

LUKE

Chapter 10

Jesus Sends Out the Seventy-two

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. 2 And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. 3 Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. 4 Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ 6 And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. 7 And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. 8 Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. 9 Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ 10 But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 11 ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ 12 I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

10:1 *appointed seventy-two.* Recorded only in Luke, though similar instructions were given to the Twelve (Mt 9:37–38; 10:7–16; Mk 6:7–11; cf. Lk 9:3–5). Certain differences in early manuscripts make it unclear as to whether the number was 72 or 70. Jesus covered Judea with his message as thoroughly as he had Galilee. (CSB)

Selected or chosen, just as Jesus had previously done when he appointed the Twelve (6:12–16) and then sent them out (9:1–6). *seventy-two.* May subtly symbolize the number of Gentile nations around Israel. On that understanding, Jesus broadens the scope of the outreach here, building on what He had just done in reaching out to Samaritans (9:52). (TLSB)

ἑβδομήκοντα [δύο]—These are seventy (-two) other disciples apart from the Twelve (see comments on the audiences of Luke in the introduction and comments on disciples in the Sermon on the Plain at 6:20–49.) The manuscript evidence here for seventy or seventy-two is evenly divided. One must evaluate the intrinsic evidence of probabilities. The symbolic value of the two numbers becomes important for deciding what Luke might have written or copyists changed. Here it depends somewhat on the interpreter. The easier reading would be “seventy,” to show that Jesus is like Moses who chose seventy elders (Num 11:16–17, 25; cf. also Ex 24:1, 9–14). As the feeding of the five thousand (9:10–17) showed, Jesus is the new Moses for Luke. However, there is strong textual support for seventy-two at 10:1 and 10:17, and it is the more difficult reading thematically. And so “two” is included in parentheses in the translation (see B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 150–51; see also J. Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 549–55; J. Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 845–46; I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 414–15). It is likely that Jesus spoke of seventy-two and Luke wrote the same, but that later scribes introduced seventy, recalling Moses. (CC p. 436)

While Jesus’ focus was on the Twelve, many others also followed him. How they were selected we can only imagine. Undoubtedly devoted followers, they also must have been bold and

trusting. They were sent to prepare the way for Jesus. Lenski suggests that Jesus' route would take Him "along the border of southern Galilee and down along the eastern side of the Jordan and through Perea" (Lenski, 565). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

two by two. During his ministry in Galilee, Jesus had also sent out the Twelve two by two, a practice continued in the early church (Ac 13:2; 15:27, 39–40; 17:14; 19:22). (CSB)

ἀνὰ δύο [δύο]—By sending two out at a time, Jesus fulfills the OT requirements (Deut 19:15; Num 35:30) that two witnesses are necessary if there is to be any judgment made, as there will be in Lk 10:10–15. (CC p. 436)

Matthew 18:19, "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven."

10:2 *harvest is plentiful* – ὁ μὲν θερισμὸς πολὺς—The image of the harvest recalls the parable of the sower (8:4–8). The seventy (-two) are sent out both to sow the seed and to "bring in the sheaves." Bringing hearers into the church is the harvest of the "now" in preparation for the harvest of the "not yet." (CC p. 436)

The Church continues praying that the Lord will raise up new generations of workers to harvest souls unto eternal life. (TLSB)

A familiar verse about a plentiful harvest but few workers. Isn't this a problem in our church today. There never seems to be enough church workers! Jesus not only sends these 70, He also instructs them to ask the Lord of the harvest to multiply their numbers. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

John 4:35, "Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest."

1 Corinthians 3:6-9, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. ⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸ The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. ⁹ For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building."

- If you don't cut grain when it is ripe it will spoil. If we miss our opportunity with unbelievers we may not get another one.

10:3 *go your way* – ἰδοὺ ἀποστέλλω ὑμᾶς—"Behold" (ἰδοὺ) alerts the hearer to the significance of this statement. Like the Twelve (9:2), the seventy (-two) are *sent*; they *represent* the one who sent them. (CC p. 436)

lambs in the midst of wolves – It's not comforting to be compared to a lamb sent among wolves. Please note, not just sheep, but lambs. The picture expresses a danger about which Jesus briefly, but clearly, warns them. The comforting news is the identity of the sender: "I [Jesus] am sending you [ἀποστέλλω ὑμᾶς ὑμᾶς]," with the implications that those sent will be protected by Him. They are sent with His authority. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

The commission of the seventy (-two) is *Christological and sacrificial* in nature. Jesus subtly implies this when he describes them "as lambs in the midst of wolves" (10:3). (In Is 11:6 and 65:25, wolves and lambs will dwell together in peace in the eschaton as a little child leads them.)

By describing them as lambs, Jesus suggests that they will be rejected and suffer the consequences of announcing the presence of the kingdom of God. They enter a cruciform ministry of preaching and healing that will receive the hostility of the world and result in violence. Like their Lord, they will become sacrificial victims of the Gospel that calls for a reversal of the world's values. After the calling of the Twelve and the description of the passion, Jesus had told the Twelve about their own cross-bearing as his followers (9:23). To save their life they must lose it. They are *sacrificial lambs*, who go forth in full knowledge of the world's enmity. But in their proclamation they will show that they are not ashamed of Jesus and his words. They are part of that privileged group to whom the Father, through Jesus, has revealed the secrets of the kingdom of God (10:21 and 8:9–10). Lk 10:17–20 describes the success of the mission of the seventy (-two) in eschatological terms, and 10:21–24 seems to resemble Jewish wisdom sayings concerning eschatological secrets. (CC pp. 441-442)

Moreover, the seventy (-two) carry in themselves, in their own bodies, Jesus' redemption and his peace. The peace that has come down from above in Jesus they can now give—and receive back when it is not received. As his emissaries, they now represent Jesus. They carry “in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in [their] body” (2 Cor 4:10). This is *the Christological principle of representation* according to which the emissaries bear in themselves the person of Christ. In bearing the cross daily, they also bear the image of Passover lamb who must be sacrificed for the people. Thus the twelve disciples and the seventy (-two) follow the pattern of sacrifice first exhibited in the prophets, “from the blood of Abel until the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar [θυσιαστηρίου] and the temple-house [τοῦ οἴκου]” (11:51). As Jesus said to them: “Many prophets and kings wished to see what things you are seeing” (10:24). By calling the seventy (-two) “lambs,” Jesus says they must depend completely on the Lord and expect to give up their lives for the kingdom. (CC p. 442)

Stephen will be the first disciple to suffer the death of a sacrificial lamb. He is the first of many martyrs who follow Jesus' pattern of suffering and death. His death by stoning takes place outside of the city (Acts 7:58) because the temple is no longer the place of sacrifice (cf. Heb 13:12–13). (CC p. 442)

Warns that Christian witness will often be met with opposition and even persecution (cf 21:12–19). (TLSB)

Matthew 28:20, “...And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

10:4 *carry no money bag, no knapsack or sandals.* They were to travel light, without moneybag, luggage or extra sandals. (CSB)

It won't take these people long to pack! No purse, no bag, no sandals (probably meaning no extra sandals), and no small talk on the road. Jesus has already dealt with any objections in His discourse on the cost of discipleship in the previous chapter. The admonition now is simply to go! The implied promise is that all of their needs will be met. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

μη ... βαλλάντιον, μη πήραν, μη ὑποδήματα—Only πήραν, “bag,” from 9:3 is repeated here, although purse, bag, and sandals are repeated in 22:35. See comments at 9:1–6. (CC p. 436)

greet no one. They were not to stop along the way to visit and exchange customary lengthy greetings. The mission was urgent. (CSB)

Polite greetings could be time-consuming, involving long discussions of one's family. (TLSB)

μηδένα κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἀσπάσησθε—Normally faithful Israelites would greet one another while traveling. The command not to do so suggests the earnestness and single-mindedness the disciples must have about their mission. Elijah gave the same command to Gehazi for the same reason (2 Ki 4:29). Cf. textual note on 9:61. (CC p. 436)

Psalm 37:5, “Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this.”

