



The Sermon

Dr. Steven J. Lawson

Genesis 17:13-27

"The Sign of the Covenant, Part II"

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TRANSCRIPT

I want to begin reading in verse 9. And just to remind you, last time we looked at verses 9 through 12, and so this is somewhat of a part two to finish the chapter that I was unable to finish last time. But I'm going to begin reading in verse 9 just so we can get the whole flow of this.

Genesis 17, verse 9, "God said further to Abraham, 'Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. A servant who is" - verse 13 - "who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.'

"Then 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 indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.' Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, 'Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?'

And Abraham said to God, 'Oh that Ishmael might live before You!' But God said, 'No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year.' When He finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.

"Then Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all the servants who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's household, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the very same day, as God had said to him. Now 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. In the very same day Abraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son. All the men of his household, who were born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him." So this is the reading of God's Word. Let's go to Him in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, all Scripture is inspired by You and is profitable for instruction, for reproof, for rebuke, for training in righteousness. And so we ask that You would teach us today, that You would reprove us today, that You would equip us today; even for some here today, that You would convert. Lord, meet each one of us at exactly our point of need. And from this one passage, I pray that You would bring much truth to our minds, to our hearts, that would transform our lives.

Lord, I thank You for these brothers and sisters in Christ who have gathered here today. I pray that You would bless them, bless their family, bless all that they do. Lord, shower Your grace upon Trinity Bible Church. Show Yourself to be mighty in our midst, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. [End]

The title of this message is "The Sign of the Covenant, Part II." And last Sunday we began looking at these verses concerning Abraham and the instituting of circumcision. We only made it through verse 12, but circumcision is mentioned ten times in these verses, so it's the central theme that is woven through these verses, everything's revolving around circumcision. And we noted last time that there is a dual aspect to

circumcision: there's a national aspect, and there is a personal aspect. The national aspect of circumcision, it was a sign that signified you're a part of God's chosen people, that you were a part of God's chosen nation that has been set apart by God unto Himself to uniquely carry out God's purposes here on the earth, that Israel was to be a light to the nations, that Israel was to carry out the Great Commission and to reach the ends of the earth with the saving message of God. And so as every male boy on the eighth day would be circumcised, it was to be a constant reminder that You are a part of this covenant nation, You are a part of this chosen nation.

But we also noted that there is a personal aspect, which would be a salvific aspect, that just as the foreskin of the male organ was to be cut with a knife on the eighth day, even so it was to be a foreshadowing of what God must do to the heart one day, that God must take a sharp two-edged sword of the Word of God, wielded by the Spirit of God, and to pierce the heart of every person within Israel, as well as outside of Israel. And so it became really a picture, if you will, of the new birth, of what would be called the new birth by Jesus in John chapter 3. And so the application even for us today is that every one of us must have our heart circumcised. The Word of God which is living in active and sharper than any two-edged sword must be administered to our spiritual heart by the Holy Spirit, and for our heart to be opened up, for our old heart of stone to be removed and a new heart of flesh to be implanted within us, if we are to enter into the kingdom of God. No one with an uncircumcised heart will ever enter into the kingdom of God.

So that is what we looked at last time, and so I want to step now back into the flow of this and just simply to remind you of the first main heading, we're going to pick it up there, beginning in verse 9, "The Responsibility Upon Abraham." This is verses 9 through 14. And in these verses we see what became incumbent upon Abraham.

So, verse 9, "Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant," and this stresses now that Abraham has personal responsibility, he has personal duty assigned to him now to keep the covenant. It is all by grace that God has instituted this covenant, the Abrahamic covenant, but grace never relieves us of our personal responsibilities to follow what the Word of God requires of us; and that is what God is stressing here.

Verse 10, "Every male shall be circumcised," that would be a physical descendant of Abraham. Verse 11, "It shall be a sign of the covenant," a

distinguishing mark. And what's interesting is no one else will ever see it because of where it's located on the body. Only the one who is circumcised will see it, and only his parents will see it, as the child would be but a baby. But nevertheless, it is to be this distinguishing mark. And then we saw in verse 12, "It's to be administered on the eighth day."

