

## Fourth Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING – Acts 2:42-47

**<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.**

**2:42** The particular events of the Day of Pentecost now give way to summary statements of the church's life. Some statements are descriptive and changing: "enjoying the favor of all the people" (v. 47). This verse, however, is prescriptive and unchanging. It is central to the life of the church: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, the breaking of bread and to prayer" (literally, the prayers). In other words, it wasn't optional for the believers to be devoted to the apostles' teaching. This is how the Holy Spirit brought Christ to them. Nor was it optional that their fellowship show equal devotion to the breaking of bread (Luke's term for the Lord's Supper). This is how the Holy Spirit brought Christ to them. Right from the beginning the prayers that flowed from and framed these gifts of the risen Christ (the liturgy) were equally centered on Word and Sacrament. Right from the beginning we see that sermon and Sacrament are not liturgy-dividing competitors, but rather life-giving complements. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

DEVOTED – The KJV has "continued steadfastly" which is really close to the original. The Greek from the lexicon has the following phrases: to persist in adherence to a thing; to be intently engaged in; attend constantly. Devoted – Volume 3 page 618 of Kittel has: To occupy oneself diligently with something; pay persistent attention to; to hold fast to something. Our English dictionary has: fixed or unchanging; firmly loyal or constant; unswerving; fixed in one place. – Philips has "continued steadfastly learning..." This is a characteristic of a disciple. In Greek "disciple" means to be trained, disciplined and instructed. In Matthew 28:20 where it says "teaching them to obey everything..." the word "obey" means to "have a living reception in the heart, as assimilated by means of faith, one that will henceforth control and mold the entire character and life and goes on throughout life.

With rapt attention. (TLSB)

*ēsan de proskarterountes*. Every word in this verse matters, for here is laid down by the evangelist the life of the Church at worship. This periphrastic imperfect suggests that their devoting themselves, their persevering as a community, was habitual and persistent, defining their life as the Church. By repeating *proskarterountes* four verses later (v 46), we are encouraged to see that the persistent worship in the temple and breaking bread in the homes would have included the apostles' teaching, fellowship in

the breaking of the bread, and the prayers. This word occurs frequently in Acts (1:14; 6:4; 8:13; 10:7). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

*apostles' teaching.* Included all that Jesus himself taught (Mt 28:20), especially the gospel, which was centered in his death, burial and resurrection (see vv. 23–24; 3:15; 4:10; 1Co 15:1–4). It was a unique teaching in that it came from God and was clothed with the authority conferred on the apostles (2Co 13:10; 1Th 4:2). Today it is available in the books of the NT. (CSB)

Summary of the apostles' faith and proclamation. (TLSB)

*tēi didachēi tōn apostolōn.* Within this verse, the apostles demonstrate that straightaway after Peter's Pentecost sermon, they continue the prophetic pattern as outlined in Luke's prophetic Christology—a first phase of teaching and miracles and a second phase of rejection for preaching that Christ is the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament. The teaching of the apostles will have followed Jesus' hermeneutic of seeing the entire Old Testament as referring to his death and resurrection, not simply discrete verses here and there. This teaching would have been centered in the kerygma of a crucified and risen Savior, now present bodily in the preaching of forgiveness in his name (cf. Lk 24:44–47). This would form the center of the first structure of the Divine Service, the liturgy of the Word, as Jesus handed down in the Emmaus story (24:35, the teaching on the way). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

To avoid misunderstanding what factually was happening, we need to remember that these new disciples were all Jews who were fully conversant with the Scriptures. Peter's easy use of words from David and Joel in his Pentecost sermon bears this out. The one thing Peter's hearers needed was the conviction that Jesus was the Christ. This the Holy Spirit worked in their hearts and minds on Pentecost. Unlike unbelievers who have no knowledge of God and His Word, these new converts were fully prepared for baptism and membership. The teaching referred to here is the teaching we do in Bible class and through the Sunday sermon. (LL)

*the fellowship.* The corporate fellowship of believers in worship. (CSB)

Greek *koinonia*, "sharing," "participation in a common thing." Christian fellowship has both a heavenly and an earthly dimension (1 Cor. 1:9; cf. 1 Cor. 10:16; 2 Cor. 8:4; 13:14; Eph. 3:6; Php 3:10; Phm 6). (TLSB)

*kai tēi koinōniai.* Although the evangelist would not have known that this is the first occurrence in the New Testament of the word *hē koinōnia*, the canonical order takes us through four Gospels before coming upon this critical word for the life of the Church. It stands in an exegetical relationship with the following phrase, *tēi klasei tou artou*, so that we might translate it "in the fellowship, that is, in the breaking of the bread." Note that a simple *kai* separates the apostles' teaching and fellowship in the breaking of bread and the prayers, but that no *kai* appears between fellowship and the breaking of the bread. Fellowship is eucharistic fellowship, and that includes the common sharing of

property, or what we sometimes call *diakonia*. Fellowship in the breaking of the bread frees us to share bread and wine as the means for Christ to come to us in body and blood, as well as our very possessions for the common good, for those who are in need. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

*breaking of bread*. Although this phrase is used of an ordinary meal in v. 46 (see Lk 24:30, 35), the Lord's Supper seems to be indicated here (see note on 20:7; cf. 1Co 10:16; 11:20). (CSB)

Could include the Holy Supper. "Although we do not object if some interpret these passage as referring to the Sacrament, it does not make sense that one part of the Sacrament was given. According to the ordinary usage of language, naming one part also means the other" (Ap. XXII 7). (TLSB)

*tēi klasei tou artou*. This is the language used by Luke to describe the Lord's Supper, first used by him in the Emmaus meal in the concluding and programmatic verse in which he laid down the structures of the liturgy. In Lk 24:35, "the things in the way [Word] and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread [Lord's Supper]" (author's translation). It is the oldest expression for the Lord's Supper, used by Luke in Acts (2:46; 20:7, 11). The breaking of the bread signified the whole meal, and if it were a festive meal like Emmaus, where reclining took place, such a meal would always include wine. Wherever "the breaking of the bread" is used, it refers to the full eucharistic meal. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

*prayer*. Acts emphasizes the importance of prayer in the Christian life—private as well as public (1:14; 3:1; 6:4; 10:4, 31; 12:5; 16:13, 16). (CSB)

The Jews had liturgical-style prayers they memorized and recited, a practice continued in the Christian Church, as the use of the Lord's Prayer shows. (TLSB)

*kai tais proseuchais*. No one can be sure exactly what these prayers might have included. These are "petitionary" prayers, like the Lord's Prayer, and perhaps Luke is suggesting that this is already a part of the liturgical life of the Church. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

**2:43-45** The Holy Spirit did not mandate communism - prohibition of private property and the requirement to amass community property. He did lead the early church in sharing the use and benefit of their goods in harmony with Jesus' teaching about possessions (Luke 12:33; 18:22; Acts 4:32). Their fellowship, partaking in Word and Sacrament as the center of life (v. 42), was not without effect in their sharing the things of this life. The context of the Feast of Pentecost indicates that many of those sharing in the common use of things had come from distant homes and were temporary residents of Jerusalem. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

**2:43** EVERYONE – Including those who were not yet believers, could see that God was at work through these men. (PBC)

AWE - Literally, “fear.” (TLSB)

*phobos, polla te terata kai sēmeia dia tōn apostolōn.* Here the miracles that are part of the prophet Christology are described by the evangelist as taking place through the apostles, who follow their Lord in this way. Miracles testify to the presence of Christ, the Creator, in his creation bringing in the new creation. Christ is now present “miraculously” in two ways: through the miracles of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, as well as through the “wonders and signs” of the apostles. Such thaumaturgic acts accompany the beginning of every new mission start in Acts, as this one at Pentecost that begins the mission to the Jews (cf. Acts 8: Samaria; Acts 10–12: Gentiles). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

“The fear of the Lord” is a key concept throughout the OT. Unfortunately, the Hebrew noun *yir’ah* that is translate “fear” (or the verb “to fear” does not communicate itself through any single word in English translation. What does “the fear of the Lord” really mean? (TLSB)

1 John 4:16-19, <sup>16</sup> And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. <sup>17</sup> In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. <sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us.”

For us, the word fear often has a negative connotation, namely, to be afraid of something or someone. The Hebrew term can mean that. For example, when Jacob prepared to meet his brother, Esau, he feared. (Gen. 32:11). (TLSB)

Proverbs points out that true wisdom begins with such fear. The opening verses sum up the entire Book: (TLSB)

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Proverbs 1:7)

This fear is closely related to trust because we can truly respect and reverence God only when we believe that He is truly everything that His Word, the Bible, says He is. Understanding “fear of the Lord” as trust helps us understand other enigmatic passages such as Psalm 130:4. (TLSB)

“But with You there is forgiveness, that You may be feared.”

