

A Gift From Heaven

God Himself Shows the Way

Lesson 25

REFORMED
EVANGELISM
TASKFORCE

God Himself Shows the Way

In the Bible God speaks to people. The voice of the Good Shepherd, says, "Come to me, all who labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (*Matt. 11:28*)

The lessons of this course were meant to make you wise to the facts of the Bible, that marvelous book, so that the Bible might be opened to you, and you might come to know God. The Bible is a gift from heaven. Do you see it as a gift?

It Was Only a Start

The course which now concludes was only a brief introduction to the knowledge of the Bible. It is a mere start in coming to know that miraculous book in which God comes to meet us.

And that means you have to continue. But how? The Bible asks the same question and also supplies the answer. It teaches you to trust. It teaches you to trust in God, who wants to show you the way to salvation in His Book.

It's a good thing that we have the Bible. For the Bible answers many questions which frequently remain unanswered in our lives. God has given us His Word, in which He tells us about Himself, and about things which we could have never known or imagined ourselves. That's what makes the Bible so important for your life. The more you read and study it, the more your feelings of uncertainty will disappear. God gives answers. He tells us who He is, what He does for us, who we are, and where we are going.

The overwhelming, powerful content of the Bible is certainly worth all your effort. The Bible is not just a message, take it or leave it, not just a call which can remain unheeded. The Word of God is the truth, the victorious truth, "A power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes." At this juncture you shouldn't put God's Words aside. You have to continue.

Let Yourself Be Convinced

Above all, do not underestimate the power of the Bible. Its contents possess an immeasurable and unequalled power; a power in fact, through which salvation becomes possible. The Word of God penetrates human hearts. It passes stern judgment on what you think and feel. The Word of God always accomplishes something. Also today the Bible convicts and convinces. Surrender to it!

That doesn't come easy. You have to work at it. You cannot close your Bible now that this course is finished. You should continue to read the Bible. Then you will gradually discern more of the value and truth of the Bible. As time goes on you will be more and more impressed. You will discover that the Bible is true and that it has power.

Read the Bible Every Day

Many Christian families have the good habit of reading a portion of the Bible after every meal and before going to bed. In that way the Bible becomes an integral part of their daily life. In that way you also can get to know your Bible better as time goes on. Of course you will have to try and understand what you are reading. Maybe at this stage the Bible is still a little too much of a challenge for you. If so, you could buy a Bible with cross-references to clarify the relationships between different parts; or use one in which study helps are included like [The Harper Study Bible](#) or [The NIV Study Bible](#).

You could also read a Bible day-book in which a text from the Bible is explained with an application for your daily life. Remember, however, that it does make a difference what kind of day-book you choose: unfortunately the Gospel is too often tampered with (*Gal. 1:7,9; Jude 4*).

The message of the Bible is sufficiently important to spend time on it each and every day. All parts of the Bible contain the glad tidings of deliverance and salvation from sin. It is the Gospel of salvation made possible through the life, sufferings and death of Jesus. Can't you spare some time for this great News?

God Wants to Help You!

While the Bible teaches you to trust in God, who shows us in His Book the way to salvation from sin, it also shows you the road ahead. And that road leads to the congregation of Jesus Christ: God calls you to the church!

There God will help you even more. There you will meet fellow believers. There you will experience the preaching of the Word and all the other activities of worship. There you will be able to study the Bible in greater detail.

One Flock One Shepherd

But where do you find the church? And do you really have to make a choice? How important is it actually? Couldn't you just go where you feel at home with people having common interests? There is only one God, one gospel, isn't there? As long as you love God ... isn't that all that matters?

Whoever has learned to recognize the voice of the Shepherd will listen when He calls. Whoever believes must be guided by that Shepherd to the right flock.

Wolves in Sheepskin

In several Bible passages we are warned that there will be many people who say that they are serving the same God, but in reality they are not. At any rate not in the way He wants to be served. The gospel message is often twisted and changed, adapted to human opinions and changed to fit human norms. Jesus mentioned this frequently when He was still on earth. "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves." (*Matt. 7:15*)

When Paul says farewell to the elders of the church of Ephesus, he pleads with them to remain faithful. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers..." "For I know this that after my departure grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples (the believers) after them. Therefore watch..."!