So we pick it up now here. As we step into verse 13, we read, "A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised." So all the men, all the males in the house who at this point will, no doubt, be adults and serving, are to be circumcised also. And it shows the solidarity of the house under the headship and leadership of the father; and in this case, that would be Abraham. So whether a servant would be born in your house, or whether you would go to a slave trader and with money purchase a Gentile to be brought into your house to serve, he is also to be circumcised when he comes into your house. And this really is a foreshadowing of, really, the gospel and the Abrahamic covenant extending beyond Israel even to the Gentile nations, as not only are Jewish boys to be circumcised, but those who have been bought from a foreign traitor from another nation, which would obviously be a Gentile, they also are to be circumcised. And so it is really a foreshadowing of the Abrahamic covenant that the nations will be included in this grace of God.

And verse 14, this warning: "But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant." This is how serious God was about this rite of circumcision: "If you have anyone in your house, Abraham, any male who is not circumcised, whether it's a baby, whether a young boy, whether an adult," or even Abraham who's a hundred years old, "if there's any male who is not circumcised in this house or in any other Jewish house, he is to be cut off." And there's a play on words here. "If he hasn't been cut upon, he is to be cut out," is what God is saying. And "to be cut off from his people" means he is to be put out of the house, he is to be excommunicated, if you will, from the house, "because you do not bear the mark, or the sign, of the covenant." In other words, "You're not one of us."

So an uncircumcised Jewish male was unthinkable, unthinkable; was to be put out. And in much the same way, an unbaptized believer is equally unthinkable. And I want to pause just here for a moment and say to all of us, that if you've never been baptized as a believer in Jesus Christ, you should be, you need to be, you must be. And even if you're a hundred years old like Abraham, if you have not yet identified yourself publicly with the Lord Jesus Christ in the manner with which God has prescribed, you're in a

place that is unthinkable by biblical standards. So I would encourage you that if you're a believer in Christ and you have not yet been baptized, that this message should serve as a prodding to you to step forward, come to the elders of this church and tell them, "I need to be publicly identified with Jesus Christ by being baptized in water."

Well, I want you to note next in verses 15 and 16, "The Renaming of Sarai." So in verse 15, "Then God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.'" Now in the Bible names were very important and they were very emblematic of that person and what God desires to do with that person. Sarai means "my princess," and the idea is that her ministry would be confined to just this one family, and for Abraham she would be his princess. But with this name change to Sarah, her name now means just "princess," and the idea is that she would be a princess of many people, of multitudes, that there would come through her, really through her body, there would be many, many descendants, and she would not simply be the princess of Abraham, but that she would be the princess of countless families that would come through her.

So God says in verse 16, "I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people will come from her." And David and Solomon will come from her, and ultimately the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the Lord Jesus Christ. At this time Sarah is ninety years old. And I think as a point of application for us here today, what we learn from this is that it's never too old to be used by God, that no matter how old you are, your greatest work for God may well be done in your twilight years. That was certainly the case with Sarah, as God waited until she became ninety years old. There's a sense in which her entire life had been a preparation for this one moment in time, that everything that had preceded in her life was to prepare her uniquely to bring forth Isaac into this world.

And as we meet here today, I love this church, I love the cross-section. We have young people, we have old people, we have middle-aged people, we have people from every, really, generation and age group. But for some of us here today, as we find ourselves in the latter years of life, let us never assume this position that, "I have retired from God's work, that I have run my race and now it's time for the younger people to step in and to carry the baton, and I will just cheer them on." No, that is nowhere found in the Bible.

