

“The Means of Grace: The Scripture” Joshua 1:6-9 / John 1:1-5 (10/13/24)

After I became a Christian, I had several issues that I needed to solve. The last time I shared about my family issues after I became a Christian. And I had another issue to solve, that was my friends. Since I was not a Christian when I was young, most of my friends were not Christians. My friends thought I could go and study at a very famous university someday because I had studied abroad since I was young. However, my friends were very disappointed when they heard I hoped to become a pastor and wanted to go to a seminary. I tried to let them know about Jesus and Christianity. But, they did not listen to me and presented sources to prove that Christianity was not true.

I could not make my friends know Christianity is true. The Bible could not be the perfect evidence to make unchurched people believe Jesus is the truth. I was so upset because my friends did not believe what I said. And I could not understand why God did not make any video evidence for me. I thought, ‘If God made clear and visible evidence for me, it would be much easier to make people believe Jesus.’ However, in the end, I failed to convince my friends, and they left me. My friends’ and my purpose in life were so different. While they were talking about money and success, I was talking about the kingdom of God and God’s

people.

My experience with my friends was not only my issue but also it is a problem that many Christians are struggling with in this present day. It is very difficult to make unchurched people know God is true. People still argue whether the Bible and Christianity are true or not. Then why didn't God give us evidence that would surely win the argument? Why did God choose the written words, and why did God give us the Scripture instead of any photos or videos? That is because I believe God wants to let us feel God's heart through the Scripture, not to use the Scripture as a tool for proof.

Last Thursday was my wife's birthday. On her birthday, she always asks me a question. "Did you write a card for me?" She is such a nice wife because she never asked me for any big surprise event or gift on her birthday. She always wants to have a card on her birthday. When she receives a card from me, she likes to attach the card to the refrigerator. She said that when she reads the cards on the refrigerator, the cards give her strength and encouragement.

Writing, written words, and scriptures were the only remaining ways that human beings used to record and deliver messages since ancient times. Even

though many technologies have developed now, writing is still used. Even in many videos, you can see there are many words in the video. Like me, people still write letters, cards, or something to deliver their hearts to other people. Also, we can read and feel historical people's hearts through their old writings.

Therefore, I believe that God chose the Word to deliver God's heart to the people in the world, to reveal Godself across time. When I did the missionary training and Bible teaching course in Hawaii, the school leader told students that many Christians read the Bible to know "How." He said people read the Bible to know how we should live, how God loves us, and how we can be good Christians. But he said Christians should read the Bible to know who God is.

God chose the Scripture to show God's hearts to us. God chose the Scripture to reveal Godself through us. Those are the reasons that the Scripture could be the way we can experience God's grace.

Then, how can we experience God's grace through the Holy Scripture? Firstly, we should read the Bible. The Bible cannot give us any grace when we just carry them in our bag or car. The Bible is just a book when it is displayed in our houses. My cards cannot give any strength or encouragement when my wife

just keeps them. The Bible could be the way of grace when we read the Bible.

To talk more about reading the Bible. We should know who we are and who Methodists are. As we know, Wesley did not name his gathering as Methodist. When he started a gathering for the faith live, he named the gathering as “Holy Club.” Wesley, his brother, his colleagues, and the people in Holy Club did their faith discipline so methodically. So, other people started to call them “Methodist.” This is the history that we had the name Methodist.

However, to understand who Methodists are, we should know that Holy Club members had another nickname. People also used other names to mock Holy Club members. The name was “Bible Moth.” A moth was a kind of bug that ate the book. Holy Club members read the Bible too much, like moths, so people called them “Bible Moth.” This means that Methodists are the people who love to read the Bible.

In today’s Scripture, God ordered Joshua to obey all the Law Moses gave Joshua. And God gave Joshua another order. “Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it.” The word “meditate” was translated from the Hebrew

word “הָגָה (ha-gah).” The original meaning of this word is “Speak.” So, the order of God to Joshua was, “Read the Book of the Law.” Still, Jewish people read the Scripture aloud when they read or pray. Whether we read it out loud or quietly, the Scripture can be the way of grace when we read the Bible. We should read the Bible if we are Methodist and if we are Christians.

Secondly, we should believe the Scripture. If we start arguing that the Bible is a scientifically perfect book, we will be leaving many questions to non-Christian people. I personally believe that the Bible is the perfect book, but it is also true that the Bible does not explain everything that happens in the world and nature. However, if we say the Bible is the perfect and enough book to explain who God is, Jesus is the Christ, and the works of the Holy Spirit in human history, no one can make any disagreement. We should believe that the Bible is the perfect book that reveals who God is, who Jesus is, and who the Holy Spirit is.

In the Gospel of John, John stated his purpose in writing the Gospel. In John 20:31, “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” John wrote the Gospel to let people believe Jesus is Christ and he is the Son of God. And he started his writing by saying, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was

with God, and the Word was God.” It is very different compared to other Gospels. The other Gospels started with the birth story of Jesus and John the Baptist. But John began the Gospel by stating that Jesus was in the beginning, and was with God, and was God. John used the Greek word “Λόγος (Logos)” to let people know the divinity of Jesus. In the time when John wrote the Gospel, the word Logos gave many meanings to Jews and Gentiles. Jews honored the Word of God, and Gentiles also had a very special meaning for Logos in their philosophy. So, John used the word Logos to imply that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God. Jesus fulfilled the Word of God through incarnation, sacrifice, and resurrection. All the stories of the Trinity were written in the Bible. It is the reason that we should believe the Bible is the perfect book to know God and is the way to experience the grace of God.

God’s grace is upon us here today. And God wrote God’s letter to us. God wants to show us God’s love and grace through the Bible. I hope we can dive into God’s deep grace through reading the Bible this week. Amen.