

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

OLD TESTAMENT
Jeremiah 1:4-10, 17-19

The Call of Jeremiah

⁴ The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵ “Before I formed you in the womb I knew ^a you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” ⁶ “Ah, Sovereign LORD,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.” ⁷ But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a child.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. ⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD. ⁹ Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “Now, I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰ See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”¹⁷ “Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. ¹⁸ Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. ¹⁹ They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD.

4–19 The account of Jeremiah’s call includes two prophetic visions (vv. 10–16) and some closing words of exhortation and encouragement (vv. 17–19).

1:4-10 Consecrated to the prophetic office before he was born, this youth was neither a wide-eyed visionary nor a self-appointed rabble-rouser. God commissioned Jeremiah to speak His words, charged with the power to destroy whatever opposed the kingdom of God and to build whatever would promote its coming. (TLSB)

1:4 See note on v. 2. (CSB)

THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO ME – It is always God who initiates his call to us. It is not something we find either by searching or by accident. That should inspire confidence in us because left to our own devices we would be in big trouble.

This immediately removes prophecy from the realm of subjectivity. Jeremiah does not feel some inner stirring or a sense of the divine. He is the recipient of a verbal revelation. Biblical prophecy is no more and no less than relaying to others the word of Yahweh that the prophet himself has received. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 14, Part 1)

The Word of the Lord would be the anchor of Jeremiah's life, holding him securely in all the fierce tests he would face. (PBC)

1:5 See Jdg 13:5; Gal 1:15. (CSB)

I formed you. See Isa 49:5. God's creative act (see Ge 2:7; Ps 119:73) is the basis of his sovereign right (see 18:4–6; Isa 43:21) to call Jeremiah into his service. (CSB)

Cyril of Jerusalem: "He is not ashamed to assume flesh, who is the framer of those very members.... Let the mouths of all heretics be stopped who slander their bodies, or rather Him who formed them" (*NPNF 2 7:79*). (TLSB)

St Bernard of Clairvaux says, "How beautifully the Divine oracle has distinguished between conception in the womb and birth from the womb! and showed that if the one was foreseen only, the other was blessed beforehand with the gift of holiness: that no one might think that the glory of Jeremiah consisted only in being the object of the foreknowledge of God, but also of His predestination" (*SLSB*, pp 302–3). (TLSB)

God the Creator is speaking to Jeremiah. Jeremiah, who comes forth from his mother's womb, is "formed," no less lovingly by Yahweh, the Creator, than was Adam. In God's economy of gracious purpose, Jeremiah should know his value to be equal to the first man, for Jeremiah, too, has a unique worth based on God's having formed him for a purpose. God does not call His prophet to embark on a task for which Jeremiah must find the way or the ability or the purpose. God has formed and given life to Jeremiah for this very calling. (This verb, which comes from the vocabulary of pottery, will become important in its participial form in Jeremiah's later proclamation [18:2-6]). These words apply not only to Jeremiah, but more important, to Christ Himself. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 14, Part 1)

I knew you. In the sense of making Jeremiah the object of his choice (see NIV text note). The Hebrew verb used here is translated "chosen" in Ge 18:19; Am 3:2. (CSB)

Yahweh, in contrast to the false gods, alone can know and be known in such perfect closeness (see Jer 44:3; also note referring to God's knowledge of Moses in Deut 34:10). God reassures Jeremiah with *is*. What matters most is that Yahweh knows Jeremiah. Jeremiah will also come to know Yahweh, but that is not the determinative *fac*. Who knows God the Father, and is known by Him, more profoundly than God the Son? Indeed He says, "I and the father are one" (John 10-30) (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 14, Part 1)

I SET YOU APART – "I sanctified you." The Hebrew verb here is virtually always used in a sacral sense in both Hebrew and related languages, and it

should not be translated “set apart.” Far better is the NRSV’ “I consecrated you” or the KJV and NKJV’s “sanctified.” The Lord is declaring that His intention for Jeremiah involves sacred ministry. While Jeremiah is set apart by virtue of his priestly ancestry (see Jer 1:1), this personal reference indicates something beyond that and is best explained in apposition to the third stitch of the verse: “a prophet to the nations, I appointed you.” Jeremiah’s life was hallowed for this prophetic task from conception. But then, who is more sanctified, who more consecrated, than Jesus? He was the Lamb of God, sinless and holy. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 14, Part 1)

I appointed you. The Hebrew for this verb is not the same as that in v. 10, but both refer to the commissioning of the prophet. (CSB)

KJV and NKJV read “ordained.” Aside from the translation question, it is plain that God wanted Jeremiah to understand – without ambiguity – where He was calling him and for what purpose. We see Jesus also in these words. His baptism was the point of inauguration – His ordination, if you will – of His ministry. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 14, Part 1)

prophet. Lit. “one who has been called” to be God’s spokesman (see Ex 7:1–2; 1Sa 9:9 and notes). (CSB)

nations. Although Judah’s neighbors are probably the primary focus (see 25:8–38; chs. 46–51), Judah herself is not excluded. (CSB)

This is no small calling. Jeremiah’s calling is to no parochial ministry, but to a universal prophetic ministry (to the nations), declaring a truth from the Creator of all nations to all His created humanity, not to Israel alone. Jesus came to the house of Israel, but in course of His earthly ministry we see Him constantly extending grace to the Gentiles. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 14, Part 1)

1:6 *not know how to speak.* Like Moses (Ex 4:10), Jeremiah claimed inability to be a prophet; God nevertheless made him his spokesman (15:19). (CSB)

Jeremiah wasn’t the first to use this excuse. Moses used it when God asked him to go to Pharaoh. Our sinful nature would have us quickly want to find a reason not to do what God asks.

only a child. See 1Ki 3:7. Jeremiah’s objection is denied immediately by the Lord (v. 7).