In the Bible, what we read is that God so often reserves the greatest ministry that we would ever have for the final years of our life. We have more wisdom, we have experienced more grace, we have been humbled, we know the Bible better, we have adopted more of a servant's heart, we cast a larger shadow of influence. We should have our greatest years of ministry, just like Sarah, in the latter years of our life. And for those of you who are young here today in your 20s or your 30s, even your 40s, there should be a sense of anticipation about the future, and what is God preparing you to do next decade and the following decade. God has great plans for your life.

Look at Moses; God reserved the greatest ministry that he would ever have for the last forty years of his life. The first forty years he really spent learning how to be somebody, the middle forty years he learned how to be a nobody, and the last forty years he learned what God can do with somebody who realizes they're a nobody. And so it's all a preparation.

The same was true with Caleb. When Joshua and Caleb went in and spied out the land Caleb could have said, "I'll just take a little green valley over here, that'll be my part of the land to spy out." No, he said, "I want the biggest mountain with the biggest giants on it; those are mine. I want the greatest challenge that you can give me."

So, for my brothers and sisters here today who are very close even to my own age, you should give careful thought as to not allow yourself to become inactive or to be sitting on the sidelines. It is for such a time as this that you have come into the kingdom of God. And that was the case with Sarah. Maybe God will save the best wine for last in your life.

Well, this leads us now to verses 17 and 18; and I want you to I want you to see the reaction of Abraham. And so, how did Abraham respond to this message from God? And in verse 17 we read, "Then Abraham fell on his face" – he just collapsed to the ground at these staggering words – "and laughed." He laughed at the absurdity of this. And he already knew from chapter 15 that he was going to have a son, and he's already had Ishmael. But what really dominates his mind is his wife: "She's ninety years old, she's not getting any younger, and You're saying that Sarah is going to bear a son, and that now me at a hundred years old? Ishmael was born thirteen years earlier." Well, God has saved the best for last even in Abraham's life.

"He fell on his face, laughed, and in his heart," – in other words, he muse silently to himself as though God could not read his mind like an open book – 'Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old?' – I mean, he believes that he's past the stage of life to be able to sire a child – 'And will Sarah who is ninety years old bear a child?' And he is thinking, "This is inconceivable. There is no way." This is not just a staggering thought, this is a sobering thought.

Verse 18, "And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before You." Now why does he say that? Why does he shift the focus away from a son to be born back to Ishmael? And I think what Abraham's trying to do here is to offer God a Plan B. He's trying to help God with a better idea: "Could not Ishmael be the solution? I mean, he is my son, he is my physical descendant, and You've said that the covenant will be carried out through a son of mine and through a physical descendant. I've got a great idea; I've already got a son and I've already got a physical descendant: Ishmael. Would this not be a simpler solution? Would this not be more convenient, this alternate plan?" And so, he's rationalizing in his mind to try to help God come up with a better solution for what God wants to do. In other words, he is thinking, "Well, as long as we have the same end in mind, the means does not matter to accomplish this end."

And I think there are times in each one of our lives when we try to help God out by coming up with an alternate plan, when the plan has been so clearly put before us. And I've tried to think about how that just one area of application where we really echo what Abraham is saying here, and I think one area would be finances. I mean, the Bible tells us – and we never talk about finances here at Trinity, but we need to – that sometimes I think there is this temptation in our mind not to give to God the first fruit of our resources, that we will live on this, "And if there's anything left over, then I'll give that to God," rather than, "No, I'm going to give to God first, and whatever is left over we're going to live on it."

And I think sometimes in our mind we rationalize this and want to cut corners, and we'll even say something like this to ourselves: "Well, rather than give my money, I'll give my time, I'll give my service, I'll give my volunteer help; that will be a better solution." But the fact of the matter is God has called upon every believer to honor Him with the first fruit of our resources of what has been put and placed into our hand. And for us to negate that is really to follow the path of Ishmael and to have a heart of unbelief. So, that was Abraham's response. And I think sometimes it can be our response as well.

