

## Lesson 13: The Means of Grace

“Nothing is so effectual against the devil, the world, the flesh, and all evil thoughts as to occupy oneself with the Word of God, talk about it, and meditate on it. Psalm 1 calls those blessed who ‘meditate on God’s law day and night.’”

- Dr. Martin Luther, *Large Catechism*: Preface

### Keys to Lesson 13:

Topic: Means of Grace

Thesis: God uses the Means of Grace to impute grace to us.

Key question: How does God show His grace in our lives?

Catechism: Sverdrup Questions – none with this lesson

Accompanying Bible Story: Luke 5:17-26 – Jesus Heals the Paralytic

### Warm-up or review:

As students enter the classroom, have a task posted for them.

Options:

Finish paragraph from Lesson 12

Finish questions from Lesson 12

Finish Lesson 12 summary

Lesson 12 quick quiz

Read and summarize Luke 5:17-26

### Introduce new lesson:

Options:

We begin a new topic of study with this lesson. Lesson 13 is an overview of Means of Grace. Lesson 14 defines “sacrament.” The lessons to 24 are studies of Baptism, Confession, and Holy Communion.

Engage your students in a conversation about where water comes from and how it gets into their houses...you will relate this later to “means.”

Read and discuss the student worksheet text

A note on the following: We mention below that houses in first century Israel typically had flat roofs which doubled as outdoor living space. Your students may question this architecture in light of Luke's use of the word “tiles.” v. 19 “But not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher...” The Greek word is κέραμος (keramos) which can be translated “tile” but is more likely clay and straw used to make up the patio floor and roof of the house.

*The crowd at the house where Jesus was teaching was very large. So many people had come to hear Jesus that even the entrance to the house was blocked. This large crowd of people presented a problem for a particular man and his friends. The man was paralyzed and could not walk on his own. His friends, believing that Jesus could heal him, had brought him to Jesus, bed and all. Their problem was how to get the man on his bed through the crowd to where Jesus was.*

*In those days, houses in Israel had flat roofs that acted like a patio or outdoor living space. The men managed to get their friend up on the roof. They then opened a hole in the roof big enough through which to lower the man on his bed.*

*Jesus understood that what the friends did was an act of faith. They believed and acted on that belief. Seeing this faith, Jesus spoke words of forgiveness. Wait! What? That's odd. The men did not bring their friend to be forgiven. They brought the man to be healed of his paralysis. But Jesus, seeing deeper into the man's needs, spoke words that gave the man the healing he really needed.*

*There were some religious leaders in the crowd who thought Jesus was a threat to their authority. Immediately they protested Jesus' words. They accused Jesus of blasphemy which is a very serious crime against God. "If Jesus thinks He can forgive sins," they thought, "He must think He is God since only God can forgive sins."*

*The irony in the story is that Jesus, in addition to being able to forgive sins, was able to hear their thoughts. So, He asked them a pointed question. "What's easier? To say, 'Your sins are forgiven' or 'Get up and walk.'?" Then to show He had the power to forgive sins, He said to the man, "I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home."*

*Jesus was speaking to the crowd at the house. Jesus spoke forgiveness to the paralytic. Jesus used words to challenge the beliefs of the religious leaders. Jesus also spoke physical healing to the paralyzed man. Jesus' words were Law and Gospel. The word of Law condemned the sin and pride of those who heard. The word of Gospel declared God's grace and forgiveness of sin to them.*

*We, like the paralyzed man, are sinners in need of forgiveness. God is gracious and wants us to know the benefits of His grace. We experience God's grace through what we call the Means of Grace: His Word and the Sacraments.*

### **Lesson:**

Help the students work through the text and Bible passages in the student material.

### **\* What do the following verses teach us about grace?**

#### **Romans 11:5, 6**

*In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.*

*God chooses us completely on the basis of grace. If there is any work or works involved in our coming to God, then our relationship with God is not based on grace.*

Ask your students to count the number of time *gracious* and *grace* are in these two verses. Emphasize with them that our relationship with God is all grace and never works.

#### **Ephesians 1:7, 8a**

*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us.*

*We are redeemed, that is our sins are forgiven, because God lavished His grace on us.*

Again the focus and emphasis is grace. Also help the students understand that God is not skimpy with His grace. He lavishes it upon us.

**Titus 2:11**

*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,*

*We are saved only because of God's grace.*

**\* Read Ephesians 2:8-9.**

*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

**What do these verses teach us about salvation?**

*Salvation is by grace through faith. Salvation, grace, and faith are all gifts from God. We can do nothing to be saved.*

**\* Read Romans 10:17.**

*So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*

**Where does faith come from?**

*Faith comes by hearing God's Word.*

***Because God gives us the gift of faith when we hear His Word, we call God's Word a "means of grace." It is somewhat like the pipes through which water gets into your house. The pipes are the "means" for transporting water. The Bible, God's Word, is the "means" through which God shows us His grace and gives us faith and salvation.***

**\* Read Romans 6:3, 4.**

*Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*

**What happens to us in baptism?**

*In baptism we die with Christ Jesus, we are buried with Christ Jesus, and just as He was raised we too are raised to new life.*

Guide your students briefly through this process (we will spend more time in these verses when we do the lessons on Baptism). We die and are buried, that is, our old nature is put to death. We rise, that is, a new nature is born. The death of the old nature and the birth of the new nature is salvation through the forgiveness of sin.

**\* Read Matthew 26:26-28.**

*While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins."*

## **Why did Jesus pour out His blood?**

*Jesus poured out His blood for the forgiveness of sins.*

***Baptism and Holy Communion are two special events we regularly do in the Church. God's Word, the primary means of grace, tells us that God forgives our sins in these acts. Because these are holy acts, we call them Sacraments (if you like big words, you can look up the etymology, but it has to do with being "holy" or "sacred"). Because God lavishes His grace on us through these two holy acts, we also call them "means of grace." So, we say we have two Means of Grace: God's Word and the Sacraments. We will be spending the next eleven weeks studying the Sacraments, learning to better appreciate how God has been and continues to be gracious to us through these holy acts.***

### **Summary:**

Options:

Students write questions in their question column

Students write a three to four sentence summary: What did I learn in this lesson?

Students write a SEE paragraph

Possible paragraph prompt:

*How does God show His grace in our lives?*

### **Sample paragraph:**

*We experience God's grace in our lives through the Means of Grace. Ephesians 2:8 and 9 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast" (NASB). Because God's Word tell us so, we believe God gives us the gift of salvation when we hear His word, when we are baptized, and when we receive Jesus in Holy Communion. God's Word, Baptism, and Holy Communion are gifts through which God gives us the gift of salvation. The Word and the Sacraments are God's "Means of Grace."*

Luke 5:17-26

17 One day He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing. 18 And some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him. 19 But not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus. 20 Seeing their faith, He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you." 21 The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" 22 But Jesus, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? 24 But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,"--He said to the paralytic--"I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home." 25 Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God. 26 They were all struck with astonishment and began glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen remarkable things today."