Matthew 6:33, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

10:5-6 Greetings delivered from the Lord are not mere formalities, but actually impart a blessing. (TLSB)

10:5 *house you enter* – Instructions are brief and simple: the house is entered, the peace is extended. Although it appears at first that the houses entered are the result of a door-to-door cold-calling campaign, the parallel text in Mt. 10:11 indicates that the 12 disciples are to “search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

οικίαν—On the house as a precedent to the early house church, see comments in the introduction and at 9:4. (CC p. 436)

peace – εἰρήνη—On “peace,” see comments at 1:79. This is an eschatological greeting of the messianic kingdom. It will be the greeting that Jesus will speak to the disciples after the resurrection (24:36). It is not just a word, but a divine blessing that goes out, may abide, or may return. This divine blessing rests upon the disciples and those who receive them. (CC pp. 436 – 437)

Note their priorities. “First day ‘peace to this house.’” This peace is more than a pious wish. Jesus refers to a greeting from them as apostles and bearers of His own divine peace. By their greeting they are to extend this peace as Jesus Himself did in John 20:19. This peace is an objective gift, the peace wrought by the Gospel, which makes God our-friend and us His children so that all is well with us. It is to be a permanent possession. And from it the subjective felling and enjoyment of peace are to flow. This feeling may fluctuate, but its sources is permanent, and the feeling can be thus be renewed again and again” (Lenski, Luke 570). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

In the context of John 20:19-23, peace has to do with the Holy Spirit and with forgiveness: “‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you.’ And with that He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive them, they are forgiven’” (John 20:21-23). In other words, there is a strong connection among peace, the Holy Spirit, and forgiveness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

10:6 *a son of peace* – Peace is either warmly and thankfully received or coldly and quickly rejected. There will be no doubt whether or not the occupant of the house is a person of peace. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

One who receives God's messengers worthily. Cf v 16. (TLSB)

will return to you – Only those who receive a blessing in good faith will actually benefit from it. (TLSB)

10:7 *remain in...what provide* – ἐν αὐτῇ δὲ τῇ οἰκίᾳ μένετε ἐσθίοντες καὶ πίνοντες τὰ παρ’ αὐτῶν —Here are the elements of table fellowship that will be continued in the worship of the post-Pentecost church: preaching and eating and drinking in the presence of Christ. The place is the house church (ἐν αὐτῇ δὲ τῇ οἰκίᾳ). The presence of Christ comes and abides through the presence of the seventy (-two) (μένετε; see 24:29) and through the word of the kingdom (10:9, 11), and the eating and drinking creates an intimate fellowship with God’s messengers. Those who receive and provide hospitality are welcoming into their house the preaching and feasting of the kingdom, that is, the Gospel. In this way also, the messengers’ need for physical sustenance and temporary shelter is met. (CC p. 437)

James 5:4, “Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.”

Do not go house to house μὴ μεταβαίνετε—“Unlike itinerant philosophers who begged their way across the country, the disciples are to accept, as did Elijah (1 Ki 17:15) and Elisha (2 Ki 4:8), the hospitality of *one house*” (F. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, 127 [emphasis Danker]). (CC p. 437)

Stability and security for His workers were important to Jesus. No need to move from motel to motel. “The thing that Jesus forbids is that they keep going from house to house, hunting out the best quarters” (Lenski, Luke, 571). Just stay put. Partake of the hospitality offered. The worker is worthy of his wages. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

10:8 *receive you* – δέχονται—See comments at 9:5. This is the language of hospitality (10:10). R. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity I*, 235, notes this about δέχομαι:

The same language is applied to Jesus in Luke, for he also must endure the insecure life of the traveling missionary. The Samaritan village did not “receive” him (using δέχομαι, 9:53); neither did Nazareth, where Jesus was not δεκτός (“acceptable,” 4:24). However, Martha (10:38) and Zacchaeus (19:6) did receive (ὑποδέχομαι) Jesus. In Acts, similar language is applied both to receiving the word or witness (δέχομαι, 8:14; 11:1; 17:11; ἀποδέχομαι in 2:41; παραδέχομαι in 22:18) and to receiving a missionary as a guest (ὑποδέχομαι in 17:7; ἀποδέχομαι in 18:27; 21:17; ἀναδέχομαι in 28:7; παραδέχομαι in 15:4). This vocabulary set is used more frequently in Luke-Acts than in the rest of the NT combined.

NT synonyms include λαμβάνω (2 Jn 10), κοινωνέω (Gal 6:6), προσλαμβάνω (Rom 15:7); cf. ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ζῆν (1 Cor 9:14). (CC p. 437)

eat what is set before you – Sounds repetitious, but it’s not. Jesus would have no reason to so quickly repeat what He said in the previous verse. Lenski says: “When Jesus now speaks of whatever city they may come to and tells His disciples they to eat whatever is set before them (the present participle to indicate repetition), we see at once that He is not repeating the injunction given in v. 7 in regard to food. In v. 7 He refers to whatever the people can afford even when they are poor; here it is whatever is placed before them in such a city. Most of the cities on their itinerary had a heavily mixed population where Jews and Gentiles live together. In these places there might often enough be doubt as to the Levitical cleanness of the food even in Jewish houses. The messengers are not to hesitate in regard to eating the food that is served them, much less to

refuse it. Any rabbinical scruples on that score are to be completely set aside. Their work is not to be hindered by anything that is so worthless” (Lenski, Luke 572) Is this the same point that is made in Mark 7:18-19? (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

Expands on v 7. More important, the missionaries are to share table with people considered ceremonially unclean and consume what may not be ceremonially clean. (TLSB)

Acts 2:41, “Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”

1 Corinthians 9:22, “To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.”

1 Thessalonians 2:13, “And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.”

10:9 *The kingdom of God has come near you.* The heart of Jesus’ message. (CSB)

The healing of the sick was to be closely connected to the source of that healing by their message to those healed: “The kingdom of God is near you.” The manifestation of this godly kingdom was portrayed, in this special instance and circumstance, in the healing power which Jesus was now imparting to the 70. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

ἤγγικεν ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ—On ἐγγίζω, see comments at 15:1. It is followed by ἐπί and the accusative only here in the NT (cf. LXX Ps 26:2 [MT/ET 27:2]). The proclamation of the nearness of the kingdom anticipates the kingdom’s presence in Jesus, who is about to come to every town and place the seventy (-two) go (10:1). This expression can also mean that it “has arrived” (J. Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 554); Nolland defines the kingdom of God in Luke as “a future eschatological reality that has broken in upon the world in the coming of Jesus but awaits future consummation.” ἤγγικεν means that the kingdom of God “has come” (M. Black, “The Kingdom of God Has Come,” *Expository Times* 63 [1951–52] 289–90, and W. R. Hutton, “The Kingdom of God Has Come,” *Expository Times* 64 [1952–53] 89–91, both cited by Nolland). I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 422, describes the kingdom this way: “The kingdom of God is not therefore a timeless reality ... but it comes near to men in and through Jesus and his disciples; the reference is not so much to the glorious manifestation of the kingdom as to its saving power for men.” (CC p. 437)

Ultimately, there is little difference between the nearness of the kingdom and the arrival of the kingdom, for in the preaching of the seventy (-two), Christ is present as if he himself were preaching, and the presence of the kingdom in him or in his representatives is seen only by faith. Perhaps the expression means that through the seventy (-two) and their preaching, the kingdom actually does arrive, but in a preliminary way that remains to be fulfilled in the eschaton, when the kingdom will come in all its fullness. (CC p. 438)

10:10 *do not receive you* – In today’s church, we perish the thought that someone might resist our efforts at witnessing the truth of God’s love, but it does happen. And it happened then, as well. Jesus predicts that, in some towns, their witness would be welcomed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

10:11 *even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you.* Note 9:5 TLSB – Ritual act symbolizing God’s judgment against those who reject the Gospel, as if to indicate that the Twelve should not even associate with these unbelievers’ dust. Jesus commands the Seventy-two to do the same when He sends them out (10:10–11), and Paul also does this during his mission journeys (Ac 13:51; 18:6). (TLSB)

τὸν κονιορτὸν τὸν κολληθέντα ἡμῖν ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ὑμῶν εἰς τοὺς πόδας—On “the dust that sticks to our feet,” see comments at 9:5. All three modifying phrases that follow κολληθέντα go with that attributive participle: the dust sticking to-us from-your-city onto-our-feet. (CC p. 438)

In those cases, the 70 were to declare in judgment: “Your dirt we leave with you. But make no mistake! The Kingdom of God is near! It’s coming! And you better be ready!” Or, perhaps this is to be a kindly word intended to one more remind the city’s inhabitants “the greatest grace (of Jesus Christ) has come near, the kingdom of God, itself, and some may perhaps realize this so as to regret their present action and to accept that Kingdom” (Lenski, Luke 573). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

kingdom of God has come near – ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ—Repeating “the kingdom of God” here shows its importance in the interpretation of this section. (CC p. 438)

10:12 *more bearable ... for Sodom.* Although Sodom was so sinful that God destroyed it (Ge 19:24–28; Jude 7), the people who heard the message of Jesus and his disciples were even more accountable, because they had the gospel of the kingdom preached to them. (CSB)

Those receiving such unmistakable signs of the Kingdom’s presence will bear a greater responsibility for rejecting it. See note, Mt 10:15. (TLSB)

ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ—This refers to the final, eschatological judgment, using an expression common in the OT prophets. (CC p. 438)

Σοδόμοις—L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 168, notes that “the wickedness of Sodom was proverbial (see Gen 13:13; Isa 3:9; Ezek 16:48, 56), but its great sin was the betrayal of hospitality to God’s messengers (Gen 19:1–23).” Cf. Lk 17:29. Both homosexuality and the abuse of strangers were part of Sodom’s great sin. (CC p. 438)

Picture yourself in that situation and you might imagine a bit of anxiety in such a dramatic proclamation. To assure those proclaimers that they were on solid ground, Jesus compares those unaccepting cities to Sodom. Yes, they are even worse than Sodom. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

that day. Judgment day. (CSB)

Sodom – Ancient city near the Dead Sea that was destroyed by God for its extreme sinfulness (Gn 19:1–29). (TLSB)

10:1–12 Having previously sent out the Twelve (9:1–6), Jesus expands the breadth of His Gospel outreach by sending out 72 more workers. Then and now, many people who hear of Jesus’ kingdom end up rejecting it. Much as we hate to admit it, we, too, have responded indifferently and, at times, have rejected God’s will for our lives. How heartening to know that Jesus continues to reach out with compassion through the Gospel ministry He has established. • Lord, even as