The idea of fearing God occurs repeatedly throughout the Book of Proverbs: 1:7, 29; 2:5; 3:7; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:2, 16, 26, 27; 15:16, 33; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17; 24:21; 28:14; 31:30. (TLSB)

WONDERS AND MIRACULOUS SIGNS – “Through” would be a better translation than by here. It was not their power but His which filled everyone with awe. These works were signs that the apostles’ teaching was from God. (PBC)

It wasn’t so much the “may wonders and miraculous signs” done by the apostles as it was this very visible witness made by these first converts that made such a profound impression on the rest of the city’s residents. (LL)

At this time, more miracles are happening through the apostles than Luke has space to record (cf. John 21:25). (TLSB)

**2:44** *believers were together.* The unity of the early church. (CSB)

*hoi pisteuontes.* This clearly refers to Christians. And in this context, these are Jews who now believe in Jesus, which is why there is no reason for them to be catechized and why the Church grew in such large numbers during these early days. They had been catechized through the Old Testament, and the only missing piece was that Jesus was the Messiah. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

*everything in common.* See 4:34–35. This was a voluntary sharing to provide for those who did not have enough for the essentials of living (see good and bad examples of sharing, 4:36–5:9). (CSB)

Note of Acts 4:32 says: “Preview and foretaste of the restoration of Paradise-like conditions in heaven. God gives us property and resources for our neighbor’s benefit. The early Christians fully shared with one another, but not in the same way as the failed communist experiments of the twentieth century. Here there is no compulsion or involvement of the State—only believers are affected, and only goods are shared, not their production.” (TLSB)

*epi to auto kai eixon capanta koina.* The coming of the Spirit of Jesus at Pentecost, the apostles’ teaching, the fellowship in the breaking of the bread, the prayers—all these things set the community free to share what they had with one another. *Leitourgia* gives way to *diakonia*. They are now one in Christ, and those who share this oneness share all things in common. This is also part of the friendship ethic of the Hellenistic world. The Gospel gave them freedom to do this. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

**2:45** SELLING - *kai ta ktēmata kai tas huparxeis epipraskon.* The imperfect verb *epipraskon*, translated “were selling,” denotes both the inception of the sharing of possessions as well as its ongoing character. This now is becoming the custom of the Church. *tas huparxeis* suggests that this comes out of their very being, out of the essence of their life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

GAVE TO ANYONE AS HE HAD NEED – In so large a congregation, and given the speed with which everything happened, it would only be natural that there would be those who found themselves without shelter and food. As these needs became known

in these meetings, no questions were asked, no resolutions were passed, no committees were formed. Love acted. Those members who had material wealth had a new understanding of why they were so blessed, and a beautiful and spontaneous sharing and meeting of needs took place. (LL)

*kai diemerizon auta pasin kathoti an tis chreian eichen.* Another imperfect verb, *diemerizon*, denoting ongoing, customary, habitual action. The Spirit of Jesus and the eucharistic fellowship opens their eyes to those who have need and the concrete response to those needs. Again, *leitourgia* and *diakonia* taken together comprise the entire Gospel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

**2:46-47** Christian worship in the temple was fleeting. The center of activity in the early church was the house churches, where apostle-led Word and Sacrament ministry fed the faithful with the temple of Jesus' body. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

*en agalliasei kai aphelotēti kardias ainountes ton theon.* The gladness expressed by the apostles is eschatological, for the eschaton had arrived in Jesus and was being celebrated at their eucharistic feasts by Christ's bodily presence. Joy is a major theme of Luke's Gospel, as the parable of the prodigal son indicates. Joy is always the response of the believer to Christ's saving presence. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

**2:46** MEET IN THE TEMPLE COURTS – They did this because it was the house of the Lord and they were the Lord's people. It was the Father's house and they were his children. They gathered there daily, perhaps at the hours of prayer. (PBC)

The apostles (even as late as 21:26) exercise the maximum possible participation at the Jerusalem temple, which Jesus called His Father's house (Lk 2:49; Jn 2:16). (TLSB)

*broke bread in their homes.* Here the daily life of Christians is described, distinguishing their activity in the temple from that in their homes, where they ate their meals—not the Lord's Supper—with gladness and generosity. (CSB)

*kath' hēmeran.* It appears as if eucharistic table fellowship occurred every day in the early Christian communities. This is one of the reasons for Acts 6 and the institution of the diaconate. Serving tables every day became a burden on the apostles and took time away from their *leitourgia*. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

*klōntes te kat' oikon arton, metelambanon trophēs.* See note above on the breaking of the bread. By "house to house," Luke means in the various homes where the Jews lived, similar to the house worship of Jewish families for the Passover and the Sabbath evening Seder, although the gatherings for these meals would have been bigger than the immediate family and would include others in what would now be "the family of God." Later eucharistic worship in the house churches of Christians would have been modeled after this post-Pentecost example. The sharing at the table would also have

been seen as an extension of *diakonia*, sharing all things in common, as this passage emphasizes. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

Covers both the agape meal (cf. Jude 12) and the Lord's Supper. (TLSB)

*glad and sincere hearts*. The fellowship, oneness and sharing enjoyed in the early church are fruits of the Spirit. Joy is to be the mood of the believer (see note on 16:34). (CSB)

In our day, too, it ought to be possible for unbelievers to say of us, "Those Christians are helpful neighbors and good citizens." Our lives cannot make believers of them, but the way we live might at least remove some hindrances to their faith. Our words and actions might convince some that they ought to give the gospel a hearing. (PBC)

"All men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35). How naturally, beautifully, and powerfully this evidence of discipleship happened! Not only did they meet regularly for the study of the Word, but they also met together often for practical purposes. And it was here in these meetings that what it means to belong to Christ and live in Him came alive for all to see. (LL)

*te proskarterountes homothumadon en tōi hierōi*. The same word used in Acts 2:42 for the Church's devotion to *leitourgia* is used here for their worship in the temple. They would pray in the temple, and Solomon's Portico became a place for their teaching (Acts 5:12). It should not surprise us that the apostles returned to the temple to praise God. Luke's Gospel begins in the temple with Zechariah offering up the atonement sacrifices in the Holy Place (1:5–25) and ends with the apostles returning to the temple to praise God (24:53). As Jews who now confess Christ as the Messiah, the temple was the premier place of worship. Only after arrests and persecution for going to the temple do references to the temple cease. However, when Paul returns to Jerusalem at the end of the third missionary journey, James, the bishop of Jerusalem, takes Paul to the temple (Acts 21), indicating that the temple remains a place of worship for Jewish Christians until its destruction in AD 70. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

**2:47** ENJOYING THE FAVOR OF ALL PEOPLE - The respect they received from the ordinary folk contrasts with the spitefulness of the rulers (Chapter 4). (TLSB)

*pros holon ton laon*. This is the first use of *ho laos* in Acts, a technical word in Luke for the people of God who are faithful to the promises of God's eschatological salvation through a crucified and risen Messiah. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

*charin*. As in Paul's Letter to the Galatians, grace is a space where God is making right what has gone wrong. The space of grace here is the Church's gathering together around the apostles' teaching, fellowship in the breaking of bread, and prayers, that is, worship in Word and Sacrament. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

ADDED TO THEIR NUMBER – No wonder that new believers were added daily! Life-style evangelism. Acts speak louder than words' either attracting or repulsing. And when actions attract, as they plainly did here, questions will be asked. Then, teaching the Word takes place naturally, and the Holy Spirit can and does create faith and growth happens. (LL)

God alone, through grace, builds His Church. (TLSB)

*tous sōzomenous*. See above in v 44 on *hoi pisteuontes*. The numbers were great because these were all Jews who now confess Jesus as Messiah. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

*kath' hēmeran*. The increase in the Church was happening every day as the news spread that Jesus was the Messiah, that his bodily presence was in apostolic teaching and fellowship in the breaking of the bread, and that the Church now was one community where everyone shared with those in need. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

**2:42–47** The early Christians lived only for their Lord and for the other members of His Body, the Church. How cheap in comparison is our indifference to the Church; how sad are our compromises with the world. Yet the Holy Spirit still dwells and works among us; we still have the apostles' teaching embodied in the NT Scriptures. How blessed are we in such heavenly fellowship! • Lord, open our eyes to Your reality, order our priorities, and let Your light transfigure these latter days. Amen. (TLSB)

#### EPISTLE – 1 Peter 2:19-25

**19 For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. 20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. 21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." 23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.**