Well, I want you to note, fourth, beginning in verse 19, "The Rebuke of Abraham. The Rebuke of Abraham." God now replies to Abraham's alternate plan. So, verse 19, it's just rather short and sweet: "But God said, 'No.'" Like a parent talking to a child throwing a temper tantrum at the grocery store: "No." "I like My plan a whole lot better than yours, Abraham. I'm God." Very emphatically He said, "No," and He will not adopt Abraham's Plan B.

And so, He says, "No, but Sarah your wife will bear a son, and you shall call his name Isaac." This really wasn't up for discussion or negotiation on God's part with Abraham. "No, your wife Sarah is going to bear a son, and I've already named him. His name is Isaac, his name is not Ishmael. This son of promise will be Isaac." And the name Isaac means "he laughs." And so every time that Abraham will say, "Isaac, come here," he's going to be reminded of his unbelief, he's going to be reminded of how he tried to cut corners with God, he's going to be reminded of how he tried to cut a deal with God, he's going to be reminded of how he pulled back short of what God had said that he must do and will come to pass. And so every time he says Isaac, he will be remembered, "He laughs. That was me; I laughed at God when God required me to take this extraordinary step of faith."

And he continues in verse 19, God says, "I will establish My covenant with him," - with Isaac, not Ishmael - "for an everlasting covenant," - meaning it will never be annulled - "for his descendants after him." It will be a perpetual covenant that will go from generation to generation to generation, all the way to the end of the age. And Romans 11 says that even in the last days before the return of Christ that all Israel will be saved; that there will be an ethnic, national, geopolitical body known as Israel, all the way to the end of the age; and it is the establishment forever of this Abrahamic covenant.

And it's an amazing thing. You can try to buy a plane ticket and go fly to the Canaanites; you're not going to find a place. Sodom and Gomorrah; you're not going to find the place. But to this very day, Israel continues to be the hub of the wheel of international policy and crisis and tension; and there is no explanation for Israel other than the sovereign purpose of God and in the Abrahamic covenant. It's a tiny little land the size of Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas. It's a tiny little sliver finger of land; and yet the influence, as it stands in the crossroads of the international scene, is extraordinary.



So, verse 20, "As for Ishmael, I have heard you." And God will now show kindness to Ishmael. "I have heard you; behold, I will bless him," - referring to Ishmael - "and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly," - referring to - "well, there will be a nation that will come from him, and there will be many, many, many descendants that will come from Ishmael. He will become the father of twelve princes," - referring to twelve sons, who will provide leadership over others, like twelve chieftains over tribes; and the nation would be Arabia, and the Arabian nations - "I will make him a great nation."

Verse 21, "But My covenant I will establish with Isaac." It's unalterable, it's irrevocable, it's immutable, it is set in stone, carved in stone, it is set in concrete, it is a part of the eternal purpose and plan of sovereign God from before the foundation of the world. There is no Plan B, there will only be Plan A, and it is God's plan. "My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year. So go buy a house closer to the elementary school, because this time next year you're going to be in the waiting room at the hospital, and there is going to be a child born to you through Sarah your wife ninety years old." And God says, "I've already named him, and his name is Isaac." And it's going to come to pass, because God has foreordained that it will come to pass.

Verse 22, "When He" - God - "finished talking to him," - Abraham - "God went up from Abraham." Now, what does that mean that God went up from Abraham? Well, we need to be reminded that God is omnipresent. That is one of the main attributes of God, that God is everywhere present with the fullness of all that He is in any one place. There's not more of God in one place and less of God in another place, or there's not a part of God here and then a part of God over here and then another part of God over here. No, the fullness of deity is everywhere: in the heights of heaven, here upon the earth, and even in the pit of hell itself. God is everywhere present, in heaven, on earth, and in hell, because God is omnipresent. There is no place where God does not exist.