You have called me to faith and hope in the Gospel, keep me steadfast in the same. Amen.
(TLSB)

Woe to Unrepentant Cities

13 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. 15 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades. 16 “The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

10:13 *Korazin ... Bethsaida.* An Exclamatory warning. These were towns near the Sea of Galilee. Residents there were aware of the teaching and miracles Jesus performed in that region.
(TLSB)

Βηθσαϊδά ... αἱ γενόμενα ἐν ὑμῖν—The miracles that may be referred to here are the healings that preceded the feeding of the five thousand, since Luke notes that these things happened near Bethsaida (9:10). The evangelist links the commissioning of both the Twelve and the seventy (-two) with the miraculous feeding. (CC p. 438)

10:14 *Tyre and Sidon.* Gentile cities in Phoenicia, north of Galilee, which had not had opportunity to witness Jesus’ miracles and hear his preaching as the people had in most of Galilee. (CSB)

Pagan cities farther north, along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. (TLSB)

would have repented – Jesus repeatedly contrasted more receptive pagans with children of Abraham who were less open-minded (cf 7:9; 13:28–30). (TLSB)

sackcloth and ashes – Symbolic of repentance. (TLSB)

Note Job 16:15 TLSB – Hebrew *saq*; rough cloth woven from goat or camel hair. He wears the tokens of grief. All his power and dignity had been covered with the deepest humiliation.

10:15 *Capernaum.* Jesus’ headquarters on the north shore of Galilee, whose inhabitants had many opportunities to see and hear Jesus. Therefore the condemnation for their rejection was the greater. (CSB)

Note Matthew 11:23 TLSB – Capernaum’s inhabitants may have felt a sense of pride because Jesus had adopted it as His hometown. But their failure to heed His message would plunge them into the depths of Hades, a term that here designates hell. (TLSB)

Καφαρναούμ—The Lukan hearer would recall that Capernaum was mentioned in the Nazareth sermon (4:23) as a place of miracles. The people of Nazareth demanded that Jesus repeat those miracles in his hometown. After the sermon, Jesus returned to Capernaum (4:31) for another series of miracles (4:33–43). The healing of the centurion’s slave also took place in Capernaum (7:1). (CC p. 438)

exalted to heaven – μη ... ὑψωθήση—The question is framed so as to evoke a negative answer; the sense is “You will not be exalted to heaven, will you? No! You will go down to Hades!” (CC p. 438)

10:16 *hears you hears me* – And now, the final word of sending explains a four part linear relationship: The Father has sent me. I am sending you. Therefore, there is a connection. If someone listens to you, he listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me and the one who sent me! (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

Rejecting God’s representatives is equivalent to rejecting Him. “They [Church authorities] have been given the ministry of the Word and Sacraments. They have no other authority according to the Gospel than the authority to forgive sins, to judge doctrine, to reject doctrines contrary to the Gospel, and to exclude from the communion of the Church wicked people, whose wickedness is known. They cannot exclude people with human force, but simply by the Word” (AC XXVIII 21). “Ministers act in Christ’s place and do not represent their own persons.... Ungodly teachers are to be deserted because they no longer act in Christ’s place, but are antichrists” (Ap VII/VIII 47–48). Apostolic authority guided the work of the Early Church (cf Ac 6:2–3; 15:6, 22). (TLSB)

ὁ ἀκούων ὑμῶν ἐμοῦ ἀκούει—Hearing the Word through Jesus’ disciples is the same as hearing the Word from Jesus himself. On ἀκούω as a term for catechumens, see comments at 5:1; the Sermon on the Plain (6:27, 47, 49); the parable of the sower (8:8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18); and Jesus’ discussion of the new kinship (8:21). (CC p. 438)

rejects you rejects me – ὁ ἀθετῶν ὑμᾶς ἐμὲ ἀθετεῖ—The one who does not hear rejects the Word. This entails a rejection of the person of the messenger, a rejection of his bodily presence. Jesus will be rejected *in his body* in crucifixion. Those who receive the messengers of the Gospel provide physical sustenance for them (10:7–8), and those who reject the messengers may do physical violence to them. The disciples who are sent out must be prepared for this. (CC p. 438)

rejects him who sent me – ὁ δὲ ἐμὲ ἀθετῶν ἀθετεῖ τὸν ἀποστείλαντά με—This prepares for the upcoming discourse by Jesus on the relationship he has with his Father (10:21–24). (See I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 426–27, on the different variations of this saying in the gospels.) (CC p. 439)

10:13–16 As Jesus sends out the Seventy-two, He warns that whoever rejects Him will be in danger of eternal condemnation. Such warnings continue in force today and apply especially to those who have heard the Gospel frequently. However, the fact that our familiarity with God sometimes breeds contempt does not mean that He acts likewise. He is faithful and just and forgives all who repent. • Give me a grateful heart, O Lord, ever ready to serve You and Your people. Amen. (TLSB)

The Return of the Seventy-Two

17 The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” **18** And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. **19** Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. **20** Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

10:17 returned with joy – ὑπέστρεψαν ... μετὰ χαρᾶς—Just as the seventy (-two) return with joy (cf. 10:20), so also after the ascension the disciples will return *with joy* to worship in the temple

(24:52; ὑπέστρεψαν ... μετὰ χαρᾶς; cf. also 1:14, 28; 2:10; 6:23; 15:5, 7, 10, 32; 24:41). (CC p. 439)

in your name – As was previously evidenced, the authority of Jesus’ name was such that it could even cast out demons (9:49). After Jesus’ resurrection, God enabled the apostles to work wonders through the almighty power of Jesus’ name (Ac 3:6; 4:30). (TLSB)

10:18 *I saw* – ἐθεώρουν—“I was watching” captures the continuous nature of the imperfect. Jesus will continually watch Satan fall like lightning from heaven as his ministry continues in the preaching and sacraments of the church. As Jesus did in his exorcisms, the church will free people from Satan’s bondage and transfer them into God’s kingdom. (CC p. 439)

Satan – τὸν σατανᾶν—This is the first time Luke has used “Satan” for the devil (cf. 11:18; 13:16; 22:3, 31). Up until now, he has used διάβολος (“devil”), particularly in the temptation of Jesus (4:2, 3, 6, 13; cf. also 8:12). The defeat of Satan in 10:17–18 constitutes the first of six miracles during Luke’s journey narrative (10:17–20; 11:14–23; 13:10–17; 14:1–6; 17:11–19; 18:35–43). (This categorization and insight comes from D. Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*, 120.) And this definitely is the first of three straight confrontations with Satan (10:17–20; 11:14–23; 13:10–17). (CC p. 439)

Satan fall. Even the demons were driven out by the disciples (v. 17), which meant that Satan was suffering defeat. (CSB)

Vividly portrays the effect that the proclamation of the kingdom had on Satan and his minions: their grip on humanity was loosened. Cf Lk 11:14–22; 13:10–17; Rv 12:1–12. (TLSB)

from heaven – ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ—On Satan’s presence in heaven and his role as accuser of humanity, see Job 1:6–12; 2:1–7; Zech 3:1–2. (CC p. 439)

When Jesus reports seeing Satan falling like lightning from heaven, he is summing up the effects of the mission of the seventy (-two). In their preaching and in their healing, in their activity of proclaiming Christ and his Gospel comes the victory over Satan and his angelic armies. As the disciples exclaimed, “Even the demons subject themselves to us in your name” (10:17). (CC pp. 443-444)

fall – πεσόντα—J. Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 563, notes that “the use of the aorist participle for the verb ‘to fall’ ensures that the reference is to a final fall and not some temporary reversal, and to the fact of the fall, rather than to the movement of transition as such.” Satan’s fall is described in Rev 12:7–10 (cf. Rev 20:1–3, 10; Jn 12:31; Rom 16:20). There St. Michael the archangel, the great prince of God’s chosen people, leads God’s angelic armies in battle against the armies of Satan and his hordes, who threaten to destroy God’s chosen Child, the Messiah. (CC p. 439)

10:19 *snakes and scorpions ... power of the enemy*. The snakes and scorpions may represent evil spirits; the enemy is Satan himself. (CSB)

ὄφειων καὶ σκορπίων—Both serpents and scorpions are well-known embodiments of evil. See Gen 3:1–15; Num 21:6–9; Deut 8:15; 1 Ki 12:11, 14; 2 Chr 10:11, 14; 2 Cor 11:3; Rev 9:3, 5, 10; 12:9, 14–15; 20:2. In Ezek 2:6, thorns and scorpions are metaphors for the rebellious people to whom the prophet is called to minister. (CC p. 439)

nothing shall harm you – οὐδὲν ... οὐ μὴ—The triple negative is translated as “in no way.” (CC p. 439)

Jesus promises His people protection from evil while they are engaged in spiritual warfare. Luther: “ ‘The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him.’ ... This is one of the special and most memorable consolations in the psalms and should be applied to our advantage” (AE 6:94). Such pledges of divine protection, however, are tempered by Jesus’ prediction that His witnesses will encounter hostile rejection (12:11) and even suffer persecution (21:12) (TLSB)

10:20 Man’s salvation is more important than power to overcome the evil one or escape his harm.