**2:18-20** This paragraph has caused some consternation among certain readers and critics of Christianity, for does it not seem that Peter is endorsing the practice of human slavery? Actually (and Paul in his letter to the slave owner Philemon, for instance) neither endorses the practice nor calls for its violent overthrow. They simply worked with it as an inescapable feature of life everywhere in the Roman Empire. Involuntary servitude has existed throughout human history, from the earliest recorded human history to 19<sup>th</sup>-century America's dreadful Civil War. In part, there are reports of human

ownership in various parts of the world into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Paul certainly did not approve of the slave trade, for in 1 Timothy 1:10, he lists slave traders along with murderers and adulterers as “lawbreakers and rebels.” In 1 Corinthians 7:21 he encouraged Christian slaves to gain their freedom if they could, but not to worry if they couldn’t – those who are called by the Lord are the Lord’s freemen. (PBC)

It should be noted that slavery as practiced in the first century was far removed from the ugly racial slavery of the Americas. Roman slavery was not race-based – people wound up in slavery as captives of war or by hard economic choice. In fact, Roman slaves were often better educated than their masters, could acquire property, buy their freedom, marry whom they wished, and had certain legal protections. In some ways being a slave was economically preferable to being a free laborer, for Roman slaves were guaranteed clothes, food, and lodging. The great orator Cicero wrote that the average length of this involuntary servitude was only about seven years. (PBC)

Christianity spread rapidly among the huge slave population of the empire. Peter counseled them to see themselves as free in the Lord, but to respect the obligations that their position in society laid upon them. He did not want the Christian faith to be seen merely as a revolutionary political or economic movement – what mattered was people’s relationship with their Savior Jesus Christ, and in drawing other people into such a relationship. That would happen best by showing that Christians were really the best citizens (and the best slaves). That is why he gives such high praise to people who bore up under unjust suffering rather than retaliate. (PBC)

**2:18** *Slaves.* Household servants, whatever their particular training and functions. The context indicates that Peter is addressing Christian slaves. NT writers do not attack slavery as an institution (see note on Eph 6:5), but the NT contains the principles that ultimately uprooted slavery. Peter’s basic teachings on the subject may apply to employer-employee relations today (see Eph 6:5–8; Col 3:22–25; 1Ti 6:1–2; Tit 2:9–10). (CSB)

Specifically addresses household servants. (TLSB)

*oiketai* meaning household servants, usually slaves. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – volume 9, Part 2)

Having shown the proper relation of the citizens to their government, the apostle here delineates the attitude which God, according to the Fourth Commandment, expects from slaves, the majority of the members in the Asiatic congregations apparently belonging to this class. (Kretzmann)

WITH ALL RESPECT – This means reverent fear, not being afraid of punishment but giving honor to whom honor is due. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – volume 9, Part 2)

Servants, be in subjection in all fear to your masters, not only to the good and lenient, but also to the perverse. The word used by the apostle, “domestics, family servants,” is

not so harsh as the plain “slaves,” and it intimates that in many cases the masters granted to their slaves privileges which made them almost members of the family. Such Christian servants were not to be influenced by a false idea of Christian liberty and refuse to do their work, but they were, in free obedience, to be in subjection, in submission to their masters, and with all fear at that, Eph. 6:5. (Kretzmann)

American Christians don't have a king to honor, but we do have a president, senators, representatives, judges, and a wide array of state and local officials. Although it is fashionable today for comedians and talk show hosts to ridicule elected officials as incompetent, selfish, drunkards, although politics in any country is rarely free from financial or sexual scandal, we can exercise our faith by showing support for those who are trying to lead. By involving ourselves with community projects and service, by informing ourselves on political issues and then voting, we show support for our government and honor the God who gave us our democracy. (PBC)

WHO ARE HARSH – (skoliois – crooked, unreasonable, or overbearing).  
(Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

Even those who mistreat others are our neighbors. Christians are to serve even unjust authorities, who may see their example and come to faith (cf 3:1). (TLSB)

They should feel a fear or dread of doing anything which might be contrary to the will of their masters, rather show all care and diligence in performing the work of their calling. And this was to be the case not only when the masters were good, kind, gentle, lenient, but also when they were of a perverse, morose disposition, when they were hard to please, when they were tyrannical. (Kretzmann)

Not only to the good, well-meaning and gentle, kind but also to the corrupt masters, who demonstrate their depraved attitude in harsh, unjust treatment, Christian slaves should willingly surrender themselves. Misuse of power does not subvert seigniorial right. It is particularly difficult to understand this. (Stoekhardt)

**2:19** Righteous living in the face of injustice demonstrates reliance on God's grace. Christians who suffer for the sake of the Gospel find favor with God, and they witness to His power. (TLSB)

FOR IT IS COMMENDABLE – This literally means, “For this grace,” and can possibly have the same sense as in Luke 6:32-34, where it means the “approval of God.” Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

For this is grace, if on account of conscience toward God one patiently bears afflictions, suffering unjustly. There is no special distinction or praise in doing one's work cheerfully and conscientiously if the master or employer is uniformly kind and lenient. But that is grace, that is pleasing and acceptable to God, that is a mark of His favor in granting the ability, that is a fine, excellent work in which God delights, if a person in that station, that of a slave, a servant, bears the afflictions of injustice, abuse, with patient endurance, if

he takes upon himself even the unjust treatment administered by the temper of the master. (Kretzmann)

**UNJUST SUFFERING** – The Christian will put aside all provocation and not permit anger to get the better of him under such adverse circumstances, simply because he is conscious of the fact that it is the Lord who sends or permits such tribulations to come upon him, and because his conscience tells him that he owes it to God, his heavenly Father, to show patient endurance under such circumstances. (Kretzmann)

*conscious of God.* As submission to duly constituted authority is “for the Lord’s sake” (v. 13; cf. Eph 6:7–8), so one will submit to the point of suffering unjustly if it is God’s will. (CSB)

If his conscience can only have God’s approval, unmixed delight remains. A thing well-pleasing to God, a thing which brings God’s approval and good will. Not the suffering in itself but patiently bearing the undeserved suffering because he did not want to violate his Christian conscience an upright Christian slave bore all perversity, all unjust treatment. – Christianity spread rapidly among the huge slave population of the empire. Peter counseled them to see themselves as free in the Lord, but to respect the obligations that their position in society laid upon them. He did not want the Christian faith to be seen merely as a revolutionary political or economic movement – what mattered was people’s relationship with their Savior Jesus Christ, and in drawing other people into such a relationship. (PBC)

Christian slaves and Gentile masters the apostle has in mind here. The religion of the slaves, Christianity was despised by the Gentile master. He, as did Gentiles generally, regarded belief in Christianity a misdeed (v. 12). And for the sake of conscience to God, ever mindful of God, ever mindful of what he owes God as a Christian, because he did not want to violate his Christian conscience an upright Christian slave willingly bore all perversity, all unjust treatment, to which his Christianity introduced him. (Stoeckhardt)

**2:20 RECEIVE A BEATING** – kolaphidzomenoi means to be buffeted about. The term is used in Mark 14:65, where the evangelist tells of the treatment given to Christ in the trial before the Sanhedrin. Slaves are to accept the unjust abuse from their masters not only because it is a part of their saintly lives but because it is God pleasing. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – volume 9, Part 2)

The KJV has “buffeted.” It means to strike with the fist, to box the ears, and then generally to cuff someone. (Stoeckhardt)

**FOR DOING WRONG** – amartanontes “sinning”– Their newly found faith does not give them license to act as rebels in their relationship with their masters. Verse 16 says “live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – volume 9, Part 2)

The future tense “ye shall take it” is from the standpoint of the exhortation. Meaning: It is nothing to be proud of when you let fall the blows which you have brought upon yourselves by your own failures. (Stoeckhardt)

That a Christian servant will in just this way give evidence of his Christianity the apostle shows in a question which he now proposes: For what praise is it if you sin and then endure a beating patiently? But if you do right and then endure suffering, this is grace before God. There is no special credit in enduring beating, stripes, punishment, with a great show of patience if such punishment was soundly deserved on account of some willful defection, some wrong-doing. (Kretzmann)

FOR DOING GOOD – This could refer to their lifestyle both as their masters view it and others as well. In 4:4 it says “They (pagan) think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – volume 9, Part 2)

Bearing a cross for the sake of the Gospel may be difficult, but it is a holy, precious, noble, and blessed calling. Christians face such sufferings with God’s strength. (TLSB)

Christians today can live their Christianity by the respectful and cooperative way in which they do their jobs, especially when they have to work for a boss who is oppressive and unfair. Anybody can like a boss who is kind, complimentary, and fair all the time. It takes a Christian to work cheerfully for a mean one. (PBC)

