

## Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

### OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 45:3-15

<sup>3</sup> Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still living?” But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence. <sup>4</sup> Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come close to me.” When they had done so, he said, “I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! <sup>5</sup> And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. <sup>6</sup> For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping. <sup>7</sup> But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. <sup>8</sup> “So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. <sup>9</sup> Now hurry back to my father and say to him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don’t delay. <sup>10</sup> You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. <sup>11</sup> I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.’ <sup>12</sup> “You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. <sup>13</sup> Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly.” <sup>14</sup> Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. <sup>15</sup> And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

**45:3** *brothers ... were terrified.* Either because they thought they were seeing a ghost or because they were afraid of what Joseph would do to them. (CSB)

The brothers feared vengeance. (TLSB)

**45:4** *I am your brother Joseph.* See v. 3; Ac 7:13. This time Joseph emphasized his relationship to them.

*you sold.* See note on 37:28. (CSB)

**45:5** *God sent me.* See vv. 7–9; Ac 7:9. God had a purpose to work through the brothers’ thoughtless and cruel act (see Ac 2:23; 4:28). (CSB)

*to preserve life.* Joseph’s Egyptian journey was a purposeful act of God, who sent him to Egypt to save thousands. God used the brothers’ sin to do His saving work (Rm 8:28; cf Jn 17:12). (TLSB)

**45:6** Joseph was now 39 years old (see 41:46, 53). (CSB)

**45:7** *a remnant*. Although none had been lost, they had escaped a great threat to them all; so Joseph called them a remnant in the confidence that they would live to produce a great people. (CSB)

**45:8** *not you ... but God*. The brothers were not the chief actors in Joseph's coming to Egypt. (TLSB)

*father*. A title of honor given to viziers (see note on 41:43) and other high officials (in the Apocrypha see 1 Maccabees 11:32). All three titles of Joseph in this verse were originally Egyptian. (CSB)

Intimate adviser to Pharaoh. (TLSB)

*lord*. Chief servant within Pharaoh's immediate circle of family and leaders (42:6; 44:18). (TLSB)

*ruler*. Having authority over the country (41:40). (TLSB)

**45:9** *hurry back ... don't delay*. Joseph is anxious to see Jacob as soon as possible (see v. 13). (CSB)

**45:10** *Goshen*. A region in the eastern part of the Nile delta, it was very fertile (see v. 18) and remains so today. (CSB)

Perhaps the primary Egyptian region for livestock. (TLSB)

**45:12** *I ... am speaking*. Not through an interpreter as before (see 42:23). (CSB)

**45:14** *fell upon his ... neck*. The brothers embraced, with the head pressed against the other's neck. (TLSB)

*wept*. See 43:30 and note. (CSB)

**45:15** *his brothers talked with him*. In intimate fellowship and friendship, rather than hostility or fear, for the first time in over 20 years (see 37:2 and note on 45:6). (CSB)

After they had recovered from their fear and were assured of his brotherly love. (TLSB)

## EPISTLE

1 Corinthians 15:21-42

**<sup>21</sup> For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. <sup>24</sup> Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God**

the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy to be destroyed is death. <sup>27</sup> For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. <sup>28</sup> When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. <sup>29</sup> Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? <sup>30</sup> And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? <sup>31</sup> I die every day—I mean that, brothers—just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord. <sup>32</sup> If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” <sup>33</sup> Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” <sup>34</sup> Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame. <sup>35</sup> But someone may ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?” <sup>36</sup> How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. <sup>37</sup> When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. <sup>38</sup> But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. <sup>39</sup> All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. <sup>40</sup> There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. <sup>41</sup> The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. <sup>42</sup> So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable

**15:21-22** Luther: “St. Paul is still speaking only about those who are Christians. These he wants to instruct and console with this article. For although also the non-Christians must all arise, this will not be to their comfort and joy, since they will arise for judgment and not for life.... I will say nothing of that great vulgar throng which seeks its pleasure and consolation only here, which [despises] God’s Word and cares not a mite for God and His kingdom. It is not surprising that such people are annoyed to hear of the blessed resurrection; for us, however, it is pure joy, because we hear that our greatest Treasure, over which we rejoice, is already in heaven above, and that only the most insignificant part remains behind; and that He will awaken this, too, and draw it after Him as easily as a person awakens from sleep” (AE 28:114–15). (TLSB)

**15:21** *death came through a man.* Through Adam (Ge 3:17–19). (CSB)

δι’ ἀνθρώπου θάνατος ... δι’ ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις—Literally, “through a man death ... through a man resurrection.” The Greek is succinct; there are no verbs and no definite articles. The translation of ἄνθρωπος as “man” (KJV, NIV, RSV) rather than “human being” (NRSV) is defensible not only for its succinctness but also because of the referents, Adam and Christ (15:22). (CC p. 566)

“In Adam all die.” All who are in Adam—his descendants, meaning all people—must suffer death because they have inherited his sin and its consequences. This is why Paul reminds us that the last enemy to be destroyed is death (v 26). Since all human beings are physical descendants of Adam, all are heirs of the physical result of his disobedience: death. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