your names are written. Salvation is recorded in heaven (see Ps 69:28; Da 12:1; Php 4:3; Heb 12:23; Rev 3:5). (CSB)

Rather than focus primarily on the lesser (albeit impressive) gifts of divine protection and power over the demons, Jesus directs the Seventy-two to make the greater gift of eternal salvation their first and final hope. (TLSB)

ἐγγέγραπται ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς—This is a theological passive; God is the one who writes names in the heavens. For OT precedent, see Ex 32:32–33; Pss 69:28 (MT 69:29); 139:16; Dan 12:1; and in the NT, Phil 4:3; Heb 12:23; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27. (CC p. 439)

Jesus directs the attention of the disciples away from thoughts about sensational success to contemplation about their heavenly status. The authority to tread upon snakes and scorpions and power over the enemy should not puff them up to seek visible achievements. Pride and a theology of success would be tools Satan could use to attack them and thwart true ministry. Their focus must be on the heavenly gift of grace. Their names are written in God’s book of life, beside the names of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the chosen people of old. They are merely part of a pattern that stretches back to the OT prophets and is centered in Jesus, the greatest Prophet, who testifies to God’s presence and salvation through teaching and miracles. The seventy (-two) speak his words and represent his person; as one might say, they stand “in [his] stead and by [his] command.” (CC p. 444)

10:17–20 Empowered by Jesus, the Seventy-two advance into Satan’s territory as people believe the Gospel. Until Christ’s return, we, too, remain in this war zone, where Satan does everything he can to destroy us and halt the Gospel’s advance. In Christ, however, we are protected. In Him, we cannot lose, even though put to death, for in the end Christ grants us eternal life. • “Lord, be our light when worldly darkness veils us; Lord, be our shield when earthly armor fails us; And in the day when hell itself assails us, Grant us Your peace, Lord.” Amen. (LSB 659:3) (TLSB)

Jesus Rejoices in the Father's Will

21 In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. 22 All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” 23 Then turning to the disciples he said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! 24 For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”

10:21 Inspired by the Spirit, Jesus expresses joy at the life-giving insight just gained by the disciples. Saving faith, a gift from the Father, is created by the Spirit, not the result of human effort or intellect. (TLSB)

in that same hour – ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ—This phrase links 10:21–24 to the mission of the seventy (-two). As part of Luke’s time framework, this phrase usually introduces a significant passage, e.g., 13:31; 20:19; 24:33. Cf. also 2:38; 12:12. (CC p. 439)

rejoiced in the Holy Spirit – ἠγαλλιάσατο [ἐν] τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ—Mary uses a similar expression at the beginning of the Magnificat (1:47; ἠγαλλίασεν τὸ πνεῦμά μου; cf. 2:25–27). (CC p. 440)

have hidden...from the wise...revealed to little children – ἀπέκρυψας ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ συνειτῶν καὶ ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις—This recalls the discourse at 8:9–10, where Jesus revealed to the disciples the mysteries of the kingdom of God in parables. The issue concerns the doctrine of election. (CC p. 440)

What the Father has hidden from the wise and understanding is that Jesus is his Son. In his ministry (and now in the ministry of the Twelve and the seventy[-two]), Jesus reveals that he is the Son. His disciples are “infants” (Lk 10:21). One would not expect such understanding and knowledge to be given to them. But “these things,” hidden from so many wise people, *are* revealed to them. This secret hidden in Jesus and his “infant” followers is the kingdom of God itself. Just as Jesus hides his teaching in parables, so also the kingdom is hidden in Jesus. Apart from receiving him as God’s Son, no one—not the wise and understanding of this world, such as the religious elite of Israel—will understand. (CC p. 445)

these things – ταῦτα—The antecedent of ταῦτα (“these things”) is the continuation of Jesus’ ministry in the seventy (-two), particularly as it is manifested in the power over Satan that comes through their healing and preaching of Jesus’ Word. (CC p. 440)

Luke concludes the first section of his journey narrative (9:51–10:24) with words of Jesus that reiterate the theme of the Great Reversal and, at the same time, make a profound statement about the relationship between Jesus and the Father. This kind of language is rare in the synoptic gospels (cf. Mt 11:17) and is more characteristic of John’s gospel (e.g., Jn 5:19–27; 6:40; 7:29; 10:14–15; 13:3; 14:8–11; 17:1–2, 25–26). (CC p. 445)

your gracious will – ὅτι οὕτως εὐδοκία ἐγένετο ἔμπροσθέν σου—ὅτι can mean “because,” “for,” or “that”; the sense is not much different. εὐδοκία is God’s gracious favor (cf. 2:14), and ἔμπροσθεν is a reverent circumlocution that avoids speaking directly of God (BAGD 2 d). Thus the sense is that it was God’s gracious plan to reveal things as the verse describes. יִצַּח has the same sense, the gift of God’s gracious favor according to his plan (e.g., Ex 28:38; Lev 1:3; 22:21; Deut 33:16, 23; Is 49:8; 61:2; Pss 5:13 [ET 5:12]; 51:20 [ET 51:18]). Why exactly this plan pleased God is a mystery bound up in the doctrine of election. (CC p. 440)

10:22 *all things* – πάντα—The antecedent here is everything that Jesus has done or said in his ministry up to this point, all of which shows he is the Son of the Father. (CC p. 440)

Jesus claims to have received from the Father an absolute authority over all creation. No higher Christological claim appears anywhere in Lk and Ac. (TLSB)

no one knows. Human beings can know Jesus as the Son of God only by the gift of faith, which God alone can give (cf Mt 16:16–17). (TLSB)

chooses to reveal him – βούληται—Although θέλω is more common, βούλομαι is used of the Father (22:42), the Son (here), and the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:11) (cf. BAGD 2 b). (CC p. 440)

Likewise, no one can know the Father apart from the revelation of the one true God given through the incarnation of His Son, Jesus (cf Jn 1:1, 14, 18). There is a perfect relationship of trust and understanding between Jesus and His Father. (TLSB)

10:23 *said privately* – κατ’ ἰδίαν—With these words, Luke accents how the following beatitude and saying is for the disciples alone (cf. 8:9–10). (CC p. 440)

Blessed. God’s people in the OT could only look expectantly toward the fulfillment of God’s promises—the coming of the Messiah and the kingdom of God. Jesus’ disciples, however, are privileged to see it dawn in Jesus’ life-imparting ministry. (TLSB)

10:21–24 While rejoicing that His disciples have received the gift of life-saving faith, Jesus stresses that He is the chief content and unique mediator of the Gospel revelation. Oh, that we would have the grace to rejoice with Him and to appreciate fully the great privilege that is ours in the Gospel! • “In Thee is gladness Amid all sadness, Jesus, sunshine of my heart. By Thee are given The gifts of heaven, Thou the true Redeemer art.” Amen. (LSB 818:1). (TLSB)

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

25 And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” **26** He said to him, “**What is written in the Law? How do you read it?**” **27** And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” **28** And he said to him, “**You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.**” **29** But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” **30** Jesus replied, “**A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ 36 Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” **37** He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “**You go, and do likewise.**”**

Dozens ignore dying man credited with stopping an NYC mugging – USA Today 4/26/2010

Surveillance video shows that a good Samaritan who was stabbed after apparently stopping a mugging in New York City lies dying on the sidewalk for more than an hour while people walked by without stopping, the *New York Post* reports.

The victim, a homeless man identified as Hugo Alfredo Tale-Yax, is seen collapsing on the sidewalk early last Sunday on 144th St. in Jamaica, Queens. Dozens of people walk by, including one man who takes a video picture.

By the time help arrives, Tale-Yax is already dead, the *Post* reports.

The New York Times quotes a police spokesman as saying units responded to three 911 calls, the first, shortly before 6 a.m., reported a woman screaming; the second, at 7:09, reported a man lying on the street.

Both calls, the *Times* says, gave incorrect addresses.

The third, at 7: 21 a.m., about a man lying in the street, led to the discovery of the body.

"We would expect someone to call 911 and, if possible, to stay with the victim until help arrives," police spokesman Paul Browne says, according to *The Times*.