It is different, however, if a servant does right, does his work faithfully in every respect, and then is obliged to suffer, receives beatings, even though he does what he knows to be right and good before God. To endure patiently in a case of this kind, that is pleasing and acceptable to God, that can be done only by a gracious dispensation of strength on His part, that is a fine, excellent work. Mark: Although these words are addressed primarily to Christian slaves, their admonitions may well be heeded by all employees and servants everywhere; for a Christian will be faithful in his work and ready to endure even injustice, knowing that the good pleasure of the Lord rests upon him. (Kretzmann)

The cause of his suffering and punishment is his Christianity. The exhortation, which is chiefly directed to Christian domestic slaves, can be applied to present day situations, to servants and maids, to people of our day who by their own choice become domestics. Applicable are these words: “Servants, maids, laborers, workmen, etc., are as much Christian as are those who have positions of high honor in the world. The prophet in Psalm 123:2 gives a good comparison, showing how they should perform: “As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the head of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God,; that is servants and maids should with fear and humility do what the master or mistress desires. This God wants; therefore, they should gladly do it. Consequently, they can be sure and certain that their work is pleasing and acceptable to God when they do it in faith and in obedience to God. The best works are those which one does in the line of duty according to God’s command. A servant or maid need not think: as I have such an

insignificant, wretched job and must always attend to my duties, I really cannot serve God – this was a common complaint in the Papacy. (Stoeckhardt)

We are not slaves, but we may have employers to whom we must answer for our work. (We may even call them “slave drivers” – just joking, of course!) But the same principles Peter refers to here apply to us as we work for other people. We are to take ill-treatment patiently and, in doing so commend ourselves to God. Certainly we set an example of honesty, dependability, cheerfulness, and industriousness – and in this way commend our faith in Jesus and our love for the Lord to unbelievers. (LifeLight)

**2:21** *To this you were called.* The patient endurance of injustice is part of God’s plan for the Christian. It was an important feature of the true grace of God experienced by the readers (5:12). (CSB)

God calls Christians to live out their faith in the midst of suffering. (TLSB)

The key idea is submission. Submission in biblical usage does not mean that you thereby become inferior or that what you submit to is thereby superior to you. To be a subject or a slave or a wife does not diminish your value before God. As Paul said in Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ.” Being willing to submit, according to your station in life, means that you love the Lord and love people enough to give up some of your freedom, willingly yielding to government, masters, husbands, or elders in the church. Our inspiration for willing submission comes from Jesus Christ, who became obedient unto death, even death on the cross. (PBC)

Already at their calling, at their conversion to Christ Christians were given to see not only eternal glory, but also the way of suffering as the way to glory. Thus it belongs to the calling of Christians to go this way, to suffer unjustly and patiently. (Stoeckhardt)

The key idea is submission. Submission in biblical usage does not mean that you thereby become inferior or that what you submit to is thereby superior to you. To be a subject or a slave or a wife does not diminish your value before God. (PBC)

The first reason for suffering wrong readily is the good pleasure of God, the second is that of the Christian’s calling, as it is typified in the example of Christ: For to this end you were called, because also Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow His footsteps. That is a part of the believer’s calling, that is the fate which was held out before him at the very time of his conversion, namely, that he will indeed be an heir of eternal glory, but that the way leading to this glorious bliss is also one of much tribulation, Acts 14:22. (Kretzmann)

*Christ suffered for you.* Cf. Isa 52:13–53:12. Christ is the supreme example of suffering evil for doing good. His experience as the suffering Servant-Savior transforms the sufferings of his followers from misery into privilege. (CSB)

Our sufferings pale in comparison to what Christ suffered for us. (TLSB)

Christ's willing self-submission is important not only as an example. It was the way in which he redeemed the human race. Peter refers three times to Isaiah chapter 53, the great story of the Suffering Servant of the Lord, whose humble self-sacrifice brought life and healing to all who believe in Him. He bore our sins in His body on the tree – and this not only to give us forgiveness but so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. This is the mystery of the process of sanctification – as we grow in faith and understanding, our lives become more Christ-like. Our own troubles and sufferings are transformed from misery into ministry. (PBC)

Christ has suffered for us, for our sakes, for our good, for our salvation. This contains the thought that He did not suffer on account of His sins, therefore, suffered unjustly. He has suffered for us, out of love for us. Thus it was a voluntary suffering. Yes, with such suffering, with innocent, patient, voluntary suffering Christ has made the beginning and thereby given us an example. (Stoeckhardt)

EXAMPLE...YOU SHOULD FOLLOW – They and we are called to patient suffering, also without guilt because Christ suffered innocently and it was to this purpose that they/we should imitate him. – We are called upon to “actually follow” (arost tense) the steps, literally the footprints, left in the soil by Jesus. To slave labors, this metaphor carried great power for understanding the suffering of Christ and for following Him through their own indignities. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

We first receive Christ as our Savior and deliverer. Only then is He an example for us to follow. (TLSB)

We are to bear the cross, if God wills, just as His Son did for us (Mt 10:38–39). (TLSB)

The Suffering Servant is now held up as the great example, whom they should follow in His steps. Were this to stand alone, Peter would be moralizing: “Try to be like Jesus.” “Jesus swam across the river of suffering that threatened to engulf Him; He show you how – now do it.” Reaching back to Isaiah 53 Peter presents the underlying motive for such endurance: three of the six references focus on Christ as our Substitute (Is. 53:4, 5, 8). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

He leaves a drawing – written pattern – for us to follow in the tracks – retrace the steps. (Lenski)

Incidentally, the disciple is not above his Master, and Christ Himself serves as a type, example, or pattern to the believers that we should follow His footsteps, be as much like Him as possible, grow more like Him every day. This example He set before us in His suffering during His whole life, and particularly at the time of His last great Passion. The meekness and humility, the patience and endurance which Christ showed at this time should always stand out strongly before the eyes of the Christians. (Kretzmann)

Matthew 16:24, “Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

**2:22** COMMITTED NO SIN – Jesus never sinned, not even in the face of completely undeserved suffering. (TLSB)

Scripture declares the sinlessness of Christ in the clearest of terms, allowing for no exception (see 1:19; Ac 3:14; 2Co 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1Jn 3:5). (CSB)

*no deceit.* Cf. v. 1; 3:10. (CSB)

The individual instances in which His example stands out with such marked emphasis are now named: Who did not commit sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth, who, being reviled, reviled not in return, suffering did not threaten, but left it to Him that judges righteously. Cf.. Is. 53:9. The suffering of the Messiah was in no way merited by His own transgressions of the divine Law; even upon His direct challenge the Jews were unable to convict Him of a single sin, John 8, 46. In both His actions and His words Christ was un-blamable. Even those sayings of Christ which were deliberately branded as lies by His enemies were without guile, altogether true. Not one of the accusations which the members of the Sanhedrin brought against the Lord was substantiated. (Kretzmann)

Isaiah 53:9b, “though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

**2:23** Prominent examples of our Lord’s silent submission are found in Mt 27:12–14, 34–44 and parallels. (CSB)

Though mocked by His lying accusers, Jesus never responded in kind. (TLSB)

This example of the Lord’s patience should gaze at steadily and emulate. That presumes that Christi slaves, upon the whole Christians, had been reviled, reproached, and badly treated by the Gentiles, just as was Christ, their Lord and Master. Therefore, for Christ’s sake since they had accepted Him, God’s Son, in whom alone is salvation, as then true Christians of all eras must to a greater or lesser degree bear the disgrace heaped upon Christ. (Stoeckhardt)

When Christ was scorned, cursed, covered with the vilest epithets, He did not return in kind in a single instance. What He had taught His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount He kept in every way. Even His apparently harsh rebukes were not personal vilifications, no expressions of hatred, but words of warning to show His opponent the foolishness of his self-hardening. In the midst of the most bitter sufferings, as when He was nailed to the cross, He did not threaten His jubilant persecutors, but, instead, pleaded with His heavenly Father to forgive them their sin. Far from seeking His own revenge, He placed the entire matter into the hands of His heavenly Father, the just Judge, that He might adjust the affair as He should think best. Surely we believers that

confess Christ, that bear His name, should be willing to bear His reproach with the same patience. (Kretzmann)

*entrusted himself.* Cf. 4:19. – The verbs in this verse indicate repeated and ongoing action. This means that he was under constant pressure. But, Jesus merely leaves everything in the Father’s hands. Jesus, to, remembers the Word which says: “Vengeance is mine. I will repay says the Lord.” (CSB)

He relied on His Father, who will justly punish the wicked and reward the righteous (cf 4:19; Mt 10:28). (TLSB)

Isaiah 53:7, He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.”

