

## Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

OLD TESTAMENT – Exodus 16:2-15

**2** And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, **3** and the people of Israel said to them, “Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” **4** Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. **5** On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.” **6** So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, “At evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, **7** and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against the LORD. For what are we, that you grumble against us?” **8** And Moses said, “When the LORD gives you in the evening meat to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the LORD has heard your grumbling that you grumble against him—what are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the LORD.” **9** Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, ‘Come near before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.’” **10** And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. **11** And the LORD said to Moses, **12** “I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’” **13** In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. **14** And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. **15** When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.

**16:2** *grumbled*. Collectively, the nation once again showed its lack of confidence in God’s chosen leaders. (TLSB)

loon – To be very obstinate and grumble so much that it turns into a grudge. This word appears 8 times in vv 2,7,8,9,12. Complaining and blaming leaders is still true and will always be so as long as sinful people live on the earth. In today’s society there is not only grumbling but also a lack of responsibility for one’s own behavior. Everything needs to be perfect and instant and nothing is ever “my fault.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 3)

Their dissatisfied complaint was directed against both leaders, and so against the divine act of bringing them out of Egypt, that is, against Jehovah Himself. (Kretzmann)

**16:3** *died by the hand of the LORD*. Israel tested God with illogical, unwarranted faultfinding. (TLSB)

*meat*. Nu 11:5 lists additional items of food from Egypt that the Israelites craved. (CSB)

Observe the unreasonable way in which the people complain. They inform Moses and Aaron that they wish God had killed them in Egypt, where they had lots of food, rather than live or actually die under such poor leadership. God’s people had praised Him as their strength, song and salvation (Ex. 15:2); now they have forgotten both God’s deliverance from their recent thirst crisis (Ex 15:22-27) and also the terror of life before God’s Passover (Ex. 1:1-16; 2:23; 3:7). The fickle faithless people dare to tell Moses and Aaron, “9[In Egypt] we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 3)

They as slaves were not often given meat, so the people were fantasizing about the best moments of their life in Egypt. (TLSB)

*kill this whole assembly* – This was an unjust accusation bordering upon insolence and, moreover, with an amount of falsehood, for they still had at least some of their cattle with them, and the congregation was by no means on the edge of starvation. (Kretzmann)

**16:4** *I am about to rain bread from heaven* – Without rebuke God answers. This is often the pattern in Jesus’ ministry as well. He ignores the silly and stupid requests with loving responses often teaching (usually spiritually) people as he supplies their needs. By using this phrase he was pointing out that this food was not coming from anything man produced on earth but from above (God). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 3)

*bread from heaven.* Jesus called himself “the true bread from heaven” (Jn 6:32), “the bread of God” (Jn 6:33), “the bread of life” (Jn 6:35, 48), “the living bread that came down from heaven” (Jn 6:51)—all in the spiritual sense (Jn 6:63). For a similar application see Dt 8:3 and Jesus’ quotation of it in Mt 4:4. (CSB)

God would provide bread through a daily miracle. This gift foreshadows the gift of Jesus as the bread of life (Jn 6:47–51). (TLSB)

*lechem*, “bread.” While certainly referring to a baked grain product, it also denotes a staple food of life. It is Jesus who, using the Septuagintal form *ho artos*, gives the manna (bread) its full significance, saying that “the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (Jn 6:33). This is certainly himself. Jesus is born in the house of bread (Bethlehem) and uses bread to be his body in the Lord’s Supper. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

*gather a days portion.* Probably the background for Jesus’ model petition in Mt 6:11; Lk 11:3. (CSB)

The Lord gave Israel specific instructions (Ex 15:26; 16:4) on what to do with the manna. They had to gather it early in the morning, for it would melt away when the sun got hot. They had to gather every morning for if they kept some till the next day, it would become infested with maggots. They were to gather only as much as they could use each day, amounting to roughly two quarts per person. (LL)

Several miracles by the Lord were involved with the manna. The first miracle was, of course, that God Himself sent it. It cannot successfully be identified with anything that occurs naturally. We must presume it was never seen before nor after the period of the Israelites’ wanderings in the wilderness: it was a special creation by God. Even though some people were more industrious and gathered more than the average, while others gathered less, no one had too much or too little. Twice as much manna appeared on Fridays, but none at all on the Sabbath. And although the manna would ordinarily spoil if kept from one day to the next, this did not happen to the portion kept from Friday to the Sabbath. (LL)

Moses had Aaron put a quart of manna into a jar to be kept as a lasting memorial for future generations, so they could believe that the Lord really fed Israel in the desert with miraculous bread. This manna never melted or spoiled over many generations (16:17-18, 23-30, 32-34).

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

*test.* God set simple rules about when and how to gather the bread to test Israel's confidence in His daily care for them. (TLSB)

God sends times of trial to test our faith. Here he uses his answer to the pleas of the people of Israel as an opportunity for a test. He provides enough for each day and adds a promise that there will be enough again the next day. Faith would cling to God's promise; unbelief would doubt God's provision. In their gathering for more than one day, they reveal their sinful distrust of God's Word. Likewise, when some go out to gather on the Sabbath, they find nothing. They should be at rest, as God was, on the seventh day of creation. They are bearing fruit according to their nature. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

The Lord intended to test their faith and obedience in connection with this miraculous gift of bread. (Kretzmann)

**16:5** *sixth day ... twice as much as they gather on the other days.* To provide for "the seventh day, the Sabbath" (v. 26), "a day of rest" (v. 23). See v. 29. (CSB)

The people were to gather twice as much on the sixth day so that they would not have to gather food on the seventh day of the week, which was the Sabbath. (TLSB)

**16:6** *know.* They would be given further unmistakable evidence that it was the Lord who had brought about their deliverance. (Kretzmann)

If they had eyes of faith to see and understand, they would see that God's provision of food confirmed His intent to save and sustain Israel. (TLSB)

*it was the Lord* – It is pointed out to the people that by criticizing Moses and Aaron they are actually criticizing the Lord. It is also a reminder that God had already done great things and was therefore very capable to taking care of them.

