married much longer than that. Some of you married less than a week. Thirteen years ago seems like a long time to me.

I don't remember a lot from thirteen years ago, but I'll tell you one thing that I remember with just vivid clarity was the process of picking out the perfect engagement ring for my soon-to-be bride. And those of you who have proposed before understand that process. You go through all the catalogs. You visit all the jewelry shops. You go through cut, clarity, carrot, all the four or five C's of picking out the perfect ring.

[5 : 36] I wanted to pick something that she would love to have on her finger forever and never ever want to take it off. And then I remember the first time that she put my ring on my finger.

It felt kind of weird at first, a little unnatural. Now it's, I hardly even notice it. It's kind of a part of me. I rarely ever, if ever, take it off. But I wonder if you've ever thought about why we do that whole thing in the first place.

Why do we go through the process of purchasing a ring and putting it on your spouse's finger? And what's the big idea beyond the wedding ring besides just a photo opportunity or to brag and show it off to your friends?

Well, that ring, yes, it's beautiful. Yes, it's valuable. But it also serves an important function, doesn't it? That wedding ring on our finger is a sign of the covenant that you have made with your spouse. It's kind of shorthand for the vows, shorthand for the promises that you've made. So it's a reminder of the promises that you've made to her and she has made to you. It points us to our promises and our responsibilities.

[6 : 46] It's a symbol. It's a sign of the covenant that you made in marriage. In many ways, as we come to our passage this morning here in Genesis chapter 17, we can see that the same is true for circumcision.

Circumcision, biblically speaking, is a sign of the covenant that God has made with Abram. And you know, you may have noticed as you read through your Bible, the Bible talks about circumcision kind of a lot.

And so this may be a little bit of an uncomfortable thing to talk about this morning, but we kind of got to get used to it as you read your Bible. It's a little bit strange if you're not used to it. Now y'all, I read this passage to my boys this week, right?

They had a lot of questions that came up about this passage. What in the world is going on here? And the Bible talks about circumcision almost a hundred times. And it's not just an Old Testament topic.

It's brought up frequently in the New Testament as well. But you know, even if you're a more mature believer in the room this morning, I would be willing to bet that you probably have some questions too.

[7 : 52] What is this all about? And so this morning as we come to Genesis chapter 17, I want us to understand the sign of circumcision.

And what we'll see is three functions of the sign. This will be our outline this morning if you're a note taker. We're going to see three functions of the sign of circumcision here in Genesis 17.

First, we see circumcision is a promise. It is a promise. It really is a reminder of all of God's promises.

Like a wedding ring, it's a symbol, it's shorthand for the promises that God made to Abram. And we know that Abram needs to be reminded of God's promises, don't we? We've seen over and over and over again this delay in fulfillment has led Abram to doubt.

He needs reassurances of God's promises. Look there to verse 1 with me, chapter 17. It kind of gives this time marker here. It says, verse 1 tells us all of this happens when Abram was 99 years old, which means, if you're keeping track, this has been 25 years now since Genesis chapter 12.

[9:06] 25 years of waiting from the time when God first spoke to Abram and first made these promises to him all the way to this point when God is reaffirming them by the sign of circumcision.

Between last chapter and this chapter and this chapter, it's been 13 years of waiting. Now these chapters are just back to back to back in our Bible. We can read them sitting down maybe in about 10 minutes total, but we should recognize that from chapter 12 here to chapter 17, this represents 25 years of Abram's life.

So far as we know, it's been 13 years since God last appeared and last spoke. I mean, that's a long time to wait. Abram's not getting any younger. Sarai is not getting any younger.

She's still barren. The promises have yet to be fulfilled and again, Abram here needs to be reassured. God, will you do what you've promised?

So, verse 1 says, the Lord appeared to Abram and he reveals himself by a new name here. He says, I am God Almighty.

[10:13] El Shaddai. God reminds Abram that I am powerful to fulfill my word. I am God Almighty. Nothing's too hard for me.

Don't focus so much on your weakness and your inability and your struggle. Focus instead on me and my strength and my power.

I am God Almighty. I will do what I promise. You know, that's what faith is, by the way. Faith is looking away from yourself, away from your ability and inability, away from your weakness and looking in trust to the power of God.