So what does this mean, "God went up"? Does that mean God would be no longer here on the earth? Does that mean God would no longer be with Abraham? So what does that mean, "He went up"? We need to understand that while God is omnipresent everywhere with the fullness of His entire divine being, there are places where God reveals Himself more than in other places, where God makes Himself known more visibly, or more in reality -

excuse me – in reality, not visibly, but in reality than in other places. So for God to go up means that God has manifested Himself to Abraham by speaking to Him directly with an audible voice. That door is now being closed. And though God remains with Abraham, God is no longer speaking audibly to Abraham until the next time; and the next time is the first verse of the next chapter, chapter 18, verse 1: "The Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre."

Now here's a theological point. We all need to understand who God is and the God that we worship, that wherever you go the rest of your life, all that God is will be with you. Even Jesus said, "Lo, I'm with you always, even to the end of the age." But there will be places in your life and times in your life when God will choose to make Himself known to you more vividly, more dramatically than at other times. And I would say the time when God has chosen to consistently speak to you more so than at other times is when you come to the gathered assembly of the church, when you come on the Lord's Day, when you come with God's people on the Lord's Day, and the Lord's Word is opened, and the Lord's Word is preached to you, it is as though God unusually comes to church, it is as though God unusually makes Himself known under the power of the preaching of the Word of God. And the same is true with the teaching of the Word of God. So, to be in church on the Lord's Day is to put yourself in a place where God most consistently chooses to speak to you and to make Himself known.

Now, will God do that in other places? Of course, because God is omnipresent. But there will be places where He will do so more than others. And just to be in church does not mean that God will show up. This Book has to be opened, this Book has to be taught, this Book has to be preached, and this Book must come to you in the power of the Holy Spirit; and God will do unusual business with you in your life. You are in a very privileged place to be in a church like Trinity Bible Church of Dallas, because there's many churches God's not coming to church. Ichabod is written over the door, because it becomes simply a haven of worldly speculations and religious superstitions and secular humanism. God comes to church and speaks to His people when His Word is opened.

Well, this leads us now to the last heading that I want you to see, "The Readiness of Abraham. The Readiness of Abraham." Beginning in verse 23, and what follows, is the ready obedience of Abraham. So we read in verse 23, "Then Abraham took Ishmael his son," let me stop right there. The word "then" leaps off the page to me. Right then. Abraham didn't have to go home and pray about it. He didn't have to go talk to other spiritual

counselors. God has spoken; and when God speaks, and when God makes His word and will known, it requires immediate obedience. Delayed obedience is no obedience, delayed obedience is disobedience.

"Then Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all the servants who were born in his house, all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's household, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the very same day." You've got to love that. And he's just rounding them all up and says, "God has spoken; and I have a knife. Now we're going to have a come to Jesus meeting right now." I won't say any more one-liners. But Abraham administered the circumcision to every single one of those men, starting with Ishmael, and all of his servants, and everyone he'd bought from a foreign trader from another nation, from another country that had been brought there.

And just to intensify the magnitude of this, verse 24, Moses, who wrote this, includes this: "Now Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin." This was a painful obedience. This was not an easy path for Abraham to take. It would cost him much to obey God. But he doesn't try to rationalize in his mind anymore. He realizes, "I just need to obey God, and I need to do it now." And so at ninety-nine years of age he was circumcised, whether he did it, or whether he handed the knife over to one of the other men to do it, it was debilitating. There was bloodshed. There's a recovery period. There's a walking with a limp. But Abraham did it because God told him to do it.

Verse 25, "And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin." Verse 26, "In the very same day." This is where Moses is placing the emphasis and is stressing, "It was the very same day Abraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son." Verse 27, "All the men of his household," - top to bottom - "who were born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner," - meaning a Gentile - "were circumcised." This was immediate obedience. It was a painful obedience, it was a complete obedience, and it was a blessed obedience. God will honor the man who honors His Word.

And so, what a chapter this is. This chapter ultimately speaks to the obedience that God requires of each and every one of us. If you have received the saving grace of God in your life, it comes with much responsibility to make deliberate choices, to obey God's Word. And every

time that God says, "You shall do this," God is pointing to the very center of His will and God is pointing to ultimate blessing. And every time God says do not do something, God in love and mercy is wanting to protect you from being harmed, because it will. When God says, "Do not do this," if you were to do that, it's going to lead you away from God's will, and it will lead you away from the fullest expression of God's blessing upon your temporal life. "Wise is the man wise is the woman who chooses to obey God immediately."