**16:7** *glory of the Lord* – They would be given definite proof of His almighty power and majesty, of His glorious presence. (Kretzmann)

The provision of bread should remind Israel of God's presence. (TLSB)

*grumbling* - *alunnote*, "grumbling" (v 7). The root verb *lun* appears only one time outside the Pentateuch (Josh 9:18). The thirteen other instances are all in the Pentateuch, and the people of Israel are always the subject as they grumble for food, water, or over trials. The Lord always hears these cries but answers in different ways. To this first cry, he answers their request as if it were a prayer, giving them meat and bread. However, as they begin to grumble even about God's answers to their requests, he disciplines them. They grumble about meat, and he gives them so much quail they become sick (Num 11:31–34). They grumble about a lack of water and how they tire of manna, and then fiery serpents descend upon them (Num 21:4–9). Later, in the New Testament, these answers to their grumbings are interpreted in light of Jesus (Jn 3:14; 6:32–33; 1 Cor 10:1–4). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

*against the Lord* – Jehovah, the Son of God, who was the real leader of the people in its desert journey, 1 Cor. 10: 4. (Kretzmann)

AGAINST US – The persons of Moses and Aaron counted for nothing; it was as the ambassadors of Jehovah that they were here concerned; the people should realize that their complaint was directed against God. (Kretzmann)

**16:8** *meat ... in the evening and bread ... in the morning.* See vv. 13–14. (CSB)

*grumble against him* – Moses and Aaron acted by God’s direction. The grumbling of the Israelites against them, were therefore in reality grumbling against Him who sent them. (Concordia Bible)

A sin against God, which He will judge. (TLSB)

“Your grumbling is not against us but against the Lord.” Moses and Aaron are the called servants of God to the people of Israel. Their complaints about food are really complaints about God’s provision for their well-being, not a commentary on the leadership of Moses and Aaron. As they have been faithful in speaking God’s Word and fulfilling their calling, they can do so with a clear conscience, knowing that it is not their word but God’s. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

**16:9** *Moses said to Aaron* – Aaron was the spokesman of Moses, was to make this announcement, giving the people the assurance that Jehovah had heard, and was ready to grant, the prayer included in their murmuring, in spite of the fact that it indicated a sinful weakness on their part. (Kretzmann)

*Come near before the LORD.* How this happened is not entirely clear. It seems that the Lord drew near to them in the cloud. (TLSB)

**16:10** *as soon as Aaron spoke* – As promised, the glory of the Lord appears to the people in cloud, quail and manna. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 3)

Isaiah 65:24 “Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.”

*glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.* This appearance confirmed the reproof and the promise given by the mouth of the Lord’s ambassadors, and incidentally indicated to them that God was able to manifest Himself in their midst even in the desert wastes which now lay before them (Kretzmann)

Here the words are used in connection with this bright cloud. As we continue our study of the book of Exodus, we shall see this expression used frequently. It was a visible sign of the Lord’s burning determination to carry out His gospel promise. Usually the appearance involved a cloud of flame and smoke. Wherever it occurs, the Lord of grace and mercy makes His presence known to His people in a special way. We should watch for these words as they occur in Scripture and see how they emphasize the Lord’s gracious abiding presence and help. (PBC)

**16:12** *shall know* – It would be another unmistakable proof of His almighty power. (Kretzmann)

God loves His people too much to ignore them. (TLSB)

**16:13** *quail covered the camp.* For a similar incident see Nu 11:31–33. (CSB)

Small game birds that migrate through this area in large numbers. Their migration was a mark of God’s providence. (TLSB)

They arose on the horizon in great masses, like a heavy cloud, their usual number being much increased by a miracle of the Lord. (Kretzmann)

Quail are migratory birds which fly in vast numbers at certain time of the year. When they rest on the ground, it is easy for people to capture them by hand. In this case, however, the quail came at a time designated by the Lord. They came in sufficient numbers to satisfy two million people. Surely this did not happen without God's direction! (PBC)

**16:14** *fine flake-like thing...as frost.* Some scholars think this was a natural occurrence. However, no manna was found on the Sabbath, which makes a natural phenomenon unlikely. Moses, who had lived in the wilderness, simply noted that it was “bread that the LORD has given” (v 15). (TLSB)

It consisted of thin flakes like frost, was white like coriander seed, resembled resin, and tasted like wafers made with honey and olive oil – thus quite tasty! It could either be baked as cakes of bread or boiled in pots (Ex. 16:13-15, 23, 31; Num. 11:7-8). (LL)

**16:15** *What is it?* mawn - Literally a “whatness that is called manna. Much like an object lesson, the food illustrates the reality of God's loving kindness. This, again, proves that the help came from God and no human.

Much like an object lesson, the food illustrates the reality of God's love. Or better put” the bread from heaven brought the reality of God's mercy into the lives of His people in a physical way, even as the Eucharist does in a greater way. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 3)

## EPISTLE – Ephesians 4:1-16

**I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.” (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? 10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.**

Chapters 4 and 5 are a portion of Ephesians that is not simply about our conduct (or, the Law). It contains some very profound Gospel teaching (e.g., 4:4-12, 5:5-25-30). However, there is a greater focus on the consequences of Law and Gospel for our faith life. (TLSB)

**4:1–16** So far Paul has taught that God brought Jew and Gentile into a new relationship to each other in the church and that he called the church to display his wisdom. Paul now shows how God made provision for those in the church to live and work together in unity and to grow together into maturity. (CSB)

**4:1 prisoner.** Paul was in prison because he had dared to speak of Christ and lived his life as a witness to Christ. This shows that he was willing to pay the price of being called by Christ. – This was a formula for vital communion with Christ, indicating that his captivity was the captivity of a part or member of the Lord. An exhortation from such a prisoner ought to fall with double weight. (PC)

His entire imprisonment was due to his connection with the Lord. In 3:1 the thought is that of special office, here the thought is that of faithfulness to the Lord. As one who is himself faithful he admonishes others. (Lenski)

Paul reminds us that he is God’s ambassador, commissioned to preach the gospel. He has carried out this task to the extent of being arrested and imprisoned for his efforts. But even being a prisoner doesn’t stop him from helping his beloved Ephesians. As their spiritual father and mentor, Paul wants to see a balance between their Christian calling and their daily conduct. (PBC)

*Urge.* BDAG identifies five distinct meanings of παρακαλέω in the NT: (1) “call to one’s side” (literal); (2) “urge, exhort”; (3) “request, implore, entreat”; (4) “comfort, encourage”; (5) “invite in, conciliate, be friendly to.” (CC)

*to walk in a manner worthy* – The word for live is - pereepateho which means to be totally dedicated with living in a certain manner. Today we might say “walk the talk.” The word for worthy is acheeoce which means that which is appropriate for a particular position or calling. They were not to be ashamed of their faith and thus try to hide it.