Faith is clinging to the promises of God, not what we can do, but what He alone is able to do. God comes, He appears, and He speaks. He commands Abram, walk before me and be blameless that I may make my covenant between me and you and may multiply you greatly.

And what does Abram do in response? He falls on his face. That's the right response to the presence of the Lord, by the way. He falls flat on his face in reverence and in fear and in awe and in worship.

[11:31] And God again, once again, reaffirms His covenant with Abram. You wonder, 13 years has gone by. What, what's God gonna do now? What is God gonna, gonna say now?

It's been 13 years, God. What are you gonna give me now? God comes and He simply reaffirms yet again the very same promises He's already made.

Verses 4 through 8 are basically just a repeat of what we've already seen and heard. You remember chapter 12? God calls Abram. He promises to multiply His offspring, to give them the land of Canaan, to make Him an agent of blessing to the whole world.

Chapter 15, God appears. He confirms these promises in a covenant. And now, chapter 17, He gives this visible, tangible sign of the promises.

But notice again, it's all essentially the same promise, isn't it? This is not a new covenant made with Abram. It's the same promises that He's been waiting for for the last 25 years.

[12:37] Only now, He gives a sign. He puts a ring on Abram's finger, so to speak, to remind him of the promises. Well, let's remind ourselves this morning.

What are they? What are the promises God's made? You can think about it basically in three categories here, the promises God makes to Abram. It's a promise of posterity, a promise of place, and a promise of prosperity.

Promise of posterity, prosperity, and place. God, here in verse 4, look there with me. He reaffirms this promise of posterity, offspring. Behold, verse 4, my covenant is with you.

You shall be the father of a multitude of nations. And God affirms this by giving Abram a new name here, doesn't He? No longer shall you be called Abram, which means great father, but now your

name will be Abraham, which means father of a multitude.

I will make you exceedingly fruitful, verse 6, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. Now that's new information, isn't it? Kings shall come for you.

[13:53] This is a new development. And we see a royal promise. Kings now will come from the line of Abram. That's the posterity promise. God reaffirms the promise of prosperity here in verse 7.

This is blessing, a promise of blessing. I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

What's the blessing? What's the prosperity? The prosperity promised here. It is God himself. God promises to be their God, to be with them as their God.

We call this the Emmanuel principle. It's God with us. God commits to be with the offspring of Abram and for them. His presence will go with them as their God.

God, this is the primary blessing of this covenant. Everything else is icing on the cake. But he goes on and he reaffirms yet again this promise of a place here in verse 8.

[15:01] I will give you and your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. And again, he says, I will be their God.

So you see these three categories here. Again, God reaffirms his promise of people, prosperity, and place. And would you just notice the emphasis here? This emphatic language of God, I will multiply you, Abram, not just a little bit, but greatly.

Not just nations, but a multitude of nations. I won't make you just fruitful, but exceedingly fruitful.

This isn't just a covenant, it's an everlasting covenant.

25 years later, Abram may have some issues here understanding how God's going to do this, but God has not wavered one bit, has he? God has not backed down off of his promise.

He's doubling down here. Church, we should take note here, just for a moment as we apply this to us. Do not let the delay between God's promise and fulfillment lead you to doubt.

[16:17] Do not let the delay between God's promise and fulfillment put you in a state of distress. God is not slow to fulfill his promises.

Two thousand years since Christ came, and he promised he's coming back. He promised us Christ will come back. He will crush the serpent.

He will end evil for good. He will put an end to sin. He will renew all things. Death, grief, pain, sin, sorrow, all of it is gone for good.

When will it happen, Lord? This delay between promise and fulfillment can easily lead us to doubt, can easily lead us to distress.

Our God who stands outside of time is just as committed to his word 25 years later, 2,000 years later, as he was the moment he first spoke his promise.

[17:24] But we need to be reminded often. So here, knowing this, God gives Abram a sign of the promise, a reminder in his flesh, the sign of circumcision.

Just as I can look at my wedding ring and see this reminder, I belong to my wife, she belongs to me, we have promised to be faithful to each other, we have promised to love one another, so now Abram and his offspring after him can see, can look at this physical sign of circumcision and remember God's promises made to them.

But it also goes the other way. The second, we see, yes, circumcision is a promise, but second, circumcision is a prescription.

The sign itself is a responsibility for Abraham. It's not just what God will do for Abraham, it's also what Abraham and his offspring must do in order to enjoy all of these blessings.

