

“The Word of God to You” (I Cor 1:1-9)

Using today’s Epistle Lesson, I’ve thought to do something different with today’s sermon. I’d like to address a big problem among devout Christians. People don’t know how to read the Bible. Most people are not reading the Bible the way God tells us to. Because of that, we do not get as much out of Bible reading as we should, as God wants.

God tells us in His Scripture how we are to read it:

The prophet Ezekial was given a scroll from God and told to eat it. “Then I ate it, and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey.” (Ez 3:3) John had the same experience. An angel gave him a scroll also and he was told to eat it, and it was “sweet as honey in my mouth.” (Rev. 10:10)

Thomas Cranmer back in 1549 wrote a collect that has been used ever since in our liturgy: “Blessed Lord, Who caused all holy Scripture to be written for our learning, Grant us to... inwardly digest them.”

God gave us His Word because He wanted to speak to us, to communicate with us, to lead us in our daily lives. Luther spoke of God as our “partner in a conversation” through His Word. It is God’s Word to us, to which we respond.

Hear a few more directions from God on how we are to use His inspired Scriptures:

“All scripture is inspired by God... for training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (II Tim 3:16) Something is supposed to happen to us when we encounter God in His inspired scriptures. The Holy Spirit is enlightening us, transforming us, equipping us

Jesus said His Word is to “abide in us,” (Jn 8:31) to live in us. It is supposed to be absorbed, digested, so that it is “lamp to our feet and a light to our path.” (Ps 119:105)

OK, it’s clear now how God wants us to read His Word. He wants it to enter our hearts and come alive in us. How should we do this, opening our hearts to the Holy Spirit reaching us through Holy Scripture.

Here’s where I want to use our Epistle reading for today. For us to be in dialogue with our Lord through His Word, here’s how we can read it, for example.

Please get our screen back to the Epistle Lesson or turn to it in your bulletin. We need to understand that this scripture is not just Paul’s words to the people of Corinth 2000 years ago. It is fundamentally God’s eternal Word, not Paul’s. It is from God to all His children for all time, not just those of the 1st century. He is speaking to us through His Word. We are in spiritual dialogue with Him as we read this.

Here's how we read and meditate meaningfully and effectively:

It begins with Paul addressing the 1st century people in Corinth:

"Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes."

Then, we need to change the wording so that it is God's Word to us of the 21st century, as Luther encouraged us:

"to you (Alice, Robert, Herb) in Portland sanctified (made sinless) called (by grace) to be saint together with all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and yours."

God is speaking to you and me. He's saying, "You are Mine. My Son and your Lord, Jesus, has died for your sins. You are forgiven, sinless by My grace. Not only that, you are safe now also. You are a member of the Body of Christ. You are surrounded by My People. My Spirit lives in them as it does in you. They will care for you in My Name."

"Grace to you, then, from Me and your Lord Jesus Christ, grace now and forevermore."

"That grace and love has been given to you and you are enriched in Him in all speech and all knowledge. You are not lacking in any gift." Do not say there's nothing I can do. Do not say you are of no use in My kingdom work. I have given you your set of spiritual gifts at your baptism. Know them. Pastor Jim has done special workshops to help you identify them. Use them with joy and fulfillment.

"Wait now for the revealing of your Lord Jesus Christ, Who will sustain you to the end, guiltless." Your Lord is coming in grace to bring you Home to us in the glories of heaven. If you are alive, it will be at the end of time. If before that, He will meet you, when you close your eyes in death. You are safe, you are guiltless. You are saved.

"I am faithful. I have called you by my grace into the fellowship of My Son, Jesus Christ your faithful Lord.

That is God's Word to you through this Epistle Lesson.

- Never say God does not speak,
- God is unreachable,
- God has no word for my daily life.
- Read His Word aright
- You are His beloved child, and He wants to share your earthly pilgrimage.

That is what Scripture is for, for you. Open your heart and let Him in. Hear His Word for you.

- Inwardly digest it.
- It will be sweet as honey.
- Let it live in you and through you by the working of the Holy Spirit through the Word.
- Let it strengthen and guide you, equipping you for every good work,
- a light for your daily path

Scripture is the Word of your living, loving God, to you.