

Second Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING – Acts 5:29-42

²⁹ Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than men! ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead—whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. ³² We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.” ³³ When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. ³⁴ But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. ³⁵ Then he addressed them: “Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. ³⁶ Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. ³⁷ After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. ³⁸ Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. ³⁹ But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.” ⁴⁰ His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. ⁴² Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

5:29-42 Lutherans seem to read the Book of Acts primarily for the opening stories (Ascension and Pentecost) and for background to the travels of Paul. That means few may have explored the meaning of Acts 3–8 and 10–12. If so, the preacher will have the opportunity to introduce hearers to the wonder and power and drama of these sections of the ongoing story of Jesus’ words and deeds. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

For background, the discussion of these early chapters in Acts by Robert C. Tannehill may be extremely helpful (*The Narrative Unity of Luke–Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Acts of the Apostles* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990], 59–79). Tannehill draws our attention to three patterns that give structure to chs 3–7. The first and most obvious is the repetitious but escalating pattern of conflict between those preaching in the name of Jesus and the Jerusalem authorities. Second, however, we see the apostles themselves experiencing many of the same things that happened to Jesus (and note that the setting and many of the characters have not changed from those of the Passion narrative). Third, in the experiences of the apostles, we see coming true many of Jesus’ prophecies concerning the future situation of his followers. Now Jerusalem is laying hands on the apostles and delivering them to prison and bringing them before rulers (Lk 21:12). The life of the Church is clearly patterned after

the life of her Lord. His victory is also our victory. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

It is unfortunate that the reading could not include the entire episode, beginning with 5:17. The interactions between the apostles and the leaders of Jerusalem is very engaging. More important, however, this first part of the episode provides the necessary context in which to read Gamaliel's words of counsel: it has already been demonstrated that these men are beyond the reach of the Council's authority (5:18–19). What looks like a "wait and see" proposal in vv 38–39 is already laughably obsolete from the point of view of the reader who has been following the story carefully. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

5:29 GOD RATHER THAN MAN - "We must obey God rather than men": Given the clear command of the Lord in v 20, Peter and the apostles may be guilty in the eyes of the authorities, but their faithfulness as witnesses had them guiltless before God. Like them, we are called to witness to Jesus' teaching, no matter the cost or consequences. We may be told by associates, employers, or teachers not to speak for our faith or represent our faith in what we wear, perhaps a cross on a lapel or on a necklace. By law we may not be allowed to confess publicly or witness to Jesus. We may not be given time off from work or school for worship but be required to take vacation or personal time. Good Friday afternoon was once time off so employees could attend services. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

"We must obey God rather than men." It is worth noting that Peter does not make this as a statement in the first person plural ("we must"); rather, he uses an impersonal verb (*dei*, "it is necessary") and so states this as a universal principle (i.e., applicable to his "judges" as well). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

The commentaries draw attention to the remarkable similarity in wording and situation between Peter's response here and the response of Socrates in his trial as recorded in Plato's *Apology*. In the *Apology*, the situation, though hypothetical, corresponds very closely to the real situation of the apostles in Acts 4:18–21. Socrates lets his judges know how he would respond if they should release him on the condition that he stop teaching his allegedly corrupting philosophy. His response would be "Men, Athenians, I embrace and kiss you [i.e., greet you with warm affection], but I shall obey God rather than you [*peisomai de mallon tō hē humin*]." This is not the place for source criticism. What makes the situation seem universal is that in both cases, the prosecution is arguing, "Obey God by obeying man [us]," whereas the defendant is arguing, "Obey God rather than obey man [you]." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

The verb that Peter uses for "obey," *peitharcheō*, brings together via its components the ideas of persuasion, conviction, trust, and obedience on the one hand with the idea of authority on the other. There is also an interesting play on words between "high priest," *ho archiereus*; "obey," *peitharcheō*; and "leader," *ho archēgos*. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

“It is necessary for Christian to be obedient to their rulers and laws. The only exception is when they are commanded to sin” (AC XVI 6-7). Hus: “As we are commanded to obey our superiors in things lawful and honorable. With the circumstances taken into consideration, we are commanded to resist them to the face when they walk contrary to the divine counsels or commandments” (The Church, p. 222). Luther: “One of these two things has to happen: either the Word will abide and conquer them; or at least be unable to suppress it, even if they refuse to accept all its grace and goodness and salvation” (AE 21:121). (TLSB)

5:30-31 “Forgiveness of sins to Israel” shows the steady focus on the offer of salvation made to Israel throughout the Jerusalem section of Acts (1:6; 2:36; 4:10, 27; 5:21). Forgiveness of sins is preached only in connection to repentance as seen in Acts 2:38. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

5:30 *tree*. Used to describe the cross (1Pe 2:24; see Dt 21:22–23). Like its Hebrew counterpart, the Greek for this word could refer to a tree, a pole, a wooden beam or some similar object. (CSB)

Judean expression for crucifixion. Cf Dt 21:22–23. (TLSB)

Two allusions to the writings of Moses may be found in this brief summary statement by Peter. The more obvious is the reference to “hanging him on a tree,” an allusion to Deut 21:22–23. Luke provides no record here of Peter developing the theological significance of the connection with Deuteronomy the way Paul does in Galatians 3, but the brief allusion at this point may be even more forcefully condemning than a lengthy exposition. A second allusion is the suggestion of a wordplay based on Deut 18:15–22. The pun becomes possible when God not only “raises up” a prophet by sending him to Israel but also “raises” him from the dead. The sentence structure of this verse corresponds nicely with seeing a double referent for God’s act of “raising up.” By mentioning the “raising up” first, it could possibly refer to either act of raising up or, better still, to both: God provided you with his prophet par excellence and, even after you cursed and killed him, God still raised him up for you again. And he continues to invite you to repent and to call you to obey. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

5:31 PRINCE AND SAVIOR - The early speeches in the Book of Acts are fascinating for the titles they use for Jesus. This is the first time the word *savior* has appeared in Acts, but the more intriguing title here is probably the less familiar one. Peter was apparently the first to use *ho archēgos* as a Christological title. The word appears several times in the Septuagint, translating a variety of Hebrew words. It also, however, has a very rich history of usage in secular Greek literature. One study that raises the question of how best to represent the word and its meaning in English concludes that “pioneer-founder-victor-leader-ruler-hero” is “too cumbersome” for most passages. The author suggests “pioneer prince” or “founding king” as acceptable compromises (J. Julius Scott Jr., “*Archēgos* in the Salvation History of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, vol. 29, no. 1 [March 1986], 47–54). Perhaps the most

important aspect of the word's meaning here is that Jesus is the one to whom obedience is due. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

FORGIVENESS OF THE SINS OF ISRAEL – This shows that God wants them to repent and then forgive them.

5:32 *so is the Holy Spirit ... given to those who obey him.* † See Jn 15:26–27. The disciples' testimony was directed and confirmed by the Holy Spirit, who convicts the world through the word (Jn 16:8–11) and is given to those who respond to God with "the obedience that comes from faith," a gift from God (Ro 1:5; see note on 6:7). (CSB)

"We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit" combines the life of the church with Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit given in Baptism (Acts 1:5, 8). The teaching of the crucified Christ, repentance, forgiveness, and life in his name will fill the world. Nothing can stop it. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

Even as brief as this response of Peter and the others is, it concludes with a very nice *inclusio*. Peter had begun with the principle that obedience is due God rather than man; he ends with the declaration that God gives his Holy Spirit to those who obey Jesus (whom God has raised and exalted to be prince and savior) and that this Spirit also witnesses to Jesus as the exalted one. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

5:33 The reaction of the council gives evidence of the escalating hostility. The annoyance of 4:2 turned to astonishment in 4:13 but had become jealousy by 5:17. Now it is murderous rage. The verb used to describe their rage is *dieprionto*. It will be used again to describe the reaction of the council to the speech of Stephen in 7:54. It describes the feeling you might have were someone to begin cutting you into two pieces with a saw—without, of course, the benefit of anesthesia. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

5:34 *a Pharisee named Gamaliel.* The most famous Jewish teacher of his time and traditionally listed among the "heads of the schools." Possibly he was the grandson of Hillel. Like Hillel (see note on Mt 19:3), he was moderate in his views, a characteristic that is apparent in his cautious recommendation on this occasion. Saul (Paul) was one of his students (22:3). (CSB)

The Pharisees were the opponents of the Sadducees on various points of doctrine, including the resurrection, which the latter denied. They greatly outnumbered the Sadducees and were more respected by the people. Therefore they were influential in the Sanhedrin, even when it was controlled by the Sadducees. Gamaliel was regarded as moderate and tolerant in his religious views, and that became evident in the advice which he gave to the Sanhedrin. His most famous pupil was Saul of Tarsus. The fact that Gamaliel recalled the cases of revolutionaries who had failed, suggests that what the Sanhedrin feared most was political upheaval. The Sadducees, especially, did not want that, because they were quite comfortable with things as they were. (PBC)

There is a hesitant consensus that our Gamaliel was the elder of two men with this name who both lived during the first century. (The other, later person named Gamaliel [II] is assumed to be the elder Gamaliel's grandson.) References to Gamaliel as the grandson of Hillel are sometimes taken as literal (biological) and sometimes taken as figurative (acknowledging influence and similarity of thought). Rabbinic sources give a composite picture of a highly respected leader who kept in close contact with Jews in the land of Israel as well as in the Diaspora. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

The form of verse 39 in Greek suggests that he was willing to grant, for the sake of argument, that the Christian movement really was from God. That does not mean he had become a believer. More likely, he was trying to irritate the Sadducees. (PBC)

5:35-37 Gamaliel's address to the council reveals the authority he had among the group (v 34). The identities and respective dating of the two rebels mentioned, Theudas and Judas, may be explored in Ben Witherington's commentary on Acts, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 235–39. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

5:36 *Theudas*. We know of him from no other historical source. (CSB)

Josephus mentions such a rebel active in AD 45-46 (Ant. 20:97-98). Luke likely refers to an earlier incident (see also Ant. 17:271-272). (TLSB)