Central Point – Christianity is a way of life

11:37–54 Jesus Teaches and Eats at the Home of a Pharisee

Even though a new section begins at this point, there is continuity with the previous discourse in the evangelist's Great Reversal theme. This lawyer is one of the "wise" people of this world who do not see in Jesus what the "infant" disciples see (10:21). Confident of his own point of view and wanting to put Jesus to the test, he asks a question whose answer he, a student of Torah, should surely know: "Having done what shall I inherit eternal life?" (10:25). The hearer of Luke's gospel must not lose sight of the fact that *this question is at the heart and core of the story of the Good Samaritan*. (CC p. 449)

10:25 and behold – καὶ ἰδοὺ—Luke introduces the story with his favorite expression to mark a significant passage. There is no time reference. The narrative is independent from what goes before and begins a new section. (CC p. 446)

a lawyer. A scholar well versed in Scripture asked a common question (18:18; cf. Mt 22:35), either to take issue with Jesus or simply to see what kind of teacher he was. (CSB)

Could be translated as scribe or lawyer. This man was well versed in Scripture. This was a test question for Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)

do to inherit eternal life – Emphasizes the gracious nature of salvation. (TLSB)

τί ποιήσας ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω... —The question leads to the Torah and then to the words of Jesus (Torah incarnate). The same question will be asked in 18:18, where the answer leads to the Torah and then to words of Jesus about selling all. "Life" is the question; "give" is the answer. Jesus is the one who gives all, unto death, and so he is the giver of eternal life. (CC p. 446)

The first round begins with the lawyer "putting [Jesus] to the test" (ἐκπειράζων; 10:25). The hearer might recall that the only other time this phrase is used is in the temptation of Jesus by the devil. Following the devil's third temptation, Jesus responds, "You will not tempt the Lord your God" (4:12). The lawyer, like the devil, does not acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God. The first

question is put forth by the lawyer: “Having done what shall I inherit eternal life?” (10:25). It is *the most important question*. It shapes the narrative, and the other three questions are attempts to answer this first question. (CC p. 451)

10:26 *written in the law* – Moses’ writings, the first five books of the Bible. (TLSB)

ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τί γέγραπται ... πῶς ἀναγινώσκεις... —This is the first time νόμος (“Law”) is used in Luke since the infancy narrative. I. H. Marshall (citing J. Jeremias) claims that Jesus’ second question refers to the liturgy: “ ‘How do you *recite* [in worship]?’ , i.e. what is the law [Torah] recited by the lawyer as part of his regular worship, and therefore the lawyer is forced to reply with the words of the ‘Shema’ ” (*The Gospel of Luke*, 443, citing J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, vol. 1 [London, 1971] 187 [emphasis added]; cf. K. Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes*, 37). The lawyer’s response is Deut 6:5, which follows the *Shema*’, Deut 6:4. The *Shema*’ was to be repeated twice a day by the faithful Jew. (CC pp 446-447)

The answer assumes that the way of Torah is the way of life. “Life” is the result for one who, in the communion of God’s love, walks in his ways. But it is possible to move from the summary statements given by the lawyer to a moralizing of the Torah, as did many of the Jews. One must read the Torah as the book of God’s gracious election and constitution of his people despite their sin, not as a “how to” book about earning merit before God. If one loses sight of the primacy of God’s grace in the Torah, then the focus shifts from the inheritance God *gives* to the deeds people *do*. An easy mistake for the modern interpreter would be to moralize the Good Samaritan story, so that it becomes an exhortation only to help our needy neighbors. But such an interpretation would turn this parable of Gospel into Law. *The interpretation of the parable must be Christological*. (CC p. 449)

The dispute between Jesus and the lawyer is this: *Jesus sees the Torah as part of the God-given means (Scripture) to eternal life, and this life comes purely by grace through faith, which is active in love (Gal 5:6)*. Conversely, the lawyer attempts (and fails) to justify himself by twisting the Torah into a legalistic system (Rom 10:5; Gal 3:10, 12) that would excuse him from showing love to all others. That is his motivation for asking, “Who is my neighbor?” (10:29). *Jesus correctly interprets the Torah, which teaches that God elected Israel solely out of his love and redeemed her in fulfillment of his gracious promises; Israel’s obedience to his commands was a response in faith, motivated by love, created by the Gospel of God’s salvation* (e.g., Deut 4:37–40; 7:7–9; 10:12–22). This proverb, then, would apply to Jesus: “The Torah/instruction of a wise man is a fountain of life, to turn [others] away from snares of death” (Prov 13:14). The conclusion to Jesus’ story about the rich man and Lazarus also points to the unity of Jesus and the Torah: if people do not believe Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe when Jesus rises from the dead (Lk 16:31). (CC p. 450)

how do you read that – The second question is by Jesus. Since God has already answered the lawyer’s question in the Torah, Jesus points him there: “In the Law what is written?” (10:26). This is a natural question to pose to a lawyer. The lawyer is astute. He answers Jesus’ question according to the Torah with the right answer: love God and love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus confirms that the lawyer’s answer is correct. “Do this and you will live” (10:28). The heart of the Torah is God’s mercy and love. The human response in faith is likewise a response in love and mercy, as Jesus will illustrate by the Good Samaritan story. Again, a quote from St. Paul elucidates Jesus’ point: “Love is the fulfillment of the Law” (Rom 13:10; cf. also Rom 13:8; Gal 5:14; James 2:8). Jesus led the lawyer to answer his own question from Scripture (Jesus did the same in dealing with the devil’s tests). The debate should be over. But the lawyer is not content

with God’s answer of love. He wants to stay focused on codifying his deeds of love; he wants to assert his own righteousness and his claim to deserve eternal life. (CC p. 451)

Jesus asks the lawyer for his own interpretation of God’s Word as a starting point for what follows. (TLSB)

10:27 *love the Lord...heart* – ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ... —Luke reports that the man added “and with your whole mind” to Deut 6:5. (CC p. 447)

Love ... God ... Love your neighbor. Elsewhere Jesus uses these words in reply to another question (Mt 22:35–40; Mk 12:28–32), putting the same two Scriptures together (Dt 6:5; Lev 19:18). Whether a fourfold love (heart, soul, strength and mind, as here and in Mk 12:30) or threefold (Dt 6:5; Mt 22:37; Mk 12:33), the significance is that total devotion is demanded. (CSB)

καὶ τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν—This is a separate command from “love the Lord your God,” occurring at Lev 19:18, where “sons of your own people” are equivalent to “neighbor.” Leviticus goes on to say that “the stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Lev 19:34; see commentary below). In Matthew (22:34–40) and Mark (12:28–34), Jesus brings these two separate parts of the Pentateuch together but still lists them as two separate commandments. Ironically, in Luke it is the lawyer who conflates the two commandments into one and thus summarizes the two tables of the Law under “love of God” (commandments 1–3) and “love of neighbor” (commandments 4–10). Perhaps the lawyer has heard that Jesus has combined these two commandments into one and is simply repeating back what he thinks the “teacher” (διδάσκαλε; 10:25) wants to hear. (CC p. 447)

The lawyer’s response stresses complete devotion to God and loving behavior toward one’s neighbor. (TLSB)

This was a good and standard answer any catechumen or divinity student should give when being examined. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)

10:28 *do this and you will live* – Jesus affirms that if a person perfectly fulfills the Law of God, that individual will receive eternal life on Judgment Day. However, this is impossible for sinners. (TLSB)

10:29 *to justify himself.* The answer to his first question was obviously one he knew, so to gain credibility he asked for an interpretation. In effect he said, “But the real question is: Who is my neighbor?” (CSB)

δικαιῶσαι ἑαυτόν—The lawyer wants to make himself be acknowledged as just (cf. 7:29). This can mean “logically” justified, i.e., he is giving a *reason* for having asked a question whose answer is so obvious. But it might also signal that in his heart lives a legalist. F. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, 131, notes: “The lawyer needs to learn, however, that in order to observe the will of God he must transcend the thinking of his own legalistic establishment. Otherwise, he will remain on the level of self-justification.” On “to declare oneself righteous,” see comments at 16:15. In the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector, the tax collector returns home “having been declared righteous” (18:14). (CC p. 447)

The lawyer seems to realize the impossibility of fulfilling the commands just cited. Thus he seeks to limit God's uncompromising demands. (TLSB)

who is my neighbor – He knew the pat answer but did not know that spirit of the statement. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)

This is why there is a second round, which begins much like the first one. The lawyer, instead of testing Jesus, now becomes defensive, “wishing to justify himself” (Lk 10:29). His defensiveness comes from his knowledge that he has been put into an untenable position. He knows that if he claims he does love God, he should love his neighbor as well. To profess love for God but to hate one's neighbor is hypocrisy. If the lawyer professes to love his neighbor as himself, someone can ask, “Where is the evidence?” This is the point at which the lawyer really starts to squirm. He tries to deflect attention away from himself by implying that the Law is the problem, that the Law is unclear. It is necessary to clarify who is “neighbor” and who is not, to divide between “us” and “them.” The lawyer—and the reader—might suppose that the next step will be to delineate bloodlines and genealogies, to define who qualifies to be included within the covenantal community of Israel as “neighbor.” The question “Who is my neighbor?” (10:29) implies that there are some people who are *not* my neighbor. By asking the question, the lawyer asks Jesus to interpret the Torah as to the kinds of people Jesus would *exclude* from his love. Anyone even vaguely familiar with Jesus' ministry up to this point should know that as Jesus fulfills the OT in his ministry, absolutely *no one* is excluded from his love. (CC pp. 451-452)

Greek root means “nearby, close.” Therefore, it means “whoever happens to be nearby or close at hand,” not just people who have homes nearby. (TLSB)

Greek root means “nearby, close.” Therefore, it means “whoever happens to be nearby or close at hand,” not just people who have homes nearby. (TLSB)

The debate should be over. But the lawyer is not content with God's answer of love. He wants to stay focused on codifying his deeds of love; he wants to assert his own righteousness and his claim to deserve eternal life. (CC p. 451)

Matthew 25:40, “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

Ephesians 2:8-10, “⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do”

10:30 *Jerusalem to Jericho*. A distance of 17 miles and a descent from about 2,500 feet above sea level to about 800 feet below sea level. The road ran through rocky, desert country, which provided places for robbers to waylay defenseless travelers. (CSB)

This road was a rocky path that descended quickly from the mountains to the Dead Sea and was an ideal location for robbers to attack travelers. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)