**2:24 bore our sins.** See Isa 53:12. Although dealing with the example set by Christ, Peter touches also on the redemptive work of Christ, which has significance far beyond that of setting an example. Peter here points to the substitutionary character of the atonement. Christ, like the sacrificial lamb of the OT, died for our sins, the innocent for the guilty. (CSB)

Death is the consequence of sin (Rm 6:23). Christ’s death was for our sin and not His own. (TLSB)

Christ, of whom it had been stated that He had no sin, stepped into our place and took upon Himself the burden of our sins, as our great Substitute. They were laid upon His body, His person: He was considered the greatest sinner of all times. (Kretzmann)

Assuming that most of the readers of 1 Peter were converts, the concept of substitution in OT sacrifices must have been unknown to them. The man bringing a creature to be sacrificed had to identify himself with his offering by laying a hand on its head (Lev. 1:4). In so doing, his guilt was transferred” to the lamb (or another creature he brought). Leviticus 16 spells out the prescribed procedure in regard to the scapegoat. While this had great meaning for the Israelites, Peter does not discuss the practice that foreshadowed the Messiah but rather immediately identifies him: Example and Substitute. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

Other NT descriptions of Christ our Substitute: Rom. 3:25 – “as a sacrifice of atonement” (for all); Rom. 5:6-8 – “for the ungodly,” “for us”; 2 Cor. 5:21 – “made him...to be sin for us”; Gal. 2:20 – “gave himself for me”; Gal. 3:13 – “becoming a curse for us”; Heb. 2:9 –“might taste death for everyone.” Our Lord was certainly conscious of His role as Substitute: “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life as a ransom for many” (Mt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45). “This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (Jn. 6:51). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

The full import of Christ taking our place could hardly be better expressed than in the words of Luther: “He sent His Son into the world, heaped all the sins of all men upon Him, and said to Him: ‘Be Peter the denier; Paul the persecutor, blasphemer, and assaulter; David the adulterer; the sinner who ate the apple in Paradise; the thief on the cross. In short, be the person of all men, the one who has committed the sins of all men, the one who has committed the sins of all men. And see to it that You pay and make satisfaction for them’” (LW, 26:280) (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

In this passage Christ is both the Priest and the Lamb. Peter called the cross a “tree, just as the pole on which evildoers were hanged is called a tree.”

Isaiah 53:8b, 12b, “For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken” ... “For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Galatians 3:13, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”

*tree.* A figurative reference to the cross (see note on Ac 5:30; see also Ac 10:39; 13:29; Gal 3:13). (CSB)

Thus He assumed also the guilt of our sins, He took upon Himself their punishment. He ascended the wooden altar of the cross, the accursed tree, loaded down with their terrible weight. And all this He did in order to give us the benefit of His suffering and death. (Kretzmann)

*that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.*† Cf. Ro 6:3–14. Peter stresses the bearing of the cross on our sanctification. As a result of Christ’s death on the cross, believers are dead to sin so that they may live new lives and present themselves to God as instruments of righteousness (see note on Ro 6:11–13). (CSB)

Because of Christ’s crucifixion, believers are dead to sin, so they may live new lives and present themselves to God as instruments of righteousness. (TLSB)

It is now possible for us, having gotten rid of our sins in the manner indicated, to spend our entire life in living in conformity with the holy will of God, in true righteousness. Without the vicarious suffering and death of Christ we should never have been able to reach this state, to obtain this ability; but faith in His redemption gives us the power. (Kretzmann)

*you have been healed.*† See Isa 53:5; not generally viewed as a reference to physical healing, but to spiritual healing. It is another way of asserting that Christ’s death brings salvation to those who trust in him. – We have been set free from sin. Redemption from sin, the guilt, punishment, and power of sin, the redemption which is

made known to sinners in the Gospel, has this effect that they now serve the righteousness. (CSB)

We find life and forgiveness because of Christ's suffering. Luther: "We crucified Him with our sins. We are still far from suffering what He suffered. Therefore if you are a pious Christian, you should tread in the footsteps of the Lord and have compassion on those who harm you. You should also pray for them and ask God not to punish them. For they do far more harm to their souls than they do to your body. If you take this to heart, you will surely forget about your own sorrow and suffer gladly. Here we should be mindful of the fact that formerly we, too, led the kind of unchristian life that they lead, but that we have now been converted through Christ" (AE 30:86). (TLSB)

He became wounded that we might be healed, since He became sick that we might be made whole. What an inspiring example, what a compelling motive, what a divine source of power! (Kretzmann)

Isaiah 53:5c, "and by his wounds we are healed."

**2:25** LIKE SHEEP GOING ASTRAY – Wandering from God's ways into sin. (TLSB)

That is true of all men by nature; they have turned away from the God of their life, of their salvation, following their own sinful bent, walking the way of sin and of destruction. It is due to the redemption of Christ and to the proclamation of this redemption in the Word of the Gospel that we have been turned, brought back, literally turned ourselves back, from the ways of sin and death to God and life, by the power transmitted to us in the Gospel-call. (Kretzmann)

Isaiah 53:6a, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way;"

**YOU HAVE RETURNED** – The Greek verb means "to become converted", "to turn oneself about", never "to be converted". Man is the subject of conversion. It is man who turns away his heart, mind, and thoughts, his will from sin, from the power of Satan and turns towards God and what is divine. (Acts 26:18) To be sure, God is the Author of conversion. It is God and God alone, who through the Gospel is responsible for this act of mind and will, for the conversion from sin and the return to God in the heart of man. We have been healed by Christ's wounds. (Stoekhardt)

Conversion and new birth are essentially identical concepts. The apostle had stated in 1:3, 23, that God according to His great mercy had begotten us again by means of His living Word. In 2:12 he had said that the Gentiles will glorify God on the day of His visitation. Nothing is more absurd than to infer synergistic conclusions from the active verb "to convert oneself", as though man himself had to contribute something towards his conversion. No, conversion is solely the work of God's power and grace. The sinner converts himself, and this change of mind God and God alone works in him. (Stoekhardt)

*Shepherd.* A concept raised here in connection with the allusion to the wandering sheep of Isa 53. The sheep had wandered from their shepherd, and to their Shepherd (Christ) they have now returned. See note on Ps 23:1; see also Jn 10:11, 14 and note on Heb 13:20. (CSB)

The chief Shepherd calls His sheep back into His fold through His Gospel. With His Word, He feeds and cares for those who were perishing. (TLSB)

These final words of this chapter comfort suffering Christians who might think their sufferings prove they have been abandoned. (PBC)

In accepting God as our Father, we, at the same time, have turned to Christ, to the Bishop and Shepherd of our souls, to Him who, as the one Good Shepherd, brought us home out of the desert of sin and is now daily leading us in the green pastures of His gracious Word. Truly, the sheep of Christ are provided for in a wonderful way, they live secure under the guiding staff of Him who laid down His life for them. (Kretzmann)

Peter's final words in chapter 2 comfort suffering Christians who might think that their sufferings prove they have been abandoned. When people come to faith, Christ accepts a solemn responsibility toward them. He commits Himself to be their Shepherd, that is, the one who takes responsibility to guide, protect, and feed His sheep. He is also our overseers, the one who watches over Israel, who never slumbers nor sleep, the one who will bring us from this sad world to a better one of His own making. (PBC)

*Overseer.* Christ (cf. 5:2, 4; Ac 20:28). Elders are to be both shepherds and overseers, i.e., they are to look out for the welfare of the flock. These are not two separate offices or functions; the second term is a further explanation of the first. (CSB)

On the one hand He is the loving, gentle, compassionate Guide, and on the other the Overseers, an authority figure. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

**2:13–25** Scripture never teaches that those who follow Jesus will be immune to suffering. Just as Jesus, our sinless Savior, faced unjust suffering and death, so we may be called to take up our own cross to follow Him. But if God gives us a cross to carry, He also promises to give us the strength to bear it by faith. Christ our Shepherd calls us by name, brings us into His fold through the Gospel, and cares for us in the midst of suffering. We are honored to follow Him. • Gracious God, we praise You for Your mercy through Your Son, who bore our sins in His body on the tree. Give us grace to reach out to our enemies with the power of Your Gospel, which works faith and saves eternally. Amen. (TLSB)

#### GOSPEL – John 10:1-10

**“I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. <sup>3</sup> The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them**

out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." <sup>6</sup> Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them. <sup>7</sup> Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. <sup>a</sup> He will come in and go out, and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