5:37 *Judas the Galilean*. The Jewish historian Josephus refers to him as a man from Gamala in Gaulanitis who refused to give tribute to Caesar. His revolt was crushed, but a movement, started in his time, may have lived on in the party of the Zealots (see 1:13 and note on Mt 10:4). (CSB)

days of the census. Not the first census of Quirinius, noted by Luke in his Gospel (2:2), but the one in A.D. 6. (CSB)

Josephus dates this census to c AD 6, when Quirinius became imperial legate of Syria. Papyrus census forms show that such censuses were taken every 14 years. (TLSB)

5:38-39 Distancing Jesus and his followers from these two revolutionary groups, Gamaliel urges caution with respect to the followers of Jesus. If this present threat is a merely human undertaking, it will bring about its own undoing, as was the case with the two precedents. "But," in a slightly wooden translation, "if it is of God, you will not be able to destroy them, that you not be found to be even 'God-fighters.'" Put so starkly, the hearer must be thinking, I certainly want to avoid that situation. What must I do to prevent it? The answers: Take care! Go slow! Watch! Listen! Let them be! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

There is a certain irony in Gamaliel's use of *theomachoi*. How different really is the image of fighting against God found here from the image of wrestling with God or contending with him in Genesis 32? To put the question another way, how wide is the line between being "Israel" and being a "God-fighter"? Gamaliel's words suggest that sometimes, at least, the line can be pretty fine after all. Recall that Gamaliel addresses the group as "Israelites," not simply "Judeans" (v 35). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

Paul/Saul is not mentioned at all in Acts 5, but he is connected to this episode by means of his relationship to Gamaliel (cf. Acts 22:3). He is also the most likely source available to Luke for an account of Gamaliel's address, since Peter and the other apostles had been "put outside" (v 34). Paul will form a living example of the way striving with/for God can easily become fighting against God when a person takes it upon himself to decide what God wants and what God can or cannot do. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

Fitzmyer makes a crucial connection between our passage and Deuteronomy 18 that should be of great help to the preacher—especially in developing the outline presented below. In the verses of Deuteronomy that immediately follow the Lord's promise to raise up for the people a prophet like Moses, the Lord also provides them with a way to distinguish true from false prophets: "If the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him" (Deut 18:22b–23). Gamaliel does not explicitly cite this passage, but his words seem to be an application of it to the situation facing Jerusalem at that moment. If what these men are claiming proves to be true, then the council and all Jerusalem must listen to them, for the Lord had said, "I myself will require it of [them]" (Deut 18:19). If their words prove false, the Lord had also promised to deal with that situation; there was no need for the people to fear. (See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Anchor Bible [New York: Doubleday, 1998], 341.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

Gamaliel's proposal, fulfilled by the growth and endurance of Christianity, shows the power of God that protects Christian faith. A mixture of shrewd pragmatism and pious caution, it poses a thoughtful suggestion to present-day Judaism.. (TLSB)

5:39-40 "So they took his advice." That is to say, they took his advice insofar as they decided not to kill them at that moment (cf. v 33). The punishment the apostles received was not light punishment, no mere slapping of the wrists. The prohibition that follows is one that has already proven to be completely ineffective, and v 42 shows that it will be again. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

5:40 *flogged*. Beaten with the Jewish penalty of "forty lashes minus one" (2Co 11:24). (CSB)

Likely "forty lashes less one," inflicted five times on Paul (2Co 11:24). (TLSB)

Flogging or scourging was a severe punishment ordered by the Mosaic law for prescribed crimes and was limited by the same law to no more than 40 lashes. At this time this punishment also was used for the breaking of ceremonial laws, heresy, and disobedience to the Sanhedrin. The apostles were ordered to bare their backs. Using rods stored for this purpose, hired hands beat each back 39 times. Not only was this extremely painful, it was also no small disgrace. (LL)

5:41 REJOICING – They regarded these disgraceful welts as badges of honor, glorying in the fact that they had been “counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name”

The apostles were “rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor.” Only months before they had been ashamed to suffer anything for the name of Jesus. Their suffering for his name now shows how completely their relationship to him had been restored. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

5:17–42 God’s patience (Rm 2:4) is running out. Those at the head of Israel are dangerously close to judgment. Under fire, the Church holds firm, confesses the truth, and accepts the suffering that follows. Today, pray for bold witness and the blessing of peaceful service. When trouble threatens, have confidence that the crucified and risen Savior will keep us steadfast in His grace. • Lord, protect and deliver Your holy people who are still persecuted countless times each day. Amen. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – 1 Peter 1:3-9

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1:3 PRAISE BE – The apostle knew that the Christians to whom he was writing needed encouragement. But there is no better way of cheering up faint-hearted Christians than by singing the praises of Him to whose goodness and mercy we owe such an overwhelming debt of mercy: Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He who, according to His great mercy, has born us anew unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (Kretzmann)

God is praised for saving us. (TLSB)

Greek – Eulogetos, meaning “well-spoken of.” – This is a verbal adjective, not found in classical Greek, but found in LXX for “praised” or “blessed” of God or His Name. See also Mark 14:61; Luke 1:68; Romans 1:25; 9:5; 2 Corinthians 1:3; 11:31; Ephesians 1:3. Rienecker says: “The participle anagennasas (having regenerated) gives the reason why God is blessed.” Bengel: “‘Blessed’ the sentiment is, God has regenerated us.” Stoeckhardt” “What is the beneficent act of God, which forms the basis and content of the doxology? In a word it is conversion.” (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

When the Christians of the five provinces began to suffer for their faith, some began to doubt whether God still loved them or noticed their trouble or could do anything about it. Peter’s response is to burst into a great doxology of praise. In the original this is really one long sentence – a river of glory given to God for His greatness and great gifts to underserving people. There is perhaps no paragraph in all of Scripture that can give more comfort to a suffering or dying Christian. (PBC)

God stands in a very special, unique relationship to Jesus Christ: God is His Father, and Christ, therefore, is God’s Son. Son – in the real sense of the word, Son born of the Father’s essence, Himself true God. (Stoeckhardt)

This Jesus Christ Christians call “our Lord”. Thus through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, God is also our God and Father. And for this beneficent act of God, which is here being praised, we have to thank the Lord Christ, who earned and obtained it for us. (Stoeckhardt)

What is this beneficent act of God, this act which forms the basis and content of the doxology? In a word it is conversion. (Stoeckhardt)

No wonder Peter continues with a stirring exclamation of praise! Peter’s words praising God remind us of David’s songs of “Praise the Lord...” (for example, Psalm 103, 150). We have so much for which to praise and thank Him! For we are who we are because God is who He is. The order of that sentence is extremely important. (LifeLight)

GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST – Note that Theos (God) and pater (Father) have only one article. He is the God of Jesus Christ according to His human nature (Eph.1:17) and Father of Jesus Christ according to His divine nature. O (the) stands in apposition to Theos. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

GREAT MERCY – The apostle gives all blessing, all praise, to God alone, since He is the Author and Finisher of our salvation, reserving none whatever for himself, for his own merits and works. We Christians have reasons for praising God with such full abandon of our hearts and minds, because He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord Jesus is our Savior, our Brother, and therefore God, being His God, is now also our God, being His Father, also our Father. (Kretzmann)

The kata tou (according to) denotes the motivating cause. The dia (through) phrase denotes the immediate cause which carried out God's motivating cause. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

The greatness of God's mercy appears when we see what we were at one time by virtue of our natural birth and what we now are by virtue of our spiritual rebirth. (Luther) – (Paul and new leaf)

The Greek word for "mercy" recalls the pitiful condition from which God raised us. Our resurrection from sin and death has come about only through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. (LifeLight)

NEW BIRTH – This the apostle explains by saying that God has born us anew, that He has made us His spiritual children, and again, not by reason of any merit or worthiness in us, but simply according to His great, His abundant mercy, according to the riches of His love in Jesus Christ. (Kretzmann)

On anagennasas Stoeckhardt says: "God has begotten us again. In 1:23 Peter says we are 'born again.' In John 3:3 'Except a man be born again.' In Titus 3:5 'By the washing of regeneration.' In James 1:18 'Of his own will begat He us.' It is the same event which Paul describes as a quickening from the dead, Ephesians 2:5-6; Col. 2:12, as a new creaton, Eph. 2:10; Gal 6:15." (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

Anagennasaz means "having begotten," and appears only one other time in the NT: 1 Peter 1:23. This is the same "born again" event that Jesus says is necessary for a person to "see the kingdom of God," bewildering Nicodemus (Jn 3:3). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

Here Peter wants to lead us to the Father through the Lord Jesus and sets Him up as the mediator between God and us. (Luther)

He has transplanted us from the inheritance of Adam into the inheritance of God. He permits us to live here in order that we may bring others to faith, just as He brought us. We have no other reason for living on earth than to be of help to others. (Luther)

Titus 3:5: "By the washing of regeneration." James 1:18: "Of his own will begat He us." It is the same event which Paul described as a quickening from the dead, Eph. 2:5-6; Col. 2:12, as a new creation, Eph. 2:10; Gal. 6:15. (Stoeckhardt)

Conversion or new birth is, generally speaking, a basic change and transformation of the heart, of man's moral disposition and nature, of moral thinking, feeling, desiring. Man in a moral relationship and spiritually becomes an entirely different, a new man. Luther says: "Therefore, in short, man, the whole person, must change, must become a person who has altogether new understanding, thoughts, and heart." Man man's senses, thoughts, desires, inclinations of the will are by nature disposed towards what is sinful. Through conversion, however, they are directed to God and what is God's.