Ordinary highway bandits, though the word sometimes means “insurrectionists, guerrillas.” (TLSB)

10:31–33 *priest ... Levite ... Samaritan.* It is significant that the person Jesus commended was neither the religious leader nor the lay associate, but a hated foreigner. Jews viewed Samaritans as half-breeds, both physically and spiritually. Samaritans and Jews practiced open hostility, but Jesus asserted that love knows no national boundaries. (CSB)

As in the first round, Jesus will answer the lawyer's question with another question (10:36), but first, he tells a story that will prepare for and clarify it. Jesus would know that this lawyer, as a member of the Pharisaic party, would exclude some people, sinners who were ignorant of the Law, from his definition of "neighbor." He would also exclude Samaritans (see the textual note on "Samaritan") and any other outsiders, particularly Gentiles. He probably felt that it was God-pleasing to show hatred toward those groups. But at the top of this lawyer's list of "neighbors" to be loved would be priests and Levites. (CC p. 452)

That is why Jesus' story about the Good Samaritan would be sure to shock and offend the lawyer. Jesus parades a priest and a Levite as models of the indifferent, unmerciful, and loveless. The hearer might expect the third traveler to be a lay person. It is a great surprise that the third traveler is a Samaritan—and he is portrayed as the hero in the story. The last person the lawyer would expect to be held before him as an example of one who fulfills the Law by loving his neighbor as himself is the hated Samaritan! Thus the story is a powerful illustration of the Great Reversal theme that runs throughout Luke's gospel. (CC p. 452)

The story itself is not called a parable, though it is commonly referred to as "the *parable* of the Good Samaritan." It is one of a number of stories in Luke that appear to be parables despite lacking the label. As with some of the other stories, it is possible that this one is a historical account of events that actually occurred, though the text does not indicate that and the message of such stories and parables is not dependent on historicity because they are intended to illustrate. (CC pp. 452-453)

10:31 *priest* – ἱερεύς—Like Zechariah, this priest may have just taken his turn in the temple (1:5–9). Perhaps he was concerned not to become defiled by touching a dead body. (This assumes that the priest and Levite thought that the man was dead.) The laws of ritual purity were extremely important for such persons. The priest is locked into certain behavior because of the regulations of the purity code. See K. Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes*, 43–46, on the predicament of the priest in approaching a man who would render him unclean. He notes that "the priest was the victim of a rule book ethical/theological system" (p. 45). Bailey cites Sirach 12:1–7 to show the kind of texts that might have influenced the priest's decision to pass by on the other side, i.e., "Do not go to the help of a sinner" (pp. 43–44). K. Bailey also notes that the priest, as a member of the upper class, would not be walking but riding on an animal (p. 43). The Samaritan has an animal, but it is unclear whether he was riding. (CC p. 447)

A fellow Jew, who served God in the temple. Cf Lv 8. (TLSB)

down that road – ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ἐκείνῃ—K. Bailey notes that this is the first of a series of phrases concerning the three participants in the story that indicate the level at which they are willing to become involved: "The text has a clear progression as we move through the scenes. The priest only goes *down the road*. The Levite comes *to the place*. The Samaritan comes *to the man*" (p. 48). This is artful narration! (CC pp. 447-448)

passed by on other side – What the priest couldn't see, he couldn't help (we call this the sin of omission). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)

The priest walked by on the other side of the road in order to avoid the injured man and any obligation to him. (TLSB)

10:32 Levite Temple worker. Cf Num. 1:47-54 (TLSB)

Λευίτης—The same laws would apply to the Levite as to the priest. J. Jeremias, *Parables*, 203–4, notes the complexity of this issue and that in one scenario this may not be the case: “The Levite was only required to observe ritual cleanliness in the course of his cultic activities. ... there would be nothing to prevent him from touching ‘a dead body by the road’.” However, K. Bailey suggests that the Levite’s reason for passing by on the opposite side could be motivated by a desire to imitate the priest who had preceded him and left the man alone. As one of lower rank than the priest, the Levite would not want to challenge the priest’s decision to pass by on the opposite side (see K. Bailey, pp. 46–47, on the Levite). (CC p. 448)

10:33 Samaritan – Samaritans were hated by the Jews and to use one of them as a good model must have been very upsetting to the people in the audience. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)

Σαμαρίτης—First in the sentence, “Samaritan” is emphatic. A village of the Samaritans has been mentioned in 9:53, and the only leper among the ten who returns to give thanks to Jesus will be a Samaritan (17:11–19). Samaria is one of the places marked by Jesus in his programmatic mission statement in Acts 1:8. For Jews who were concerned with purity of descent (cf. 8:19–21), the Samaritans were considered “sinners,” part of those who “did not conform to the ideal of the law” (G. Feeley-Harnik, *The Lord’s Table*, 42). She describes the status of Samaritans on p. 43: (CC p. 448)

The worst of these groups [the commoners, the “people of the land,” ‘*am—ha’arets*] were the Samaritans. According to scripture ([2] Kings 17), the Samaritans were once Israelites of the former northern kingdom of Israel. Because they despised the Lord’s covenant, they were exiled in Assyria, where they “went after false idols and became false. ... Their children likewise, and their children’s children as their fathers did, so they do to this day” ([2] Kings 17:15, 41). Therefore they were no longer Israelites. The Greek word [describing the] Samaritan in Luke (17:18) means “stranger in the land,” “no blood kin” (Jeremias [*Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*] 1969: 355). Samaritans were considered unclean. Marriage with them was prohibited. It was said in connection with the prohibition on marriage: “He who eats the bread of a Samaritan is like one that eats the flesh of swine.” (CC p. 448)

As in the first round, Jesus will answer the lawyer’s question with another question (10:36), but first, he tells a story that will prepare for and clarify it. Jesus would know that this lawyer, as a member of the Pharisaic party, would exclude some people, sinners who were ignorant of the Law, from his definition of “neighbor.” He would also exclude Samaritans (see the textual note on “Samaritan”) and any other outsiders, particularly Gentiles. He probably felt that it was God-pleasing to show hatred toward those groups. But at the top of this lawyer’s list of “neighbors” to be loved would be priests and Levites. (CC p. 452)

There were ranks among the people of that day: (Steunkel)

- Priests and Sadducees
- Scribes and Pharisees
- Rural People
- Publicans & Sinners

- Slaves

That is why Jesus' story about the Good Samaritan would be sure to shock and offend the lawyer. Jesus parades a priest and a Levite as models of the indifferent, unmerciful, and loveless. The hearer might expect the third traveler to be a lay person. It is a great surprise that the third traveler is a Samaritan—and he is portrayed as the hero in the story. The last person the lawyer would expect to be held before him as an example of one who fulfills the Law by loving his neighbor as himself is the hated Samaritan! Thus the story is a powerful illustration of the Great Reversal theme that runs throughout Luke's gospel. (CC p. 452)

ha had compassion – This means to be moved to one's inward parts. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)

10:34 *pouring on oil and wine* – Treatments comparable to today's antibacterial first-aid creams. (TLSB)

set him on his own animal – ἐπιβιάσας δὲ αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ ἴδιον κτῆνος—Jesus' careful description of the Samaritan's animal as "his own animal" could suggest that the Samaritan has more than one animal: one to carry him and other animals to carry his possessions. The Samaritan places the man on the animal he was riding and either rides with him or leads the animal, which the text suggests: "He led [ἤγαγεν] him to an inn." In that culture, this was highly unusual; an owner of an animal normally would not lead it while someone else was riding on it. (See K. Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes*, 51.) (CC p. 448)

took care of him – ἐπεμελήθη αὐτοῦ—K. Bailey notes that due to the Middle Eastern principles of retaliation, the Samaritan put himself at risk by identifying himself as one making amends. He might be attacked by the victim's family in revenge for the attack by the bandits since the actual attackers could not be found. Bailey says that attacking the Samaritan would be "an irrational response" but one that any Middle Eastern traveler had to consider (pp. 51–53). In many modern cultures too, one who stops to help a stranger puts himself at risk by becoming involved, even if he does no wrong and offers generous assistance. (CC pp. 448–449)

In the story itself, the Good Samaritan stands at the center with his *compassion* (10:33; ἐσπλαγγνίσθη). The Good Samaritan's *compassion* is manifest in *compassionate actions* (10:34–35). He administers first aid, takes the man on his own animal to a place to recuperate, and spends his money to take care of the man. What dominates the parable is this *compassion* of the Samaritan in contrast to the others who either beat him or left him there beaten. The lawyer clearly understands the story, for he has exactly the right answer to the question put to him by Jesus: "Which of these three seems to you to have been a neighbor of the one who fell among the bandits?" (10:36). Of course the answer is "the one who did the merciful thing [τὸ ἔλεος] for him" (10:37). The lawyer's answer reemphasizes the point of the whole pericope: compassion and mercy. (CC p. 453)