Now as we bring this to conclusion, somewhat of an unusual chapter for us as Gentiles living in New Testament times, just to wrap this up, I want you to understand that all of this ultimately looked ahead to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Number one, "Jesus received circumcision." In Luke 2, verse 21, the Bible says, "Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day." He had to be, because it says in Galatians 4, verse 4, "He was born of a woman, under the Law," meaning He was born in a position where He is now responsible in His incarnation to obey the very law that He Himself has given to us. So Jesus the great lawgiver, even at eight days old, through His parents' obedience is carrying out the requirement of the Law. And so Jesus received circumcision.

But second, "Jesus fulfills circumcision." He fulfilled the ceremonial and civil parts of the law by His death upon the cross. The moral law continues into this church age, but the ceremonial and civil law has been fulfilled, especially the ceremonial law, by Jesus' death upon the cross, as He Himself was cut off on our behalf. When He went to the cross and He was lifted up to die, God transferred the sins of all the people who would ever believe upon Him, were transferred to Him, and the Bible says, "Him who knew no sin God made to be sin for us," and in that moment Jesus was cut off from God. And He cried out upon the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" He was separated in His humanity from the holiness of His Father, who can have no fellowship with sin.

And so Jesus in His death upon the cross fulfills this being set apart, this being cut off in His death upon the cross. And if you will believe in Jesus Christ, if you will put your faith and your trust in Him, you will never be cut off from God. "There is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." And upon the cross He took Holy God in one hand and sinful man in the other and He has reconciled the two through the blood of His cross, and you are forever joined to God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so Christ has fulfilled circumcision by Him being cut off, and it was His blood that was shed. And it was a painful obedience for the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet it was on the Day of Atonement, it was immediate obedience. Just as the Father had directed Him, He died a painful death in our place. And if you've never believed upon Jesus Christ, I plead with you, I urge you to commit your life to Him this very moment as you're seated under the preaching of the Word of God.

And the last thing I would say as this points to Christ; not only did He receive circumcision, and not only did He fulfill circumcision, "He actually executes circumcision." Jesus is the one who circumcises the heart. Jesus is the one who takes His own word, the sharp two-edged sword, and He is the one who pierces the soul by His Holy Spirit and brings about conviction of sin and regeneration that produces conversion.

Colossians 2, verse 11, just listen to this one verse: "In Him," - referring to Christ - "in Him you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands." If you're a believer you've been circumcised, but not with human hands; He says, "by the circumcision of Christ." By the circumcision administered by the invisible hands of Christ, administered by the Holy Spirit, this is what God has done in your life. He has circumcised your heart. He has filleted your heart. He has cut open your heart. Just like Acts 16, verse 14, "God opened Lydia's heart so that the gospel could come in."

And so, this chapter looks ultimately to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who is the fulfiller and the executor of true circumcision of the heart. If your heart has never been circumcised, this is a work that only God can do. And I would urge you to pray to God and say, "O God, open up this hard heart of mine. God, take Your Word and bring it to bear upon my calloused heart. God, open up my soul and give me a new heart, a new heart to believe, a new heart to put my faith and trust in You." If you would pray that prayer, that is a prayer that God delights to hear, a prayer that God delights to answer, and God would answer that prayer. "God, circumcise my heart." Let us go to the Lord now in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we can only say thank You that You have circumcised us, the removal of the flesh of our heart, that we would become new creatures in Christ. Lord Jesus, thank You for Your obedience, that You went to the cross and obeyed the Father so that we might have right standing with You,

that we would never be cut off from You. Bless us this day with an understanding of what we have looked at. Work it into the fabric of our soul. May we be living epistles of this truth, in Jesus' name. Amen.