Though the date of Jeremiah’s birth is unknown, he was likely under 20 years old. God overcame this young man’s hesitation to assume his task just as He did in the case of others called to His service (Ex 3:1-4:17; Jdgs 6:11-18; cf 1 Sam 17:33, 42; Gal 1:15-16; 1 Tim 4:12). (TLSB)

1:7 Youth and inexperience do not disqualify when God calls (see 1Ti 4:12); he equips and sustains those he commissions. (CSB)

DO NOT SAY – God does not go for our excuses.

1:8 *Do not be afraid.* See 10:5; 30:10; 40:9; 42:11; 46:27–28; 51:46; see also Isa 35:4 and note; 41:10. (CSB)

This much like the phrase “fear not” which Jesus used often. Some have said that one can find it 365 times in the NT (one for each day of the year).

I am with you. See v. 19; 15:20. God’s promise of his continuing presence should calm the fears of the most reluctant of prophets (see Ex 3:12; see also note on Ge 26:3).

Jesus also said this when he was about to ascend into heaven. He even added “always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:20. God never asks us to do something that he isn’t right there be by our side.

rescue.† See v. 19; 15:20; 39:17. The Lord does not promise that Jeremiah will not be persecuted or imprisoned, but that he will never be beyond the Lord’s help. (CSB)

God will have none of Jeremiah’s objection, for he fails to appreciate that God’s call is nonnegotiable. A divine “because I said so” is reason enough for acquiescence, but even more reason is given: “Fear not, for I am with you, to deliver you.” God’s presence alone will provide the basis for Jeremiah’s work. That presence will later offer Jeremiah consolation in the midst of the prophetic task (Jer 20:11). What manner of deliverance and how it will occur is left to divine discretion with an implied call to trust that it will be the deliverance needed for every circumstance. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 14, Part 1)

1:9 *touched my mouth.* Either in prophetic vision (see note on v. 11) or figuratively—or both (cf. Isa 6:7). (CSB)

I have put my words in your mouth. Continues the figure of speech begun earlier in the verse and provides a classic description of the relationship between the Lord and his prophet (see 5:14; Ex 4:15; Nu 22:38; 23:5, 12, 16; Dt 18:18; Isa 51:16; cf. 2Pe 1:21). (CSB)

Jeremiah’s words are God’s words. Jeremiah repeatedly uses prophetic statements such as “declares the Lord,” “thus says the Lord,” and “the word of the Lord came.” No allowance is made for the possibility that God’s Word is no longer true in all respects because it is transmitted by a fallible prophet. (TLSB)

Jesus promises the same thing when he states "...do not worry about to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your father speaking through you." Matthew 10:18-20. He said this to his disciples before sending them out for ministry.

1:10 *appoint*. See note on v. 5. (CSB)

We are never sent on unimportant errands. Whatever he has to do for us helps to build his kingdom.

uproot and tear down ... destroy and overthrow ... build and ... plant. † See 12:14–15, 17; 18:7–10; 24:6; 31:28; 42:10; 45:4. The first two pairs of verbs are negative, stressing the fact that Jeremiah is to be first a prophet of doom, while the last pair is positive, indicating that he is also to be a prophet of restoration. The first verb ("uproot") is the opposite of the last ("plant"), and fully half of the verbs ("tear down," "destroy," "overthrow") are the opposite of "build." (CSB)

Four verbs of destruction are used (in contrast with two verbs of construction) because destruction will dominate Jeremiah's message to sinful Judah. Melancton says, "The voice of the Law condemning sins must constantly be set forth and taught in the church, and indeed it would be a monstrous crime to conceal God's judgment and His voice which announces His wrath against sin" (Chem, *LTh* 2:438). *build ... plant*. Thorough destruction will clear the way for the Lord to restore the nation. (TLSB)

1:17 *Get yourself ready!* Lit. "Tighten your belt around your waist!" For related expressions see Ex 12:11; 1Ki 18:46; 2Ki 4:29; 9:1; Job 38:3; 40:7. (CSB)

1:18 *fortified city*. A symbol of security and impregnability (see 5:17; Pr 18:11, 19). (CSB)

iron pillar. Unique in the OT, the expression signifies dignity and strength. (CSB)

bronze wall. See 15:20. Jeremiah would be able to withstand the abuse and persecution that his divine commission would evoke, even though his enemies themselves would be "bronze and iron" (6:28). (CSB)

kings ... officials ... priests ... people. The whole nation would defy the prophet and his God (see, e.g., 2:26; 23:8; 32:32). (CSB)

All attempts to intimidate or silence Jeremiah would prove as ineffectual as attacks against the tightest of defenses. (TLSB)

1:19 See note on v. 8; see also 15:20. (CSB)

THEY WILL FIGHT AGAINST YOU – The Lord did not commission His prophet under the illusion that his task would win him popular acclaim. The violent opposition Jeremiah would encounter foreshadows the hostility that Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth, had to endure. (TLSB)

I AM WITH YOU AND WILL RESCUE YOU – This assurance serving as the source of the prophet's strength in the coming trials. It has happened more than once in the history of the Church that practically a single man was obliged to stand against the enmity of the mighty ones of the earth and of the masses of people as well, but that he maintained his righteous cause in the power of the Lord. (Kretzmann)

EPISTLE

1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13

Love

And now I will show you the most excellent way.

the most excellent way. Paul now shows the right way to exercise all spiritual gifts—the way of love. He does not identify love as a gift; rather, it is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). (CSB)

