

235. The Means of Grace.

Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. *Matt. 28, 19. 20.*

There is no promise that God will give us His gifts without means. There is no hope for those who despise the means of grace and will not use them. The means of grace not only tell of, but offer and give, God's grace. These means of grace are the Gospel and the Sacraments. "Preach the Gospel to every creature," is the clear command of Christ. The Gospel is a means of grace offering forgiveness to all. Where there is no Gospel, there is no forgiveness and no salvation. But the Lord's promise is clear: "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it." Our life is short and uncertain. The years flit by, and any day may be our last. Oh, be diligent in using the means of salvation which God has given! Hear the Word of God and receive it as His Word, which is able to save your soul.

And to this heavenly proclamation two sure seals are fixed: the Sacrament of Baptism and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. These Sacraments are a pledge and seal that divine grace is imparted to us. While the Word generally is addressed to all, in the Sacrament it comes to the individual and applies to him in particular the grace of God. At Pentecost, Peter said to the multitude: "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." He says: "Everyone of you." If, therefore, you are not yet baptized, postpone it no longer. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." And of the Lord's Supper we read: "This is My body; this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Now, this pardon, the remission of sins, must be appropriated and accepted by the individual sinner. What is promised must be believed; what is offered as a gift must be accepted. *Faith* is that act of the soul by which it confidently lays hold of the grace and mercy of God set forth in the means of grace.

Prayer.

O merciful God, blessed is the soul that is acceptable to Thee. Open my eyes that I may see the wonders of Thy institutions. Awaken my heart, increase my hope, render fervent my devotion, that I may hear Thy Word with due reverence, approach Thy table in cheerful confidence, and with a pure mouth, holy heart, and a heartfelt desire partake of Thy Sacrament to the blessing, life, and salvation of my soul. Help me to receive great blessings from the means of grace. Amen.

Let, O Jesus, I beseech Thee,
These Thy means take root in me;
Let these precious gifts enrich me
So that I bear fruit for Thee;
Take them never from my heart
Till I see Thee as Thou art.
When such honor Thou wilt show me,
I shall see and fully know Thee.

This devotion is one of 318 taken from *Daily Bread* by F. E. Pasche, published by CPH in 1926, but now in the public domain. They have been copied and reformatted by Rev. Bruce G. Ley and made available for distribution by pastors and missionaries.

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