

## Romans 10; Lord's Day 25

# FAITH COMES BY THE MEANS OF GRACE

1. The idea of the means of grace.

1. God normally uses means to convey things to us in our daily lives.

1. God created all things in this world, adapting them for the purpose of man's existence.

2. God is pleased to use certain instruments to convey grace to His children.

- Which are the means of grace?

1. The preaching of God's Word is indispensable for coming to and maintaining a conscious faith in Christ ( cf. Rom. 10:14; John 5:24,25; 10:3,4,27; Eph. 4:21; I Th. 2:13).

2. The sacraments depend on the preaching for their meaning and content, signifying the promise preached.

- What is the preaching of the pure gospel which is so necessary for our salvation?

1. Preaching is the authoritative proclamation of the gospel by the Church in the service of the Word of God through Christ.

1. The content of the message is from the King in the Bible, so Christ Himself speaks and is heard.

2. It is authoritative: one of the Greek words for "preach" is "to herald" on behalf of the King.

3. The preacher must be "sent" (Rom. 10:15), which sending is done by the elders (Acts 13:1-3).

- Not the preaching by itself, but the Spirit normally uses right preaching to bring faith to consciousness (Rom. 8:14-16).

- The Holy Spirit confirms faith by the sacraments.

1. The sacraments are signs, i.e., visible representations of invisible realities.

2. And they are seals, i.e., marks of ownership and authority, guaranteeing what is revealed in the sign.

1. A seal solemnly pledges and assures the promise of the gospel, viz., righteousness is out of faith.

2. God seals that He reckons the power of faith to be unto salvation.

- How are they signs and seals?

1. They are fingers which point our faith to the content of the preaching, viz., Christ crucified.

2. They are our uniforms which say that we were dead in sin, but are now saved and redeemed in Christ.

- The implied command is that we must use correctly the means God uses to give grace.

1. We are bound to use them if we want grace and increasingly stronger conscious faith (Canons I,16).

2. Demand the right kind of preaching, i.e., that which gives exposition of God's Word.

3. Receive the Word with all "readiness of mind" (Acts 17:11).