There is something greater than attaining these gifts: love, as described in ch 13. (TLSB)

To be sure, he has just encouraged the Corinthians to strive for the greater gifts. But he would have them aspire to something higher still. Whatever their gift may be, he would have them exercise it in the superior way of Christian love. For only through love will the whole body of Christ be able to function smoothly and grow (Eph 4:16). Paul does not classify love here among the spiritual gifts. As we have seen, the gifts are not parceled out equally; one person receives one gift, another person receives something different. But love, as the first and highest fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22), transcends all the gifts and is to be cultivated equally by all believers. (CC p. 455)

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. ⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will

cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹² Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. ¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

13:1-8 Paul uses “all or nothing” rhetoric throughout this section. “He does not say that we have access to God by our love without Christ as the Atoning Sacrifice, that we receive the promised forgiveness of sins by our love. Paul says nothing about this. He does not, therefore, think that love justifies, because we are justified only when we receive Christ as the Atoning Sacrifice and believe that for Christ’s sake God is reconciled to us” (Ap V 101). (TLSB)

13:1–3 *tongues ... prophecy ... faith ... give*. Paul selects four gifts as examples. He declares that even their most spectacular manifestations mean nothing unless motivated by love. (CSB)

13:1 *tongues of men and of angels*. Paul uses hyperbole. Even if he could speak not only the various languages that human beings speak but even the languages used by angels—if he did not speak in love, it would be nothing but noise. (CSB)

By “the tongues of humans” he does not mean the created capacity to learn other languages; he means the supernatural gift of speaking foreign languages as exercised in Corinth, a gift which Paul himself was richly endowed (14:18). (CC p. 458-459)

Because Hbr was the language of the temple prayers, rabbis came to regard it as the language of the angels. (TLSB)

love. The Greek for this word indicates a selfless concern for the welfare of others that is not called forth by any quality of lovable-ness in the person loved, but is the product of a will to love in obedience to God’s command. It is like Christ’s love manifested on the cross (cf. Jn 13:34–35; 1Jn 3:16). (CSB)

Note the Greek word order, which gives prominence to the word *agape*. The word is rare in classical and Hellenistic Greek literature. Occurring nineteen times in the LXX, it is used most frequently of a lover’s desire for his or her beloved (eleven times in the Song of Solomon) and may denote a sensual love like Ammon’s love for Tamar (2 Sam 13:15). Only in the NT does *agape* take on its specific Christian coloration as that self-sacrificing love for one another which is inspired by God’s love for us in Christ (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). “We love because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). (CC p. 457)

CLANGING CYMBAL – Even the possession of this gift to the highest degree would be a sham if it were not accompanied by love. A loveless tongues-speaker is no better than a noisy brass (gong) or a clashing cymbal – not melodious but monotonous and annoying to the ear. Corinth was noted for its bronze. Paul may have in mind bronze cases used as amplifiers in theatres. The clash of cymbals would have been familiar to the Corinthians from the frenzied worship associated with the cults of Dionysus and Cybele. (CC pp. 459-460)

Not melodious, but annoying. Devotees of Dionysus and Cybele clashed cymbals during frenzied worship. Corinthian brass works likely made such cymbals. (TLSB)

13:2 GIFT OF PROPHECY – Again, Paul was second to none in receiving revelations from God and his insight into divine mysteries. But if he or anyone else should claim the gift of prophecy, even to the nth degree, but fail to exercise it in love, he would be worthless. (CC p. 460)

Lit, “prophecy,” which could describe the office. (TLSB)

all mysteries and all knowledge. Again Paul uses hyperbole to express the amount of understanding possessed. Even if one’s gift is unlimited knowledge, if one does not possess and exercise that knowledge in love, he is nothing. (CSB)

faith that can move mountains. A special capacity to trust God to meet outstanding needs. Again Paul uses hyperbole. (CSB)

Jesus had said: “If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move” (Mt 17:20). In an unmistakable echo of his Master’s words, Paul asserts that even if he were filled with enough faith to move mountains but lacked love, he would amount to nothing. His gift would fail to build up the church. (CC p. 460)

I AM NOTHING – Without love, office and service bring neither good nor honor. (TLSB)

13:3 GIVE ALL I POSSESS – Paul adds that if he were to follow the example of many early Christians by parceling out his possessions to the poor (Acts 2:45; 4:32), he would still reap no spiritual benefit as long as his actions were not motivated by love. In fact, he would be no better than Ananias and Sapphira, whose behavior was prompted solely by selfish considerations (Acts 5:1-11; cf Mt 6:2). (CC pp. 460-461)

Like breaking away bits of bread until the entire loaf is gone. (TLSB)

surrender my body to the flames. A reference to suffering martyrdom through burning at the stake, as many early Christians experienced. Even the supreme sacrifice, if not motivated by love, accomplishes nothing. (CSB)

An early variant refers to giving the body up for “boasting” rather than “burning.” In all cases, willing martyrdom is meant. (TLSB)

Paul was enduring all kinds of bodily sufferings for the sake of the Gospel, and rather than boasting in his great spiritual accomplishments and visions, he was resolved to boast only in the Lord (1 Cor 1:31) and in his weaknesses (2 Cor 11:18-30; 12:9). But he knew that “without love all reason for glorying, even the greatest, is profitless. (CC p. 461)

I GAIN NOTHING – Without love, goodness and honor are never gained. “We are to keep the Law when we have been justified by faith, and so grow in fulfilling the Law more and more ‘by the Spirit’” (Ap V 3). (TLSB)

13:4–7 Love is now described both positively and negatively. (CSB)

