

Scripture: Genesis 17

LD 25.65-68 (2)

Singing: 408:1-3 – 66:1-4 – 112:1-4 – 423:4, 7

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MINISTRY IN STRENGTHENING OF SAVING FAITH

I. THE PRIMARY MEANS II. THE SECONDARY MEANS

I. The Primary Means the Holy Spirit uses to strengthen saving faith

A. Saving faith is like an infant

1. Real saving faith can be *weak or strong (immature or mature)*

a. what is weak faith?

b. what is strong faith?

2. As in working faith, so in strengthening faith: *Holy Spirit uses means*

B. The main means: The preaching of the Gospel promises

1. Consider Abram in Genesis 17: *How did God strengthen his faith?*

2. Like with Abram: *The Holy Spirit strengthens our faith thru the Gospel*

a. Why is the strengthening of faith needed?

b. What are the promises the Holy Spirit keeps repeating?

c. Through preaching the Spirit fulfills Jesus' promise in John 14:21, 23
and answers Paul's petition in Ephesians 1:17-19

II. The secondary means the Holy Spirit uses to strengthen faith

A. Often God used *visible things* to strengthen faith of His people: Gen. 9:12;
15:6; 17:11; Ex. 13:9; Is. 7:11; 38:7-8

B. So Holy Spirit uses the NT sacraments to strengthen faith in Gospel promises

1. The meaning of *sign & seal*

C. What is God's ultimate purpose of these sacred tokens?

1. to help believers in believing the promises of the Gospel (q. 66)

2. the tokens are not intended to make God's promises more certain

“Sacraments are not to establish the sacred Word but us in faith of the Word, since our faith is so feeble and unless propped up on all sides and sustained by all means, it trembles, wavers, totters, and at last gives way.” (John Calvin)

D. How does the HS strengthen faith through sacraments?

Closing Reflections:

A. Did you come tonight as a guilty sinner? Unworthy? Standing afar off?

B. Do you still doubt that the Gospel He declares applies to you?

C. Are you unmoved, unconcerned, unburdened about where you are spiritually?