Conversion is evidence of a new spiritual life. And this new spiritual life is not an idle condition but is composed of spiritual motivations and acts in personal living.
(Stoeckhardt)

Faith does not enter the discourse until verse 5 and is then used often in our letter. See 1:6, 9, 21; 2:6; 5:9. To Peter and to the other apostles faith is the specific Christian attitude. Faith is what characterizes the Christians. Faith makes them Christians. Coming to faith, therefore, is the beginning of Christianity. This faith is the faith in Christ, is trust in the merits of Christ, this coming to faith coincides with conversion, which indeed marks the beginning of one's Christianity. Paul likewise attributes the spiritual awakening, the new birth, to the acquisition of faith. See Eph. 2:8; Col. 2:12.
(Stoeckhardt)

living hope. In spite of the frequent suffering and persecution mentioned in this letter (v. 6; 2:12, 18–25; 3:13–18; 4:1, 4, 12–19; 5:1, 7–10), hope is such a key thought in it (the word itself is used here and in vv. 13, 21; 3:5, 15) that it may be called a letter of hope in the midst of suffering (see Introduction: Themes). In the Bible, hope is not wishful thinking but a firm conviction, much like faith that is directed toward the future.
(CSB)

Not a pious wish but a solid promise of God. This hope gives life. Luther: "Peter ... exhorts them to be steadfast in faith and to increase through all kinds of suffering and good works.... He strengthens their faith through the divine promise and power of the salvation to come" (AE 35:390). (TLSB)

By the way *eis* is found six times in our text; *ev* (at) six times and *dia* (through) three times. *Elpida* (hope) here must be the subjective hope, not the thing hoped for but the actual hoping. It is called *zao* "living." Rienecker: "A living hope is one that is never extinguished by untold circumstances." Bengel: "It is termed LIVING, because it springs up from Christ's resurrection." Stoeckhardt: "The Christian's hope never deceives and never fails to reach its goal." Selwyn: "A hope that is never extinguished by untoward circumstances." Lenski: "It is the opposite of an empty, false deceptive hope. This hope is "living" because God guarantees and produces its fulfillment...We have a living hope resting on God's promises and power." Jerusalem Bible translates: "a sure hope." In the hymn "In the cross of Christ I Glory" stanza two (LSB – 427) we read: "When the woes of life o'er-take me, Hopes deceive and fears annoy, Never shall the cross forsake me; Lo, it glows with peace and joy." Mere human hopes can easily vanish like vapor. Not so Christian hope. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

The "born again" action results in a "living hope," something other than an uncertain or false hope of one's own creation. Without "the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" no such hope can exist. The hope reaches beyond our earthly sojourn.

1 Corinthians 15:19, "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men."

Hebrews 6:19, "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain."

Romans 15:13, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

The result, then, of this spiritual begetting should be that there be imparted to us, and that we possess, a living hope, a hope that has sound basis, a hope that is sure to be rewarded. The entire life of regeneration is a life of hope, which looks forward to the precious gifts of the future. With faith there is naturally combined the hope of a future, perfect salvation in eternity, for to the reconciled sinner heaven itself is standing open. This live, this vigorous hope exists in our hearts through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; for this fact has given us the guarantee that our hope will surely be fulfilled. (Kretzmann)

Not a pious wish but a solid promise of God. This hope gives life. Luther says, "Peter...exhorts them to be steadfast in faith and to increase through all kinds of suffering and good works...He strengthens their faith though the divine promise and power of the salvation to come." (TLSB)

And now indeed the emphasis is on the goal of this action. The new life of conversion is a life of hope. Hope looks to the future, the future blessings. This new, spiritual, divine life, still weak and imperfect and hampered by sinful flesh, is striving for perfection, and finally in eternal life, where we shall totally, according to body and soul, live to God. The faith which God has kindled in conversion, the faith which takes to itself the present blessings, the forgiveness of sins through Christ, breathes forth hope, hope for the future, perfect and final salvation, eternal bliss. For redeemed sinners heaven stands open. (Stoeckhardt)

This hope is a living hope. Upon his entrance into natural life all sorts of hopes open themselves up to man. These hopes do for the most part remain unfulfilled. The Christians' hope, which unfolds before them in conversion, never deceives and never fails to reach its goal. Conversion has built in it life and power and the certainty of realization. And so it exerts an enlivening influence upon the heart of the Christian. (Stoeckhardt)

resurrection of Jesus Christ. Secures for his people their new birth and the hope that they will be resurrected just as he was. (CSB)

Our redemption and eternal life are guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus, the firstborn from the dead (Col 1:18). (TLSB)

Christ, having risen from the dead and having entered into the state of His glorification, will certainly make good His promise and bring us also into the life of glory. (Kretzmann)

And the eis (to) phrase denotes the purpose or result of Christ's merciful resurrection from the dead. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

The realization of our hope is guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Jesus Christ, our Lord, who died for us, rose again from the dead and according to His human nature entered the state of glory. And He will draw along in His resurrection, into the life of heavenly bliss, all those who are united with Him through faith. With His resurrection Christ has entered into His glory which will be revealed in us. Rom. 8:17; 5:10.

1:4 into an inheritance. Believers are born again not only to a hope but also to the inheritance that is the substance of the hope. The inheritance is eternal—in its essence (it is not subject to decay) and in its preservation (it is divinely kept for us). (CSB)

Through Christ, God has promised us the riches of heaven. (TLSB)

heir. Gk *kleronomos*, “one who receives the promise” or “chosen one.” Describes the relationship of believers to the heavenly Father, based on grace. (TLSB p. 1902)

Luther says, “Our inheritance, which our conversion brings long with it, is imperishable, eternal. Therefore, we must banish all anxiety about deterioration or cessation taking place. Secondly, it is unspotted, that is, very fair and beautiful; it can never defile us, as the good things of this life are want to do. Thirdly, it is unfading, that is, never dries up or rots, never deteriorates as do the things of earth but remains green and fresh forever; therefore, we shall never be sated nor become weary.” (Stoeckhardt)

When Christians are aware of what is being taken away from them, such as their freedom, their dignity, their health, or their money, it is comforting to remember which treasures cannot be taken from them: the mercy of God, the new birth of Holy Baptism, and the heavenly inheritance that cannot perish, spoil, or fade away. The stock market may crash; buildings burn down; banks may fail; doctors may fail; but the good things that Christ gives will never fail because they are based on irreversible historical fact – Christ's resurrection from the dead. He lives; and because He lives, hope lives too. (PBC)

Klaronomian, “an inheritance”: unlike the inheritance once promised to Israel (Deut. 15:4) which was eventually laid waste by enemy armies and drought, Peter writes of an inheritance that is not subject to decay and destruction. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

The beauty and glory of this gift is such as to provoke the apostle to a veritable burst of exultant praise: To an inheritance imperishable and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven with a view to you. That is the aim, the object, of God's regeneration, that is what He wants to give and impart to us. Heaven and all its glory are our inheritance, for we are children of God and joint-heirs with Christ. This heavenly inheritance is imperishable; it cannot perish, cannot decay, cannot be corrupted, cannot lose in beauty

and value. Earthly possessions will pass away and become subject to corruption, but the heavenly possession is of a nature that will never deteriorate, It is an unsoiled, undefiled inheritance. Earthly goods and riches are soiled and defiled and violated by reason of unrighteousness, covetousness, avarice, sin. But the salvation which Christ earned for us is pure, unspotted by any sin; it is the inheritance of the saints in the holy light that emanates from the throne of God. Earthly happiness, earthly fortune and glory, is like the flower of the field, which, indeed, shoots up quickly and blossoms soon, but just as quickly loses its beauty and fades away. The heavenly inheritance is unfading, standing before us in everlasting, unchanging beauty. (Kretzmann)

We will never grow tired or bored or disenchanted with our heavenly inheritance, as we often do with the best this world can offer. (New Corvette) (LifeLight)

KEPT IN HEAVEN – Nothing in this world can take our inheritance from us. Luther says: “This blessing is ours forever and ever, even though we do not see it now...On earth no pleasure is so great that it does not become unpleasant as time goes on. We see that one becomes weary of everything. But this blessing is different. All this is ours in Christ, by God’s mercy, if we believe” (AE 30:13). (TLSB)

The first indescribable exultation that will take hold of our hearts upon entering the heavenly mansions will never be reduced, will never grow cold. This inheritance is laid up, reserved, for us in heaven. There is no possibility that it may yet be lost to us, since God’s promise is holding it out to us, since it is assured and applied and imparted to us by faith. (Kretzmann)

Philippians 3:20, “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

1:5-6 How can persecuted Christian believe that they are **shielded**? God never promised us heaven on earth. He did not promise an earthly life without pain, sickness, hostility from Satan’s accomplices, or death. What He did promise is that He would set limits to the hardships that come upon us; He would allow only as much trouble as He knows we can bear. Second, He promises that after the night of trouble, relief and deliverance will come in the morning – these troubles are only “for a little while” (verse 6). Third, He promises to work it all together for our good. Somehow, in some way God turns every disaster inside out and makes it an opportunity for blessing. Fourth, God compensates Christian for everything they have to give up for Him. That compensation is given in eternity, but also now. Peter once told Jesus, “We have left all we had to follow you!” Jesus replied, “No one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life” (Luke 18:28-30) (PBC)

1:5 *through faith ... by God’s power.* † The perseverance of the Christian is shielded by God’s power through faith, a gift of God. (CSB)

Notes from Ephesians – 6:16...

6:16 *shield of faith ... extinguish ... flaming arrows.* Describes the large Roman shield covered with leather, which could be soaked in water and used to put out flame-tipped arrows. (CSB)

This shield is long and covers the entire body. In spiritual battle the warrior is struck by the fiery darts. They burn the conscience. Nevertheless, faith has the power to extinguish the fire. Faith grasps and holds Christ, who offered himself up unto God for us. Christ's blood extinguishes the fiery darts. (Stoeckhardt)

Ancients sometimes made use of arrows and small spears that were impregnated with pitch or some other inflammatory material., set on fire before they were discharged and inflicting ugly wounds. Thus the temptations of Satan will greatly harm the Christian in his faith and spiritual life, unless he meets them with the calm assurance of the forgiveness of sins through the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. (Kretzmann)

What we see are Satan's attacks in the form of insults, setbacks and temptations. But the shield of faith protects us from Satan's flaming arrows. With God's perspective, we can see beyond our circumstances and know that ultimate victory is ours.