Poetically balanced between negative and positive statements. Fifteen assertions describe the nature of love in Christ: two positive statements, eight negative statements (the last one adds a positive contrast), then four positive statements. The first assertions are most important (“patient,” “kind”; God’s attributes, and are further defined by the assertions that follow. (TLSB)

This section uses fifteen verbs to describe the qualities of Christian love. The first two verbs give a positive description of love’s greatest qualities. They are followed by a series of eight negated verbs which express what love is not. The final four verbs are positive again, each being preceded in Greek by *panta*, “all things.” (CC pp. 463-464)

Whereas English translations generally resort to adjectives in translating many of these verbs, the Greek has a dynamic quality well suited to the way love expresses itself in actions for the benefits of others. (CC p. 464)

13:4 IS PATIENT – In contrast to the feverish emotionalism of the heathen cults (12:2), Christian love is marked not so much in the expressions as in the extension of emotion. The Christian is not short-tempered, but longsuffering with others. In this he imitates God, who has always displayed longsuffering in His dealings with His people. Paul was deeply conscious of how much he owed to the perfect patience Christ Jesus had shown in his case (1 Tim 1:16). God’s longsuffering with His people is to be reflected, then, in the longsuffering Christians are to show one another. Such longsuffering does not come naturally, nor may it be produced by “an arbitrary cultivation of the virtue of self-control. It is a gift from God, a fruit of God’s Spirit (Gal 5:22). (CC p. 464)

Patience (long-suffering) plays a significant role in the OT, where the formula of Ex 34:6 (“the Lord God is compassionate and merciful, longsuffering...”) echoes again and again through the biblical writings. To say that God is longsuffering, “long-tempered” rather than short-tempered, he reflects and imitates God (Rom 2:4; 9:22) and the example of Jesus (see Mt 11:29). Instead of expecting instant results, he is able to wait patiently for the Lord’s coming, like the farmer patiently waiting for the rain (James 5:7-8; cf Lk 18:7). Such is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). (CC p. 462)

2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

IS KIND – Again it is God who sets the example by showing unfailing kindness in the creation, preservation, and redemption of His people. His kindness to them should bear fruit in their lives. (Gal 5:22; Col. 3:12). (CC p. 464)

DOES NOT ENVY – Having shown love’s most important positive characteristics, Paul throws love into sharper relief by showing what it is not. The Corinthians had fallen prey to jealousy through their competitiveness and warring factions (1:10-11; 3:3). “You have not been walking the way of love,” Paul reminds them. Jealousy is the green-eyed monster which is never content with the gifts it has received, but must be eyeing what others have (Mt 20:15), even trampling over others for advancement and preferment. It is one of “the works of the flesh” Gal 5:19-21) which make war on the new Spirit-filled life within the body of Christ. (CC pp. 464-465)

DOES NOT BOAST – Love also does not behave like a braggart or windbag. Apparently some of the Corinthians, with their delight in eloquent and impressive speech, had fallen into that trap. Paul had to educate them about the world’s false wisdom, and eloquence; the world’s wisdom in foolishness to God (1:17-24; 3:19), and Paul deliberately avoided superficial eloquence in his presentation of the Gospel (2:1-7, 13; 4:19-20). (CC p. 465)

not proud. See 8:1. (CSB)

Nor does love condone the closely related sin of being inflated with self-importance (is not puffed up). A number of times Paul has had occasion to chide the Corinthians for being puffed up (4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1) because of factional pride and arrogance, for their toleration of immorality, and for their disregard for his directives as a called apostle of God. Now he points out that ballooned, inflated egos are totally incompatible with Christian love. Egoism fractures the unity of the body of Christ. (CC p 465)

13:5 *not rude*. Perhaps an indirect reference to their unruly conduct in worship (11:18–22). (CSB)

It is concerned for what is right in the Lord's sight and also takes care not to offend others. Paul often calls on Christians to conduct themselves in a proper and dignified fashion in various aspects of their lives – their conduct toward the opposite sex (1 Cor 7:35); in the conduct during worship (14:40); and in proper and responsible ethical conduct in general (Rom 13:13; 1 Thess 4:12). (CC p. 465)

IS NOT SELF-SEEKING – Paul had admonished the Christian in Corinth not to be self-seeking and not to do everything that may be permissible, but to seek the edification of others (10:23-24). Thus they would be imitating his example of not seeking his own benefit but the salvation of many (10:33). Later Paul commends Timothy to the Philippians for his unparalleled unselfishness: “I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ” (Phil 2:20-21; cf Phil 2:4). (CC p. 465)

NOT EASILY ANGERED – Paul himself had become provoked during an argument with Barnabas about whether or no to take John Mark along on the second missionary journey (Acts 15:39). He may have come to regret his impatience on that occasion, for Mark proved a valuable church servant (2 Tim 2:20-21; 4:11). More important, however, than any personal regrets on Paul's part was the widespread tension in the Corinthian congregation, where the factional rivalry had led to a great deal of provocation. His admonition here is in line with his general concern that Christians control their anger (Eph 4:26, 31-32). (CC p. 466)

KEEPS NO RECORD OF WRONGS – In so doing, it follows the Lord of love, who did not keep a record of a record of people's sins, not even of those who crucified Him (Lk 23:34). Our Lord erases the sins of His people from His ledger (Rom 4:8; Col 2:14) so that He remembers them no more (Jer 31:34; Heb 8:12). Love carries “no chip on its shoulder.” It does not nurse a grudge. It forgives, even as Christ has forgiven (Eph 4:32) (CC p. 466)

13:6 *does not delight in evil*. As they were doing in ch. 5. (CSB)

