

“Gathered to Hear the Word of the Lord”

- I. God’s Word – what a gift!
- II. God’s Word – what a message!
- III. God’s Word – believed and lived!

Dear Christian friends – and especially you the members of this year’s confirmation class,

These verses take us to Paul’s 1st missionary journey. He and **Barnabas** were in a city called **Pisidian Antioch** in what we today would call central Turkey. It’s Saturday – the **Jewish Sabbath**. The week before Paul **had preached** in the local synagogue, **“Let it be known to you that through this Jesus forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed to you.”** When that service had ended **“the people kept begging them to speak again on this same subject on the next Sabbath.”** NOW a week later, **“almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of God.”** That had to be exciting for Paul and Barnabas.

But there’s something to note here. The people weren’t gathered to HEAR PAUL but **“the word of the Lord.”** In fact four times in these verses we have the phrase **“the word of the Lord/God.”** We see hear God’s Word preached – rejected by some – believed and **“honored”** by others – spreading through the world.

Today takes us to Fox Lake. It’s Sunday – a special Sunday for the three of you. But today is not ALL ABOUT YOU! We’ve gathered NOT JUST to hear you answer some questions but to **“hear the word of the Lord.”** With your answers you will BE SHARING God’s Word with us.

“Gathered to hear the word of the Lord.” Those words will guide the examination this morning. GOD’S WORD – 1)what a gift, 2)what a message, 3)believed and **lived**.

I. God’s Word – what a gift.

“Gathered to hear the word of the Lord.” Let’s back up one step. HOW do we even know there is a God?

WHAT do those things tell us about God?

For us to really know God God must tell us about Himself. God does just that in the Bible. That’s why we exclaim, “God’s Word – **what a gift!**”

WHAT IS the Bible?

The doctrine of INSPIRATION?

What are the two chief PARTS of the Bible?

Their MESSAGES?

Because the Bible **is God’s Word** it IS?

Because the Bible is God’s Word what are we NOT TO DO with it?

In the Bible God tells us about Himself.

TRIUNE?

What are some of the OTHER ATTRIBUTES of God?

God is eternal – He has **no beginning** or end. That’s NOT TRUE about us or our world.

What is the doctrine of CREATION?

God made Adam and Eve **“in His own image.”** WHAT’S that?

Not only did God create this world God is still actively involved in our world and daily lives.

What is the doctrine of PRESERVATION?

How can God PROTECT us?

“Gathered to hear the word of the Lord.” AS we read and **study** – hear and **learn** – God’s Word we also exclaim...

II. God’s Word – what a message!

What are the TWO CHIEF DOCTRINES of the Bible?

Tell me some DIFFERENCES between them.

What are the three USES of the law? (and explain)

What are the three TYPES of law?

The law teaches us that GOD DECIDES what is right or wrong – NOT US or WHAT OTHERS are doing. God – AS GOD! – claims total control over our lives – **control** of our morals and **values** – our priorities – the language we use – the shows we watch, etc. God defined right and wrong with His 10 Commandments. I’ve heard the **class recite** the commandments WITH their explanations. CAN YOU still do that?

What are the TWO TYPES or **kinds** of sin? (and example)

What is ORIGINAL SIN?

People like to make excuses for their sins or shrug them off as **no big deal**. But God says we DESERVE because of our sins?

Because of our sin our relationship with God was IN RUINS. But thank God we HAVE HIS WORD! God’s Word reveals the gospel and WHAT A MESSAGE the **gospel is!**

What does the word GOSPEL MEAN?

The **gospel** is the main message of the Bible. Only in the Bible do **we learn** the GOSPEL WONDERS of God.

WHO is Jesus?

How do we know Jesus is TRUE GOD?

What does the NAME Jesus mean?

The **doctrine** of the VIRGIN BIRTH?

INCARNATION?

What two things did Jesus do to save us?

FOR WHOM did Jesus do that?

What is the doctrine of the VICARIOUS ATONEMENT?

What does the word JUSTIFY mean?

WHOM has God **justified**?

HOW can God justify us?

God wants everyone to **be convinced** that Jesus is their perfect Savior so God tells us that in **many different ways**. For example the Bible calls Jesus our REDEEMER.

What does redeem MEAN?

What does it mean that Jesus **has redeemed** us from – ALL SINS?

DEATH?

The POWER OF THE DEVIL?