Psalms 91:4, "He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart."

God keeps us in the faith He created and by which we are saved. "The knowledge of this faith is necessary to Christians, brings the most abundant comfort in all troubles, and shows us Christ's office." (Apology of the Augsburg Confession V. 266) (TLSB)

What if I lose my grip on my salvation or weaken under the pressure of this world's hatred? Peter replies: Not to worry! God will guard and keep you in faith until that day comes when you will receive your inheritance. He will hold His powerful hand over you to shield you. Just think of how God preserved Daniel in the lion's den, Daniel's three young friends in the furnace of fire, and John the Baptist in prison. God preserved them all in faith and shielded them with His power. (LifeLight)

Peter's term translated "shielded" literally means "to post a sentry." It is a military word, reminding us that we are taking part in a war, that we have a fight on our hands. Our struggle is against God's own enemies – the devil himself, the unbelieving world around us, even our own sinful nature within us. (Jailors were to guard their prisoners at the cost of their life. If the prisoner escaped they would have to die. Jesus died so that we can stay out of the prison of hell.) (LifeLight)

2 Timothy 1:12, "That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day."

The faith which works in us the power of God – which dwells in us and with which we are filled – is such a tender and precious thing that it gives us a true and clear understanding of everything that pertains to salvation, so that we are able to judge everything on earth and say: ‘This doctrine is right, that one is false.’” (Luther)

The inheritance is reserved for us above in heaven, and while living here on earth we shall be reserved for the inheritance. Here in one brief statement are expressed three thoughts: (1) We, our souls, are being kept for salvation. (2) This is occurring through faith, faith in Christ and His redemption. (3) This preservation through faith occurs by virtue of the power of God. (Stoeckhardt)

We Christians have powerful enemies who seek to snatch our saving faith from us. However, God’s power is stronger than all visible and invisible foes. Under His powerful protection our faith remains steadfast and unconquerable. (Stoeckhardt)

1 John 3:20, “whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.”

Apostasy is truly man’s own fault, but the opposite, the cause for perseverance in faith, is not due to any sort of better conduct on the part of man or to some special act of God because of man’s conduct. It is solely God’s handiwork, whose motive lies within itself. (Stoeckhardt)

salvation.† See note on 2Ti 1:9. The Bible speaks of salvation as (1) past—when a person first believes (see, e.g., Tit 3:5), (2) present—as eternal life now, that is, a living relationship with Christ by faith (see v. 9; 1Co 1:18), and (3) future—when Christ returns and salvation, or sanctification, is completed through glorification (here; see also Ro 8:23, 30; 13:11). (CSB)

Deliverance from sin and death to live with God forever. (TLSB)

And lest some one hesitatingly refer to the possibility of growing weak and of losing hope, which, indeed, is ever present on account of the many temptations which beset us, the apostle adds: Who are protected by the power of God through faith unto the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. The Christians are like a house or fortress which is besieged by Satan in many forms of temptation. But they are guarded and protected by God’s almighty power. This is not exhibited in absolute majesty, but through faith, which is the hand that receives the gift of salvation, which clings to the certainty of the everlasting mercy. Thus the keeping of the believers unto salvation is accomplished, namely, to a salvation which was appointed before the beginning of time for the believers, in order that it might be revealed and made known in the last time, at the end of the world. The exact time is not known to the author, nor does the fact of his being ignorant of this date in any way interfere with his faith. Sufficient for him is the fact, as it should be for every believer, that God is keeping watch, that his soul’s salvation is well taken care of in the hands of the heavenly Father. Apostasy is indeed

man's fault all alone, but the opposite condition, the reason for steadfastness of faith, is in no way a better conduct or attitude in man, but it is the work of God all alone. What a wonderful comfort when weakness of faith and doubt tend to assail our hearts!
(Kretzmann)

LAST TIME – God's promised salvation will be fully revealed on Judgment Day. (TLSB)

1:6 YOU REJOICE – This it is that causes the apostle to write: in which you greatly rejoice, although now for a little you may be obliged to be grieved in various trials. That is the true attitude of the Christian's heart, full of joy, exultation, jubilation, even here in time, to be completed, however, with inexpressible happiness, throughout eternity. The believers having the guarantee even now that they are chosen sojourners, incidentally have the assurance that God will preserve for them eternal joy and salvation.
(Kretzmann)

The hope of our heavenly inheritance brings about "inexpressible and glorious joy" (1:8). C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* says, "Most of us find it very difficult to want 'Heaven' at all – except insofar as 'Heaven' means meeting again our friends who have died. One reason for this difficulty is that we have not been trained: our whole education tends to fix our minds on this world." (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

Acts 5:41, "The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name."

Romans 5:3-5, "Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

Peter says that in this whole period we ever and ever exult, jubilate, celebrate, and do this in spite of the fact that we are subject to grief in manifold trials. (Lenski)

"Wherein ye are overjoyed" is a better translation. The Greek word denotes the highest degree of joy, delight, exultation. And this exultation begins on the day of the revelation of Jesus Christ and continues into all eternity. (Stoeckhardt)

VARIOUS TRIALS – Situations that test one's faith. Though believers should not seek out trials, they should be ready to face them in faith, with God's power. (TLSB)

Even though the certainty of salvation is a present reality and therefore cause for rejoicing, Peter does not hesitate to introduce the fact that suffering and trials will accompany it. This other reality surfaces in every chapter of his letter. Identification with Christ constitutes the reason for suffering (Acts 5:41). Tribulations in life common to all as human beings are distinct from this cross-bearing that characterizes Christians (Mt. 16:24). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

Therefore this anticipation cannot be influenced by the fact that the believers are here, for a passing moment, exposed to outward grief on account of their being beset by various trials; their life may make the impression, as if they were subject to nothing but disheartening experiences and never had a glad hour. (Kretzmann)

This was true not just of the Christians of Asia Minor. Christians of all ages are strangers here on earth and in every way imaginable experience the ill will of this world's inhabitants. And Christians are not Stoics. They are not insensible to such oppression, to the sufferings of this present time, but are afflicted and grieved by them. However, it is a comfort to know that this lasts only for a short time; the days of their pilgrimage on earth are brief. (Stoekhardt)

1:7 *that your faith ... may be proved genuine.* See Ro 5:3; Jas 1:2–4. Not only is the faith itself precious, but Peter's words indicate that the trial of faith is also valuable. (CSB)

As the true character of gold is seen in a refiner's fire, so faith's true character is revealed when tested. (TLSB)

GREATER WORTH THAN GOLD – But appearances, in this case, are very deceiving; for the apostle continues: That the testing of your faith may (show it to) be much more precious than perishable gold, which is also proved by fire, found unto praise and honor and glory in the revelation of Jesus Christ. (Kretzmann)

Three times in his letter Peter compares spiritual qualities with gold; in this instance, faith. The redeeming blood of Christ is more precious than gold (1:18-19). Even in his directives to Christian wives "gold jewelry" is of less importance – if important at all – than "the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit" (3:3-4). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

Gold ore has to be smelted at 1100 degrees Fahrenheit to be refined enough to be useful. (PBC)

REFINED BY FIRE – All earthly treasures will eventually be destroyed, but through faith, we will live with our Savior forever. Luther says: "All Scripture compares temptation to fire. Thus here St. Peter also likens the gold that is tested by fire to the testing of faith by temptation and suffering. Fire does not impair the quality of gold, but it purifies it, so that all alloy is removed. Thus God has imposed the cross on all Christians to cleanse and to purge them well, in order that faith may remain pure, just as the Word is, so that one adheres to the Word alone and relies on nothing else. For we really need such purging and affliction every day because of the coarse old Adam" (AE 30:17). (TLSB)

Those very trials which a Christian must undergo are at bottom not a cause of sorrow to him, since they redound to his advantage. For if his faith stands the test to which it is subjected, it is thereby proved to be more precious and valuable than any corruptible

gold, whose quality is likewise tested by fire, just as faith is tested in trials. And the result, if the believer stand the test properly, will be that he attains to praise and glory and honor. Through the fiery trial of suffering we not only realize the vanity and evanescence of all earthly things and our own helplessness in spiritual matters, but we are also prepared for the final acknowledgment of our faith, for its crowning and glorifying in the bliss of eternal salvation. (Kretzmann)

The Formula of Concord offers, "But since in this life we have received only the first fruits of the Spirit, and regeneration is not as yet perfect but has only been begun in us, the conflict and warfare of the flesh against the Spirit continues also in the elect and truly reborn. Again, there is not only a great difference between Christians, one being weak and the other strong in the Spirit, but even the individual Christian in his own life discovers that at one moment he is joyful in the Spirit and at another fearful and terrified, at one time ardent in love, strong in faith and in hope, and at another time could and weak." (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

God afflicts us in this way in order that our faith may be proved and made manifest before the world, with the result that others are attracted to the faith and we are praised and extolled. (Luther)

So long as we are upon earth, our faith is alloyed with too much trust in things created and with self-righteousness. In the fiery trial of suffering we experience not only that everything earthly is vain, but also that we ourselves are nothing before God, that we cannot appear before God with our own conduct and life. (Stoekhardt)

Luther says, "Fire does not make gold inferior; fire purifies gold, removing all alloy. God has laid the cross upon Christians so that being thus cleaned by fire of it faith remains undefiled, so that they cling solely to the Word and trust in nothing else. We need such cleansing and cross-bearing daily because of the old Adam." (Stoekhardt)

Under such testing and refining faith is increased and grows stronger. Luther states, "God casts us into the fire of temptation, suffering, and affliction for the purpose of cleansing and testing us until the end – that not only sin is destroyed more and more, but also faith is preserved and grows stronger within us – that we from day to day become more certain of how matters stand with us, increase in understanding of divine wisdom and knowledge. (Stoekhardt)

If gold, perishable though it is, being only of earthly, temporal value, is tested out and proved genuine, how much more should faith with its eternal value for us not also be tested and proved genuine. (Lanski)

Job 5:17, "Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty."