Love avoids the human propensity not only to give tacit approval to wickedness but even to delight in hearing about it and perpetuating it (cf Acts 8:1; Rom 1:18, 32; 6:13). Here unrighteousness is contrasted not with righteousness but (as often in the NT) with truth. While unrighteousness suppresses the truth (Rom 1:18), God's righteousness is displayed in the truth of the Gospel (Rom 1:16-17; Gal 2:5, 14). (CC p. 466)

13:7 IT ALWAYS PROTECTS – Paul and his co-workers put up with hard work and deprivation for the sake of the Gospel (9:12). (CC p. 467)

Protects has a range of meanings including “cover,” “conceal,” “protect,” “hold back,” “hide,” “bear,” “endure,” “persist.” Its cognate noun mean “a roof” (Mt 8:6; Mk 2:4; Lk 7:6). (CC p. 463)

ALWAYS TRUSTS – To say that love believes, has faith through all things does not mean love is gullible and always believes other people. Rather, faith generated by God’s love in Christ perdures in all circumstances. (CC p. 467)

ALWAYS HOPES – Love never gives up hope in God. The same theme is found in 1 Thessalonians, where Paul thanks God for the church’s “endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 1:3). (CC p. 467)

ALWAYS PERSEVERES – Endurance is one of the great characteristics of life under the cross in Christ’s kingdom (Rev. 1:9) The verb endures is a close synonym to be longsuffering at the beginning of 1 Cor 13:4, nearly rounding off the paragraph. (CC p. 467)

13:8 LOVE NEVER FAILS – Piptei – To fall or come to an end. Love never does this.

Paul introduces another contrast to show love’s superiority. (TLSB)

Just as the Word of God never falls to the ground ineffective but always accomplishes its purposes (Is 55:10-11), so Christian love will retain its honored place throughout time and eternity. (CC p. 470)

prophecies ... will cease; ... tongues ... will be stilled; ... knowledge ... will pass away. These three will cease because they are partial in nature (v. 9) and will be unnecessary when what is complete has come (v. 10). (CSB)

The same verb (*katargeo*) is repeated in different forms. The offices/gifts craved by the Corinthians are bound to the present era and will not be needed in eternity. (TLSB)

In 1:28 Paul used the verb *kataryeo* to describe how God abolishes or reduces to nothing “the things that exist,” namely, the world’s wisdom and power. Here in 13:8 and 13:10 the verb has the sense to “supersede.” The difference between 1:28 and 13:8, 10 is that the things to be abolished in 1:28 are evil, but the things in 13:8, 10 are good but will give sway to greater realities. (CC p. 468)

If the Corinthians would only stay focused on the things that endure, eagerly anticipating the revelation of their Lord Jesus Christ (1:7) and the resurrection of

the dead (15:1-58), then from that eternal perspective they would see that even the greatest spiritual gifts lack permanent value. (CC pp. 470-471)

13:9 WE KNOW IN PART – God has not revealed everything we could know or that could be revealed through ongoing prophecy. For life now, God insists that we live by faith. (TLSB)

This does not mean that the knowledge provided by divine revelation is false, distorted, or imperfect. Jesus assured His disciples that by continuing in the Word they would know the truth, and the truth would make them free (Jn 8:31-32). His words are words of eternal life (Jn 6:68). But while the knowledge we have is liberating and life-giving, it is still only partial. Our darkened minds find it difficult to comprehend God's truths. And His Word still provides only glimpses of what will be fully revealed in eternity, when we will see "face to face" (1 Cor 13:12). (CC p. 471)

13:10 *perfection*. The Greek for this word can mean "end," "fulfillment," "completeness" or "maturity." In this context the contrast is between the partial and the complete. Some refer the verse to the return of Christ, others to the death of the Christian, others to the maturity (or establishment) of the church (see the illustration in v. 11), still others to the completion of the canon of NT Scripture. Verse 12, however, seems to indicate that Paul is here speaking of Christ's second coming. (CSB)

Gk *teleios*, "something or someone complete." The fullness and completeness that will appear with Christ's return. He is perfect and is the One who makes perfect (Heb 12:2). "At that time there will be no more forgiveness, but only perfectly pure and holy people" (LC II 58). (TLSB)

13:11 A CHILD – *Napios* – A very young child or infant. (QV)

Childhood is "imperfect" and incomplete because the mind and body are designed to strive for maturity. (TLSB)

Certain patterns of speech and of thinking and reasoning are appropriate for a child, and children cannot transcend the natural limitation imposed on them by their immaturity. But as they develop into adults, they become capable of more mature cognitive activity. Their former ways are no longer appropriate once they have grown up. (CC p. 471)

13:12 *we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror*. The imagery is of a polished metal (probably bronze) mirror in which one could receive only an imperfect reflection (cf. Jas 1:23)—in contrast to seeing the Lord directly and clearly in heaven. (CSB)

Made from polished brass. Archaeologists have found such mirrors at Corinth. *dimly*. Lit, “in a riddle.” The knowledge is indirect and, therefore, imperfect. (TLSB)

Ainigma (poor reflection) comes from the Greek word for “riddle,” We can hear our English word enigmatic in it . (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

During our life in this age, we live by faith in the revelation we have been given through God’s Word, and we do not yet behold God directly, by sight. This may be compared to looking in a mirror: what we see is only a reflection of the real thing. Paul is not implying that the mirrors of his day provided only “a poor reflection” or distorted the image so that it was inaccurate. The argument that ancient mirrors were of poor quality, providing only a flawed image, cannot be sustained. Indeed, Corinth was known for the fine quality of its bronze mirrors. Rather, Paul is comparing the indirect nature of viewing a face in the mirror with seeing someone face to face. An apt modern comparison is between seeing a person in a photograph or on television or in a movie verse seeing the person himself. In eternity we will see God “face to face.” Just as the Israelites – with a few significant exceptions, such as Moses (Num 12:8) – could look on God’s face and live (see also Gen 32:30; Judg 13:22-23), neither can the Christian in this life look on the full glory of God and live. That privilege is reserved for the next life. Thus our knowledge of God in this life can only be incomplete. (CC pp 471-472)