**10:1–30** Should be understood in light of the OT (and ancient Near Eastern) concept of "shepherd," symbolizing a royal caretaker of God's people. God himself was called the "Shepherd of Israel" (Ps 80:1; cf. Ps 23:1; Isa 40:10–11; Eze 34:11–16), and he had given great responsibility to the leaders ("shepherds") of Israel, which they failed to respect. God denounced these false shepherds (see Isa 56:9–12; Eze 34) and promised to provide the true Shepherd, the Messiah, to care for the sheep (Eze 34:23). (CSB)

**10:1-10** In ch 9 a blind man receives both physical and spiritual sight: "Lord, I believe." Proof that he heard the Good News and believed it is seen in his response: "He worshiped [Jesus]" (v 38). Instead of acknowledging this (double) miracle, the Pharisees, the Bible scholars and spiritual leaders of the day, show themselves to be the ones truly "blind" (cf. Mt 23:16). They epitomize the description of the false "shepherds of Israel" described by Ezekiel (ch 34) who "do not take care of the flock" (v 3). Ezekiel excoriates them because they "have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost"; they "have ruled them harshly and brutally" (v 4; also Jer 23:1–2; 50:6; Is 56:10–11. For the Pharisees' "shepherding" of the blind man, see Jn 9:28, 34!). But the Lord makes a promise: "I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them . . . and be their shepherd" (v 23). Given this OT background, Jesus' introduction of new language relating to sheep and shepherds is not surprising. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

Jesus' opening words, "Truly, truly," bind this text to ch 9 (the man born blind), where the Pharisees, self-proclaimed teachers of Israel, indignantly ask, "Are we also blind?" (9:40). Jesus responds, "Now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains" (9:41). Our text proves not only how truly Jesus had spoken, but also the power of his Gospel voice: The formerly blind man (and all whom the Spirit calls) hears and follows him to abundant life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

This text makes its students feel like participants, not spectators, in its drama as they struggle to follow Jesus' meaning. His sheep know the shepherd's voice, but his "figure of speech" (v 6) defies an over-confident approach to it. His imagery shifts, or allows for multiple applications. When are his words part of the image? When do they refer to the situation at hand? Which element of the figure depicts Christ? Is he the Door? Or is he the one who, by using the door, proves himself to be the Shepherd? He is both, leaving

room for application, concerning both the true Shepherd and the undershepherds of his flock. Neither emphasis, Christ as Shepherd (primarily in vv 1–5) or Christ as Door (primarily vv 7–10), completely excludes the other. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

The Lord has come so that those who are blind may see, and those who see may be blind. He had just opened the eyes of the man born blind. That man can see and now believes. Yet the Pharisees, who believe themselves to have perfect vision, are completely blind. Ironically, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains” (Jn 9:41). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

**10:1-2** *Amēn amēn legō humin*. Before all the door, sheep, and robber-talk, there is the attention-grabbing “Amen, amen, I say to you all” from Jesus. The objects of the *humin* are the Pharisees from 9:41, who think themselves to be able to see. Jesus is speaking the truth—double-amen truth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

*ho eiserchomenos* (“The Coming-in one”) and the prepositional phrase *dia tēs thuras* (“through the door”) are repeated for emphasis and provide contrast between the shepherd and the thief and robber. The thief and robber do not come through the door. They “climb over at another place” (*anabainōn allachotheren*). “The One coming” who comes through the door is the Shepherd of the sheep (*poimēn*). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

**10:1** YOU - This included the Pharisees (9:40) and others who were attending Jesus’ teaching. (TLSB)

I TELL YOU THE TRUTH – aman aman lego hmin – This double statement is found only in John (25 times). It is like a special heads-up. It says: “Pay attention to what I am about to say because it is very important.” Isaiah 55 opens with a similar call to attention as to what is about to be said. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

The familiar words “Verily, verily” (KJV) “Truly, truly” (RSV), “I tell you the truth” (NIV), *amēn amēn legō humin* (as in 5:19, 24, 25; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; 8:34, 51, 58; etc.) affirm that what follows is of the highest importance. They also link our text with the preceding chapter, with its contrast between the Pharisees who are blind (9:39–41) and the blind man who sees (9:36–38), and between the rulers of the Jews who persecuted the blind man (9:22, 24), and Jesus, who healed him. Thus chapters 9 and 10 are closely related. Jesus is speaking to a mixed group: some Pharisees (9:40); the Jews (10:19); as well as to his disciples (9:2) and the healed blind man (9:35). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

“Truly, truly, I say to you” (also v 7). A solemn formula (twenty-five times in John) marking what follows as important, and binding this text to ch 9, the man born blind. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

Our text is also closely linked with the following chapter. Jesus had said, “I tell you the truth [the familiar words], a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live” (5:25). In John 10, our theme is hearing the shepherd’s voice, which leads the sheep to life (v 10). In John 11, we see a vivid example of this very promise fulfilled as the voice of Jesus calls, “Lazarus, come out!” (v 43). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Jesus begins with his solemn *amēn amēn legō humin*, “I tell you the truth.” The double *amēn* is found only in John (25 times). It is like a pointer: “Pay attention. What I’m about to say is critical and important.” *tēn aulēn tōn probatōn*, “pen,” literally, “courtyard for sheep,” was a walled enclosure, open to the sky, often adjacent to a house, where sheep were kept at night. It was high enough to dissuade the sheep from jumping over and (most) intruders (or predators) from climbing in. Such would be *kleptēs*, “thieves,” and *lēstēs*, “robbers.” The former steal by means of deception (e.g., Judas; Jn 12:6; cf. Mt 24:43), the latter by violence and force (e.g., Barabbas; Jn 18:40; cf Lk 10:30). A single entrance (“gate”) controlled access. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

*sheep pen.* A court surrounded by walls but open to the sky, and with only one entrance. The walls kept the sheep from wandering and protected them from wild animals. (CSB)

Walled enclosure for keeping sheep safe at night. (TLSB)

Note from Numbers 32:16 says: “Rock walls formed a large pen, where sheep and shepherds were safe from nighttime predators. Caves were also used for this purpose.” (TLSB)

The word for “pen” is *aulan* and means a courtyard for sheep. This was a walled enclosure, open to the sky, often adjacent to a house, where sheep were kept at night. It was high enough to discourage the sheep from jumping out and keep most intruders and predators from climbing in. It had a single entrance. You might say it was a “gated community. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

Gate serves both as entrance way to the house and as a night enclosure for the family’s sheep. Admission both to the sheep area and to the house is by way of a door in the wall, watched over by someone so designated (*thurōros*, literally “doorkeeper,” v 3). The thief or robber, who climbs over the wall (*anabainōn*, v 1, literally “ascend, go up”) or seeks entrance through some opening other than the door, may be interested not only in stealing sheep but also in pillaging the contents of the house and even killing its occupants (v 10). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

**THIEF AND ROBBER** – *kleptas* and *lastas*. The first uses deception and the second uses sheer might. Each of their actions betrays them for what they are. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

*kleptēs* . . . *lēistēs*, “a thief . . . a robber.” The one takes by deception, the other by force; neither is up to any good. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

**10:2** THE MAN – Notice that the shepherd does not come from within the house; he comes from outside, but not as an intruder, since he is the owner of the sheep (v 3; cf. 1:3, “through him all things were made,” and 1:11, “he came to that which was his own,” *ta idia*, the same words as in 10:3). The shepherd’s rugged life is spent outdoors with the sheep, rather than in the luxury of the home. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

THE SHEPHERD - *poimēn*, the shepherd. It lacks the article, but as a definite predicate preceding its verb, the article is to be supplied. See Jn 1:1, *kai theos ēn ho logos*, “and the Word was [the, not a] God.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

**10:3-4** The emphasis is on the Shepherd. For “that one” (*toutoi*), the doorkeeper (*ho thurōros*), opens (*anoigei*) the door. The sheep hear (*akouei*) his voice. He calls out (*phonei*) for his own sheep, and he leads (*exagei*) them out. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

*ekballō* was used twice in ch 9 to describe what happened to the man born blind. He was cast out (*exebalon*) of the synagogue by the Pharisees. But here, the Pharisees are the thieves and robbers kicking God’s sheep out of his pen for their own selfish reasons. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

The sheep are *ta idia* (his own). The Lord is emphatic about this. There is no doubt that he’s going to bring them out, for he promises to do it! It’s not a conditional, *if* he will bring them out. It’s *when* or *whenever* (*hotan*) he drives them out (*ekbalēi*). He goes before them, and the sheep follow (*akolouthei*) They know (*oidasin*) his voice. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

**10:3** *The watchman*. Apparently in charge of a large fold, where several flocks were kept. (CSB)

This was a watchman who guarded the entrance to the sheep pen. (TLSB)

Thuroros mean porter, the gatekeeper. It means that the shepherd does not enter clandestinely, secretly or violently.