This mercy is shown by bandaging, then pouring on oil and wine. Oil and wine are associated with love in Song 1:2–3, and James 5:14 reflects early Christian use of oil. In Lk 7:38, oil and myrrh are poured out on Jesus in a libation of love. Many have noticed that the order of the Samaritan's actions seems to be the reverse of what one would expect. Oil is to clean the wound, wine is to disinfect it, and then it would be bound by a bandage. But K. Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes*, 49–50, citing J. D. M. Derrett (*Law in the New Testament* [London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1970]), suggests a theological rationale for the order since Yahweh binds Israel's wounds and

heals her (cf. Jer 30:17 and Hos 6:1–10, where there are clear parallels to this passage). Bailey is insightful in suggesting that this mercy is clearly demonstrated in the liturgical acts of binding the man’s wounds and applying oil and wine:

Furthermore, the oil and wine were not only standard first-aid remedies. They were also “sacrificial elements in the temple worship” (Derrett, 220). Likewise, the verb “pour” is from the language of worship. There were libations in connection with the sacrifices. Yet for centuries the call had been sounded for going beyond ritual in an effort to respond adequately to what God had done for them. Hosea (6:6) and Micah (6:7–8) called for steadfast love and not sacrifice. ... The Jewish priest and Levite were the religious professionals who knew the precise rituals of the prescribed liturgy. In worship they officiated at the sacrifices and libations. They poured out the oil and the wine on the high altar before God. Here in the parable this same freighted language is applied to the Samaritan just after the priest and Levite have failed miserably in their ability to make the “living sacrifice.” It is the hated Samaritan who pours out the libation on the altar of this man’s wounds. As Derrett observes, “To show what is the *hesed* (steadfast love) which God demands one cannot be more apt than to show oil and wine employed to heal an injured man” (Derrett, 220). The Samaritan’s total response to the man’s needs (including this simple libation) is a profound expression of the steadfast love for which the prophets were calling. It is the *Samaritan* who pours out the true offering acceptable to God (emphasis Bailey). (CC p. 453)

10:35 *two denarii* – Two days’ wages, which would keep a man up to two months in an inn. (CSB)

This is somewhat like leaving our credit card number at a hotel and cover the expenses for someone rescued from dying in the ditch. (Portals of Prayer – 4/16/10)

innkeeper – Though this person’s job was to provide lodging and perhaps a meal, the Samaritan pressed him into nursing duties. (TLSB)

10:36 *Which ... proved to be a neighbor to the man ... ?* The question now became: Who proves he is the good neighbor by his actions? (CSB)

The Gospel reveals that such doing flows only from *having received* God’s mercy. Legalists who cross-examine Jesus make no progress until they recognize that *they* are the man half dead and *Jesus* is the one who does mercy as neighbor. The lawyer says, “I will act to love my neighbor as myself; tell me who he is.” But Jesus answers, “You cannot act, for you are dead. You need someone to love you, show mercy to you, heal you, pay for you, give you lodging, revive you. I am the one you despise because I associate with sinners, but in fact I am the one who fulfills the Law, who embodies the Torah, and who brings God’s mercy. I am your neighbor and will give you the gifts of mercy, healing, life. As I live in you, you will have life and will do mercy—not motivated by laws and definitions, but animated by my love.” (CC p. 454)

Fulfilled the law of loving “your neighbor as yourself” (v 27). (TLSB)

10:37 *do likewise* – The Samaritan risked his own neck to help a Jew, and then spent a sizable amount of money to provide for his ongoing recovery. He invested much in order to rescue a traditional enemy. See note, Mi 6:8. God requires us to act in love toward all people, even our

enemies and esp those in need. Luth: “Our neighbor is any human being, especially one who needs our help, as Christ interprets it in Luke 10:30–37. Even one who has done me some sort of injury or harm ... does not stop being my neighbor” (AE 27:58). The Samaritan in the parable likely represents Christ, who had recently sought to work with the Samaritans (9:51–56). (TLSB)

omoios – This is the word we often used to describe a confession of faith. In other words he was to have his actions be a witness to his faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)

1 John 3:16-19, “¹⁶This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. ¹⁷If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? ¹⁸Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. ¹⁹This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence .”

This Christological interpretation is not in vogue today so much as it was in the early church. It identifies the Good Samaritan with Jesus. The early catechumen has been well prepared for this. He has seen numerous examples of Jesus’ merciful compassion to the outcasts of Jewish society, in which Jesus has publicly portrayed himself in a manner similar to the Samaritan. And the catechumen will recall that at the center of Jesus’ Sermon on the Plain is the exhortation to “love your enemies” (6:27) and to “become merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (6:36). In the Samaritan, the catechumen sees the portrayal of the Christological mercy and compassion that is the basis for Jesus’ sermon. The catechumen in the early church sees all around him evidence that the church has overcome Jewish exclusivity and has opened her doors to the rich and poor, the free and the slave, the Jew *and* the Gentile. One of the great controversies in Acts and in the missions of Paul was the relation between Jewish and Gentile Christians. What clearly separated Jewish and Gentile Christians from non-Christian Jews was their inclusiveness, their unity in Christ. Forever in the church’s catechesis, the parable of the Good Samaritan would stand as a reminder of the Christological character of the mercy toward all that marks the true church’s life. (CC p. 455)

Robert Farrar Capon, *The Parables of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 60–61, suggests that the chief Christ figure in the parable is the man who fell among thieves, was stripped, beaten, and left half-dead (ἡμιθανῆ [Lk 10:30]). That man was an outcast, “another loser, yet another down-and-outer who, by just lying there in his lostness and proximity to death ... is in fact the closest thing to Jesus in the parable” (p. 61). Jesus too was rejected, stripped, and beaten and died in the company of two thieves. Capon says the “common, good-works interpretation ... gives the Gospel a fast shuffle” (p. 61). He views the parable as a call for Christians to imitate Christ by taking up the cross and following Jesus into death and resurrection. Capon’s Christological interpretation has some merit, and perhaps it can stand beside the Christological interpretation of mercy advocated above in this commentary. The parable may to an extent support both interpretations. The theme of self-sacrifice runs through them both, since in the doing of mercy the Samaritan in the parable gave of himself and risked his own well-being in order to help the victim. If the victim is considered the Christ figure, then the parable supports the biblical theme that acts of mercy done for the least of Christ’s brothers and sisters are done to Christ himself (cf. Lk 10:16; Mt 25:31–46). (CC p. 455)

10:25–37 Jesus tells the famous parable of the Good Samaritan to clarify that He expects His followers to do good to all people. However, His concluding exhortation, “Go, and do likewise,” reminds us just how far we are from the loving, self-sacrificing behaviors the Lord expects. So it was that Jesus became the Good Samaritan for us. He laid down His life, befriended us while we

were yet His enemies. He promises us full restoration and life everlasting. • Lord, make me more like You, that I grow in faith and love for my neighbor. May people see You in my actions as I reach out to them with Your love. Amen. (TLSB)

At the Home of Martha and Mary

38 Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." 41 But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, 42 but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

10:38 *they* – The makeup of the group accompanying Jesus is unspecified, though it certainly included the Twelve. (TLSB)

disciples – This includes both the 12 and the 70 (two) as well as the women mentioned in 8:1-3 and most likely others. (CC p. 456)

on their way – Jesus ministry followed a pattern of travel that relied on people's hospitality as here at the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary. In Luke 19:6 Zacchaeus is the host. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)

This story of hospitality shown to Jesus, the wandering missionary, illustrates things said in the reports of the mission of the seventy (-two) (10:1–24) and the Twelve (9:1–6) and points to the source of *mercy* of which the story of the Good Samaritan spoke (10:25–37). The hearer is reminded that Jesus continues the meandering style of ministry he began in 9:51 (see 9:52–56), as he journeys to Jerusalem. As a traveler whose mission is to preach the kingdom of God and to heal, he would be seeking out places of hospitality, houses in which to abide (cf. 9:4; 10:5–7). (CC p. 457)

Matthew 8:20 "Jesus replied, 'Foxes have hole and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.'

a village. Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem, was the home of Mary and Martha (Jn 12:1–3). (CSB)

εἰς κώμην τινά—We know from Jn 11:1 and 12:1–3 that Mary and Martha live in Bethany, which is closer to Jerusalem than to Galilee. It seems that in Luke's journey narrative, Jesus has quickly moved from Galilee (9:50) through Samaria (9:52 ff.) to the outskirts of Jerusalem. However, a later incident will take place on the border area of Galilee and Samaria (17:11). It is not certain whether Luke's order is chronological or thematic. (CC p. 456)

Martha welcomed him into her house – Μάρθα ὑπεδέξατο αὐτόν—Luke uses the same word for Zacchaeus' welcome of Jesus into his home (19:6) where hospitality is shown. What is unusual here is that a woman welcomes Jesus into her home, and that Jesus accepts her hospitality. (CC p. 465)

Though ... women could attend synagogue, learn, and even be learned if their husbands or masters were rabbis, for a rabbi to come into a woman's house and teach her specifically is

unheard of. ... Thus, not only the role Mary assumes, but also the task Jesus performs in this story is in contrast to what was expected of a Jewish man and woman (B. Witherington III, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus: A Study of Jesus' Attitudes to Women and Their Roles as Reflected in His Earthly Life* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984] 101).