Look there to verse 9. God says to Abraham, as for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant which you shall keep between me and you and your offspring after you.

[18:47] Here it is. Every male among you must be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.

He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought in with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, they all must be circumcised.

Verse 14 says, any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people. He has broken my covenant.

Now that's some clever language, isn't it? You notice that play on words there with this cutting language, right? In the ancient world when they made a covenant, they didn't just make a covenant, the language they used was they cut a covenant.

And here God says, I'm cutting a covenant with you Abraham, and you must cut off, or you will be cut off. This is not optional, is it?

[19 : 54] That raises an important question though, doesn't it? Is this covenant conditional or is it not? Theologians debate this sort of thing.

This might not be interesting to you, but theologians sort of get boxed up in these categories. Is this conditional or is it unconditional? Is it bilateral? Is it unilateral?

Let's just try and keep it simple here. I think the best way to understand what's happening here is to simply say what the Bible clearly says. It is pretty clear to me there are conditions.

Abram must do this. Cut off or be cut off. It's not optional. And at the same time, it is clear, God will make certain that the promises of the covenant are fulfilled.

One way to think about it is that God will certainly fulfill his promises, but not every individual offspring of Abraham will get to enjoy them.

[20 : 58] Why? Because as you read on in your Bibles, they break covenant with the Lord. God does everything he promises. He brings Israel out of Egypt.

He multiplies the offspring. He brings them into the land of Canaan. Eventually, praise God, he brings about the promised Messiah through the line of Abram. the Bible is abundantly clear.

God has fulfilled every promise made to Abraham. But for Abram and his descendants to enjoy these blessings, they must obey this command.

You must be circumcised. In fact, as you read on and see in the book of the law, we see circumcision becomes shorthand for the whole law.

The law is not unclear, is it? It is do this and live. Obey my law and you'll get to enjoy the blessing in the land. You'll get to be my people.

[21 : 56] But disobey, break my covenant, you will be exiled, just like Adam and Eve in the garden were exiled. And of course, what happens? They break a covenant, and they're sent away.

God guarantees what he will do, but there is a condition here for Abram and his offspring to enjoy it, not just his physical offspring either.

Look, look here. Notice here that from the beginning, this covenant is open to the nations. Did you notice that? It is not just the physical descendants of Abram, it's also those who are brought in from the outside, from the very beginning, God's plan is to bless the world, and he will do it.

But at the very same time, we see there is a condition. They must meet this condition in order to enjoy these blessings. You can imagine, even still, after all these reassurances, all these appearances, all these promises, reassured, reaffirmed, Abram here, 99 years old, he still has to be wondering, God, how will you do it?

how in the world are you going to multiply me and my offspring? So here again, look at verse 15. Yet again, God reaffirms the promise.

[23 : 25] God said to Abraham, as for Sarai, your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her.

I will bless her, she shall become nations, kings of peoples shall come from her. And once again, what does Abram do? He falls on his face, only this time he's not worshipping, what's he doing?

Verse 17, Abram falls on his face and he laughs, he can't believe it. Shall a child be born to a man who's 100 years old?

Are you serious? Shall Sarah, who is 90 years old and barren? Is she really going to bear a child? God, you've got to be kidding me. Now, I know you keep saying this, I know you're not backing down off of your promise, but this is just so crazy, so impossible, so unlikely, I can hardly believe it. So God, I've got an idea. How about you just take Ishmael? Can you just bless Ishmael? Oh, that Ishmael might live before you.

[24 : 39] Maybe this plan made in the flesh can just work out after all. Don't you just love that? And don't we tend to operate the same way?

We make our own plans without a thought to the Lord. We do what we think we have to do to get what we think we have to have and then we ask God's blessing on our plans after the fact, once they're already in motion.

You ever do that? God won't do it that way. The promises of God cannot be achieved by human effort.

The promises of God cannot be earned, achieved, merited, brought about by anything in us.

So God says in verse 19, no, Sarai, Sarah, your wife will bear you a son and you shall call his name Isaac.

[25 : 39] Again, here, two new names, two new names. Sarah, which means princess, that's a hint of the royalty that's to come from her womb and Isaac, which means he laughs.

Now, Abram would be reminded every time he called Isaac's name that God's word, his promises, however unlikely they seem, is nothing to laugh at.