FACE TO FACE – In God’s immediate presence (cf Ex 33:11; Dt 34:10), where He is not “hidden” by our present limitations. (TLSB)

know fully ... fully known. The Christian will know the Lord to the fullest extent possible for a finite being, similar to the way the Lord knows the Christian fully and infinitely. This will not be true until the Lord returns. (CSB)

know fully. Perfecting our knowledge in God’s presence. The believer will not simply know about God but will have direct, personal experience of Him. *fully known.* God is all-knowing and already knows us fully. (TLSB)

The passive epegnosthan stresses once again that the love and knowledge Christians have are the result of being loved and known by God. It’s all sheer grace. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

Switching back to the first person singular, Paul speaks in a personal way of what this heavenly prospect means for him. Now the apostle’s knowledge of God and of divine things is only partial (13:12 as in 13:9). But then his knowledge will be complete, just as God’s knowledge of him is complete. And God’s intimate knowledge of Paul is bound up in his divine love and care for him. One may compare 1 Cor 13:12 to John 10:14-15, where the Good Shepherd’s knowledge of His sheep is connected with His self-sacrificing love for them (cf Ps

1:6, where the Lord's knowledge of the way of the righteous implies His personal care as he leads them to life eternal; see also Ps 23:1,6). (CC p. 472)

13:13 *remain*. Now and forever. (CSB)

faith, hope and love. See note on 1Th 1:3. (CSB)

A summary of Christian virtues. (TLSB)

Faith in the God who knew and loved His people before they were born (1 Cor 13:12; cf Gal 1:15), hope in Him, and the love which flows from faith and hope – these “theological virtues” have supreme and enduring value for the lives of all Christians, regardless of the spiritual endowment any individual may possess. They are the believer's enduring character marks. (CC p. 472)

Paul does not mean, however, that these “virtues” in their present form will all abide eternally. Elsewhere he contrasts “faith,” which marks the Christian's walk in this aeon, with the “sight” which will be granted in the age to come (2 Cor 5:7). Moreover, he will write to the Romans: “Hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he sees? (Rom 8:24). Faith and hope, then pertain to this temporary aeon, which “is passing away” (1 Cor 7:31) (CC pp. 472-473)

the greatest of these is love. Because God is love (1Jn 4:8) and has communicated his love to us (1Jn 4:10) and commands us to love one another (Jn 13:34–35). Love supersedes the gifts because it outlasts them all. Long after these sought-after gifts are no longer necessary, love will still be the governing principle that controls all that God and his redeemed people are and do. (CSB)

“Faith” and “hope” are by nature imperfect, because they mature into “knowledge” when the thing believed in or hoped for is reached. Love does not turn into something else but, when mature, remains love. “Paul, in this passage, properly speaks about love toward one's neighbor and indicates that love is the greatest, because it has the most fruit. Faith and hope have to do only with God. But love has infinite offices outwardly toward humanity” (Ap V 105). “Faith is never alone, but always has love and hope with it” (FC Ep III 11). (TLSB)

The loving relationship between the God who is love and His people will endure throughout eternity; indeed, in eternity it will become most palpable. This will not only be true of the love between God and His people, It will also, in an almost unimaginable fashion, be true of the relationships that God's people have with each other. Our love for each other will be perfect, because it will flow out from God's perfect love toward us. (CC p. 473)

But the eternally enduring nature of love is by no means the only reason why Paul calls it “the greatest.” Clearly Paul is also praising love because of its inestimable value to the church. The whole aim of his apostolic charge was to produce the love that flowed “from a pure heart and a good conscience and

sincere faith” (1 Tim 1:5). Nowhere was a church in greater need of this highest of virtues than the strife-torn congregation in Corinth. (CC p. 473)

To have Christian love is to be most like God. God is not called faith or hope directly, He is called love. “God is love” (1 John 4:16) Without love we cannot understand God or what it means to be a Christian. (PBC)

GOSPEL
Luke 4:31-44

Jesus Drives Out an Evil Spirit

³¹ Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath began to teach the people. ³² They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority. ³³ In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, ³⁴ “Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” ³⁵ **“Be quiet!”** Jesus said sternly. **“Come out of him!”** Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him. ³⁶ All the people were amazed and said to each other, “What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!” ³⁷ And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.

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4:31 WENT DOWN TO CAPERNUAM –This was a more important place than Nazareth. The Romans had a company of soldiers here. Many incidents from the life of Jesus took place in Capernaum. We may regard it as His home during His earthly ministry. Peter and Andrew lived there, plying their fishing trade on the nearby sea. (PBC)

BEGAN TEACHING – This synagogue may have been on the site of a fourth-century synagogue discovered at Capernaum. (TLSB)

4:32 See note on Mk 1:22.

WERE AMAZED – They did not react to it negatively as did those in Nazareth.

MESSAGE HAD AUTHORITY – Jesus, in contrast to the rabbis, does not appeal to previous religious authorities. He states the truth clearly and forcefully without any hedging. The difference was obvious, even to uneducated, sinful people. He will state that he has this authority also in Matthew 28:18 when he commissions his disciples and us to go out and make disciples. It will be evident when the apostles preach the Word as is illustrated in Acts 4:13 “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.” The Word of God carries the day and is not dependent on signs or the people proclaiming it.