Through one man’s disobedience, the tragedy of human suffering and death had become the common lot of all (1 Cor 15:21–22) (See also, e.g., Gen 2:17; 4:8, 23; 5:5). It was fitting, then, that it would be through the obedience of another man, the second Adam, that resurrection and life would come to all men. Later Paul would spell this out more fully in his epistle to the Romans (5:12–21). Here he sketches the Adam-Christ typology in the briefest terms. Just as Adam’s sin and death affected not only himself but all humanity, so the Corinthians needed to appreciate that Christ’s resurrection was not only for his own benefit; through this Man the resurrection from the dead had become the destiny of all believers. For just as Adam was the head of the old humanity, so that his fall left a legacy of sin and death to all, so Christ stands as head of the new humanity to be made alive in him. And—to use Luther’s fine analogy from the birth of humans and animals—“after [the head] is born, the whole body follows easily.” (CC pp. 568-569)

Cf. LW 28:110:

For the main and best part of this has already come to pass, namely, that Christ, our Head, has arisen. But now that the Head is seated on high and lives, there is no longer any reason for concern. We who cling to Him must also follow after Him as His body and His members. For where the head goes and abides, there the body with all the members must necessarily follow and abide. As in the birth of man and of all animals, the head naturally appears first, and after this is born, the whole body follows easily. (CC p. 569)

*the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.* Through Christ, the second Adam, “the last Adam” (v. 45; cf. Ro 5:12–21). (CSB)

Here St. Paul places these two types over against each other. He wants to say: “Through one man, Adam, so much was effected that all men must now die, both he and all of us who, after all, did not commit or perpetrate the offense but came into sin and death solely because we are descended from him.” Although this happens after the Fall, yet it is no longer the sin of another, but it becomes our own when we are born. That is a miserable deal and an awful judgment of God; and it would be still more terrible if we were all to remain in death eternally. But now God placed a second Man, called Christ, over against the first one, so that, just as we die without any fault of our own by reason of the first man, we shall live again by reason of Christ and without our merit. And as we in Adam have to pay solely for the fact that we are his members or his flesh and blood, so we enjoy our advantage here in Christ also solely by virtue of His being our Head. It is pure grace and gift, so that we have no works or merits to boast of here. (Luther)

“In Christ all will be made alive.” The verb *zōiopoieῩthēsontai* is first future passive indicative of *zōiopoieō*, “to make alive.” Paul contrasts the present reality of death with the future reality of resurrection. Though physical death is a certainty for everyone, it is equally certain that those in Christ will be made alive. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

**15:22** *in Adam all die*. All who are “in Adam”—i.e., his descendants—suffer death. (CSB)

ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ ... ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ—The definite articles point to both Adam and Christ as specific historical persons. (CC p. 566)

*in Christ all will be made alive.*† All who are “in Christ”—i.e., who are related to him through faith—will be made alive at the resurrection (cf. Jn 5:25; 1Th 4:16–17; Rev 20:6). (CSB)

ζωοποιηθήσονται—See this verb also in 15:36, 45. In the LXX God “is almost always the subj[ect] of ζωοποιεῖν.” He kills and *makes alive* (2 Ki 5:7; cf. 1 Sam 2:6). In the NT the subject may be God the Father (Jn 5:21; Rom 4:17; 8:11) or God the Son (Jn 5:21; 1 Cor 15:45) or God the Spirit (Jn 6:63; 2 Cor 3:6). The verb is strongly soteriological and eschatological, pointing to the triune God’s unique power in making alive through the Gospel those who are spiritually dead, and raising those who are physically dead. In Jn 5:21 and Rom 8:11 it parallels ἐγείρω. Compare Rev 20:4–6, 12–15, which portrays “the first resurrection [ἀνάστασις]” (Rev 20:5) as the spiritual resurrection of Christians in this life, when they are made alive through the Gospel. The second resurrection is the bodily resurrection of all people on Judgment Day. (CC pp. 566–567)

This latter clause in 1 Cor 15:22 (“so also in Christ all will be made alive”) must not be understood in a universalistic sense. Only “those who belong to Christ” (οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 15:23) through baptismal incorporation (“we all were baptized with one Spirit into one body,” 12:13) and by faith will receive the gift of resurrection to eternal life. Unbelievers too will be raised bodily but then will be cast into the lake of fire, which is “the second death” (Rev 20:14–15; cf. Dan 12:1–3). (CC p. 569)

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Therefore the grace, the consolation, and the joy are as great here as the misery and sadness are there, indeed, even greater. The benefit surpasses the harm done by far. If someone inflicts a slight injury on me and another compensates me richly for this, what cause for complaint do I have? It is as if a thief had stolen ten florins from me and a rich man reimbursed me with one hundred florins. Therefore when the devil kills my body with all sorts of evil, Christ again restores this to me in a state much more glorious, beautiful, and brilliant than the bright sun. Therefore we must not be concerned about our reluctance to die, but against this we must vividly picture the happiness and the joy

that will be ours in yonder life. This will be inexpressibly greater and more glorious than the damage and the woe which we now suffer from Adam. (Luther)

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**15:23** *each in his own turn.*† Christ, the firstfruits, was raised in his own time in history (c. A.D. 30), and those who are identified with Christ through faith will be raised at his second coming. His resurrection is the pledge that ours will follow. (CSB)

ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι—The word τάγμα is related to words like τάσσω, ὑποτάσσω, and τάξις, all of which have to do with “order.” A τάγμα can designate a military division; a group like the Sadducees or Essenes; or a position someone assumes, a rank. Here the context (“firstfruits, then ... then”) seems to require the meaning listed under BAGD, s.v. τάγμα, 2: “order, turn, arrangement.” (CC p. 567)

That is what is meant here when we read: “each in his own order.” These words differentiate between His resurrection and ours. For the order demands that He be the first; He must blaze the trail and produce life. After that He will gather all those who are His members and belong to the resurrection, one after another, so that they all come forth together on one day appointed by Him and live with Him eternally. (Luther)

Paul goes on to encourage the Corinthians to be patient. The end is not yet; their loved ones must still rest in the grave for a time. But everything will surely happen in its proper order. Christ’s resurrection is the great first step, the firstfruits holding the promise of everything else. Then His resurrection leaven will work through the whole church lump, as those who belong to Him (cf. Gal 5:24) will be raised when He descends from heaven on the Last Day (1 Thess 4:16). At no point in 1 Cor 15:2-28 does Paul refer to the fate of unbelievers; his concern is to bring comfort and hope to the believers (cf 1 Thess 4:18). (CC p. 569)

**WHEN HE COMES** – Gk *parousia*; commonly described a royal visit. Used 18 times in the NT for Christ’s reappearing in glory. (TLSB)

παρουσία—Of its twenty-four occurrences in the NT, παρουσία is used six times of the arrival or physical presence of people (e.g., Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, 16:17), and eighteen times of Christ’s second coming in glory—its meaning here, which the English transliteration “parousia” conveys. Deissmann showed that the word was commonly used for a royal visit. (CC p. 567)

**BELONG TO HIM** – The dead in Christ. (TLSB)

**15:24** *the end*. The second coming of Christ and all the events accompanying it. This includes his handing over the kingdom to the Father, following his destroying all dominion, authority and power of the persons and forces who oppose him. (CSB)

τὸ τέλος—J. Weiss and H. Lietzmann held the view that τὸ τέλος here means a third group or τάγμα after Christ and the redeemed. But J. Hering has shown that τέλος never means a group of people. τὸ τέλος means “the end,” particularly in the sense of God’s great goal or purpose of redemptive history. (CC p. 567)

All things on earth will come to an end, and that which we together with all saints have desired and waited for since the beginning of the world will be ushered in, namely, that God Himself will be Lord alone and rule alone in us, His children. To this rule there will be no end. He Himself explains what He means with the end when He says that He will abolish every rule and power and will alone be all in all. (Luther)

**HE HANDS OVER** – Christ, as a conquering general, now wars against sin, death, and the power of the devil. He will present His conquest to His Father, who has given Him authority to wage this war (v 28). (TLSB)

ὅταν παραδιδῶ ... ὅταν καταργήσῃ—The change from the present subjunctive παραδιδῶ in the first clause to the aorist subjunctive καταργήσῃ in the second may be significant; the aorist here indicates prior action. Thus Christ’s subjugation of the powers will precede his delivering the kingdom to the Father. The kingdom (βασιλεία, 15:24) is the *activity* of ruling, as indicated by the *verb* βασιλεύω in 15:25. (CC p. 567)

At the appointed time, *then* Christ’s second coming will usher in the consummation of the age (1 Cor 15:24). The conjunction “then” (15:24) does not necessarily indicate that there will be a marked interval between his return and his handing over the kingdom to the Father. Rather, the triumphant Messiah may be compared to a nobleman who had journeyed to a far country to receive a kingdom and then to return (Luke 19:12). All authority had been entrusted to him for this assignment (Matthew 11:27; 28:1). In the course of His campaigns against the enemies of the kingdom, he had bound up the “strong man” (Satan) and plundered his goods (Mark 3:22-27), so that Satan’s former possessions now belong to the conqueror. The He hands over His people to His God and father, having deposed all spiritual and temporal authorities and powers (1 Cor. 15:24). (CC p. 569)

**TO GOD THE FATHER** – τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί—Literally this phrase reads “to the God and Father.” This is a good example of Sharp’s rule: “When the copulative καί connects two nouns of the same case, ... of personal description, ... if the article ... precedes the first of the said nouns or particles, and is not repeated before the second noun or particle, the latter always relates to the same person.” (CC p. 567)

There is no personal pronoun “his” in the Greek phrase. But Jesus often referred to God as “my God” (e.g., Mt 27:46) and “my Father” (e.g., Mt 10:32). Since the plural pronoun ἡμῶν (“our”)

is not used, Paul probably has in mind Jesus' unique relationship with the Father. That relationship is indicated by inserting "his" in the translation above. (CC p. 568)

**ALL DOMINION, AUTHORITY AND POWER** – Spiritual powers that manifest themselves in sinful institutions and orders on earth. (TLSB)

The texts parallel to 15:24 make it clear Paul has in mind primarily hostile spiritual powers: the devil and his forces (Cf. Eph 1:21; 2:2; 3:10; 6:12). But his terminology is comprehensive, and he may well have been thinking also of hostile human authorities: kings, rules, and all anti-Christian forces who under the influence of demonic forces range themselves against the Lord and His Anointed. (CC p. 570)