*his voice*. The sheep recognized the voice of their own shepherd and responded only to him. (CSB)

LHM – 6/10/16

It was around 1985 when a friend of mine was backpacking through the country of Jordan.

It was late afternoon or early evening, when he stopped and watched three shepherds who were watering their flocks at a common well. As the flocks had mixed together, my friend wondered how the shepherds would separate them.

Eventually, one of the shepherds stood up and called out, "Menah!" -- Arabic for "Follow me!"

Unbelievably, 30 sheep immediately walked out of the super-flock and began to follow their shepherd up the hill. The second shepherd shouted, "Menah!" and his flock followed after him. As for the other sheep, they acted as if nothing had happened.

When the third shepherd stood up, my friend asked, "Would your sheep follow me if I called them?" The man shook his head and invited my friend to try.

My friend called out, "Menah! Menah!" The sheep looked at him as if he had lost his mind. "Will they always follow you?" my friend asked.

The shepherd said, "Always. Except when a sheep is sick; then the creature follows any one."

Today, Jesus -- our Shepherd, our Savior -- is calling, "Menah!" -- "Come!"

In this verse the focus is on God's sheep; the others who "do not hear . . . do not belong to God" (8:47). The shepherd calls his own by name. Near Eastern shepherds often have a distinct call for each one of their sheep. "Early one morning I saw an extraordinary sight not far from Bethlehem. Two shepherds had evidently spent the night with their flocks in a cave. The sheep were all mixed together and the time had come for the shepherds to go in different directions. One of the shepherds stood some distance from the sheep and began to call. First one, then another, then four or five animals ran towards him; and so on until he had counted his whole flock" (H. V. Morton, *In the Steps of the Master* [London, 1935] quoted in L. Morris, *The Gospel According to John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971] p. 502 n. 17). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

"the sheep hear his voice." When called out to pasture in the early morning darkness, sheep know the shepherd through their ears, not their eyes. Jesus' sheep "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7), a faith that comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom 10:17). "His own" (also v 4) stresses the ownership of the shepherd. "By name" stresses the individual love the shepherd has for each of his sheep. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

*his own sheep.* The shepherd did not call sheep randomly, but only those that belonged to him. (CSB)

Here the subject (“sheep”) is neuter plural, while the verb is singular. This emphasizes the collective nature of the sheep. *akouei* is more than “hear”; it means “listen with attention and discernment” followed by action. The picture is of a shepherd coming to the sheep pen in the morning to take his own (*idia*) sheep (there could be more than one flock) out for pasture. Like God (Is 43:1), the shepherd has a personal concern for each sheep and calls them each *kat’ onoma*, “by name.” His voice is distinguishable from other voices, and the shepherd might have a “pet name” for each sheep. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

My father and our cows.

*idia*. There might be more than one group of sheep in the pen. These are the responsibility of this shepherd.

BY NAME – *onoma*. His voice is distinguishable from other voices and the shepherd might have a pet name for each sheep. It points to a mutual relationship of trust and stresses the willing obedience of the sheep. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

Isaiah 40:26, “Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.”

Isaiah 49:16, “See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me.”

LEADS THEM OUT – Sheep would usually recognize the voice of their shepherd and respond to his call. Shepherds in the Near East typically lead their flocks rather than drive them from behind; they draw the sheep by their word. (TLSB)

**10:4 BROUGHT OUT ALL** - “all.” No sheep is left behind. *ekbalēi*, “put out” or “cast out.” This sounds surprisingly forceful. Do the sheep balk at following? This works against other images within the text but shows the shepherd’s commitment to do what’s needed. It is also strangely reminiscent of 9:34, where the blind man was “cast out” by false shepherds, as though their “casting out” is at the same time the “bringing out” of the Good Shepherd. *oidasin*, “they know.” Contrast with the Pharisees who *ouk egnōsan*, “did not understand.” They do not know the shepherd’s voice and do not follow (v 6). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

*all his own*. As sheep follow their shepherd, so those drawn to Jesus by the Father follow Him (cf 6:44). (TLSB)

*he goes on ahead*. The Palestinian shepherd led his sheep (he did not drive them), and the sheep followed because they knew his voice. (CSB)

He leads and not drives. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

Eastern shepherds, unlike their western counterparts, lead rather than drive their sheep. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

The word *ekballō*, "brought out," serves as a synonym of *exagō*, "leads . . . out," in v 3. Any suggestion of rejection or violence that the word in v 4 might otherwise have is excluded by the context, in notable contrast to 9:34, where the same word describes what the Pharisees did to one of the "sheep": "They threw him out." At the same time this word choice does draw our attention to the helplessness of the sheep and their dependence upon the action of the shepherd (cf. 12:32 and Luther's explanation of the Third Article: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength. "). Hearing and following go together, both of them in response to hearing and knowing the shepherd's voice—the Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Exodus 13:21-22, <sup>21</sup> By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. <sup>22</sup> Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people."

**10:5-6** The stranger (*allogriōi*) is not one of his own. The verbs that the sheep do for the shepherd, they will not do for the stranger. They will not follow (*akolouthēsousin*) him. Instead, they flee because they do not know (*oidasin*) the voice of the stranger. It should be no surprise that the Pharisees didn't understand this proverb (*paroimian*); they aren't his sheep! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

John is emphatic. Jesus spoke. They didn't understand it. So he speaks again. The Lord repeats the *Amēn amēn legō humin* a second time and doubles down with *egō eimi hē thura tōn probatōn*. You don't get more emphatic in Greek than *egō eimi!* (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

This is the twelfth *egō eimi* in John's Gospel at this point. The Lord will use this expression twice just in our reading for Good Shepherd Sunday. The simple translation to English is "I am." But it would be very difficult not to believe that the Lord was making reference to the "I AM" of Exodus 3. The "I AM" is none other than the Lord God Himself! The Lord truly is my shepherd (Psalm 23). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Whether this *egō eimi* is simple emphasis or a Yahweh reference can't be fully addressed here. It is enough simply to take note that the Lord lays down all his cards with a super-emphatic "I am" *hē thura tōn probatōn* (the door of the sheep). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

**10:5** WILL RUN AWAY – This is a very strong contrast to willingly follow.

WILL NEVER FOLLOW A STRANGER – The setting is away from the pen and out in the open. This would be a great place for thieves and robbers to make their move. –

The sheep will not follow strangers; instead they will flee from them because they do not know their voice. This contrasts with us today who in the flesh, always need the Lord's warning to beware of false prophets (Mt 7:15). But it is also a picture of how by grace the Holy Spirit keeps Christ's people with Him in the one true faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 2)

True sheep definitely (double negative) do not “follow” a stranger's voice. Cf 18:37. “Recognize” is the same verb as “know” in v 4. The setting is away from the sheep pen where a “stranger” (“thief”) tries to entice the sheep away. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

*ou mē*, “in no way.” A double negative strongly denying the possibility. *ou mē akolouthēsousin, alla pheuxontai*, “They will not follow, but they will flee.” These future tenses are also volitive: What the sheep are (not) *going* to do is also what they are (not) *willing* to do. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

**10:6** USED FIGURE OF SPEECH – *paroimia*, “figure of speech,” like OT concept of *mashal*, is a broader term than the more familiar Synoptic word *parabolē*, “parable.” Unlike many of the Synoptic parables of Jesus, this does not include an extended story. The Pharisees do not “understand,” proving themselves (again) to be “blind” (9:40–41). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

*paroimian*, a “dark saying,” whose meaning is hidden without the key, but which, for that reason, continues to haunt. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

Vv 1–5 are referred to in v 6 as a *paroimia*, i.e., a “figure of speech” (NIV), a “figure” (RSV), or a “parable” (KJV, TEV). Its literary form is similar to Jesus' parables. There is one central message—the sheep follow the shepherd's voice—but there are also related sub-points: other leaders are robbers, whose voices the sheep do not follow; the shepherd alone leads the sheep to good pasture and life; the doorkeeper opens for the shepherd alone. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

