

few examples of God using extraordinary means in converting sinners, such as John the Baptist who was regate while still in utero, and Paul the Apostle, who heard the words of Christ directly! However, the ordinary way that God does the work of salvation in a sinner’s heart is through the preaching of His word.

#### Discussion Questions

- Have you had the opportunity to preach the gospel? We tend to think of gospel preaching primarily in terms of the church service, but what other opportunities may you have to preach?
- If conversion typically requires the gospel message and the work of the Holy Spirit, how might you pray before a church service, or before you go out for evangelism?

#### **Day 5 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse**

Yesterday we focused on the work of preaching in converting the sinner, and we saw that God’s ordinary means in reaching the lost through the preached word. God also uses preaching to build up His church. We started this week looking at an example in the Old Testament of how God’s word was read and explained and how that built up the people of the covenant. How much more, do those who partake of the Holy Spirit experience great encouragement and the call to holiness when God’s word is preached! In Chapter 8 of Acts we read that there was a severe persecution that fell on the church in Jerusalem after the stoning of Stephen. As a result of the persecution, many in the church were scattered across the region, fleeing from the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. *Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word*, Acts 8:4. Following the dispersion of the church in Jerusalem, we read of the preaching of Phillip in Samaria, and then the conversion of Paul, who in turn became a zealous preacher of Christ. *So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord*, Acts 9:28. Immediately afterward, we read that the church was built up and experienced the blessing of God. *So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied*. Acts 9:31. As the word of Christ is preached, his church grows in holiness and in grace.

#### Discussion Questions

- How does Acts 8 and 9 show that God uses preaching not only to convert sinners but also to build up His church?
- Describe a time that have you personally experienced being “built up” or strengthened through hearing God’s Word preached?

# Baptist Catechism

## Family Worship Guide



### **West Oaks Baptist Church**

(in preparation for Sunday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025)

#### **Baptist Catechism Question #94**

**Q:** How is the word made effectual to salvation?

**A:** *The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.*

#### **Suggested Memory Verse**

***Nehemiah 8:7–8 ...the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. [8] They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. (ESV)***

### Day 1 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

When the people of Israel had returned from exile, the people were assembled to hear the book of the law. Nehemiah records the event, noting: *the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the meaning, so that the people understood the reading.* Nehemiah 8: 7b-8. The people wept when they heard the words of the law. Ezra encouraged the people to eat and drink, and to make the day holy to God. So the people went their way rejoicing, for, it says, *they had understood the words that were declared to them,* Nehemiah 8:12. For most of the history of redemption, people did not have their own copy of the scriptures. So, it's no wonder that often times when the scriptures encourage us to listen to God's word, the way that God's word is being delivered is through preaching to the gathered people of God. God's word is powerful! We read that it *is able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus,* 2 Tim 3:15. God uses our private time of study to work in our hearts, but there is a special way in which God has designed his Word to work when the people of God are gathered, in His name to listen.

#### Discussion Questions

- Have you ever read over a bible passage without much thought, but then later heard a sermon on the same text? Describe the difference, and if you recall, what was the scripture passage?
- Why do you think God gives a special measure of grace when his word is preached?

### Day 2 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

In reading this weeks' catechism question, it's easy to skip over one part of the answer. The first part of the answer tells us that it is by the activity of the Holy Spirit that the word is given its intended effect on the sinner, resulting and conversion, being built up in holiness and receiving comfort. As opposed to the Roman Catholic Church, the reformers taught that the faith of the recipient of means of grace was the essential piece of the equation. It's not through the merit of minister, that there is any power in the means of grace by itself that there is any effect on the recipient. Its God, who works faith in the heart of the believer that makes the word effective. In other words, there is nothing that you do, or that the preacher does to bring about the transformation that God intends through the preaching of the word. *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.* Zechariah 4:6. Before you hear the word preached, make sure you take a moment to ask that the Holy Spirit works in your heart to accomplish all that God intends through the preaching of the word. It's not the hearers of the word, but the doers who are commended by God. *For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.* Romans 2:13.

#### Discussion Questions

- Why is it important to remember that neither the preacher's merit nor our own effort brings about spiritual transformation?
- How can you prepare your heart before hearing God's Word preached so that you are ready to receive and respond in faith?

### Day 3 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

There are three letters in the New Testament we call the pastoral epistles. In this group of three letters addressed to Timothy and Titus, Paul gives practical advice and spiritual insight to his two proteges as they labored in the gospel at Ephesus and Crete. In these letters, there are many exhortations that apply to all believers, and some that apply specifically to elders in their task of preaching. Paul states that preaching must be pure. Titus 2:1 *But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.* Paul tells Titus that he ought to preach in accordance with the message he had received. Paul states that preaching must be prudent. 2 Tim 2:15 tells us the preacher must endeavor to be approved by God, *rightly handling the word of truth.* 2 Tim 2:15. The word preached should be fitting for the occasion and the audience. In another place we read that the word is like two-edged sword. The Greek phrase for "rightly handling" is transliterated as orthotomeo, and it means to make straight cuts. Putting the two ideas together, the preacher should wield the sword to make straight cuts, such as a skilled surgeon would. Paul states that preaching must be bold. 1 Timothy 4:1 *Command and teach these things.* Paul's instruction to Timothy is that he would proclaim God's word boldly, with the authority that is vested in it by God by nature of His revelation and the authority that Timothy has as ordained minister. Timothy is to preach the *not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God.* 1 Thes 2:13.

#### Discussion Questions

- Have you heard preaching that was pure, prudent, and bold? Why are all three of these essential for gospel preachers?

### Day 4 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

Yesterday we discussed the emphasis that Paul put on the preacher in his pastoral epistles. We could only give a few of the many examples in the scriptures on the topic. Why is there such a focus on the apostle on just one aspect of ministry? It's because the preaching of the word is the means of convincing and converting sinners! When the preacher preaches a gospel message and the Holy Spirit works in the heart of the unbelieving man, he is convinced of his own sin and the sufficiency of Christ to save. The Holy Spirit converts the sinner. The preacher tells the sinner to turn to Christ, and the Holy Spirit converts the sinner, giving them the faith required to turn to Christ. A sinner may hear a gospel message ten times or a ten thousand times, but aside from the work of the Holy Spirit making the preach word effectual, the sinner remains unconverted. As we will look at tomorrow, the preacher also builds up the church in holiness and in comfort. But the gospel ministry of the preacher is also focused on calling sinners to repentance. Last week we looked at a