Psalm 2; Acts 4:25–28; 2 Thess 2:8; Rev 19:19. Revelation portrays the anti-Christian forces as consisting of an unholy trinity, composed of Satan—the dragon (Revelation 12)—and two beasts (Revelation 13). The second beast later becomes “the false prophet” (Rev 16:13; 19:20; 20:10) and also the “harlot” (Rev 17:1, 5, 15–16; 19:2). The harlot riding the beast represents Babylon (Rev 17:1–6), which would refer to Rome, and to every oppressive power, especially when a false religious power unites with a governmental power to persecute the church. See the commentary on Rev 17:1–6 and the excursus “Is the Harlot the Antichrist?” in L. Brighton, *Revelation*, 435–45, 481–83. (CC p. 570)

Hays finds in the terms “ruler,” “authority,” and “power” (1 Cor 15:24) not only a reference to “cosmic spheres or forces” but also “concrete political implications” (*First Corinthians*, 265). While Hays' suggestion that this text has “political implications” and that Paul's doctrine of the resurrection is “subversive” outruns the evidence, he is probably right in maintaining that Paul would include among the powers whose days are numbered “the ideology of imperial Rome” with its cities “replete with statues and temples dedicated to the glory of the Roman rulers.” (CC p. 570)

Christ's triumph over these powers (1 Cor 15:25) fulfilled God's plan as it had been laid down in Ps 110:1. David says: The Lord says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.” (CC p. 570)

Paul cites the psalm freely to show the divinely ordained necessity that Christ should triumph over death and ascend to the Father's right hand, where he is enthroned and rules in the midst of his defeated foes (Ps 110:2). (CC p. 570)

Note how Paul differs from LXX Ps 109:1 (MT/ET 110:1) by inserting πάντα (“all his enemies”) and by altering the LXX's ὑποπόδιον (“footstool”) to ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας (“under the/his feet”). Paul may have effected these changes in order to make Psalm 110 (cited in 1 Cor 15:25) and Psalm 8 (cited in 1 Cor 15:27) echo one another according to the rabbinic method of *gezerah shawah* (“equal category”). Compare the citation of both Ps 110:1 and Ps 8:5–7 in close proximity in Heb 1:13–2:9 and in early Christian writings. See, for example, D. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973). On *gezerah shawah* (הַגְּזֵרָה שְׁוָה), see R. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, second ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1999) 20. (CC p. 570)



His regency would continue until *all* his enemies had been subjugated completely. Paul adds “all” to the quote in 1 Cor 15:25 and places “all” first in the Greek of 15:27 to emphasize it. (CC p. 570)

**15:25-27** *He. Christ. last enemy ... death.* Contrary to notions of death as friendly and suicide as a solution, the Bible describes death as our enemy. The Lord created us for life, not death. Death is destroyed by the gift of eternal life in Christ. *subjection under His feet.* Paul applies these verses to Jesus. He is the man by whom God fulfills His purposes for all humankind. “There is and remains in Christ only one divine omnipotence, power, majesty, and glory, which is peculiar to the divine nature alone. But it shines, manifests, and exercises itself fully—yet voluntarily—in, with, and through the received, exalted human nature in Christ. In glowing iron there are not two kinds of power to shine and burn. But the power to shine and to burn is a property of the fire. Since the fire is united with the iron, it manifests and exercises this power to shine and to burn in, with, and through the glowing iron. From this union also the glowing iron has the power to shine and to burn without changing the essence and the natural properties of fire and iron. This guides how we understand the testimonies of Scripture that speak of the majesty to which the human nature in Christ is exalted” (FC SD VIII 66–67). (TLSB)

**15:25** *For he must reign.*† During this process of Christ’s destroying all dominion and handing over the kingdom to the Father, Christ must reign (Rev 20:1–6). Some take this to mean that Christ will literally reign with his saints for 1,000 years on the earth. But this refers to Christ’s reign over the course of history and in the lives of his people, who are spiritually raised, or born again. This reign is viewed as continuing throughout the present age. (CSB)

*under his feet.* An OT figure for complete conquest. Verse 25 is an allusion to Ps 110:1 (cf. Mt 22:44). (CSB)

Paul cites the psalm freely to show the divinely ordained necessity that Christ should triumph over death and ascend to the Father’s right hand, where He is enthroned and rules in the midst of His defeated foes. His regency would continue until all His enemies had been subjected completely. Paul adds “all” to the quote and places “all” first in the Greek of 15:27 to emphasize it. (CC p. 570)

For through the Gospel and through Christendom He strikes the factious spiritually, repels the devil, dethrones the tyrants, subdues the raging and raving of the world, deprives sin and death of their strength and might, etc. This is His work which He pursues and in which He engages until the Last Day, only that He now does this piecemeal and by degrees. Then, however, He will knock the bottom out of the barrel and put an end to everything at one time. (Luther)

**15:26** THE LAST ENEMY – This destruction of death will occur at the end of the second-coming events after Christ conquers his enemies (Rev 19:11–21; 20:5–14), at the great white throne judgment (when death and Hades will be thrown into the lake of fire). (CSB)

ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς καταργεῖται ὁ θάνατος—Literally, “death is destroyed as last enemy.” “Death” is the subject of the sentence because it is preceded by the definite article, while “last enemy” (without the article) is the complement. The verb applies to a future event, but the verb’s present tense “strikes a note of vividness and certainty.” (CC p. 568)

A little later Paul will call death an “enemy” with a vicious sting,” “the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law” (1 Cor 15:56). Humankind fears death as a hostile and destructive force (Heb 2:15) and the punishment for sin (Rom 6:23). (CC p. 570)

Luther sees death as “the last enemy” (15:26) because it outlasts the Christian’s other enemies (the flesh, the devil, the world, sin, and the Law): “Thus these enemies can deal with us only here on earth; after that they have to cease. Death, however, survives all the others and holds us in his power” (LW 28:136). (CC p. 570)

As long as people continue to die as the wages of their sin, inherited from Adam, who rebelled against the Creator, God’s good and gracious will for His creation is not yet brought to completion. But after all Christ’s people have been raised to life at His second coming, there will be no more death (Rev. 21:4). (CC p. 570-571)

The fact that death is our spiritual enemy has immense significance for Christian existence and Christian funerals. Sometimes at funerals one hears comments such as these: “We shouldn’t be sad; we should only rejoice. This is a victory celebration.” To be sure, there is a sense in which that is true. But death, the last enemy and sign of sin’s universal dominion over fallen humanity, will not be swallowed up until the Last Day (1 Cor 15:54), and Christians are free to grieve at the death of their loved ones. God never intended the pain of separation and the heartache that attends death. That sharp pain of grief can be an entirely appropriate manifestation of the biblical understanding that death is the enemy that has not yet been fully overcome. And so Christians may and should mourn at funerals—but not as those who have no hope (1 Thess 4:13–18). (CC p. 571)

Paul’s depiction of death as “the last enemy” to be defeated finds a graphic parallel in Revelation, where the unholy trinity of the beast, the false prophet, and the devil are thrown into the lake of fire, to be followed at last by “death” and Hades (Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14). (CC p. 571)

See the commentary on those verses in L. Brighton, *Revelation*, 522, 575–76, 586–87. To speak of death as an “enemy” is important both for Paul’s culture and for our own. Just as ancient Stoics and Gnostics welcomed death as the soul’s release from the body, so today advocates of euthanasia and suicide speak of death as a “friend.” (CC p. 571)

**15:28** *the Son himself will be made subject to him.*† The Son will be made subject to the Father in the sense that administratively, after he subjects all things to his power, he will then turn it all over to God the Father, the administrative head. This is not to suggest that the Son is in any way inferior to the Father. All three persons of the Trinity are equal in deity and in dignity. The subordination referred to is one of function (see note on

11:3). The Father is supreme in the Trinity; the Son carries out the Father's will (e.g., in creation, redemption); the Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son to vitalize life, communicate God's truth, apply his salvation to people through the means of grace and enable them to obey God's will (or word). (CSB)

*so that God may be all in all.* The triune God will be shown to be supreme and sovereign in all things. (CSB)

Luther: "Everybody will find all wants that are now satisfied by all things satisfied in God Himself. When He will reveal Himself, we will be satisfied in body and soul and will no longer stand in need of so many things as we now do here on earth" (AE 28:141–42). (TLSB))

**15:29–34** From frustration, Paul resorts to sarcasm and even mockery. (TLSB)

**15:29** *hose ... who are baptized for the dead.* † The present tense suggests that at Corinth people were currently being baptized for the dead. But because Paul does not give any more information about the practice, many attempts have been made to interpret the concept. Three of these are: 1. Living believers were being baptized for believers who died before they were baptized, so that they too, in a sense, would not miss out on baptism. 2. Christians were being baptized in anticipation of the resurrection of the dead. 3. New converts were being baptized to fill the ranks of Christians who had died. At any rate, Paul mentions this custom almost in passing, using it in his arguments substantiating the resurrection of the dead, but without necessarily approving the practice. Possibly Paul is citing an improper practice, similar to that of modern Mormons, as an example of people who believe in the resurrection. Probably the passage will always remain obscure. (CSB)

Lit, "What will the ones being baptized do over the dead?" Dozens of interpretations have been offered. Paul points out the irony that some Corinthians did not believe in the resurrection, yet held an opinion or practice based on the resurrection. He only alludes to the opinion or practice, which could have been (1) conducting Baptisms in graveyards to express hope in the resurrection of those who die in Christ (similar to Easter sunrise services held in church graveyards); (2) requests for Baptisms because of the inspiring examples of those who died; or (3) Baptisms that would somehow benefit those who had already died (though Paul never mentions a specific benefit). Gnostic groups developed practices based on this last interpretation (consider Mormon practices, which also misapply this text). Take note—Paul's ironic questions are no basis for novel practices. Instead, Christians should base their baptismal practices on Christ's clear command in Mt 28:19–20 and rejoice in the hope of the resurrection expressed through Baptism (Rm 6:3–5). (TLSB)

**15:30** *why do we endanger ourselves every hour?* If there is no resurrection, why should we suffer persecution and privation for Christ every day (cf. 2Co 11:23–29)? (CSB)