What price did Jesus pay to redeem us?

The Bible also teaches Jesus is our **perfect Savior** by calling Him the Christ – the Messiah – the ANOINTED ONE.

What did ANOINTING MEAN in the Bible?

How is Jesus our PROPHET?

PRIEST?
KING?

Jesus is true God and true man in one person. But Jesus didn't always look or **act like** God while here on earth. There was no halo around His head.

What is Jesus' HUMILIATION?

WHY did Jesus humble Himself?

What is Jesus' EXALTATION?

Jesus' descent into hell PROVES?

Jesus' resurrection assures us of what?

And now our Savior has ascended into heaven and is ruling all things in this world for **His glory** and our **eternal good**.

That's the **"good news"** of the gospel. That's the GRACE of our God! We don't save ourselves – we CAN'T. Jesus has taken care of **everything** for us. **For Jesus' sake** God has forgiven all our sins. TRUSTING in Jesus **we have** a whole new relationship with God – peace with God – eternal life in heaven. **All** those blessings are ours THROUGH FAITH in Jesus.

"Gathered to hear the word of the Lord." Now see –

III. God's Word – believed and lived.

What does it mean to BELIEVE/HAVE FAITH in Jesus?

Why does it TAKE THE HOLY SPIRIT to bring us to faith in Jesus?

We call the work of the Holy Spirit **sanctification** – to MAKE HOLY. The Holy Spirit **makes us holy** by bringing us to faith in Jesus and then helping us live our faith **each day** – helping us live **holy** GOD-PLEASING – GOD-CENTERED – lives.

What are GOOD WORKS?

WHAT MAKES us want to live **God-pleasing** lives?

WHAT GUIDES us in living **God-pleasing** lives?

We don't do good works to EARN OUR WAY to heaven but to thank God for forgiving us and **giving us** eternal life in heaven.

WHAT MEANS does the Holy Spirit use to sanctify us?

What is GRACE?

What is a SACRAMENT?

What is the sacrament of Holy BAPTISM?

What does the word baptize MEAN?

HOW do you baptize a person?

WHY do we baptize babies?

WHAT BLESSINGS did God give you when you were baptized?

HOW can water do that?

We are baptized only once but our baptism is something for us to LIVE AND ENJOY **every day** of our life.

What does BAPTISM MEAN in your daily life?

What is the sacrament of Holy COMMUNION?

HOW **do we know** it really is Jesus' true body and blood?

Holy Communion is a miracle. It DOESN'T MAKE sense but it's TRUE! Jesus' words are clear – ***"This is My body – this is My blood."*** The bread we eat REALLY IS Jesus' true body. The wine we drink REALLY IS Jesus' true blood.

WHAT BLESSINGS does Jesus give us in Holy Communion?

I won't ask how often we should come to Communion. That's like asking how often I should **come to church** or **read my Bible**. If I think I DON'T NEED to faithfully come to church or diligently read God's Word – **if I think** I don't need to GROW in my faith – don't need God's FORGIVENESS or God's HELP in living a holy life – then I have some REALLY BIG **spiritual problems**. When we understand THE BLESSINGS God has for us in His **Word and Sacraments** we will faithfully use them.

Communion is a wonderful blessing from God. Like any other blessing it can BE ABUSED and **misused**. Then a person is actually sinning by coming to Communion. So we are told to examine ourselves before coming to Communion.

HOW do you **do that**?

According to Jesus WHO is to **receive** Holy Communion?

TRUSTING in Jesus we have God's forgiveness of all our sins. We are children of God. We have heaven as our home.

What happens when a person **dies**?

WHO GOES to heaven/hell?

The Bible also teaches that Jesus will return in glory.

WHEN will that be?

WHO will be raised from the dead?

HOW will people be judged?

HOW do we get ready for Judgment Day?

But I still have three questions for all of you.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND that as you are confirmed you are making promises to God?

Do you UNDERSTAND those promises?

Are you making those promises SINCERELY and BECAUSE YOU WANT to?

“Gathered to hear the word of the Lord.” We thank God that THROUGH HIS WORD He has made you and us Christians. We all pray that EACH of you will continue to hear ***“the word of the Lord”*** so that you will continue to grow IN your Christian faith and CLOSER to your Savior – that it may also be true of you, ***“the disciples continued to be filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.”*** Amen.

APOSTLES' CREED