



## Oceanside URC—Adult Sunday School

“How Does God Preserve Us?”

John 6; Canons of Dort 5.14

*The Life of Perseverance #12*

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*While we know that God preserves us by his infinite and supernatural power (1 Peter 1:5), we also know that he allows us to experience that preserving power through ordinary means.*

*And as it has pleased God, by the preaching of the gospel, to begin this work of grace in us, so He preserves, continues, and perfects it by the hearing and reading of His Word, by meditation thereon, and by the exhortations, threatenings, and promises thereof, and by the use of the sacraments.—Canons of Dort 5.14*

### **He Uses Means**

*Examples: Creation, the Flood, the Wilderness*

*One Key Difference with Anabaptists [i.e., much of modern American Christianity]*

### **He Uses the Means of the Word**

*In Regeneration: “And as it has pleased God, by the preaching of the gospel, to begin this work of grace in us...”*

- **Born Again by the Power of the Holy Spirit**  
“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit . . . The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:5, 6, 8).
  
- **Born Again through the Means of the Gospel:**  
“. . . since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you” (1 Peter 1:23).

“Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures (Jas. 1:18).

*In Preservation: "...so He preserves, continues, and perfects it."*

- **The Word in Public**  
*"...by the hearing and reading of His Word..."* (Deut. 6:20–25; Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 4:13)
- **The Word in Private**  
*"...by meditation thereon..."* (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:2, 37:31, 119:9, 11, 105)
- **The Word in its Parts**  
*"...by the exhortations, threatenings, and promises thereof..."* (2 Tim. 3:16–17)

Exhortation: Acts 14:22; Matt. 26:11

Threatenings: Titus 1:13; Luke 13:3, 8:13; Ps. 119:71; Heb. 12:10–11

Promises: Ps. 119:50, 92

**\*\*Herman Witsius** [*The Economy of the Covenants*, p. 77]: "These admonitions, promises, threatenings, and the like actions of God towards the elect, are so far from giving the least ground to conclude any thing against their perseverance, that, on the contrary, they are powerful means for their conservation [preservation]."

## **He Uses the Means of the Sacraments**

*"...and by the use of the sacraments."*

*The Sacrament of Baptism (Rom. 6:4)*

*The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 10:16)*

**\*\*Compare Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 65 with Canons 5.14:**

Q. Since, then, we are made partakers of Christ and all His benefits by faith only, whence comes this faith?

A. From the Holy Spirit, who works it in our hearts by the preaching of the holy gospel, and confirms it by the use of the holy sacraments.