G. Feeley-Harnik, *The Lord's Table*, 44, discusses Mary and Martha as marginalized members of Jewish society. (CC p. 456)

Martha received Jesus as a guest and showed hospitality. (TLSB)

10:39 *sat at the Lord's feet* – Normal position for student learning from a rabbi. (TLSB)

Augustine says, “She sat at the feet of our Head. The more lowly she sat, the more amply did she receive. For the water flows together to the low hollows of the valley, runs down from the risings of the hill.” (NPNF 1 6:430). Aug: “The one was arranging many things, the other had her eyes upon the One. Both occupations were good” (NPNF 1 6:427). (TLSB)

παρακαθισθεῖσα πρὸς τοὺς πόδας τοῦ κυρίου—Others in Luke's gospel who sit at the feet of Jesus with rapt attention are the sinful woman who anointed Jesus' feet (7:38) and the man from whom he cast out a legion of demons (8:35). (CC p. 456)

listened to his teaching – ακουεν – An imperfect meaning “kept on listening.” Matthew 28:20, too, reminds us that our learning is to be very intensive and continuous. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)

ἤκουεν τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ—The imperfect ἤκουεν gives the sense of continuous listening, i.e., “kept on listening.” On ἀκούω as a term for catechumens, see comments at 5:1; the Sermon on the Plain (6:27, 47, 49); the parable of the sower (8:8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18); and Jesus' discussion of the new kinship (8:21). (CC pp. 456-457)

This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped His feet with her hair (John 11:2). Mary symbolically embalmed Jesus for the “day of [His] burial” (John 12:7). Apparently she understood better than the 12 disciples that Christ's death was imminent. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 3)

10:40 *was distracted* – periespato – This literally means “she was dragged around.” This could mean that she really wasn't into doing this but felt obligated. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)

περιεσπᾶτο—The literal meaning is “she was dragged around.” This could suggest that Martha would rather not be working. She would rather be “sitting at the feet of the Lord,” like Mary. Martha's burden is to show hospitality to Jesus. Since she alone is named as the one who “welcomed” Jesus in 10:38, perhaps she had assumed responsibility for showing hospitality. (CC p. 457)

Martha was likely cooking for dozens of people. (TLSB)

much serving – διακονεῖν—Martha continues the tradition of the women in 8:2–3 (δηκόνουν in 8:3). To serve is a positive action that is part of Luke's hospitality motif. (CC p. 457)

Martha is not so much a personification of the Law as she is a vivid example of modern Christians trying to juggle all their obligations to God, family, friends, and others. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 3)

do you not care – Note her implied rebuke and criticism of Jesus. She expected Him to be sensitive to the workload that His arrival created. (TLSB)

tell her – In Martha’s eyes, Mary should be helping. This, of course, is a reasonable expectation. (TLSB)

10:41-42 θορυβάζει περὶ πολλά, ἐνὸς δέ ἐστιν χρεῖα—The reading of P⁴⁵ and P is to be preferred. It preserves the rarer word (θορυβάζω, instead of τυρβάζω) and has internal support because of the proper contrast between Martha’s “many things” (πολλά) and Mary’s “one thing” (ἐνός). Some manuscripts have replaced ἐνός with ὀλίγων: “there is need of a few things.” (Perhaps some scribes thought that this was a reference to the number of dishes at the meal.) Other manuscripts include both, which leads to confusion: “there is need of a few things, of one thing” (cf. B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 153–54; I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 452–53; J. Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 894; J. Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 600). (CC p. 457)

10:41 *Martha, Martha* – Jesus here intone a combination of sympathy, sadness, impatience, and even exasperation. The double name signals that Jesus is about to say something important: “Martha, Martha. We’re so near Jerusalem; we’re so near the cross. This is my last journey. How long do you think you will have me with you? Is dinner more important than listening to some of my last words? (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 3)

Jesus’ double address implies tender affection, pity (cf 13:34; 22:31; 2Sm 18:33). (TLSB)

you are anxious and troubled about many things – merimnas – This is the same root as used in the parable of the Sower. These worries choke off the faith that had sprung up. Jesus seems to be saying that Martha should not let her worries about hospitality duties get in the way of continuing to learn from him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)

10:42 *one thing is necessary* – This is the listening to Jesus in his Word. This is not to be taken for granted by even the most ardent Christians. In the parable of the Sower the devil used the worries to take away faith. Many a new Christian who comes into the church with great enthusiasm can quickly be sidetracked and soon lose that faith. It can also happen to long time Christians who have been active and then slowly drift. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 3)

τὴν ἀγαθὴν μερίδα—μερίς can be used of a “portion,” a “serving” of food (cf. Gen 43:34; BAGD 2). This suggests there is a play on words in Jesus’ statement. The best portion of food is the word of Jesus. Cf. also Lk 4:4, quoting Deut 8:3. Since this “good portion” is contrasted with an inferior one, it may be translated as a comparative: “the better portion.” (CC p. 457)

Many choices, decisions, and options are not completely right or wrong, good or bad. Choices often are comparatively good or bad. Martha’s service was better than apathy toward the Lord. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 3)

As necessary as hospitality was—esp during Jesus’ visit—the only thing that remained truly indispensable was the Word of God. Augustine, “One is preferred to many. For one does not

come from many, but many from one. The things which were made, are many, he who made them One...She chose that which shall abide forever.” (TLSB)

The hearer easily discerns the point of the story: don't be so distracted and concerned about doing good that you neglect what is *most* important, namely, to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear the Word of God. But the hearer also recognizes the problem confronting Martha. Isn't she also doing the proper thing, namely, showing hospitality to the Son of Man, who has no place to lay his head (9:58)? And by receiving Jesus, isn't she receiving him who sent Jesus (10:16)? (CC p. 458)

Martha's dilemma can be highlighted by seeing it in the broader context of the instruction (catechesis) of Luke's gospel. Recall that there are three elements to Jesus' table fellowship: teaching, eating, and the presence of Jesus. One shows hospitality to wandering missionaries in a variety of ways. One certainly provides for them the food that is essential for *table* fellowship. But the most fundamental part of the hospitality shown to wandering missionaries is to receive and hear *the preaching of the kingdom*. Here the parable of the sower is decisive in determining why Mary grasps the one thing needful and Martha does not. For Mary has heard Jesus' word "with a noble and good heart" (8:15), and she is included among Jesus' mother and brothers who "hear the Word of God and do it" (8:21). The hearer could not help but recall the admonition of Jesus in the context of the parable of the sower: "Therefore take care how you hear: 'For he who has, it will be given to him; and he who has not, even what he thinks he has, it will be taken away from him' " (8:18). (CC p. 458)

The one thing needful is the gift that Jesus has come to bring. In the context of the church, it is the catechesis of the church, the Word of God. The catechumen "shows hospitality" when he faithfully receives the Word of God. The catechumen would certainly recognize this in view of Luke's prologue. There Luke promised that the reason for his gospel is "in order that you come to recognize completely the reliability concerning *the words* by which you have been *catechized*" (1:4). The meal with Mary and Martha emphasizes the significance of the catechesis of Jesus within his table fellowship; *his teaching* is the good portion that will not be taken away. (CC pp. 458-459)

The issue here is whether one is first to serve the Lord or first to be served by him. This is really a question of the proper approach to worship. Mary has the right liturgical theology. She sits at the feet of Jesus to receive divine service from him. Instead of trying to serve Jesus first, she allows Jesus first to serve her with his gifts. Hospitality to the Lord is first expressed in faith's passive acceptance of God's Word, where the gifts of God's kingdom will be found. After receiving the gifts, there will be time for an expression of hospitality in response. But first must come the reception by faith of the preaching of the kingdom. Peter's mother-in-law shows this (4:38-39), as she first receives the gift of healing and then serves Jesus. Conversely, the lawyer claimed he was prepared to do his duty *for* a neighbor, but he had not let Jesus love him as a neighbor. So also "Martha made the mistake of thinking she was the host and Jesus the guest." (CC p. 459)

Recall that Luke was first written for Theophilus, who had been catechized (Lk 1:4). The catechumen now sees the primary importance of his catechesis. The story of Mary and Martha shows that when the kingdom of God is near, one must choose the portion that is "good" in the absolute sense—good above all others. The posture in which one receives Jesus' divine service is not the busyness of human doing, but the stillness of listening to the words of Jesus. Faith is the highest worship. (CC p. 459)

good portion – A clever turn of phrase, since it implicitly compares hearing the Word to eating a meal. (TLSB)

not taken away from her – Food comes and goes, and eventually everyone becomes hungry again. The Word of God, however, abides forever. It alone can truly satisfy. (TLSB)

Augustine, “ In these two women the lives are figured, the life present, and the life to come, the life of labor, and the life of quiet, the life of sorrow, and the life of blessedness, the life temporal, and the life eternal. (TLSB)

ἥτις οὐκ ἀφαιρήσεται αὐτῆς—Contrast 8:12, where the devil *does* take away (ἀῖρω) the seed of the Word, and 8:18, Jesus’ admonition to “take care how you hear,” lest what one thinks he has be taken away (ἀῖρω). Cf. also 12:19–21. (CC p. 457)

In contrast with Jesus’ demand for great works in the previous parable (vv 25–37), the story of Mary and Martha shows the importance of faith and rest in Jesus and His Word. Today, we are often so distracted that we neglect what matters most: God’s Word and Sacraments. What we can never earn for ourselves, no matter how much we scramble, God freely provides through faith in Jesus Christ. • O Savior, bear my anxieties and remove my distractions, that I may receive Your good portion for me. Amen. (TLSB)