Because the Ephesians have this new life in Christ, Paul can expect a proper response from them. (PBC)

*calling.* The Christian faith itself, as brought by the Word of God (1:18; Rom. 8:30). (TLSB)

Christians are called by God to have part in fulfilling God’s vast design for the universe. In their unity is prefigured the unity of all things that God is bringing about in Christ.

kaleho. To be bidden in this case by God. The word “received” says very plainly that this was something done by someone other than the Ephesians themselves. This was done through the Gospel and didn’t include any of the Jewish rituals or other contingencies.

**4:2** Qualities of Christ Himself (Mt. 11:29; 21:5; 2 Cor. 10:1; Php. 2:5-8), which He works in the believer for the sake of the Church’s unity (Eph. 4:13-16; Col. 3:12-15). (TLSB)

Paul lists four qualities, divided into two pairs. (PBC)

*humility* – The humble are those who know the privilege of their calling. They set their own sins against the perfection of Christ. They know that they are creatures of God the Creator. They know that

they are beggars before God, humbled by his generous grace. The humble are able to be servants. With an attitude of servanthood comes unity. (LL)

It may be brought about by our remembering what we were when God's grace took hold of us. (PC)  
tapinofrosounay – It literally means “lowliness in mind.” It would be the opposite of being proud and arrogant. Remembering who or what we were in the past can help one to be humble.

Luke 14:10 “But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests”

Romans 12:3 “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”

Philippians 2:3-5, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.” Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus”

The realization of their own unworthiness before God would humble them, and in that spirit of humility they are to be gentle toward others. These two are internal qualities, characteristics that the Ephesians bring to the scene. (PBC)

*gentleness* – The original Greek (*prautes*) carries the idea of being angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time. It is used as well of kings who despite their strength, show great mercy to their subjects. Sometimes translated meekness, the word actually belongs to those of strength, who intentionally refuse to use their strength to wrong others. (LL)

The word describes one who so depends on God that he refuses to be deflected from the goal by slights, injuries, or insults. It is found in men of great strength and character.

This is the natural expression of a lowly state of mind, opposed to boisterous self-assertion and rude striving with others, it genders a subdued manner and a peace-loving spirit that studies to give the soft answer that turns away wrath. (PC)

It is well illustrated by Luke 6:29 “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.

The next two qualities involve irritations and aggravations from others. The key to having patience and putting up with others is love. The Greek word used here is that one-way love that doesn't look for anything in return. It simply reflects to others the undeserved one-way love we have received from a gracious God.(PBC)

*patience* – The original Greek (*makrothumia*) means literally to be long-tempered. Patient people are not short with others, especially with those who let us down, insult us, or even injure us. (LL)

This would be better translated “longsuffering.” The idea is the willingness to not give up hope for improvement in a troubled relationship. A long holding out of the mind before it gives room to action or passion. (Lenski)

1 Corinthians 13:7 “It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

Colossians 3:13 “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

1 Peter 4:8 “love covers over a multitude of sins.”

**4:3** *eager to maintain* – This means a burning desire or blazing zeal for the cause of unity.

This is not a fifth admonition but a modification of the previous. Peace should be the bond that unites the members of the Church. When Christians exercise towards one another humility, a good cheerful temper, longsuffering, patience, then will they remain at peace among one another. (Stoekhardt)

*maintain the unity.* Which God produced through the reconciling death of Christ (see 2:14–22). It is the heavy responsibility of Christians to keep that unity from being disturbed. (CSB)

We are truly one because God’s Spirit made the Church one in Christ (1:10; 4:4). True unity is neither created nor destroyed by our actions. Rather, Paul exhorts us to treasure this unity and act accordingly. (TLSB)

Nothing less than “the unity of the Spirit” is at stake. When Paul speaks of the “unity of the Spirit,” we need to be very clear that this is a unity the Holy Spirit has accomplished. It is the unity that exists in the holy Christian Church, into which the Holy Spirit has brought all believers in Christ. It is not something dependent on us or something we create by our right actions and conduct. It does not come about because we “make every effort to keep the unity.” Rather, Paul cautions us not to spoil the Holy Spirit’s good work by our own actions and lose the unity He establishes by disrupting the peace with petty quarrels and inconsiderate actions. (PBC)

Philippians 1:27 “Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.”

*bond of peace* – Tying Christians to one another and to God (2:15). (TLSB)

Peace and bond are the same thing. If the saints do what they are told in verse 2, peace will result. And that is the only quality which will preserve God-given peace in the Church. Kretzmann says: “As soon as these virtues are disregarded, the result is dissension and disagreement, division and sectarianism. (Buls)

**4:4-6** In these three verses there are seven “ones” which define the unity of the church. Seven is the number of completion or perfection. We might translate: “The Church is absolutely and perfectly one. Furthermore, the first three elements of oneness look to the present, the second three look back to the historical origin of the Church, and the last one looks to the ultimate origin of the Church (CSB)



Poetic. Possibly a quotation of an early Christian hymn or creed (cf. 1 Cor. 12:3-6). The Church's unity is rooted in the Trinity: one Spirit (v. 4), one Lord (v. 5), one Father (v. 6). There are seven "ones" God's number for completeness. (TLSB)

All three persons of the Godhead – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – were involved in effecting this unity. Paul shows this is a table beginning at verse 4. He constructs three sets of three items each – one set for each person of the Trinity. Interestingly enough, he reverses the order from what we're used to seeing. He places the persons into this sequence: Spirit, Son, Father. (PBC)