Paul asks rhetorically, "Why would I risk my life for things I don't truly believe in?" Cf Ac 18:5–6, 9, 12–13. (TLSB)

**15:32–33** To his Greek detractors, Paul quotes two Greek opinions: (1) a gross hedonist view that the good in life is only in pleasure, with no hope of an afterlife; (2) a saying by the Greek comic poet Menander that refutes gross hedonism. Even the Greek tradition gave helpful examples and warnings, which the Corinthians ignored. (TLSB)

**15:32** *I fought wild beasts in Ephesus.*† This statement can be taken literally or figuratively. Although from Ac 19 we have no evidence of Paul suffering imprisonment and having to face the lions, Luke’s account is highly selective. The events recorded in Ac 19 could have occurred within three weeks of Paul’s three-year stay. (CSB)

*Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.* See Isa 22:13; a fitting philosophy of life if there is no resurrection. (CSB)

**15:33** A quotation from the Greek comedy *Thais* written by the Greek poet Menander, whose writings the Corinthians would know. The application of the quotation is that those who are teaching that there is no resurrection (v. 12) are the “bad company,” and they are corrupting the “good character” of those who hold to the correct doctrine. Cf. Pr 13:20. (CSB)

**15:34** *stop sinning.* The sin of denying that there is a resurrection and thus doubting even the resurrection of Christ, all of which had a negative effect on the lives they were living. (CSB)

*some who are ignorant of God.* Even in the Corinthian church. This, Paul says, is a shameful situation.

Sarcasm and hyperbole. Such sins were certainly affecting some in the congregation, but Paul shames them all alike. (TLSB)

**15:12–34** The Corinthians take pride in their wisdom, but Paul tears apart their arguments with basic logic and rhetoric. Logic, rhetoric, and even sarcasm have their uses in preaching and teaching the Gospel. Yet all our powers and wisdom must remain subject to the Lord, who is “all in all.” The Lord refuted sin, death, Satan, and all our foes—not with reason but with acts: His death and resurrection for our redemption. • Victorious Savior, daily put to death my foolish pride and wisdom, and teach me the way of humility and self-sacrifice. In the daily repentance and renewal of Baptism, may I partake of Your sufferings so that I may partake of Your resurrection. Amen. (TLSB)

**15:35–49** In discussing the nature of the resurrection body, Paul compares it to plant life (vv. 36–38), to fleshly beings (v. 39) and to celestial and earthly physical bodies (vv. 40–41). (CSB)

**15:35–41** Paul provides three examples from God’s created order to illustrate the principle of resurrection. The main point is v 38: we have the body and life that God chooses. Just as our

current existence depends on His choices at creation, our eternal existence depends on His choice in redemption: resurrection unto life. (TLSB)

**15:35–37** Paul presents the question not as an honest inquiry but as a foolish attempt to cast doubt on the resurrection. Just as the “death” of a seed produces something greater and more fruitful, our death and resurrection in Christ will produce still greater fruit. (TLSB)

**15:36–38** Plant organisms, though organized similarly in their own order, are different; the seed sown is related to the new plant that sprouts, but the new sprout has a different and genuinely new body that God has given it.

**15:39** *All flesh is not the same.* Although there is much that is similar in the organizational character of fleshly beings, each species is different: man, animals, birds, fish. (CSB)

**15:40–41** Here the analogy involves inanimate objects of creation: the sun, moon and stars with their differing splendor, and the earthly bodies (possibly the great mountains, canyons and seas) with their splendor. In it all, God can take similar physical material and organize it differently to accomplish his purpose.

**15:42–44** In applying these analogies, the apostle says that in the case of the resurrection of the dead, God will take a perishable, dishonorable, weak (and sinful) body—“a natural body” characterized by sin—and in the resurrection make it an imperishable, glorious, powerful body. “Spiritual body” does not mean a nonmaterial body but, from the analogies, a physical one similar to the present natural body organizationally, but radically different in that it will be imperishable, glorious and powerful, fit to live eternally with God. There is continuity, but there is also change.

**15:42–44a** *perishable ... imperishable.* This wordplay describes how God transforms the body for heavenly existence. Paul mentions the brokenness of our bodies in death, but the whole force of argument compels respect for the body, as one respects and sows a seed anticipating greatness. The groundwork for respectful Christian funerals is laid in this passage. “The body is put to death (mortified) because of present sin that is still left in the flesh. Death itself serves this purpose, namely, to abolish this flesh of sin, that we may rise absolutely new” (Ap XIIB 55–56). (TLSB)

GOSPEL  
LUKE 6:27-38

**<sup>27</sup> “But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. <sup>29</sup> If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. <sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. <sup>31</sup> Do to others as you would have them do to you. <sup>32</sup> “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> And if you do good to those**

who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ do that. <sup>34</sup> And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ lend to ‘sinners,’ expecting to be repaid in full. <sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

**6:27-34** The second section of the Sermon on the Plain is called “The Imperatives of Catechesis” because of the sixteen imperatives that occur in 6:27–38. There is a natural connection between this section and the previous one. If the beatitudes and woes describe the characteristics of disciples or catechumens, who are incorporated into Christ in Baptism, this imperatival section describes the shape of the catechumen’s life as he shares in the life of Christ. The beatitudes describe “being” and this series of catechetical imperatives describe “doing.” (CC p. 291)