Matthew 5:12, "Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Romans 5:3-5, “Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”

Hebrews – 12:4-11, “In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵ And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, ⁶ because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.” ⁷ Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? ⁸ If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. ⁹ Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! ¹⁰ Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹ No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

glory. A key word in 1,2 Peter. (CSB)

On the day of the final revelation of Christ’s glory He will, out of His boundless mercy, permit us to share in this glory and to live and triumph with Him throughout eternity. (Kretzmann)

When Christ is revealed He will publicly praise those who have remained faithful to Him unto the end: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” He will let them share in His glory, which will according to body and soul completely permeate and illuminate them. He will let them share in His honor: they will rule and triumph with Him (2 Tim. 2:12). Thus suffering, which the glory appears to contradict, is for Christians the God-ordained way to glory. (Stoeckhardt)

1:8 *though you do not see him now, you believe.* Similar to Jesus’ saying in John 20:29, on an occasion when Peter was present. (CSB)

Unlike Peter, we are not eyewitnesses of Jesus, but through faith, we believe in Him and love Him. Our eyes will see Him on the Last Day, but even now we encounter Christ through His Word and Sacraments as He gives us saving faith, forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life. (TLSB)

This calls to mind the refusal of Thomas to believe (John 20:25) and the commendation from the risen Lord to those who believe without seeing Him (John 20:29). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

This happiness is pictured by the apostle: Whom, without seeing, you love, in whom you now, although you do not see Him, yet believing, you exult with unspeakable and glorious joy, obtaining the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls. The readers, just like the Christians of the present time, had not seen Christ in the flesh, had not been witnesses of His miracles nor heard His wonderful parables and discourses. And yet their love, growing out of the faith in the Gospel-message, had taken root and was firmly established. Even now, when they expect His return to Judgment, their faith in Him is unmoved, although they are still without sight of Him.

GLORIOUS – As Peter saw Jesus’ glory in the transfiguration, so by faith we are filled with His glorious presence. (TLSB)

JOY – And with their faith their joy, their happiness, their exultation over their redemption and over their final deliverance, continues. In this way the present joy of the believers leads up to its future culmination, when, in the enjoyment of the heavenly glories, their joy will transcend all human language, the most glowing description which human tongue could give, being beyond the conception of even the most daring speculation on glory which human beings have ever succeeded in bringing forward. (Kretzmann)

Joy impossible to describe. Joy impossible to exhaust in words. Joy glorious and blissful, pure and serene. Joy as a state similar to the state of transfiguration wherein Christ now is and wherefore we then shall partake. (Stoeckhardt)

We all need this wake-up call – our number one priority needs always to be our relationship with our Savior, so that our reunion with Him at His reappearing will be full of praise, not dread. The more we ponder these sure promises of God, the more our insides will be full of joy and satisfaction. Self-pity, complaining, and envy will fade away. This joy is “inexpressible,” that is, you can feel it better than you can describe it. (PBC)

1:9 RECEIVING THE GOAL – Thus will the believers obtain, carry off as a prize, the end, the goal, of their faith; they will go from believing to possessing; they will have and hold forever the salvation of their souls. Thus justifying faith is also saving faith, and by the fact of its having accepted the promises of the Gospel it works deliverance from this earthly life with its misery and affliction, and will finally seal to us this deliverance, world without end. (Kretzmann)

True faith in Christ brings eternal salvation. “It is clear from God’s Word that faith is the proper and only means through which righteousness and salvation are not only received, but also preserved by God” (FC SD IV 35). (TLSB)

This point is illustrated by a story about a boy who was about to enter a dark cemetery at night. Through the cemetery ran a path that provided a shortcut home. His friend asked him, “Aren’t you afraid to walk through the cemetery alone at night?” “No,”

answered the boy. “Do you see that light shining in the window there in the distance? My father puts it there so I can find my way home. I just follow the light!” (LifeLight)

souls. Implies the whole person. Peter is not excluding the body from heaven. (CSB)

GOSPEL – John 20 19-31

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

20:19-31 Today’s lesson begins on the evening of Easter day with the disciples locked in a room in fear of the Jews. When Jesus appears to them, their initial reaction is greater fear still. But their fear begins to give way to the peace that Jesus brings them. A week later the disciples are once again found behind locked doors, implying that they remained fearful. Big fears go away slowly and require much encouraging. Thomas’s doubting was a symptom of his fear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

humin, “Peace be with you.” Throughout the New **20:19, 21, 26** *eirēnē* Testament, the Greek recalls the Hebrew *shalom*. In this one word is comprehended—and conveyed—the entire essence of the Gospel. So much more than absence of war or conflict, *shalom* describes the full condition of well-being that accrues when God and man are at one. Since the fall, of course, this is possible only when sin, which put enmity between God and his creatures, has been removed. And this, then, takes us specifically to the cross, where the reconciliation took place. It was peace that was promised in the first expression of Gospel (enmity between the serpent and Eve’s seed meant reconciliation of her offspring to God, Gen 3:15), and it is peace that is described in the final images of Scripture, when the well-being of creation is restored (Revelation 21–22). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

Moreover, the blessing of peace, which Jesus extends three times in this text, is never simply a pious wish, but actually conveys all of this. When Aaron would speak the *shalom* upon Israel, God promised, “I will bless them” (Num 6:27). Many a pastor has wisely instructed his confirmation class that if they should miss the entire Divine Service and arrive only in time for the Benediction, the trip is eternally valuable. In those words of peace alone, hearers *have*, have been given, every blessing of a reconciled, all-

powerful and all-loving God to his people. The disciples received all this each time Jesus spoke the blessing in this text. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

Notice the way a speaking of peace introduces each major movement of the story: the reinstatement of the Ten (vv 19–20), the giving of the Office of the Keys (vv 21–23), and the restoration of Thomas (vv 26–29). These three occurrences for these three movements shape the outline here offered. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

This passage is paralleled at Luke 24:36-49 and Mark 16:14-18 which ought be read. It was late in the evening. The group was composed of the disciples, those with them and the two Emmaus disciples. They were eating. (Buls)

Word of Jesus' resurrection has already reached the disciples by Easter evening. Mary Magdalene and other women have seen the Lord and, we can be sure, have dutifully carried out their assignment to bring word to Jesus' brethren, especially Peter (20:17–18; also Mt 28:10; Mk 16:7; Lk 24:9–10). Peter himself, with John, had seen the empty tomb, and John had even "believed" (Jn 20:6–8). Further, the personal appearance to Peter ("Simon," Lk 24:34; "Cephas," 1 Cor 15:5) has almost surely taken place before our text. The fact that Jesus had risen could no longer have seemed like the "idle tale" the disciples had taken it to be earlier (Lk 24:11). What remains to make *this* appearance so noteworthy? Fear of Jesus himself! The disciples had abandoned him at the most crucial moment. Was it entirely good news that he was alive? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

20:19 FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK – "That first day of the week" is a conscious effort to inform the reader that we are still on Easter Day. The identification of the risen Christ with the crucified Jesus is made at the first appearances. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 2)

"Evening of that first day of the week"—this is a resurrection day event. "It is still Easter," we would say. "The disciples" includes more than the 10 (Judas and Thomas missing) as Lk 24:33–36 supports. Security-conscious, out of fear for what the Jewish leaders might do to them, the disciples had all doors locked. "Jesus came and stood among them." He was suddenly there! "Peace be with you!" never meant so much to the disciples (cf in 14:27). They might have expected to be taken to task for their conduct on the past Thursday and Friday. Instead, Jesus comforts and reassures his followers. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

usēs oun opsias tēi hēmerai ekeinēi tēi miai sabbatōn, “On the evening of that day, the first day of the week.” Time is often hard to determine in John’s Gospel, but clearly this is the evening of Easter Day. Jesus announces peace to the whole assembly of gathered disciples and gives the Holy Spirit. The giving of the Holy Spirit is something associated with Pentecost. The Spirit is given to commission the Church and lead it to confess Jesus as Lord before the world so that all may have life in Jesus’ name (v 31). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

disciples. Probably includes others besides the apostles, “the Twelve” (v. 24). (CSB)

hoi mathētai, “the disciples.” This may be a group as large as 120 (Acts 1:15). It includes more than the Twelve, as v 24 seems to indicate in its designation of Thomas. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

This includes more than the 10 (Judas and Thomas are missing). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 2)

DOORS LOCKED – Security-conscious, out of fear for what the Jewish leaders might do to them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 2)

“the doors being locked . . . for fear of the Jews.” That was the disciples’ obvious fear, but if Jesus was alive *and on their side*, the Jews would be of no concern. The disciples’ rejection of Jesus’ mission left them in doubt as to whether Jesus was their friend any longer or rather might abandon them—or worse. This is the beauty behind Jesus’ word “Peace” (also vv 21, 26). They *are* reconciled! Thank God our faithlessness does not stop Jesus from coming with his blessing of peace. This is a peace defined by Jesus’ character and work and delivered on his terms. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

They knew that Caiaphas could have his soldiers drag them into the night and hold a trial that even quicker than Jesus’ trial. After all, as long as Pilate had agreed to Jesus’ death, he would have to be consistent and agree to theirs. So a sense of fear and dread filled the room. (LifeLight)

But just as heavy was the sadness. Despite the reports of the women, the disciples were still convinced that everything was over. Three years of hoping, learning, and growing were gone. God was now far off again instead of being as near as Jesus’ presence. The ugliness of the cross was still etched in their memories. It was all over.