**4:4** In the first set Paul highlights the Spirit's contributions to the church's unity by assembling three items, all introduced by the numerical adjective "one." He says, "There is one body and one spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called." We have noted that the Holy Spirit reminds the Ephesians that they were "called." They were called into one body, the holy Christian church. In that body all people are of the same heart and mind – of "one spirit," if you will – because they all have one and the same hope, namely, eternity with God in heaven. (PBC)

*one body* – Paul sees one church – the body of Christ. As he writes 1 Corinthians 12, every part of the body is essential for it to work effectively. Clearly Paul could not envision a church fragmented into denominations. Yet even with many denominations the church of believers in Christ is one body; that is, we all have the same Head, Jesus Christ, and we have all been called out to be the church, we function for the same reason, and we all really do need one another. (LL)

*one spirit* – The same indivisible Spirit unites us all. (TLSB)

The oneness of the Church, rooted in Christ Himself, into whom we are baptized (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:13). (TLSB)

God's Spirit is, as it were, the soul of this body, the Christian Church. They are all moved and ruled by the self-same Spirit, the Holy Spirit. And in such a Spirit they all strive after the same goal. (Stoeckhardt)

*one hope*. Has different aspects (e.g., 1:5, 10; 2:7), but it is still one hope, tied to the glorious future of Christ, in which all believers share. (CSB)

My hope is everlasting life, and objective hope. Lenski comments here: "One hope is the one item that contains a personal reference to the Ephesians. In a marked way it reverts to verse 1: 'the calling with which you were called.'" (Buls)

**4:5** Regarding the second member of the Trinity, Paul sets up this triad: "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." In Luther's explanation of the Second Article of the Apostle's Creed we confess that Jesus purchased and won us, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood. And he did this so that we might be His own. He owns us. He is our Lord, and the only Lord we want or need. Furthermore, all believers by definition believe in Him. He is the object of their faith. "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). And the way to come to faith in Christ is through the means of grace, through Word and Sacraments. In stressing the unity that exists among members of the church Paul calls special attention to baptism, very likely because it is the universal sacrament, intended for all age groups. (PBC)

Franzmann says of these three that they look to the historical origin of the church. (Buls)

*one Lord* – All in the church serve one Lord. Kurios, the Greek word translated “Lord,” was used of the master of slaves and of the Caesar of Rome. That makes all in the church servants. It makes Christ master and king. We are united under one great leader, Christ. (LL)

A Confession of Jesus as Yahweh, true God (Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3). (TLSB)

*one faith* – The substance of saving faith is the same for every Christian – faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ. (LL)

Not the act of believing, but what is believed: true doctrine, as confessed through the Apostle’s Creed at Baptism (cf. Col. 2:6-7). (TLSB)

*one baptism.*† Not the baptism of the Spirit (see Ac 1:4–5), which was inward and therefore invisible, but the sacrament of baptism (see note on Ro 6:3–4). Since Paul apparently has in mind that which identifies all believers as belonging together, he would naturally refer to that sacrament in which every new convert participated publicly. (CSB)

Although Baptism as new birth cannot be repeated (nor may “Spirit Baptism” be separated from “water Baptism,” that is not the emphasis here. Rather, Paul teaches that there is only one Baptism, into which Christ Himself and all Christians are baptized and thereby joined. “For the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree about the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies instituted by men, should be the same everywhere” (AC VII 2-3). (TLSB)

**4:6** In his third triad Paul varies the form, giving three prepositions to highlight our gracious God’s activity. There is only one God, our heavenly Father. With His almighty power our heavenly Father looks after all and watches over them. With His matchless grace He works through His believers to accomplish His saving purpose. In fact, so close is the relationship between God and His believers that Paul can even say God dwells in His believers. As bold and daring as that sounds, Paul really is saying nothing other than what Jesus Himself promised His followers at the Last Supper: If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him” (John 14:23). (PBC)

Paul’s point in this whole section is that a marvelous unity binds the Ephesians to one another (in their local congregation, or “visible church”) and binds them also to every other believer in the worldwide holy Christian church (the “invisible church”). Therefore, in their daily sanctified lives the Ephesians shouldn’t do anything to spoil this great blessing. Rather, they should “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” (PBC)

Despite this unity that binds together all believers in Christ, believers always retain their own individuality. They are not reduced to a number in God’s book. He knows each believer by name. He treats each one with the utmost love and care. (PBC)

*one God and Father*– The church has one ultimate authority, one provider, and one whose love for us unites us as a family. The use of the title Father presents the unity of the church as that of a family with a good, strong, and gracious Father. (LL)

God claims Fatherhood over all because He created all (3:14-15; Rom. 10:12; 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6). But only through Christ can we acknowledge Him as Father (Gal. 4:6). (TLSB)

*all* – The word “all” is used four times in this verse. All are masculine. The first is genitive in relation. The last three are governed by prepositions. We shall meet the word “all” again in verse 13. These several references to “all” are individualization of the one body. All make up one body. Only the Christian religion calls its God “Father.” (Buls)

**4:7** *to each* – In this verse we have “one” whereas in the preceding verses the text spoke of “all.” Paul is stressing “to each one of us.” (Buls)

*was given* – We did not work for it. Here Karis does not mean salvation, forgiveness of sins, everlasting life. It simply means “gift” something with which to serve the church. In this phrase lies the diversity of gifts given to Christians, “in keeping with measure of the gift of Christ.” Beck: “But each of us has been given the gift measured out by Christ who gave it.” There is no such thing as a Christian who has not received some gift with which to serve the church. (Buls)

All Christians are one and of one mind in the Spirit and in faith. In connection with is unity, however, they have received various gifts, which each one should exercise to the welfare of his brother. (Stoeckhardt)

*grace*. The stress in the Greek is on “each one of us.” Again we are reminded that the gifts themselves are gifts of grace.