**6:27-28** LOVE...DO...BLESS...CURSE – ἀγαπάτε ... ποιείτε ... εὐλογεῖτε ... προσεύχεσθε—These four imperatives are present tense, suggesting continuing action, and they are second person *plural*. (CC p. 280)

Jesus clarifies how love for an enemy expresses itself concretely—in blessing and interceding for them. Later in Luke’s accounts, Jesus and Stephen fulfill this command in remarkable and similar ways (Lk 23:34; Ac 7:60). (TLSB)

**6:27** *Love your enemies.* The heart of Jesus’ teaching is love. While the Golden Rule (v. 31) is sometimes expressed in negative form outside the Bible, Jesus not only forbids treating others spitefully but also commands that we love everyone—even our enemies. (CSB)

Jesus takes love, the heart of His teaching, to an unexpectedly deeper level by commanding that His disciples love their enemies. (TLSB)

In the first section, the eight imperatives begin with the imperative that will govern the next six: “Love your enemies” (6:27). This radical command is a call to action, not just emotion, for to love one’s enemies requires an unnatural act of the will. Your enemies are those who hate and persecute you, and the final beatitude (6:22–23) describes hateful persecution in detail (cf. 1:71 in the Benedictus: “salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us”). The context here is religious persecution, which Jesus pictures as an inevitable consequence of being part of the baptized community. The general attitude that Christians must have is love for all who persecute them “on account of the Son of Man” (6:22). (CC p. 292)

**6:29** *turn to him the other.* We are not to have a retaliatory attitude. (CSB)

*cloak ... tunic.* The cloak was the outer coat, under which the tunic was worn. (CSB)

Give the inner garment also to one demanding the outer one. Note how this command goes beyond the one spoken by John the Baptist (3:11). (TLSB)

To survive one had to have an outer garment, but Jesus instructs his followers to give up both the inner and the outer garments. This is not to surrender to a robber, but to the persecutor who hates the believer so much that he would take away the outer garment that is essential to survival. The Christian is not even to struggle to hold on to the inner garment but willingly to allow his persecutors to strip him naked. The believer may be stripped of his property as well, and he should not demand back from those who take his things (Heb 10:34). Disciples must be prepared to be treated violently and stripped of their clothes and their material goods. If they have the mind of Christ in the beatitudes, then they will accept such persecution as to be expected (cf. Jn 15:18–21, 25). (CC p. 293)

The hearer cannot help but think of Jesus' passion, when he himself willingly was beaten and stripped in fulfillment of such prophecies as Is 50:4–11. Jesus himself had no possessions or property except the robe he wore, and even that he gave up without demanding it back. Again, the Sermon on the Plain is Christological, and everything Jesus asks of his disciples, he himself has first done on their behalf. (CC p. 293)

See Exodus 22:26 and note below:

“If ever you take your neighbor’s cloak in a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down.” (ESV)

Shows the high value of garments, due to the labor and material required to make them by hand. Each evening, out of compassion for the borrower (who needed it to keep warm at night), the lender should return the cloak used as collateral. This large, square outer garment was wrapped around the body or draped over the shoulder, similar to a Roman toga, and reached down to the knees.

**6:31** *as you wish that others*. The Golden Rule. Jesus sets down a variation of “love your neighbor as yourself” (Lv 19:18). (TLSB)

**6:32–34** People typically do favors in order to gain favors. The Roman saying “I give so that you give” (*do ut des*) perfectly encapsulates the spirit of this ethic. Jesus, however, expects more of His followers. He commands them to reflect God’s love by giving without expecting any payback. (TLSB)

**6:32** WHAT CREDIT IS THAT TO YOU – ποία ὑμῖν χάρις ἐστίν—This is translated literally as “grace” instead of “credit” (RSV and NASB) or “thank” (KJV) to emphasize that God’s grace is a gift that moves the recipient to give freely without expecting “thanks” or “credit.” (CC p. 280)

The golden rule in terms of *quid pro quo* is something even unregenerate sinners are capable of doing occasionally. But as the beatitudes state, those in Christ are enabled by his grace to do what Christ does, and this is most clearly expressed in the ability to give above and beyond the golden rule. (CC p. 294)

**6:35 BUT – πλήν**—This strong adversative brings us back to the theme “love your enemies.” (CC p. 280)

**EXPECTING TO GET ANYTHING – μηδὲν ἀπελπίζοντες**—The textual variant μηδένα (**W**  $\Xi$  *pc* *sy*<sup>s,p</sup>) suggests the translation “despairing no one.” This is an attempt to ameliorate the difficulty of the usual meaning (“despair”) in this context. Most translations are similar to “expecting nothing in return.” (CC p. 280)

Lk repeatedly emphasizes the undeserved and unconditional nature of God’s mercy. Cf 7:36–50; 15:11–32; 18:9–14. (TLSB)

