



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

## A Systematic Study of Bible Teachings (Dogmatics) Lesson 9.1 – The Doctrine of the Means of Grace

### The Meaning of “Means of Grace”

The term “means of grace” is not found in the Bible, but it is a useful expression to describe the tools that the Holy Spirit uses to create faith in Christ in unbelieving sinners, as we all are by nature. It is especially important to have a good understanding of this topic, because there are many professing Christians who believe that the Holy Spirit does not use tools to create faith in Christ, but that He works directly on the human heart without any tools or means of grace. Such false teaching leads into all kinds of other errors. Anyone can claim that the Holy Spirit has spoken to his heart and has told him all kinds of things that God wanted him to know which he then teaches to others with the claim that he is speaking the Word of God.

But if we want to be faithful teachers of God’s Word, we must teach as the apostle Paul did, that **“it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe”** (1 Corinthians 1:21). The message Paul is speaking about is the Good News of **“Christ crucified”** (1 Corinthians 1:23). **“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”** (Romans 10:17). **“How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?”** (Romans 10:14).

Since the Holy Spirit is God, He certainly could have created faith in Christ in many different ways, but He has chosen to work through the Gospel, that is, through the Good News of Jesus Christ, which Paul calls **“the word of reconciliation”** (2 Corinthians 5:19). Thus, the Gospel is the Holy Spirit’s means of creating faith in Christ and the means He uses to strengthen that faith. The Gospel is the means of grace; it is the tool that God, in His grace, uses to convey the blessings that Christ has won for us all by His life, death, and resurrection. Those blessings center in the righteousness of Christ and the forgiveness of sins.

### Questions

1. Why is it important to learn that the Holy Spirit uses certain tools to create faith in Christ?
2. What is the tool that the Holy Spirit uses to create faith in Christ?
3. Where is this taught in the Bible?
4. What blessing is given to us through the means of grace?