As he did in the parable of the vineyard and the tenants (Mt 21:33–46), Jesus uses a set of images so familiar to his hearers that it seems incredible that they missed its application to them (v 6). Here is the picture of sheep and shepherds. In the OT, Israel was often portrayed as God's flock (Pss 23; 74:1; 78:52, 71; 79:13; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3; Is 40:11; Jer 23:1–4; Ezekiel 34). Though they sometimes had false shepherds that abused and tyrannized them (Jer 10:21; 12:10; Ezek 34:1–10; Zech 11:3–9, 15–17), they would be saved by the Lord through David's Righteous Branch, the new David who would shepherd them (Jer 23:1–8; Ezek 34:23). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The subject, then, is one found throughout Scripture. It contains a word of Law: God's voice alone is to be heard and followed by his flock, with woe to shepherds who would mistreat or lead in other directions, and to sheep who would follow other voices. It also contains the Good [News](#): God's voice leads his sheep to life and salvation, and blessed

are those under-shepherds who guide so that there is no distinction between their voice and that of the Good Shepherd. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The setting is a dwelling or house with a wall-enclosed courtyard (*aulē*, “sheep pen,” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The Greek is “paromimia” which means “veiled saying” (in NT only here and 16:25, 29; 2 Pt. 2:22). A concrete image used to convey a spiritual truth. As with parables, the meaning is not always obvious to outsiders (cf. Mt. 13:13-16). (TLSB)

**10:7** JESUS SAID AGAIN – Jesus saw that the Jews failed to understand, so He started again with a slightly different twist and a more direct application. (PBC)

*palin*, “again.” These sheep still have not heard his voice, but he will try again. This both calls to repentance and illustrates the truth of Jesus’ judgment (9:39), that “those who see may become blind.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

*amēn amēn* (see v 1). Jesus builds and expands upon his imagery, which involves some overlap (the “shepherd” of the sheep is also the “gate/door” for the sheep). *Egō eimi hē thura* is one of seven “I AM” statements found in John. Most commentators see a connection to the name of Yahweh, as he revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush (Ex 3:14). There is stress on the “I AM” (and no other). Some commentators mention the intriguing example of shepherds who themselves lie in the entrance to the sheep pen, keeping sheep in and intruders out. In essence they become the gate/door. Enticing as it is homiletically, it may not harmonize with the picture given in v 3. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

*I am.* See note on 6:35. – This is first of seven “I Am” statements found in John. Many would say that there is a close connection to the way God identified himself to Moses in the burning bush (Ex 3:14). (CSB)

I AM THE GATE – Jesus was the way to reach the sheep and the way for the sheep to come for nourishment. (PBC)

While vv 1–6 set forth the parable, in vv 7–18 Jesus explains it and applies it to himself. Aware of the incomprehension of his hearers, Jesus expands on the image to help them know who he is and what he has come for. He is the door, the only way to the Father (cf. 14:6; perhaps the doorkeeper in v 3 of our text represents the Father). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

*egō eimi* (also in v 9), the emphatic “I am” with divine overtones. “The door,” one of seven “I am” images of Jesus in John (see 6:35; 8:12; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

Jesus compared Himself to the gate that controlled access to the safety of the sheep pen. He alone provides access to eternal life. (TLSB)

**10:8** *All ... before me.* “False shepherds” like the Pharisees and the chief priests, not the true OT prophets (see note on vv. 1–30). (CSB)

Religious leaders of Jesus’ day, much like leadership in the past, cared far more for their own profit and welfare than for God’s sheep (cf Ezk 34). (TLSB)

“All who ever came before me” includes the Pharisees, Sadducees, temple authorities, and any unfaithful shepherds/leaders up to that *very moment* (the verb *eisin* is actually *present*, not past). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

This verse has caused some perplexity because of Jesus’ sweeping indictment against “all who came before me,” but it need not do so. Jesus speaks here of all those who from the beginning have followed the devil in seeking to be what only God and his Christ are: the Shepherd and the Door of the sheep. They are robbers and thieves. Certainly this does not include the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets, who in faith testified and still testify of him through the Scriptures (5:39). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

*pantes hosoi ēlthon*, “all who came” (“before me” is omitted in some early manuscripts). This is strangely inclusive. If understood in terms of history, “all” cannot include faithful prophets. If part of the imagery, “all” need not be identified; enough to know they are false and dangerous. This second understanding agrees with *eisin* (present tense): “all who came . . . are [not were].” But this makes Jesus the Shepherd in an image where he is already the Door. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

*BDAG* translates *pantes hosoi* as “all who.” The Lord is the Door. *pantes hosoi* came through other means were thieves and robbers. So the thieves and robbers go over the gate and not through the Door, which is Christ. The Pharisees, the bad shepherds of God’s people, are thieves and robbers. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

*NA28* includes the *pro emou* (before me) but there is substantial evidence for the shorter reading. It was included because there seemed to be significant copyist attempts to soften the “all who came were thieves and robbers.” This is seen in the moving of the *pro emou* before and after the *ēlthon*, and the deletion of the *pantes* in some manuscripts. We should simply stay away from making too much of this homiletically, focusing on the Shepherd saving the sheep. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Many “strangers” came prior to Jesus, trying to reach His sheep. False prophets and false christs, thieves and robbers came. They did not come by way of Jesus. They did not find Christ Jesus in the Scriptures and point Him out to others as they way of salvation. Therefore, they did not reach God’s sheep would not listen to the thieves and robbers. (PBC)

**10:9** *the gate*. The one way into salvation. Inside there is safety, and one is able to go out and find pasture, i.e., the supply of all needs. – There are great blessing to those who believe in Jesus as their Savior. They are protected from danger, they have a freedom only God’s children could have and they have support for all aspects of their lives. (CSB)

*di emou* is emphasized by its position in the sentence. It is not clear whether the “whoever” refers to sheep or to (under)shepherds. “Whoever” is masculine, while “sheep” would be neuter. Sheep “come in and go out” to pasture, but the same expression is used of shepherds (cf. Num 27:17) or people in general (Acts 1:21). If it is (under)shepherds, like “pastors,” in mind, the sense would be “Those who are true shepherds must themselves first come through the one and only Door” (cf. 1 Tim 4:16). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

Anyone who comes through the gate, that is, who believes in Jesus, will be saved. He or she will come and go and be nourished. (PBC)

Cf. Pss 23; 121:7–8; Lk 13:24; Mt 7:13–14. Paradoxically, it is those who enter by the narrow Door who find “plenty of room,” and whose lives are not cramped by the confines of sin. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

*eiselthēi* (“comes in”) and *heurēsei* (“will find”) may be active verbs; however, those entering the sheep pen don’t do those verbs by their own reason or strength but only *di’ emou* (“through me”). Those entering by means of the Door (Christ) will be saved (*sōthēsetai*—future, passive). They will come out and come in and find pasture, all through “the Door” to the sheep pen. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

**10:10** *thief*. His interest is in himself. Christ’s interest is in his sheep, whom he enables to have life to the full (see note on 1:4). (CSB)

COMES TO STEAL AND KILL – *thon* – To sacrifice for the purpose of food.

Thieves and robbers come only to steal, to take life, to destroy. But the Shepherd of the sheep came to lay down his life for the sheep (v 11); to give his life as a ransom for them (Mk 10:45); to give them full, abundant, and eternal life (Jn 20:31). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

*thuō* means “sacrifice,” as well as “kill” (for food). Perhaps Jesus uses the less expected word because he is taking a swipe at the priestly authorities. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

The thieves and robbers come to steal, kill, and destroy. The effect of false teaching is disastrous. The path of the Pharisees falls off the rocky cliff. But Jesus came so that the sheep might have life and have it to the full. (PBC)

The thief comes for himself. The double negative is used for emphasis: “The thief comes not (*ouk*) except (*ei mē*) so that to steal, slaughter, and destroy.” The only reason the thief comes is to steal the sheep, butcher them, and destroy them. He comes in the present tense. The Shepherd has come (*ēlthon*, aorist) with double *echōsin*. He comes so that they, his sheep who hear his voice, might have life and have that life *perisson* (TDNT: “over abundantly”). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

I HAVE COME - *ouk erchetai ei mē*, “he does not come except to.” A strong negation. He comes for no other purpose. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

*egō ēlthon*, “I came” (aorist)—into history, and from heaven—an accomplished reality. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL – This is the best kind of life: life lived in security and freedom, life with a purpose and goal, life with a capital “L.” – Life is an important word in John (used 36 times; but only 14 times in the Synoptics). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

Everlasting life through faith in Jesus Christ (cf. 20:31), not through material goods or worldly success. (TLSB)

Someone has said that Jesus gives us life without the big “if” in the middle. With Jesus life takes on meaning and has an eternal future. He gives life that delivers joy, rest content and blossoms in glory. We believe, and we receive that life from Jesus. (PBC)

*sōthēsetai*, “will be saved.” Again, how one translates affects (and is affected by) how one understands the elements of this figure. Salvation is a prominent theme in John, but Lenski translates “shall be safe,” that is, by using the door, the undershepherd proves himself true, and so has no worry (as would a thief) of being caught or punished (R. C. H. Lenski, *St. John’s Gospel* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961], 716). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)