They were weeping not only for themselves, but also for Israel and for the world.
(LifeLight)

Yet they heard again and again the strange stories – the message by the angels to the women (Matt 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-8; John 20:10-13), the appearances of Jesus to the women (Matt 28:8-10; John 20:14-17) and the appearance of Jesus to the Emmaus disciples (Luke 24:13-35). Did they dare to hope? The mind plays tricks when one is sorrowing and fervently wishing that things aren't as they are. (LifeLight)

Besides showing how utterly the Jew rejected Jesus, it clearly shows the disciples' lack of faith at this time. After the Ascension and Pentecost they are joyful and fearless.
(Exegetical Notes – Buls)

the Jews. See note on 1:19. (CSB)

The disciples were afraid that they would be arrested for supporting Jesus' alleged conspiracy against the authority of imperial Rome. (TLSB)

CAME AND STOOD AMONG THEM – The body of Jesus, now glorified, was no longer contained by time and space limitations. He could suddenly be there. John's gospel began with the marvelous assertion that the Word, The Son of God, "became flesh and made His dwelling among us" (1:14). Now here He was again coming just as quietly as He had the first time when He was born in a stable in a quiet an insignificant village to two unimportant people, as the world counts unimportance. Standing in their midst made all the difference in the world. Now they would know and believe. Now they would listen and wait. Now Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit would come. Now they would make a difference. (LifeLight)

estē eis to meson, "stood among them." The Word that became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:14) continues to dwell in the midst of his people. This is the reason his people have peace, can forgive sin, and witness to the signs so others believe and have life in his name. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

After His resurrection, Jesus more fully manifested His divine attributes. Thus, though still completely human, He did not allow physical barriers to keep Him from revealing Himself to His disciples. Luther states, "The evangelist says not that they saw him enter, but 'He appeared or stood in their midst' (Luke 24:36), which sounds as if he had been there already, hidden, and now revealed himself, as he also did to Mary Magdalene at the grave (John 20:14), and with all to whom he appeared" (AE 37:66).
(TLSB)

Peace be with you! The normal Hebrew greeting (cf. Da 10:19). Because of their behavior the previous Friday, they may have expected rebuke and censure; but Jesus calmed their fears (see note on 14:27). (CSB)

“Fear of the Jews” paralyzed the disciples. Closed doors shut out the enemy, but did not shut out the risen Christ, who came to them to dispel their guilt and fear with a message of peace. “Peace be with you!” is, in this context, far more than a casual greeting. This is the peace all the prophets declare, the peace Jesus himself promised to give to his disciples (Jn 14:27). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

The *shalom* “shalom” behind the Greek *Eirēnē*, “peace” has many implications about salvation of the whole person. Used with the dative of address, this is a translation of the common greeting on arrival (1 Sam 25:6). Instead of rebuking the disciples for their conduct on Good Friday, Jesus bestows his peace on them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

eijrhvnh uJmi'n, “peace be with you”: Though the disciples were huddled together in fear, Jesus does not come to them saying, “Don’t be afraid,” but instead greets them with, “Peace be with you.” Peace is the antithesis of fear. Jesus only uses this greeting in the context of appearing to his disciples after the resurrection (here and in Lk 24:36). This greeting is common in the Epistles, especially in the opening words, echoing the peace that Jesus extended to his first disciples. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

The greeting of “peace” in the OT wished prosperity in body and soul to the person being greeted. It occurs many times in Luke: (1) Mary (1:28), (2) Birth (2:14), (3) Forgive sins (7:50), Healed (8:48), Sending of 72 (10:5-7), Palm Sunday (19:38). (CSB)

eirēnē humin, “peace be with you.” In John, “peace be with you” is the equivalent of the Synoptics’ “fear not.” Fear can be set aside because of the one who is present. While the resurrected Jesus is present when not visible, he makes this visit Easter evening and eight days later to assure the disciples that he is in their midst. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

Peace is the antithesis of fear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 2)

Now the Father’s anger over sin had been satisfied through the death of His son, the perfect substitute for our sins. (LifeLight)

This is not an empty greeting. This is full Gospel. It is an absolution. The greeting is in keeping with the Greeter. The first thing He does is to forgive their sins and declare that all is well. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:20 *his hands and side*. Where the wounds were (John does not refer to the wounds in the feet). According to Lk 24:37 they thought they were seeing a ghost. Jesus was clearly identifying himself. (CSB)

“Showed them his hands and side”—He flashed his “identification badges” to establish who he was, the Teacher and Lord they had known so intimately for three years, Jesus of Nazareth. This was not an apparition produced by intense fear or mob psychology. His wounds prove that the same body that hung on the cross is now risen. For their own faith, as well as their future testimony, it was essential that the disciples positively identify him. The holy wounds of Jesus continue to bring joy and assurance to us today. They are evidence of Jesus’ atoning sacrifice. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Jesus is always reaching out and teaching. For their own faith, as well as their future testimony, it was essential that the disciples positively identify him. The wounds of Jesus bring joy and assurance to us today. They are proof of Jesus’ death and resurrection. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 2)

“After he said this.” The greeting of peace is to be connected to the actions that follow. Jesus chose to retain in his glorified body the mortal wounds of the crucifixion. He did so because these are the wounds that heal and the marks of “the punishment that brought us peace” (Is 53:5). They are not marks of shame, but of victory because, through them, the sinner has been reconciled to God. (“Behold his hands and side, Rich wounds, yet visible above, In beauty glorified” [LW 278:3].) The wounds verify that this man standing among the disciples was the very Jesus who died on a cross on Friday. They are, of course, filled with joy, just as Jesus had promised (Jn 16:20). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

“He showed them his hands and his side.” Salvation is an “in the dirt” affair. He became “sin who knew no sin” (2 Cor 5:21) so that we might be saved. He got his hands dirty and bloody. Salvation is also an event in history. These are not metaphorical hands; these are the hands of Jesus, the one who was crucified, died, and was buried. The salvation of God has handprints and footprints in history so that “peace on earth, goodwill toward men” might be visible to all. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

This was no ghost, no figment of battered imaginations. This really was the Lord with a real body, the same body that had seen suffering on the cross! Finally, all their fears and forebodings and hopelessness disappeared in the joy of recognition and realization. Jesus was truly alive and in their midst! (LifeLight)

Proved beyond doubt that the risen Lord, though appearing with a glorified body, was the same person as the crucified Christ. Luther, “So the very same Christ who was born of Mary and who was nailed to the cross truly rose again. It was He and no other, as He showed His disciples the scars in His hands and His side. (TLSB)

WERE OVERJOYED – chairo -- to be full of “cheer”, that is, calmly *happy* or well off.

Lenski remarks: “Jesus appeared again and again, intensifying faith and joy, until nothing could ever disturb the solid certainty. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

THE LORD – This the title used in vv 18,25, 28 by those who believed in His resurrection. John is writing this from the perspective of post-Easter faith as he records its awakening in the disciples. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 2)

20:21-23 The peace won for them and offered to them is now to be carried by the disciples to the whole world. Repeating the greeting of peace, Jesus commissions the disciples to undertake a mission of peace carrying the word of peace. The First Adam received the breath of life from God. Jesus, the Last Adam, now breathes the divine breath that bestows the Spirit of life to the disciples. This Spirit will empower them to carry out the mission of forgiving and retaining sins. Jesus speaks of forgiving as “releasing” sins, *ajfh'te*. The opposite of releasing is “grasping,” or retaining, sins, *krath'te*. Both words of the church actually convey what is spoken, as Luther says in the Small Catechism. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

These verses demonstrate that the essence of Jesus’ work is forgiveness achieved and delivered. These verses, like Mt 28:18–20, also demonstrate that God’s gifts of life and salvation are for all. The disciples are to be agents of his grace, ambassadors of his reconciliation by the power of the Holy Spirit. Even this work is not our work for him, but the Holy Spirit’s work in us for others. Graced people get to live gracious lives. Forgiven people get to live forgiving lives. Eph 2:8–10 says it well—that we are saved by grace and are given works that he already prepared beforehand for us to do. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

20:21 *Peace be with you!* See note on v. 19. (CSB)

“Peace” is at the very heart of the Gospel message (Rom 5a:1–5) that the disciples would now be sent to proclaim. The sending is repeated in Mt 28:19–20 and Acts 1:8; connected with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Christ’s giving the Spirit by breathing on his disciples at this time is seen by Lenski as a “preliminary stage” to Pentecost. By his word from the cross “It is finished” Jesus established a “done” religion, a salvation accomplished and paid for, so that the disciples would work with a completed justification as they went out to “forgive” or “not forgive” sins (in what we know as the Office of the Keys). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

First He actually bestowed the only peace to them personally. Now He does it again for their important office, not just to the disciples, for more than disciples were present. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

FATHER HAS SENT ME – apostello - *set apart*, that is, (by implication) to *send out* (properly on a mission). – Jesus was sent in a unique way for a unique mission.

Note the different verbs used for send: *ajpostevllw* is used by Jesus to describe how the Father had sent him, while *pevmpw* is used to describe how Jesus is sending his disciples. Jesus was sent in a unique way for a unique mission. We are sent to proclaim his work—to echo the Gospel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

I am sending you. See note on 17:18. (CSB)

pempo - to *dispatch*, send, thrust. We are sent to proclaim his work – echo the Gospel.

Christ sends forth His disciples in equality, without any distinction... He says, ‘As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.’ He says that He sends them individually in the same way He Himself was sent (John 12:44-50). Hus, “Jesus sends them to bear testimony to the truth, to preach the word of salvation, and, by life and teaching, to show the way of blessedness to the people. (TLSB)

20:22 BREATHED ON THEM – *empusao* - *blow at or on*:—breathe on.