These are gifts which each should exercise to the welfare of his brothers/sisters. (Stoeckhardt)

*according to the measure of Christ’s* – Not a little to one and more to another, but the fullness of Christ’s giving to all Christians. Unity, not diversity is the point. (TLSB)

Paul wants to call attention to the Source of those gifts. The Giver is none other than the risen, triumphant, ascended Lord Christ. Paul substantiates that from Scripture in verse 8. (PBC)

**4:8** Ps 68:18 speaks of God’s triumphant ascension to his throne in the temple at Jerusalem (symbol of his heavenly throne). Paul applies this to Christ’s triumphal ascension into heaven. Where the psalm states further that God “received gifts from men,” Paul apparently takes his cue from certain rabbinic interpretations current in his day that read the Hebrew preposition for “from” in the sense of “to” (a meaning it often has) and the verb for “received” in the sense of “take and give” (a meaning it sometimes has—but with a different preposition; see Ge 15:9; 18:5; 27:13; Ex 25:2; 1Ki 17:10–11). (CSB)

The temple dedication enthroned God in the Jerusalem sanctuary (1 Kings 8:1-11; cf. 2 Sam. 6:16-19). He received gifts (offerings) as a victorious king who had led His people through the exodus. Christ, having freed those captive to sin, ascended to heaven to give gifts to people (Luke 24:49-51; Acts 1:8-9; 2:33). (TLSB)

*ascended on high* – That according to Paul’s opinion is the ascension of Christ into heaven is meant by this ascension on high is generally acknowledged. They give the apostle the right to such an interpretation because of the typical character of the Psalm. But the Hebrew text itself permits no other interpretation. The Messiah often appears in prophecy as Lord Jehovah, who is presented as a Champion, who fights and gains the victory for His people. And now in adoration the Psalmist calls to the Victor “Thou has ascended on high.” Upon victory follows triumph. “On high” in the OT never designates Mt. Zion but always heaven. (Stoeckhardt)

*captives*. Probably Paul applies this to the spiritual enemies Christ defeated at the cross. (CSB)

Satan and hellish hosts, and he sees in Christ's ascension a triumph over the forces and powers of darkness. (Stoekhardt)

*gave gifts to men* – Marvel of marvels, he deigns to give us mortal a part in his grand plan to have the church spread out into all the world. (PBC)

The ascended Lord, the exalted Messiah, has taken gifts among men, that is out of the human race, men who are now His own, who are with whole heart devoted and subject to Him. This interpretation best suits the final words of the verse from the Psalm: that also the rebellious live with the Lord Christ. Also the rebellious, also men who before others opposed the Lord, come hither and live under Christ in His kingdom and serve Him in righteousness and innocence. To such rebellious men, whom the Lord draws unto Himself, belong such Gentiles as the Ethiopians and the Egyptians, whose conversion is pictured at the end of the Psalm. (Stoekhardt)

**4:9** Interpreting Ps. 68:18, Paul sees Christ as its ultimate meaning. The OT is interpreted in view of Christ's saving work. Christ's descent is His incarnation (John 3:13). (TLSB)

*ascended ... descended.*† Although Paul quoted from the psalm to introduce the idea of the "gifts to men," he takes the opportunity to remind his readers of Christ's coming to earth (his incarnation) and his subsequent resurrection and ascension. Some interpret this passage as referring to Christ's descent into hell, but this is probably incorrect. (CSB)

Paul's emphasis in this section is on Christ's exalted return to heaven. Hence it seems somewhat more likely that the apostle's reference is to Christ's state of humiliation. (PBC)

**4:10** *might fill all things* – As the exalted, other-worldly one, who sits at God's right hand. Christ now fills all things by his powerful, effective omnipresence. (Stoekhardt)

**4:11** *who gave.* The quotation from Ps 68 has its ultimate meaning when applied to Christ as the ascended Lord, who himself has given gifts. (CSB)

The Office of the Ministry and the men who hold it are Christ's gifts to the Church. The Gospels connect it institution with the period between Christ's resurrection and ascension. There is one office, but a diversity of callings, within it (cf. Rom. 12:6-8), and some men held more than one role (cf. 1Tim. 2:7; 4:13; 5:17). The first two callings listed here (and perhaps the third) belong only to the first generation of the Church, though their message is preserved in Holy Scripture. (TLSB)

It would be an engaging process to try to find names of people who might fit the categories Paul lists, but his intent seems rather to list offices or position created for the church. (PBC)

Franzmann says at this point: "A comparison with 1 Cor. 12:26-28 shows that the list is not intended to be exhaustive...Pastors and teachers attend to the day-by-day nurture and edification of the churches established by the labors of apostle and evangelist." (Buls)

These are gifts which each should exercise to the welfare of his brothers/sisters. (Stoekhardt)

*apostles.* Mentioned here because of their role in establishing the church (see 2:20). For qualifications of the initial group of apostles see Ac 1:21-22; see also notes on Mk 6:30; Ro 1:1; 1Co 1:1; Heb 3:1. In a broader sense, Paul was also an apostle (see 1:1). (CSB)

The original group who founded the Church.

apostolos – Means to be a “sent one.” Someone who is delegated to be an ambassador (special messenger) of the Gospel. Acts 1:21-22 defines an apostle as someone who: (1) was with Jesus the whole time and (2) witnessed his resurrection. In a broader sense Paul was also an apostle (Ephesians 1:1).

*prophets.* People to whom God made known a message for his people that was appropriate to their particular need or situation. (CSB)

Probably not of the OT, but those in the apostolic age to whom special revelation was given (Acts 11:27-28; 1 Cor. 14:3-6, 22-32). (TLSB)

Men of the NT who spoke the Word authoritatively to their contemporaries.

profaytace – To be a foreteller or an inspired teacher. This is a fulfillment of Joel 2:28. 1 Corinthians 14:1-5 describes the prophet as someone who speaks to others for their “strengthening, encouragement and comfort” and therefore “edifies the church.”