Foundation of the Truth

A meeting or an organization can look so much like a church; it may even have the presumption of calling itself "church". But if "another gospel" is preached there, if ministers contradict each other there, if thoughts are proclaimed that contradict the Bible - then the flock of the Good Shepherd is not gathered there; on the contrary, it is being scattered (*Eph. 1:6-10*). And that is not the work of the Good Shepherd. That cannot possibly be the work of the Good Shepherd.

The church is the guardian of the truth. In the church the truth has to be safe. The truth has to be permanent there, as permanent as something that is built on a solid foundation. Round about you and in your heart there may be doubt and uncertainty, but not in the church. There is the truth, steadfast and sure. This is not because people in the church are so strong, so sure of themselves, so unspoiled, so strongly convinced, but it is because the one, genuine gospel is kept there.

Which Church?

Having said quite a bit about the church the question still arises as to which particular church one should join. After all any number of different churches can be found in any one place. Which is the real guardian of the truth?

To answer that we would say to you that a church is only true to God if it meets a basic standard and can respond positively to three questions: Does it practise the pure preaching of the Gospel? Does it maintain the pure administration of the sacraments? Does it exercise church discipline?

The churches who bring you this course try with the help of God, to live according to this standard. They make no pretensions about being perfect or about having only perfect people in their midst. No, they recognize that they daily need the atoning blood of Jesus Christ to cover their sins. At the same time they strive to live as true churches and true Christians.

I Believe

To arm herself against the attacks of "wolves in sheepskin", the church summarized, very early in her history, the core of the Gospel in statements called confessions. Among these we may mention the Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dordt, and the Heidelberg Catechism. In these confessions the Word of God is summarized. Led by them the church can uphold its faithfulness to the Bible. With the confessions the church is helped to wage the war against falsehood, so that she may be and continue to be a "pillar and ground of the truth". The confessions give, therefore, nothing new. They add nothing to the Bible, neither do they bring human ideas to the fore; the confessions only reiterate what the Bible says. Sometimes they do this deliberately against dangerous deviations from the Bible. Thus, a confession prevents the church from slowly departing from the truth, from being led astray by the opinions and ideas of men.

In addition, a confession is certainly not more important than the Bible. On the contrary, a confession underlines that Word of God and submits itself completely to that Word; and this is something we people, too often do not do.

The Bible: You Can Trust It

Only what God Himself has said and what He has written down is completely trustworthy. That is the only thing you can trust. With the Bible in your hand, you can research what is presented as spiritual truth and discern the lies. The Bible asks you to search it. God is trustworthy, and so is His Word. Believe and accept the divine authority of the Bible. The Bible is the only sure thing in a world full of uncertainty. The Bible is a gift from heaven.

Psalm 25:2 (Rhymed version):

Show thou unto me, Thy servant
All Thy ways, and teach Thou me.
So that by Thy Spirit guided
Clearly I Thy paths may see
In Thy truth wilt Thou me guide
Teach me God of my salvation
All the days for Thee I bide
Lord, with eager expectation.

Rendering an Account

This course has been presented to you by the "Reformed Evangelism Taskforce" of the Canadian Reformed Churches (www.canrc.org). The advertising campaign and production of the course were possible thanks to the financial support of numerous believers in these churches. They did so because "the love of Christ controls us (them)" (*2 Cor. 5:14*).

You will look in vain for names of people who have volunteered to help make this course possible: there were authors, editors, members of the Taskforce. For it was only their mandate to serve their Lord Jesus Christ. Its all about Him, isn't it? (*Ps. 10:15-18; Rom. 10:14-17; Heb. 10:23-31*)

"...for all flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the Word of the Lord abides forever. That Word is the good news which was preached to you." (*1 Pet. 1:24,25*)