Different from the rest of the rabbis, and all the more because it could effect miraculous signs (cf v 36). (TLSB)

4:33 *possessed by a demon.* To pagans, “demon” meant a supernatural being, whether good or bad, but Luke makes it clear that this was an evil spirit. Such a demon could cause mental disorder (Jn 10:20), violent action (Lk 8:26–29), bodily disease (13:11, 16) and rebellion against God (Rev 16:14). (CSB)

It caused the people it possessed to be unclean or wicked. (TLSB)

LOUD VOICE – The demon itself cried out before Jesus’ superior power. (TLSB)

4:34 JESUS OF NAZARETH – This title is used three times (here; 18:37; 24:19) in contexts that recall His reputation as a teacher and miracle worker. (CC p. 200)

The Christological testimony at the opening to Jesus’ Galilean ministry is spoken by a being from the world of spirits through the mouth of the man in whom that unclean demon’s spirit dwelt. In 4:34 the demon says to Jesus: “Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth [Ἰησοῦ Ναζαρηνέ]? Have you come to destroy [ἀπολέσαι] us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God [ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ].” The title “Jesus of Nazareth” is used three times (here; 18:37; 24:19) in contexts that recall his reputation as a teacher and miracle worker, i.e., the first phase of the prophet Christology. This is part of Luke’s geographical perspective, as Nazareth/Galilee becomes identified with this first stage of his ministry. (When Jesus turns his face to Jerusalem in Luke 9, he will predict his passion and the focus will be on his rejection.) The demon recognizes that, as the Messiah, Jesus has come to destroy the demons. The use of ἀπόλλυμι, “destroy,” suggests an eschatological interpretation. This *is* the end-time conflict. Jesus’ teaching and

miracles demonstrate that the new era of salvation has broken in; the demonic powers fear the appearance of “the Holy One of God.” (CC p. 200)

Until Peter’s confession in Luke 9, no human participant in the gospel know who Jesus is. But the demons do. They hold people in bondage. But they recognize that the power of God is with Jesus to destroy their kingdom by releasing those who are bound by it. This He will do on the cross. Jesus has the power to exorcise, to prevail over demons. This and all other exorcisms point to the release from Satan’s bondage wrought by Jesus’ death and resurrection, the ultimate exorcism of the world. (CC p. 200)

Holy One of God. See note on Mk 1:24. (CSB)

Demons know Jesus’ divine identity. Here, the demon calls Him by name in an attempt to exercise control over Him. (TLSB)

The title “Holy One of God” is messianic. It expresses the strong relationship between Jesus and the Spirit. Jesus has just been anointed by the Spirit (3:22), filled by the Holy Spirit and led by the Spirit in the wilderness (4:1), and returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee (4:14). (CC p, 200)

4:35 THREW MAN DOWN – The Lord bade him keep silence, and also come out from the man, from the victim of his spite. The spirit had to obey, but in doing so, he took the last opportunity to wrench the poor man in a frightful manner, throwing him down in the midst of the synagogue. (Kretzmann)

4:36 WERE AMAZED – But beyond that he could not hurt him; Jesus would not permit it. But the effect upon the congregation was such as to throw a stupor upon them all. They were inclined to doubt the evidence of their own eyes and ears. To hear a man speak words of command, with power and authority, lay down the law to unclean, evil spirits and receive unquestioned obedience, was an entirely new thing in their experience; it filled them with something like horrified reverence. (Kretzmann)

4:37 NEWS...SPREAD – But they thought of promises like Is. 49:24-25, and were soon busily engaged in spreading the news of this deed to every town of the entire neighborhood. The miracle was a proof that Jesus was indeed the Holy One of God, and that He had come to destroy the works of the devil and to deliver men from the bonds of Satan. (Kretzmann)

Jesus Heals Many

³⁸ Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. ³⁹ So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them. ⁴⁰ When the sun was setting, the

people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them, ⁴¹ Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ. ⁴² At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. ⁴³ But he said, “**I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.**” ⁴⁴ And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

4:38 *Simon’s mother-in-law.* Peter was married (1Co 9:5).

From the synagogue Jesus went directly to the home of Simon Peter, of whose call Luke tells in the next chapter. Having lived at Bethsaida formerly, Simon had moved to Capernaum, where he lived with his family, to which the mother of his wife belonged. Evidently, Scripture knows nothing of the foolish unkindness which is now so commonly shown to those to whom reverence and honor is due. (Kretzmann)

a high fever. All three Synoptics tell of this miracle (Mt 8:14–15; Mk 1:29–31), but only Luke, the doctor, mentions the fever. (CSB)

This aged woman, at any rate, must have been esteemed very highly in the house of her son-in-law, for when she was prostrated with a fever, severely afflicted with the severity of the attack, they, the members of the family, made intercession for her to Jesus. (Kretzmann)

A high fever was often the harbinger of something worse. (TLSB)

4:39 BENT OVER...REBUKED THE FEVER – The Lord immediately signified His willingness. Stepping to the cot on which she was lying, He raised Himself in the fullness of His majesty, He threatened the fever, and it obeyed His voice. The healing was immediate and complete. If in any family someone becomes a disciple of Jesus, there is a path between that house and heaven, guarded by angels. Not only in temporal things, but especially in spiritual matters blessings will attend such a house where a faithful soul prays. (Kretzmann)

BEGAN TO WAIT ON THEM – And the subsequent serving of the mother-in-law of Peter after healing shows that the beautiful, but rare plant of gratitude nourished in that house. (Kretzmann)

4:40 *When the sun was setting.* The Sabbath (v. 31) was over at sundown (about 6:00 P.M.). Until then, according to the tradition of the elders, Jews could not travel more than about two-thirds of a mile or carry a burden. Only after sundown could they carry the sick to Jesus, and their eagerness is seen in the fact that they set out while the sun was still setting. (CSB)