Prophets and evangelists were special gifts of the primitive Church. The prophets, and these are the NT prophets, for special purposes received special revelation, which they then expounded to the Christian assemblies in inspired speech. The evangelists, to whom, for example, Philip belonged, (Acts 21:3) were missionaries of the Gospel; they carried the apostolic Word to those regions where apostles themselves had not gone. The office of the present-day missionaries corresponds somewhat to their calling. (Stoeckhardt)

*evangelists.* See Ac 21:8; 1Co 1:17. While the other gifted people helped the church grow through edification, the evangelists helped the church grow by augmentation. Since the objective mentioned in v. 12 is “to prepare God’s people for works of service,” we may assume that evangelists, among their various ministries, helped other Christians in their testimony. (CSB)

Literally, “Gospelers.” Either missionaries or those who compiled the four gospels (Luke 1:1-4). (TLSB)

Probably missionaries who reached out to the non-Christian with the Gospel.

yooanghelistace – A preacher of the Gospel. They took the Gospel message which they had received from the Apostles and carried it to those regions where the Apostles had not gone. Philip was an Evangelist.

*Shepherds and teachers.*† Because of the Greek grammatical construction (one article with two nouns; also, the word “some” introduces both words together), it is clear that these two nouns describe one office. Those who have pastoral care for God’s people (the image is that of shepherding) will naturally provide “food” from the Scriptures (teaching). They will be especially gifted as teachers (cf. 1Ti 3:2). – Pastor comes from poymane which means to shepherd or care for people. Teacher comes from didaskalos which means a master teacher (instructor) like one possessing a doctor degree. The Greek text indicates that these words describe a single occupation of ministry of the Word. (CSB)

With pastors and teachers Paul described the regular ministry of the Word, which at all times in the history of the Church is and has remained the same, public ministry. The word, teachers, points mainly to the ministry of teaching, pastors or shepherds to pastoral care, applying the Word to the individual members of the congregation. (Stoeckhardt)

Those caring for Christ's flock (John 10:11-16; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4). (TLSB)

Teachers – Either another word for shepherd (1 Tim.3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24). Or a distinct calling as theological teacher (Acts 13:1; 2 Tim. 1:11; James 3:1). Augustine: “He added teachers (to the list) that pastors might understand that teaching – doctrina – belong t their office”(Hus, The Church, p. 158) (TLSB)

**4:12** *to equip the saints for the work of ministry.* Those mentioned in v. 11 were not to do all the work for the people, but were to train the people to do the work themselves. (CSB)

Like outfitting a soldier for battle (6:10–17). Some editions and translations include a comma after this phase to distinguish it from the following (cf KJV). *the work of [the] ministry.* The commissioned task of proclaiming the Word (3:7–8; Ac 6:4; Rm 11:13), as carried out by the apostles and so on (4:11). (TLSB)

Beck translates: “in order to get His holy people ready to serve as workers and build up the body of Christ.” (Buls)

No member is excluded from the edifying of the church. (Buls)

The preaching of the divine Word is the only means through which the Church of Christ is built. (Stoeckhardt)

katartismos – To complete thoroughly (perfectly). Also means to restore, adjust or repair like repairing a broken bone. In this case it means a through training program to equip people. – Works comes from ergon which means an act of labor. Service comes from deekonee which means giving attendance or aid which provides relief. The service could especially be in the area of teaching.

*For building up the body of Christ.* See v. 16. Spiritual gifts are for the body, the church, and are not to be exercised individualistically. “Built up” reflects the imagery of 2:19–22. Both concepts—body and building—occurring together emphasize the key idea of growth. – Good body building requires that we eat right, exercise and get proper rest. (CSB)

The purpose of this work is for the perfecting, for consummation of the saints. (Stoeckhardt)

oykodomay – The building up of structure. In this case it is the Body of Christ (Church).

**4:13** *until.* Expresses not merely duration but also purpose. (CSB)

Paul distinguishes the following stages in the Christian's course on earth. After their conversion many Christians still resemble immature children. They are still rather unintelligent and inexperienced in spiritual matters. Then with God's help they attain to a certain manly maturity and constancy, so that they can resist temptations which press upon them from all sides. Notwithstanding, perfect manhood is the final end and goal of development. Therefore, the exalted Christ has given to His Church apostles, prophets, etc., in general teachers for the purpose of perfecting the saints, so that the ultimate goal will be reached, the end. (Stoeckhardt)

*unity.* Carries forward the ideal of vv. 1–6. (CSB)

The oneness is the one that unites us all. It is the oneness belonging to the faith and to the knowledge of God. (Lenski)

Paul appealed to the Office of the Ministry because the ministers' faithful teaching promotes the Church's unity in the true doctrine (Titus 1:9; 2:1). (TLSB)

*of the faith.* Here "faith" refers to the Christians' common conviction about Christ and the doctrines concerning him, as the following words make clear (cf. also "the apostles' teaching" in Ac 2:42). (CSB)

*knowledge of the Son of God.* Unity is not just a matter of a loving attitude or religious feeling, but of truth and a common understanding about God's Son. (CSB)

Not mere intellectual knowledge but true heart knowledge. (Lenski)

*measure of the stature...fullness of Christ.* † Not only the maturity of doctrinal conviction just mentioned, nor a personal maturity that includes the ability to relate well to other people (cf. vv. 2–3), but also the maturity of the perfectly balanced character of Christ. (CSB)

Sound teaching leads to maturity (Col. 1:28). The only way to know God is through Christ (Mt. 11:27; John 1:18). "This healing is only begun in this life. It will not be perfect until the life to come" (FC SD I 14). (TLSB)

As faith and knowledge about Christ grow, believers "become mature." That process, however, is never complete here on earth. It has rightly been said that the Christian life is a constant "becoming." Paul himself hadn't yet attained full spiritual maturity – as he frankly admits to the Philippians (3:12-15). For a candid statement of his frustration with his frequent lapses and lack of maturity, read Romans 7, particularly verses 14 to 25. Spiritual maturity is not fully attainable here, but it is what every Christian strives for personally and seeks to help others reach. (PBC)

Philippians 3:12: "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

1 John 3:2: "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

**4:14 children.** Contrast the maturity of v. 13. (CSB)

Reborn through Baptism, Christians should not remain like infants, for false doctrine always threatens them (1 Cor. 3:1-2; Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Peter 2:2). (TLSB)

Beck renders the verse: "We shouldn't be babies any longer, tossed and driven by every windy thing that is taught, by the trickery of men and their clever scheming in error." (Buls)

The whole verse is talking about deliberately deceptive and false teachers who make easy victims of Christians who cannot stand on their own feet so far as doctrine is concerned. (Buls)

These are images of immaturity and instability. The child has a flighty, unsettled temperament.