Greek term used only here in NT. Jesus’ words, formed by breaths of air, delivered the Spirit to the disciples (Greek *pneuma* translates as “spirit” or “wind” [breath]). Augustine says, “ That bodily breathing, proceeding from the body with the feeling of bodily touching, was not the substance of the Holy Spirit, but a declaration by a fitting sign,

that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but also from the Son” (NPNF). (TLSB)

enephusēsen: aorist of *emphusaō*, “to breathe on.” Suggests new creation. Jesus creates the authority to loose and bind. There are overtones of Gen 2:7 and the creation of a people here. The chief character of this new creation is the vehicle of God’s forgiveness in Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

In close connection to the sending of the disciples, Jesus breathes on them, *ejnefuvshsen*, to give them the Holy Spirit. This is reminiscent of Gen 2:7 and may indicate the new creation ushered in by Jesus’ victory over sin, death, and the devil. It is the giving of the Spirit for a specific purpose—in this case in connection with the establishment of the Office of the Keys (v 23). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

The word *emphusaō* means “to breathe on” and takes the dative. In the LXX of Gen 2:7 it is used with *eis*, “into,” as the Lord God blows into the man and he becomes a living being. In Ezek 37:9 the Spirit or wind blows into the enflashed dry bones, and they become alive—a type of resurrection. Although the preposition is not used here, “John expects his readers to see a parallel between God’s creative breath in Gen 2:7 and Jesus’ act of breathing here” (Newman and Nida, p 615). The life imparted here is not mere physical life, but new life in the Spirit, and in particular the ability granted by the Spirit to carry out the office of the keys, described in the next verse. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

The word uses in 2 Tim 3:16, *theopneustos*, “God-breathed, inspired,” comes from a different root, *pneō*. Jesus blows his Spirit on the disciples, and the Spirit has called, gathered, enlightened, and kept us all, but the church is not inspired in the same way Scripture is inspired. The accent in 2 Tim 3:16 is on the effectiveness of the written Word, not the reported news. However, we dare not denigrate the proclamation, which carries the Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

Receive the Holy Spirit. Thus anticipating what happened 50 days later on the day of Pentecost (Ac 2). The disciples needed God’s help to carry out the commission they had just been given. (CSB)

By giving the Holy Spirit, Jesus was equipping the disciples for the ongoing work assigned to them, including especially the exercise of the Office of the Keys. (TLSB)

The gift is the Holy Spirit for a specific purpose. They already had the Holy Spirit for they were believers. And this is not the same bestowal of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost

for that is called “power from on high.” Here Jesus bestows the Office of the Keys, a permanent bestowal on all Christians. Cf. Mt. 16:19; 18:17, 20. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:23† Lit. “Those whose sins you forgive have already been forgiven; those whose sins you do not forgive have not been forgiven.” God does not forgive people’s sins because we do so, nor does he withhold forgiveness because we do. Rather, those who proclaim the gospel are in effect forgiving or not forgiving sins, depending on whether the hearers believe in Jesus Christ or not. (CSB)

There are only two classes of people, those who are to be absolved and those who are not be absolved. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

THEY ARE FORGIVEN – – *aphiemi* - to *send forth*, forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let (alone, be, go, have), omit, put (send) away, remit, suffer, yield up. – In Leviticus 16:10 on the Day of Atonement the sins of the people were laid on the scapegoat and sent away from the sight of God and the people.

“They are forgiven” (v. 23) is a common translation of the perfect tense expressing the present state which results from previous action. However, “in a conditional sentence it emphasized the continuous character of the action,” as in “God forgives them, and they remain forgiven” (Newman and Nida). The tense therefore emphasizes the efficacy of absolution. The textual variants (the present and future tenses) are more poorly attested. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

These words show that the Keys are given to all the apostles alike and that all apostles are sent forth alike. In addition, it must be recognized that the Keys belong not to the person of one particular man, but to the Church. Many most clear and firm arguments show this. For Christ, speaking about the Keys, adds, for example, “If two of you agree on earth” (Mt. 18:19). Therefore, He grants the Keys first and directly to the Church. This is why it is first the Church that has the right of calling. (TLSB)

Lenski rightly quotes Psalm 103:12; Micah 7:19; Isaiah 43:25. Forgiven sins are buried and gone. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

Psalm 103:12, “as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

Micah 7:19, “You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.”

Isaiah 43:25, “I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.”

The sins have already been lastingly forgiven. Christians merely declare what is already true. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

All Christians exercise the Office of the Keys privately. The pastor by virtue of his call, exercises it publicly for the specific congregation to which he is called. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:19–23 The once-crucified Jesus appears to His disciples, commissioning them for their work and equipping them with the Holy Spirit. Christians have received the most precious treasure on earth—the Gospel of forgiveness—but often keep it hidden from others. Pray that the Lord would grant you boldness. God raised Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and will equip us with every good thing to do His will (Heb 13:20–21). • O God, give us Your eternal peace and also boldness through the Holy Spirit. Amen. (TLSB)

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴ **Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.** ²⁵ **So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.”** ²⁶ **A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”** ²⁷ **Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”** ²⁸ **Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”** ²⁹ **Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”** ³⁰ **Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.** ³¹ **But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**

20:24-25 The first “mission project” of the disciples falls on hard ground. Their fellow apostle Thomas refuses to believe the testimony they bring to him. He insists upon seeing and touching before he believes. “I will not believe” is emphatic. These are the

words of hardened, determined, willful unbelief, not just weakness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

Jesus breaks through walls of fear to get to the disciples. With Thomas, he bursts through a wall of doubt. Thomas's doubt reaffirms the uniqueness of Jesus' actions; he is the Messiah who must serve. Thomas knew that Jesus was the Crucified One with nail prints and a hole in his side. Yet, like Peter (Mt 16:21–23), Thomas struggled with how a “crucified Messiah” could be the Savior. False expectations of Jesus' mission (expecting glory rather than a cross) caused Thomas to stumble. His doubt is emphatic in the Greek. It is resolute unbelief. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

20:24 *Thomas*. See note on 11:16. (CSB)

THOMAS WAS NOT WITH THE TWELVE – Perhaps some necessity kept him away. Perhaps he was overcome with despair and hopelessness. – Sadly many miss the Lord today because they do not join the gathering of fellow Christians in worship and study of the Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

Since Thomas was absent from the gathering of Christ's people, he missed so much—in this case, seeing the risen Lord. Sadly, many miss the Lord today because they do not join the gathering of Christian brothers and sisters in worship and study of the Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Why he was absent is not known. But to absent one's self from Christian brethren in a time of crisis leads to trouble. Christians assemble for mutual comfort in Christ. Heb. 10:25. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:25 OTHER DISCIPLES TOLD HIM – *Elegon*, imperfect, indicates that the other disciples kept, repeatedly telling Thomas that they had seen the Lord. Note also the contrast here between the witness of the 10 disciples and the hardheadedness of Thomas, who insists on seeing Christ's identification marks and touching them with his own hands. He rejects the testimony of others as invalid or unreliable. How many today still reject the apostolic testimony? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Unless I see ... and put ... I will not believe. Hardheaded skepticism can scarcely go further than this. (CSB)

Thomas insists on irrefutable, physical evidence despite the word of 10 faithful witnesses. His statement “I will not believe,” *ouj mh; pisteuvsu*, is an emphatic, categorical denial. It shows that Thomas lacked faith, *pivsti*”, both in the testimony of the other disciples and in the words of the Lord to which they were testifying. In this state of unbelief he resorts to a worldly standard for acceptance and trust: I will only believe that which can be proven. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

Instead of accepting the testimony of fellow disciples, Thomas remained deeply skeptical and demanded tactile proof of Jesus’ physical resurrection. (TLSB)

pisteuo to *have faith* (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), to *entrust* (especially one’s spiritual well being to Christ):—believe (-r), commit (to trust), put in trust with. – This is an emphatic and categorical denial of both what the disciples and Jesus said. In this state of unbelief he resorts to a worldly standard for acceptance and trust: I will only believe that which can be proven. How many today still reject the testimony of the Scriptures.

This is an emphatic, categorical denial. It shows that Thomas lacked faith, *pistos*, both in the testimony of the other disciples and in the words of the Lord to which they were testifying. In this state of unbelief he resorts to a worldly standard for acceptance and trust: I will only believe that which can be proven. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 2)

Thomas was not just doubting. Thomas would not believe. And in this state he speaks in a superior, demanding fashion. He was not *si* “gullible” as were the rest, he maintained. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:26-27 What patient, seeking love of the Savior! He condescends to Thomas’ requirement for both visual and physical “proof” of his resurrection, adding the plea, “Stop doubting and believe.” Was it really necessary for Thomas to physically touch Jesus before he would believe? Most likely, the sight of the living Jesus was enough. Here is one more example of Jesus conquering unbelief. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Jesus recognizes Thomas’s unbelief. He calls him to believe, if not on the testimony of his fellow disciples, then on the evidence standing before him. Jesus’ command to Thomas, *mh; givnou a[pisto" ajlla; pistov*”, is a present imperative with a negation. The structure indicates that a present action should cease and a new action begin in its

place. Thomas's response shows that Jesus not only commands faith, but he works the faith he commands. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

Jesus graciously provided Thomas the proof he demanded. Thomas, after all, as an apostle, had to be an eyewitness of the risen Christ. Again—and again through closed doors—the risen Christ brought the message of peace, but knowing the thoughts and words of Thomas, he offered the nail marks in his hands and the wound in his side to the finger and hand of the unbelieving disciple. This offer was given together with a rebuke, “Stop doubting and believe.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

Jesus comes looking for Thomas as he does for us. Faith is always a gift. Jesus comes with peace that opens a doubting heart. He offers again the witness of his suffering and death, his hands and side, so Thomas could see the victory that comes only through the cross. Jesus' rebuke is also an invitation: “Stop your doubting and believe.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

20:26 A WEEK LATER – The following Sunday (calculated by using Jewish inclusive reckoning). (TLSB)

HOUSE AGAIN – Perhaps same location as in verse 19. (TLSB)

Why the disciples had not yet gone to Galilee (Mk. 16:7) is not known. Ylvisaker says: None of them could summon the courage necessary for such a journey.” Lenski remarks: “As far as making the start for Galilee is concerned, the safest view is that the disciples awaited specific directions from the Lord.” In any case, their waiting in Jerusalem was providential, for its afforded opportunity to retrieve unbelieving Thomas. Jesus cared much for Peter who had denied Him, Mary Magdalene, from whom He had driven seven evil spirits, and Thomas who would not believe. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

Peace. See vv. 19, 21 and note on 14:27. (14:27 Note...*peace ... my peace.* A common Hebrew greeting (20:19, 21, 26), which Jesus uses here in an unusual way. The term speaks, in effect, of the salvation that Christ's redemptive work will achieve for his disciples—total well-being and inner rest of spirit, in fellowship with God. All true peace is his gift, which the repetition emphasizes. *I do not give ... as the world gives.* In its greetings of peace the world can only express a longing or wish. But Jesus' peace is real and present.) (CSB)