He is God almighty and he will accomplish everything he promises. God promises an offspring, Isaac, through Sarah and he promises now to extend the covenant blessings through him.

Don't lose sight of the big picture here. Remember the big picture? We are tracing the promise God made all the way back in Genesis 3 of the seed of the woman, an offspring of Eve, an offspring of the woman who will come and crush the head of the serpent.

It's in him that all the nations of the earth will be blessed. It's in him that this curse of sin will be peeled back and undone. And now we have clarity. God says this promised Messiah will now come through Isaac.

[26 : 56] I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you, I haven't forgotten about him.

And behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, I will make him into a great nation, but I will establish my covenant with Isaac.

By the way, he's coming next year. Sarah shall bear, to you, this child, at this time next year. Can you imagine this anticipation? Twenty-five years of waiting, and now we're less than a year away.

The child of promise is coming. We're almost here. So how does Abram respond? Look there to verse 22. Abram responds in the obedience of faith.

How do we see faith? If faith is trust in the promises of God, that's invisible. We can't really see faith, can we? How do we see it manifested?

[28 : 04] We see faith manifested externally in obedience. When he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abram, and then Abraham took Ishmael, his son, and all those born in his house, or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him.

Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. Ishmael, his son, was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. That very day, no delay in it, no waiting, Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised, and all the men of the house, those born in the house, those bought with money from a foreigner, all of them were circumcised with him.

This is quick, complete, total, immediate obedience. That's what faith looks like. The obedience of someone who's trusted in the promise of God.

So, we see that circumcision served as a promise, we've seen it served as a prescription, but there is a third function here, and here's where it comes to us this morning, church.

Here's where it comes to bear on us. Third, circumcision is a pointer. It is a pointer. As we read through the Old Testament, and we see God's dealings with Abraham, and we see how he deals with his people under the Old Covenant, we need to understand that that's not where it stops.

[29 : 43] All of this is pointing us forward to a new and better covenant, the new covenant of grace in Jesus Christ.

These promises here made to Abraham, they have a partial fulfillment in the life of Israel, yes, but that's not all. They are ultimately, finally fulfilled in Christ.

Christ. This is good news for us, church. We shouldn't read this and think, man, it must be nice to be a Jew. I wish I had some of those promises, right?

I wish that God would be for me. I wish that God would give me a land and a place. I wish God would bless me and give me a certain hope and a certain future and be my God.

Don't you see? Christian, you can read these promises and rejoice. All of these are yours by faith in Christ. Think about this with me for a minute.

[30 : 45] The God who made all things, rules over all things, spoke all things into being, holds all things together. This God is your God.

He is your God in Christ. He is for you in Christ. He delights in you in Christ. He loves you in Christ. He stands to defend you from all your enemies in Christ. He is working out all things for the good of those who love him. And are called according to his purposes.

This God is yours in Christ. We are the most prosperous people in all the earth, church. Who is more blessed than us? What blessing could we desire more than the Lord himself?

He says, I'm yours in Christ. Not only this, but we have a future place to inherit. Not just Canaan. Canaan is too small.

[31 : 50] Romans 4 tells us the promise made to Abraham and his offspring was that they would be heirs of all the world.

all the earth. Just imagine it. Totally renewed, freed from sin, no more curse, no more evil, no more pain, no more death, no more tears.

A perfect place where Christ the King will reign forever and ever. Where Christ, our Emmanuel, will be God with us forever more.

forever more. That is your future in Christ. And who can come enjoy it? All the people of God.

His spiritual posterity. Not just the children of Abraham according to the flesh, but those who share the faith of Abraham.

[32 : 52] Children of God from every tribe, every tongue, every nation. These promises of people, place, prosperity, are all fulfilled in Christ and in Him.

By faith in Him. Church, we are heirs of all the promises of God. But there is one condition.

You know what it is? You must be circumcised. not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

You must be circumcised in your heart. Meaning, you must be born again by the Spirit of God through faith in Christ.

You must be given a new heart. you must be spiritually circumcised. In fact, that's exactly what this fleshly circumcision is pointing to.

[34 : 02] Physical circumcision is a pointer. It's a shadow. It's this partial black and white fuzzy image. But as we come forward through the new covenant and the new testament and we see what Christ has done, we see this image in full 4K high definition color.

We see the substance to the shadow. Physical circumcision is pointing us forwards to true spiritual circumcision.