They are helpless against assaults; they must be protected, carried in the arms of others. (Lenski)

naypeeos To be simple minded and immature like a baby. They are helpless against assaults. (QV)

Hebrews 5:12 “In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!”

*tossed*. The nautical imagery pictures the instability of those who are not strong Christians. (CSB)

Christians live in an evil spiritual atmosphere (2:2). They are exposed to the influence of the most diverse doctrine and opinions, which all run directly counter to the apostles’ doctrine. Like a ship that sails the high sea without a rudder, the immature are easily carried and tossed to and fro, so that they are inclined now to this, then to that doctrine. (Stoeckhardt)

People who don’t grow spiritually through diligent use of Word and sacrament remain infants, despite their chronological age. With no doctrinal base, they’re helpless because they have nothing firm to hang on to. That’s why Paul can liken them to people in a rowboat out on the high seas during a fierce gale. They’re swept around “by every wind of teaching.” (PBC)

kloodonidzomahee – To surge first one way and then another or to constantly fluctuate. These are people who run after every new teaching and do not have a solid biblical base.

*Wind of doctrine*. Then, as now, there were many distorted teachings and heresies that would easily throw the immature off course. (CSB)

*cunning ... craftiness ... deceitful schemes*. Sometimes those who try to draw people away from the Christian faith are not innocently misguided but deliberately deceitful and evil (cf. 1Ti 4:1–2). (CSB)

No specific false teaching is mentioned, but Paul is probably referring to pagan Greek philosophies and Judaizing. (TLNB)

The word pictures playing at dice. The idea is of the fickleness of the dice. The Christian who is easily swayed by every new doctrine is falling back into the fickleness of mind which shows he has no firm principles to guide him. The translation for “craftiness and deceitful scheming” would be “ingenuity in inventing error.”

The men who openly propose and advocate false doctrine are unscrupulous wanton and crafty. They make wanton and treacherous sport of those who give them audience. They don’t care a bit about their neighbor’s weal and woe. They trifle with the conscience and spiritual welfare of the Christian. They seek only their one advantage, their own honor. They desire merely to acquire adherents and delude and deceive the simply by pious talk and glowing promises. Thus the insecure are easily captivated by them. (Stoeckhardt)

False opinion itself is dangerous and insidious. In error there is plan, method, calculation, cunning. False doctrine conceals itself behind apparently pointed and stringent conclusions from the Word of Scriptures but which are all fallacies, and expertly knows how to distort words and concepts. This belongs to the wiles of the devil (6:11), who is the author of all errors and inspires false teachers. The logic and dialectics of the old serpent who seduced Eve run through the systems of the heretics. (Stoeckhardt)



Spiritually immature people are like unsophisticated buyers being “worked” by a slick salesperson. Because they don’t know the product, they’re taken in. Without knowing it, immature Christians may not be getting pure doctrine or correct teaching. They may be accepting spiritual snake oil from false teachers. (PBC)

**4:15** *speaking the truth in love.*† True doctrine and a loving manner of life are implied. (CSB)

Concern for true doctrine and love for one another are not alternatives, but belong together (1 Peter 1:22). (TLSB)

Far from accepting false doctrine, spiritually mature Christians will rather go on the offensive against it. They are not to lord it over their weaker brothers. Nor are they viciously to turn on false teachers, but rather speak as lovingly and as winsomely as possible in the hope of winning over the proponent of an incorrect view. (PBC)

Jesus spoke the Truth in love, whether it was Law or Gospel. Our objective for ourselves and for others is the salvation of the soul and body. (Buls)

*grow up ... head.* A slightly different restatement of v. 13, based now on the imagery of Christ as the Head of the body, which is the church. Paul thus speaks primarily of corporate maturity. It is the “body of Christ” that is to be “built up” (v. 12). In v. 13 “we all” are to become “mature” (lit. “a mature man”). (CSB)

“If they understand the substance of it (the Creed), they themselves may afterward strive to gain more, refer to these parts whatever they learn in the Scriptures, and may ever grow and increase in richer understanding” (LC II 70). (TLSB)

Growth in knowledge, in truth not only is intellectual progress but includes, brings with it in every respect growth in Christian character, faith, life and an ever more intimate unity of ourselves with Christ our Lord and Head. (Stoeckhardt)

**4:16** Further details of the imagery of the body growing under the direction of the Head. The parts of the body help each other in the growing process, picturing the mutual ministries of God’s people spoken of in vv. 11–13. (CSB)

*joined and held* –The stunning image is of a head that energizes its body, drawing its parts together by fitting the joints and providing tendons, the growth emanating from the head in defiance of any scientific pedantry. It is significant that Paul returns to the role of Christ at the end of this pericope. The ministers (4:11) are simply instruments. It is not they who produce the growth, but the Christ, who gave the ministers (4:7–11) and continues to work through them (1 Cor 3:6–7). (CC)

Paul makes it clear that every Christian has a role in Christ’s church. We need to keep that in mind. We’re often inclined to think that we’re too small or too unimportant to make much of a difference. Paul helps us understand how wrong that kind of thinking is. “Every supporting ligament” is important to the body. The whole body grows and builds itself up “as each part does its work.” Every Christian is an important part of the church, because growth and improvement in the church come “from him,” that is, from Christ and not from us. Think of what misery and discomfort the whole body feels when one member is sick or fails to function properly. (PBC)

Or, ligament. What binds the members together: the Word, the ministry, the common confession. (TLSB)