**6:36 BE MERCIFUL – οἰκτίρμονες ... οἰκτίρων**—This adjective only occurs elsewhere in the NT in James 5:11. Cf. οἰκτιρμός in Rom 12:1: “by the mercies of God”; 2 Cor 1:3: “the Father of mercies”; Phil 2:1; Col 3:12). It is often used in the LXX in connection with ἐλεήμων. I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 265, notes that “the concept is close in meaning to ἔλεος (cf. 1:50 note; 10:37) but stresses more the idea of sympathy and pity shown to the unfortunate and needy.” J. Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 641, notes that God is said to be merciful (οἰκτίρων) in the LXX at Ex 34:6; Deut 4:31; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2. (CC pp. 280-81)

*just as your Father is merciful.* God’s perfection should be our example and goal (see Mt 5:48). (CSB)

**6:27–36** Jesus overthrows the common ethics of human culture to emphasize the Father’s ways of love and mercy. God calls you to have self-sacrificing love. Pray for wisdom and patience with yourself as you put God’s ways into practice. The Father of all mercy will hear your plea. He is ever ready to forgive and strengthen you. • Lord, lead me to love the ungrateful and the evil, even as You have loved and cared for me. Amen. (TLSB)

### *Judging Others*

**<sup>37</sup> “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. <sup>38</sup> Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”**

**6:37-38** After a great climax in the sermon: “Become merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (6:36), there come practical examples of how this mercy is to be shown to others. The prohibition against judging or condemning is not about legitimate judicial decisions in a court of law, but rather, it refers to judgments of believers against unbelievers, and particularly those judgments in the Christian assembly among



believers (e.g., Romans 14). These would not simply be the normal kinds of petty criticisms that take place in every community, but judgments and condemnations about doctrine and life that are made without substantial evidence or are based on a faulty understanding of God's standards. Above all, since Jesus' disciples represent him and he represents the Father, Jesus does not want his disciples to misrepresent God. If they themselves are judgmental or legalistic, they sully God's character as a God of grace. While it is true that God will also judge all people, he reveals himself through Jesus and his disciples as a God who delights in showing mercy, not in condemnation (Ezekiel 18, especially v 32). Therefore, Jesus' disciples are to be characterized by mercy and forgiveness and thus portray God's character to the world. (CC p. 295)

**6:37** *Do not judge.* Jesus did not relieve his followers of the need for discerning right and wrong (cf. vv. 43–45), but he condemned unjust and hypocritical judging of others. (CSB)

Because one's behavior toward others often ends up being paid back in kind—indeed, sometimes even to a greater degree—Jesus continues urging His disciples to be long-suffering. In particular, He prohibits condemning others and instead commends forgiveness. (TLSB)

JUDGE...CONDEMN – μὴ κρίνετε ... μὴ κριθῆτε—In this section (Lk 6:37–38) there are four present, active imperatives (implying continuous action) in the first part of each sentence (the first two stated in the negative and balanced by two positive imperatives). The first two are in synonymous parallelism, as are the last two: “do not judge” parallels “do not condemn,” and “forgive” parallels “give.” Each of the four imperatives is followed by a corresponding passive verb. The first two passives are aorist subjunctives with μή, a strong negation; the last two are future. These four passive verbs are theological passives with God implied as the subject: you will not be judged or condemned *by God*, and you will be forgiven and it will be given to you *by God*. (CC p. 281)

FORGIVE – ἀπολύετε—“Forgive” is best here (RSV, KJV, NIV) although “pardon” (NASB) or “acquit” also fit the context as antonyms of “judge” and “condemn.” The Lukan theme of forgiveness employs a variety of vocabulary. ἀφίημι is the more common Lukan verb for “forgive,” occurring thirty-one times in Luke; see especially 5:20–21, 23–24. Its noun ἄφεσις (“release”) occurs twice in the programmatic verse 4:18. ἀπολύω occurs fourteen times in Luke, often meaning “let go, dismiss, send away,” but with the connotation of God's grace and favor on the departing person in 2:29; 8:38; 9:12. Jesus uses it in a physical healing in 13:12. In the passion narrative, it describes the “release” of Barabbas (23:18, 25), though Pilate wished to “release” Jesus (23:16, 20, 22). (CC p. 281)

“If you forgive, you have this comfort and assurance, that you are forgiven in heaven. This is not because of your forgiving. For God forgives freely and without condition, out of pure grace, because He has so promised, as the Gospel teaches. But God says this in order that He may establish forgiveness as our confirmation and assurance, as a sign alongside of the promise” (LC III 95–96). (TLSB)

**6:38** *poured into your lap.* Probably refers to the way the outer garment was worn, leaving a fold over the belt that could be used as a large pocket to hold a measure of wheat. (CSB)

A generous portion of grain could be poured into the fold of one's cloak over the belt. Cf Ru 3:15. (TLSB)

μέτρον καλὸν πεπιεσμένον σεσαλευμένον ὑπερεκχυννόμενον δώσουσιν εἰς τὸν κόλπον ὑμῶν—Jesus uses the image of corn or grain poured into a vessel where it is pressed down and shaken to make room for more to the point of overflowing, then poured into the fold of a garment (like a pocket) and taken home. The prophet Amos said much the same thing as Jesus did here, but in negative form, when he condemned Israel for selling grain with dishonest scales and small measuring containers (Amos 8:4–6; cf. Micah 6:9–12). (CC p. 281)

Market practices for packing grain to guarantee a good deal. (TLSB)