20:27† See note on 20:17. (CSB)

PUT...SEE...REACH – What patient, seeking love of the Savior! He condescends to Thomas’ requirement for both visual and physical proof of his resurrection, adding the plea, “Stop doubting and believe.” Here is one more example of Jesus conquering unbelief. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

Jesus graciously accommodated Thomas’s request, to his astonishment and perhaps even his shame. (TLSB)

Jesus condescendingly meets all demand made by Thomas. Thomas ended with a categorical denial. Jesus ends with a prohibition. The display of omniscience in the human nature of Jesus must have impressed Thomas deeply, plus the fact that Jesus’ human nature not fully used the omnipresence of the of the divine nature. Did Thomas actually feel Jesus’ wounds? WE know not. But we know what 1 John 1:1 says. Did he kneel or prostrate himself before Jesus? We know not but we know what he said in verse 28. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

The present imperative means that the action to be stopped is presently going on. Jesus bids Thomas to stop being an unbeliever and to become a believer. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 2)

BELIEVE – Literally, “become believing.” (TLSB)

The words *apistos* and *pistos* are often used to distinguish between unbelievers and Christians, respectively. The present imperative means that the action to be stopped is presently going on. Jesus bids Thomas to stop being an unbeliever and to become a believer. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

Jesus conquers unbelief by His Word. With the prohibition comes the power to believe. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:28-29 Thomas was convinced by seeing the risen Jesus. He immediately humbled himself before Jesus and declared him to be Lord and God, both clearly divine names. Jesus used the joyful occasion of Thomas’s “conversion” to pronounce a greater blessing on those who believe without seeing such proof, namely, on the basis of the Word alone. In the very near future, the whole church would be gathered through this Word alone. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

20:28 *My Lord and my God!* The high point of faith (see note on 1:1). (CSB)

How fitting is the bold confession of Thomas, “My Lord and my God.” *Kurios* and *theos* is a combination found in the LXX for the name of the God of Israel (*Yhvh elohim* “Yahweh Elohim/God”; see, for instance, Gen 2:4; Pss 72:18 [MT 72:19]; 84:8, 11 [MT 84:9, 12].) John’s book has come full circle from 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word . . . with God . . . was God” to the clear, awesome identification of Jesus as “Lord . . . God.” Jesus had not been addressed this way before, but is commonly spoken of this way in the remainder of the New Testament. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Restatement of 1:1, a central Christological affirmation in John. (TLSB)

To understand Thomas’ answer as a mere exclamation of surprise is blasphemous in view of the context. The words are, of course, an exclamation, but at the same times, an address (vocative) and a humble confession of sin and confession of faith.

(Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:29 BECAUSE YOU HAVE SEEN – Even though Thomas believes, Jesus criticizes him for rejecting the witness of the other disciples and believing only when the evidence was overwhelming. Because Thomas had been with him longer Jesus was disappointed that Thomas had still not gotten it. BUT he didn’t give up on him and uses this opportunity to teach others who will read about this account.

Few have had sight-based faith as did Thomas. Peter speaks of those who, without seeing, love and believe in the Christ and have the same joy as those who saw him (1 Pet 1:8). Down through the ages faith has come by means of hearing the message of Christ since the Spirit works through the Word (Rom 10:17). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

those who have not seen and yet have believed. Would have been very few at this time. All whom John mentions had seen in some sense. The words, of course, apply to future believers as well. (CSB)

hoi mē idontes kai pisteusantes, “those not seeing and believing.” We are not eyewitnesses and yet are blessed because we believe. This is also a challenge to Thomas and the rest who did not believe Jesus was present. We may rethink our misconception about doubting Thomas and consider the doubting disciples. Do we see? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

Even though Thomas believes, Jesus criticizes him for rejecting the witness of the other disciples and believing only when the evidence was overwhelming. makavrio",

“blessed,” reminds us of the Beatitudes and the blessings of faith that come through the Word. Unlike Thomas, we have not seen but have come to faith through the Gospel—the same Gospel that was first proclaimed by the disciples who were locked in the Upper Room on Easter night in fear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

Makarios – supremely *blest*; by extension *fortunate, well off*:—blessed, happy – Blessed reminds us of the Beatitudes and the blessings of faith that come through the Word.

Down through the ages faith has come by means of hearing the message of Christ since the Spirit works through the Word. (Romans 10:17). This is the same Gospel that was first proclaimed by the disciples who were looked in the Upper Room on Easter night in fear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

After Jesus’ ascension, people would come to faith without seeing Jesus, on the sole basis of the apostles’ witness (cf. 17:18, 20; Rm 10:17). (TLSB)

What Jesus is really criticizing is not merely “seeing” but the fact that Thomas categorically rejected the witness of the other disciples. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:24–29 Jesus appears before a skeptical Thomas, who upon seeing Jesus is moved to confess Him as Lord and God. Today, we live in a skeptical age that operates by the saying “I’ll believe it when I see it.” However, in the Word and the Sacraments, we see and we do receive the benefits of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Those who believe receive God’s divine favor, for whoever believes has everlasting life (3:36). • Even though I do not now see You, Lord, I believe and rejoice with inexpressible joy. Amen. (TLSB)

20:30-31 ou\n connects these two verses with the story of Thomas or, at least, Jesus’ blessing upon those who believe without seeing. Though John’s conclusion applies to the whole Gospel, it is also directly related to the immediate context. The disciples saw many other signs besides those recorded, but these recorded testimonies (in John’s Gospel) were written by the evangelist for the purpose of engendering faith in the one who hears without seeing. Through these written words, the hearer may and should believe that Jesus is the Christ, the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises concerning the Messiah, the Son of God. This faith leads the believer to “life in his name.” The purpose of John’s Gospel, indeed of all Scripture, is to make sinners “wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 3:15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

John reminds us that Jesus is coming to us through the testimony of these words. The fear of the disciples and the doubt of Thomas were met with the grace and peace of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. These things are not only “written” but testified to, so that we might believe also. The very lives of the disciples, who are transformed from fearful ones to faithful, courageous ones, bear witness to the hands and side of Jesus Christ for you and me. John, like Luke (Lk 1:1–4), challenges the reader to put his or her trust in this Jesus who is testified to in these words, for there is life in his name. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

20:30 *miraculous signs*. See note on 2:11. John had selected from among many. (CSB)

The word *sēmeion*, “miraculous sign,” is used in the synoptic gospels to denote the signs the Jews requested from Jesus but which he did not perform for them. It is also used of “the sign of the Son of Man,” which will appear in the last days. It is often tied to *terata* (“wonders”) as evidences accompanying the Messiah. But the synoptics do not use *sēmeion* for the miracles of Jesus; instead, they use the word *dunamis*, “power; miracle.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

However, John uses *sēmeion* 17 times, usually referring to Christ’s miracles. The “miraculous signs” are markers pointing beyond themselves to hidden divine truths. They are understood after Easter and Pentecost, but seldom when they occur. Because the Sacraments are also part of the reality toward which they point, Brown (p 186) sees them as continuations of *sēmeia*, “signs.” (See Morris, pp 684–91, for an excellent discussion of these words and their theological significance.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

The signs spoken of in verses 30 and 31 do not refer to proofs (Acts 1:3) of His resurrection, but those performed throughout His life beginning with the first miracle in Cana. Do they include His Resurrection? Yes, but it is not called that here, because it was not performed “in the presence of His disciples.” (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

in the presence of his disciples. Those who could testify to what he had done. John again stresses testimony (see note on 1:7). (CSB)

20:31 *that you may believe*.† Expresses John’s purpose. See NIV text note and Introduction: Purpose and Emphases. (CSB)

believe. See note on 1:7. (CSB)

This crucial verse summarizes John's purpose in writing his gospel, and the reason we (and everyone) should read it. John's gospel contains 98 occurrences of *pisteuō*, "to believe." "Believing and Christ are so much part of one another that the former inevitably implies the latter. . . . (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

This verse summarizes not only all of Easter but also John's Gospel account. Every sign, every word, every name and title given to Jesus is given so we may believe and have life in his name. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

John admits that his gospel reports relatively few of all the "miraculous signs" of our Lord but enough is written that you may believe, *pisteu[s]ēte*. Why is the sigma in brackets? Both readings are equally good. Without the sigma it would be a present subjunctive, "that you may continue believing." This would indicate that John was writing to Christians. However, with the sigma it is an aorist subjunctive, "that you may believe." This would indicate that John's intended readers were not yet believers. "By believing you may have life in his name" is another application of John's words in chapter 1, "In him was life" (v 4), which was based on a new relationship with God as his children. (See the earlier sermon for Palm/Passion Sunday for more on the life-giving name of Jesus.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

pisteuo - to *have faith* (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), to *entrust* (especially one's spiritual well being to Christ):—believe (-r), commit (to trust), put in trust with. – In this case the form means "to keep on believing." - This is really the purpose of John's gospel and the purpose for our witness to Scriptural truths.

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Faith has content. (CSB)

the Christ. See note on 1:25. This whole Gospel is written to show the truth of Jesus' Messiahship and to present him as the Son of God, so that the readers may believe in him. (CSB)

that by believing you may have life. Another expression of purpose—to bring about faith that leads to life (see notes on 1:4; 3:15). (CSB)

name. Represents all that he is and stands for (see note on 2:23). (CSB)

Believing . . . takes the believer out of himself and makes him one with Christ” (Morris, p 337). The phrase “in his name” is equivalent to “in him” (Newman and Nida, p 621). The name of Jesus conveys his person and all his blessings. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

John not only states the purpose of his Book, but summarizes succinctly its content. (TLSB)

20:30–31 John, the author of this Gospel, clearly states its purpose and summarizes its central message. People commonly and mistakenly think that biblical books were written mainly to provide rules for godly living. Speaking through John, God announces the Good News that Jesus is His Son and that by faith in His name, we have life and salvation—the core message of the entire Scripture. • Let me gladly share this Good News, O God, that others may believe and live. Amen. (TLSB)