Not to baptism, by the way, which our Presbyterian friends, who I love them so dearly, believe, but to what baptism represents. physical circumcision points us forwards to true spiritual circumcision by faith in Christ.

And if you've received that, then we baptize you. If you want to be one of the people of God, if you want to be an heir of all the promises of God, there is one way, one condition.

You must be spiritually circumcised. That's the requirement. That's the condition. But this is what brings you into the new covenant.

[35 : 23] The good news for us, church, is that God himself does this work by his grace in his people.

It cannot be accomplished in the flesh. Which means, praise God, it cannot be forfeited in the flesh. God himself meets this condition of the new covenant for us and in us.

We can't give ourselves new birth. We can't spiritually resurrect a dead heart. We can't give ourselves new life. God must do it.

And God has done it. God has accomplished our salvation in such a way that if you have it, you cannot lose it.

You cannot be exiled from the new creation. We are born again of his spirit by faith in Christ, brought in to his covenant by his work, his grace, his plan, his power.

[36 : 32] God gave Abram a glimpse of this, didn't he? In a miraculous birth to an old man as good as dead, he got to see El Shaddai in part, but church, we see the power of God displayed most clearly in the regeneration of sinners from the dead.

If anyone is in Christ, he is a what? Help me. A new creation. The old is gone. Behold, the new has come.

This has been the plan of God from the beginning. All the way back to Deuteronomy, the promise was made, the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of all your offspring so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul that you may live.

In fact, I'll go a step further and go to Romans. This is what it means to be a true Jew, Paul says in Romans. A true Jew, an heir of the promises, one who is included in the people of God, one who has been circumcised in the heart by the Spirit.

Paul makes this clear in Romans 2. He says, no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical, but a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart by the Spirit, not by the letter.

[38 : 07] His praise is not from man, but from God. So Paul can say in Philippians chapter 3 to a group of Gentiles, we are the circumcision, we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

He goes on in the passage that was read this morning from Colossians chapter 2. In him, in Christ also, you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.

Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God who raised him from the dead. And you who were dead in your trespasses in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with his legal demands.

This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. I ask you a personal question this morning.

Hopefully by now you understand. Have you been circumcised? not according to the flesh that matters close to nothing.

[39 : 45] Have you been circumcised in the heart? Has God by his grace sent the message of the gospel to you in such a way that you hear it, you believe it, you respond with faith that your heart is alive to the glories of Christ?

That by faith you see I have no hope of standing before this holy God on my record, I must have a savior. Have you trusted in Christ alone by faith?

Has God put his spirit in your heart as a sign and a guarantee of promises made, of an assurance of a future glorious hope, of an enabler of obedience of faith that's required of you?

Has God by his grace circumcised your heart? If so, then friend, rejoice that by the grace of God, all the promises of God are yours in Christ.

And if not, then friend, the invitation is yours this morning. Would you come to Christ by faith?

Would you look to him who was cut off for you so that you might be included in the people of God, made an heir of his promises, adopted as a son and a daughter of God?

[41 : 17] Would you look to Christ by faith? Now, when I look at my wedding ring, I'm reminded of promises made, I'm reminded of my responsibilities, I'm reminded of the vows that my wife made to me, but I should also be reminded that this marriage is not forever.

It too is a pointer towards a greater forever union between Christ and his bride. It is a picture of a greater reality to come.

In the very same way, this sign of circumcision, it points us forward to true circumcision of the spirit. And this gathering of believers, churches, we come together week in and week out and we sing songs of worship and we enjoy fellowship with one another as we rejoice in the truths of the gospel, as we meet with the living God.

This too is a pointer to greater day to come when Christ returns and all of his people from every tribe, tongue, and nation will be gathered as one in worship before the king.

And on that day we will see every promise kept by our God. Father, we praise you, Lord.

[42 : 47] All of this is to the praise of your glorious grace. God, we praise you that you have worked salvation in your people by your grace through faith in Christ, that you have spiritually circumcised our hearts, given us a new heart that loves you and desires to keep your commands.

Lord, that did not come from us. Father, the promises of God cannot be accomplished in the flesh, but Lord, you've taken it upon yourself to do all that's needed.

And sending Christ to live and to die and to rise for sinners like us. Lord, we love you and we rejoice in your faithfulness to us. We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.