

Romans 10; Lord's Day 25
FAITH COMES BY THE MEANS OF GRACE

- I. The means of grace.
 - A. As the God of order He normally uses means to convey things to us in our daily lives.
 - B. Which are the means of grace?
 1. In the wider sense, all things are means of grace – all things work together for our spiritual good.
 2. In the narrow sense, the Spirit instituted means in the church to be actively used: preaching and sacraments.
- II. What is the preaching of the pure doctrines of the gospel, which is so necessary for our salvation?
 - A. Preaching is the authoritative proclamation of the gospel by the Church.
 1. The Word is the testimony of the Father concerning the Son, Who is the essential content of the faith of every believer.
 2. The content of the message is from the King in the Bible.
 3. It is authoritative.
 4. The preacher must be “sent” (Rom. 10:15), which is done by the elders (Acts 13:1-3).
 - B. How is the preaching of the Word a means of grace?
 1. The Spirit of God makes the preaching an effectual means of enlightening and convincing sinners (I Cor. 10:11; Acts 20:32; Luke 24:32).
 2. Therefore any reading and attendance of the preaching must be accompanied with prayer for the Spirit to work.
- III. The Holy Spirit confirms faith by the sacraments.
 - A. The sacraments are signs, i.e., visible representations of invisible realities.
 - B. And they are seals, i.e., marks of ownership and authority, guaranteeing what is revealed in the sign.
 - C. How are they signs and seals? Only by the Spirit working.
- IV. The clear implication is that we must use correctly the means God uses to give grace.
 - A. We are bound to use them if we want grace and increasingly stronger conscious faith.
 - B. It is required of those that hear the word preached that they attend unto it with diligence, preparation, and prayer.