

Holy Scripture: God Reveals Himself to His People

Lesson # 15 of 27

Scripture/Memory Verse

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness (vs 16)

Scripture Reading: II Timothy 3: 14 – *17

Lesson Goals & Objectives

Goal

- The students will understand that Holy Scripture is true Revelation: that is, God reveals Himself, shows Himself to us so that we may come to know God's love for us and love Him in return. Holy Scripture contains genuine, accurate information about God in order to make it possible for us really to know God in a loving relationship with Him.

Objective

- The students will find, choose, read and explain one passage of Holy Scripture from the list given to them (found at the end of this lesson). They will briefly explain how people were called by God and then wrote down what God inspired them to understand.

Introduction & Teacher Background

To review: let us remember that we have already seen that God is not only infinite and eternal, He is also a Personal Being (three Persons in one God, one Being) Who is consciously aware of Himself, and Who loves. Although the three Persons of the Trinity are perfectly happy and satisfied with their love for One Another, God also wishes to share His love even beyond Himself. For this reason, God freely decided not only to create the universe, but also to create persons whom He can love, and who can love Him in return. God wants to be in relationship with us.

Some modern thinkers like to say that God created all things and then left them alone to go and do other things. They regard the universe in a manner that is called, "mechanistic." That is, God made the universe like an enormous clock, wound it up with the laws of physics, put it on some cosmic "shelf" and leaves it completely alone to run itself by those laws. Others even believe that the universe just happened by itself and runs blindly by its own laws. Some believe that it is impossible to know God at all.

This is not and never has been the way that Christians have understood God, His creation and our relationship with God.

St. John tells us many times in His Gospel and in His letters that, “God *is* love.” Why would a loving God ignore His Creation? Why would He create something only to abandon it? Why would He create human beings with the capacity to know and love Him only to ignore us? None of these ideas makes any sense.

The first commandment is to *love* God with all our mind, heart, soul and strength. We cannot love something or someone that we know nothing about. In order to fulfill this commandment, we must come to know God. That is, we need to have a relationship with Him, not merely to know information about Him.

However, we do need to know reliable information about God in order to begin and continue to nourish this relationship with God.

Some people also think that God has made it impossible or at least extremely difficult to get to know Him. This does not make any sense either. A loving God would not put obstacles in the way of forming a relationship with us since that is why He created us in the first place. Because our culture has abandoned faith in God to a large extent, our society can make it difficult for us to come to know God. To some extent we must be “counter-cultural” in order to pursue a relationship with God. We must be able to trust in God and His revelation of Himself more than in mere cultural ideas. We have also seen in previous lessons that the human race has fallen away from the original relationship God intended for us in our creation. Sin makes it difficult for us to pursue our relationship with Him. It clouds our spiritual sight and hearing. None of this is God’s fault. God does everything He can to break through this situation – He does not leave us lost and alone, hopelessly trying to find Him. Rather, He seeks us out, telling us and showing us Who He is.

Through the ages, God has called out to people to let them know Who He is. He forms relationships with people and teaches them to understand His love and to grow into relationship with Him. Beginning with Adam and Eve, Enoch, and Noah and his family, God later called out to Abraham and Sarah and their descendants to form a committed relationship with them called a covenant. He continued His relationship with Abraham’s descendants – the People of Israel, the Jewish people – through the kings of Israel and the prophets and teachers He chose and inspired. Finally, Jesus Christ, Who is the Son of God Himself, came into our world to be in relationship with us directly – to touch human lives with His Love in real and concrete ways and to teach all people of all nations to understand and love Him in return.

The Holy Scriptures are the written record of God’s relationship with human beings through the People of Israel, through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the original community of faithful believers in Jesus.

The Holy Scriptures are called, “God-breathed” or “inspired.” That is, God, through His Holy Spirit, has chosen and directed the writers of Holy Scripture to convey accurately and genuinely the information about Himself that

He wants to share with us. Holy Scripture is inspired by God through real relationships with people down through history.

However, these writings are not only concerned with people in the past. They invite us to respond in faith now – to trust in God and to form our own relationships with Him according to the examples and instructions we find in Holy Scripture. Without our own response of Faith, Holy Scripture remains just another dusty book on a shelf. This response of Faith means that we trust in God’s revelation of Himself to us in and through this written record (the word, “Scripture,” simply means, “that which is written.”)

Holy Scripture has been called, “a love letter from God.” While it is genuinely informational, it is also intended to be put to actual use by faithful Christians. It is our guide, the “Rule of Faith” and the source of our understanding of God and our relationship with Him. It is the “How to... Book” for getting to know God and ourselves in relation to Him.

God reveals Himself – shows Himself – to us in Holy Scripture. Without it, we would be searching around for God in the dark with very little hope. This is why Holy Scripture is called, “Revelation:” God reveals Himself to us in and through His written Word.

Materials Needed for Lesson

- _ Every person needs to have his or her own Bible
- _ Hymnals or a copy of Hymn #488 “Be Thou My Vision”

Opening Prayer (5 min.)

Use the Collect for Proper 28 in the middle of page 236 in the Book of Common Prayer.

Blessed Lord, who caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Give the students some time to offer their own needs, concerns and thanksgivings.

Review of the Previous Lesson (5min.)