Because it was the Sabbath (v 31), the crowds waited until the end of the Sabbath (sundown) to transport the sick. Carrying them earlier would have violated the holy day. Now, needy people began streaming to Jesus. (TLSB)

LAYING HANDS ON EACH – ὁ δὲ ἐνὶ ἑκάστῳ αὐτῶν τὰς χεῖρας ἐπιτιθεὶς ἐθεράπευεν αὐτούς—Laying on of hands is used only one other time in Luke, when Jesus heals a crippled woman on the Sabbath (13:13). In Acts it is used only once in connection with physical healing, when Paul lays hands on Publius' father who is sick with a fever and dysentery (Acts 28:8). However, it is used frequently in Acts as part of the baptismal rite, the new healing of the new era of salvation. It is also used to set apart the diaconate in a separate ministry (6:6) and Paul and Barnabas as they begin the first missionary journey (13:3). (Being set apart by laying on of hands gives Paul and Barnabas authority to baptize.) (CC)

4:41 YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD – In this verse the title is a sign from the demons that they are fully aware of who Jesus is and what He has come to do. It is placed here by Luke (missing in Matthew and Mark) to show that Jesus' release of the captives is part of His work as the Son of God, fulfilling His destiny first announced at His baptism. (CC p. 201)

HE REBUKED THEM – The word “rebuke” is used three times in this section. Jesus makes no distinction between body and soul. Demon possession, sickness, sin and death are all manifestations of creation's bondage in its fallenness. He rebukes the demon, and it comes out after a violent struggle (4:35) He rebukes the fever of Peter's mother –in-law, and it leaves her (4:39). He rebukes the demons who call Him “the Son of God” because they know Him to be the Christ, those demons come out (4:41). This word ties together not only demon possession and sickness, but also sin, for Jesus encourages His disciples to rebuke those who sin, and if they repent, to forgive them (17:3). (CC p. 201)

Jesus likely silenced the demons because He knew that they would misrepresent Him and distort the nature of His mission (cf vv 1–11). (TLSB)

because they knew he was the Christ. See note on Mk 1:34. (CSB)

4:42 *solitary place.* Mark includes the words “where he prayed” (Mk 1:35). (CSB)

Early Sunday morning Jesus went out to a solitary place. The Sabbath had been long and hard; He had been engaged in bitter warfare with the devil. Now He needed time for meditation and prayer. (PBC)

The very next morning, at break of day, Jesus left Capernaum. He followed the method He employed at other times also: He went out into the solitude to be all alone in prayer and communion with His heavenly Father. It would be of

advantage to most Christians if they would occasionally withdraw from the bustle of modern business and spend some time after the example of Christ. We are too liable to lose our balance and the sense of proportion according to Biblical standards if there is only the ceaseless hurry of work, alternating with rounds of pleasure. Sunday should be the day for quiet communion with God, not spent in contempt of God's Word and in loud and boisterous picnics, but in prayerful contemplation of our need of God. (Kretzmann)

TRIED TO KEEP – But the absence of Jesus was soon noticed, and a large multitude of people, with Peter in the lead, went out to search for Him and bring Him back. But He would not be persuaded by them. He knew that it was not the Word of Life for which they were eager, but the miracles which they hoped to see. (Kretzmann)

4:43 I MUST PREACH THE GOOD NEWS – And so He explained to them the principal purpose of His ministry. The obligation rests upon Him to bring the Gospel news of the kingdom of God to other cities also. This work He has taken upon Himself; in this work He wants to show all faithfulness. And so He departed on a preaching tour of Galilee, Himself proclaiming the Gospel-message in His sermons in the synagogues of Galilee. (Kretzmann)

kingdom of God. Luke's first use of this phrase; it occurs over 30 times in his Gospel. Some of its different meanings in the Bible are: the eternal kingship of God; the presence of the kingdom in the person of Jesus, the King; the approaching spiritual form of the kingdom; the future kingdom. See note on Mt 3:2. (CSB)

Major theme in Lk; this is merely the first of over 30 occurrences of this phrase, which describes the coming of the Messiah and the exercise of God's reign through Him. (TLSB)

The kingdom of God occurs here for the first time in Luke's gospel, and without explanation. It is never defined in the gospels, and one must deduce its meaning from the context. Its use here is programmatic for Luke. It means the Good News that God's plan of salvation is now being manifested in Jesus, who teaches and performs miracles that testify to the presence of God in Him. The connection between the kingdom of God and the teaching and miracles of Jesus is an intimate one. (CC p. 201-202)

Thus, Jesus, the preacher of the Gospel to the poor, is also the kingdom preacher who must preach the Father's redemptive plan, for this is His mission. The expression "for this purpose I was sent" also recalls 4:18. (CC p. 202)

4:44 This summary statement includes not only what has just been described (from v. 14 on) but also what lay ahead in Jesus' ministry. No express mention is

made in the Synoptics of the early Judean ministry recorded in John (2:13–4:3), though it may be reflected in Mt 23:37 and Lk 13:34. (CSB)

Judea. Some manuscripts, as well as the parallel accounts (Mt 4:23; Mk 1:39), mention Galilee instead of Judea (see NIV text note). In writing to a Gentile (see Introduction: Recipient and Purpose), Luke possibly used “Judea” to refer to the whole of Palestine, the land of the Jews (23:5; Ac 10:37; 11:1, 29; 26:20). (CSB)

Refers broadly to all of ancient Israel’s territory, since the account continues with Jesus’ ministry in Galilee. (TLSB)