- _ What do we mean when we say that the Church is the Body of Christ?
- _ What did you do this week to show that you are a member of the Body of Christ?
- _ Let us remember that we have already seen that God is not only infinite and eternal, He is also a Personal Being (three Persons in one God, one Being) Who is consciously aware of Himself, and Who loves. Although the three Persons of the Trinity are perfectly happy and satisfied with their love for One Another, God also wishes to share His love even beyond Himself. For this reason, God freely decided not only to create the universe, but also to create persons

whom He can love, and who can love Him in return. God wants to be in relationship with us so He reveals Himself to us.

Introductory Activity (5-10 Min.)

*(These ideas are intended to ensure a lively and exciting atmosphere for the beginning of this lesson. It is fine for each parish to approach this differently if you wish to make use of your own games or other materials. It is best **not** to eliminate doing any activity at all.)*

Choose someone to be “It” and let the others hide. Do one round of “hide-and-seek.” When they all come together again, **explain:** Sometimes we may feel that we are looking for God, but we don’t know where to find Him. However, the real situation is just the opposite. We are not just looking for God, He is looking for us. We are not the ones who are “It.” God is “It.” He comes looking for us, no matter how we may try to hide from Him. He has never given up on the human race. He finds us and brings us into a real relationship with Him. Holy Scripture describes how God seeks for us, finds us and shows Himself to us.

Lesson (20-25 min.)

(Locate the Bibles in your parish, and make sure every student has one to look at.)

Read aloud: II Timothy 3: 14 –

17

Genesis 12: 1 – 3

Exodus 3: 1 – 8 and

13 – 15

Explain to the students: God loves His creation; He created us to be in a loving relationship with Him. Down through all the ages, God has called to people and formed relationships with them. These people came to know and understand a lot about Who God really is. God’s Holy Spirit then inspired these people to write down this authentic understanding about Him. “Scripture” means writing. The word “Bible” means “The Book.” The Bible is called “Holy Scripture” because it is “The Book” which collects together all the writings that God has inspired people to record concerning their relationship with Him.

Actually, the Bible is a collection of many books written by different people down through history. These are the books which accurately convey God’s own revelation of Himself to these people with whom He formed relationships in order to teach them to know Him.

When the world was ready, God Himself came down to be with us. Jesus Christ **is** the Son of God, so when Jesus

taught His friends about God, this was God Himself telling us about Himself. Jesus' disciples also witnessed His miracles and His passion, death and resurrection which accomplished our salvation. These people then wrote down everything the Holy Spirit inspired them to remember and understand about what Jesus did and what he taught them. God used all these people to convey to everyone – to us – what we need in order to have a relationship with Him.

Now it is up to us to trust that God is really speaking to us today to reveal to us Who He is and how to have a relationship with Him. This is Faith. We read the Bible partly to get to know *about* God, but more importantly, we read the Bible in order to learn how to have a real relationship with God ourselves.

Give the students some time to ask questions and discuss this. Try not to become too technical or to get lost in side-tracks.

Reflection (10-15 min.)

Give each student a Bible to look at. Make sure they all have access to Bibles at home.

The books of the Bible written by prophets, leaders and teachers who lived **before** Jesus was born are called the “Old Testament.” They tell the stories of how God formed the people of Israel to be in relationship with Him, and they also teach about how God wants His relationship with people to be lived out.

The New Testament consists of Four Gospels – which are books about Jesus' Mission of Salvation (they are not biographies of Jesus as such), the Book of Acts, which tells the story of the founding of the early churches, 21 letters written to some of these churches about how to live a Christian life, and the Book of Revelation which is about the final fulfillment of God's King-dom on earth.

For the rest of the class, open the Bibles with the students and look through the Old and New Testaments. Show them the lists in the front of the Bible which indicate the different books of the Old and New Testaments. Let them turn pages in various books. Explain how citations of the Bible work: [number of] name of book – then the chapter number – then the numbers of the verses. Make up some citations such as I Kings 5: 12; Exodus 13: 10; Mark 3: 5; I Corinthians 12: 21 or any other random citations you think of. If you have time, let the students “race” to see who can find the citation first.

Take-home Activity (5 min.)

Give the students the following list of citations from the Bible. Have them **choose ONE**, read it, and then write a

short paragraph summarizing what is happening in that passage. At the end of their paragraphs the students will briefly answer this question: How does this passage show something about how the Bible was written?

Choose ONE of the following

readings:

- Genesis 12: 1 – 4 (The call of Abraham)
- Exodus 3: 1 –5 (God calls to Moses from the burning bush)
- I Samuel 3: 7 – 11 (God calls to the prophet Samuel in the Temple)
- Isaiah 6: 1 – 8 (The call of Isaiah – his vision of God in heaven)
- Matthew 3: 13 – 17 (Jesus is baptized in the Jordan)
- Luke 4:16 – 21 (Jesus reads from the Prophet Isaiah and says, “...this scripture is fulfilled...”)
- Acts 9: 1 – 6 (the conversion of St. Paul)
- Revelation 1: 9 – 11 (St. John is filled with the Holy Spirit and told to write what he sees)

Closing Prayer (5 min.)

Recite together the words (or sing if possible) of Hymn 488, “Be Thou My Vision”

Give the students time to give thanks to God for speaking to us through Holy Scripture, and also for whatever they are grateful to God for in their own lives.

Scripture References

As above

Resources

Bibles

Hymnals – or copies of hymn # 488