We quote from Stoeckhardt's comments: "The Apostle, both in Colossians and here tells us that the human body when it is in action and moves receives assistance and is closely joined by the intensive straining of the muscles and sinews, so that each part contributes its share to the effort of the whole, because all the members unite in action and cooperate... The same persons of the individual Christians are pictured as members and also as the muscles, ligaments. The proper use of the gifts of the Lord by the individual Christian in the service of others redounds to the good of the entire body, by which the entire body of the Church is strengthened, firmly joined, and made unitedly effective. (Buls)

*love. Maturity and unity are impossible without it (cf. vv. 2, 15). (CSB)*

**4:1–16** Paul highlights the gifts of Christ that make us His Body; as one Body, we are protected from the dangers of our times. Modern individualism and consumerism make it easy to treat the Church as "all about me." Thanks be to God, the Church is all about Jesus, who provides for our salvation and edification. • Lord, bind us together by the truth proclaimed by Your faithful ministers. Amen. (TLSB)

#### GOSPEL – John 6:22-35

**22 On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. 23 Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24 So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. 25 When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" 26 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. 27 Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." 28 Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." 30 So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32 Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." 35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.**

**6:22–24** The crowd could not figure out what had happened to Jesus. But they wanted to see him again, so they looked for him in the most likely place, Capernaum. (CSB)

When daylight came, the crowd whom Jesus had fed realized that He was gone. They were puzzled by Jesus' absence. There had been only one boat, and Jesus stayed behind when the disciples left in it. When a fleet of boats landed on the shore where they were, they got in the boats and headed for Capernaum to search for Jesus. Still excited by the free lunch He had provided, they were eager to find Him. (LifeLight)

On the morning after the miracle of the loaves there was great excitement and astonishment on the northeastern shore of the lake. The people that had remained in that neighborhood over night, expecting

to take hold of Jesus in the morning, were deeply perplexed. Only one boat had been at the place of the miraculous feeding, and that was the one into which the disciples had gone. This boat had not had Jesus as a passenger, and it had not returned. The question therefore was: How had Jesus gotten away? They were at a loss to explain His absence. But meanwhile other boats from Tiberias landed in the neighborhood of the place where the miracle had been performed. So the people took advantage of the opportunity thus offered. They were determined to find Jesus at all costs, and therefore they took some of the boats and crossed the lake to Capernaum. (Kretzmann)

**22:23** *Tiberias* – Large Greek city on the Sea of Galilee, mentioned only in John (6:1; 21:1). Herod Antipas built it in AD 16-22 and named it in honor of the reigning Roman emperor. (TLSB)

*had given thanks* - “after the Lord had given thanks.” In the Greek text, this is a genitive absolute (*eucharistēsantos tou kuriou*) that seems to lend eucharistic imagery to Jesus’ work of feeding the five thousand. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

**6:24-35** The conversation between Jesus and his addressees in our text is immediately preceded by two miracles: Jesus’ feeding of the five thousand (vv 1–15) and Jesus’ walking on water (6:16–21). The first miracle accounts for the talk about food in our text. The second miracle accounts for the people’s question in v 25, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

The Gospel already surfaces in the relationship between our text and its immediately preceding context—in two ways: first, in the situation, and second, in the method of Jesus’ teaching. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

*The situation:* From v 15 of this chapter, we learn that Jesus had avoided the people he talks to in the text because they wanted to make him a king. Their pursuit of him was prompted by less than commendable motives: curiosity, materialism, and carnal security. Despite the untoward beginning of this encounter, Jesus makes the best of a bad situation and tries to elevate the people’s thinking to a higher and more spiritual plane. On the one hand, Jesus does not hesitate to correct the mistaken approach of the people (v 26), but, on the other hand, neither does he angrily dismiss the crowd nor turn away from them in contempt. His conduct suggests an evangelical approach for pastors today: Take people where they are, with all their limitations, and with simultaneous integrity and kindness move them ahead in their understanding of God’s Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

*The method of Jesus’ teaching:* Be it reverently said, Jesus exploits the situation. In the context of the feeding of the five thousand, the people are thinking of bread. Similarly, to the woman at the well in John 4, Jesus presents the Gospel in the metaphor of water. Again, it seems, Jesus’ procedure in these incidents provides an obvious precedent for us pastors today in our ministry to people. Present the Gospel, wherever possible, in terms of their situation and understanding. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

The pericope being studied comes after the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand (Jn 6:1–14). This is the only miracle that is included in all four Gospels. St. John alone provides the account of Jesus’ speech regarding himself as the Bread of Life. This Dominical Word was occasioned by the aftermath of the sign of the feeding when, John says, the crowd wished to take Jesus by force and make him a king—their kind of king, an earthly “bread king” (6:15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

This lesson includes the first of Jesus’ “I am” sayings (6:35, 41, 48, 51; 8:12; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5). This is a distinctive feature of John’s Gospel over and against the Synoptics. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Our text speaks of what happened the day following the feeding of the 5,000. Two days before Jesus and His disciples had crossed the Sea of Galilee from west to east. The next day He preached the Gospel and fed the 5,000. That evening He dismissed the disciples and He went up on the mountain to pray. The disciples boarded a boat and began to cross to the western shore. A severe storm came up and Jesus came to His disciples, walking on the water. He boarded the boat and they came to land. The next morning the crowd looked for Jesus. (Buls)

**6:25** *they found him* – "After they had found Him." They call him rabbi. This crowd was respectful to Jesus but they were unbelievers. They ask Him: "When did you get here?" What they did not know was that He had crossed the sea in a miraculous manner. They must have been aware of the storm on the lake during the night. They are amazed at the fact that He got there so quickly. The "when" also includes the "how." (Buls)

*heurontes*, "found": a confirmation for those who suspected a miracle had taken place. Jesus had walked on the water to arrive at the other side (vv 16–21). The interrogative *pote*, literally, "When have you become here?" (with the perfect *gegonas* instead of the more common aorist) also entails the question, "How?" But Jesus does not respond with an explanation of his miracle. Instead, he immediately gets to the more pressing question of why they had followed him. Was it out of faith or self-interest? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

*other side* - "The other side" is Capernaum, in the synagogue (v 59). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

*when did you get here* - *ghinomahee* – To come or to arrive. Also "how" is a part of the mix.

As noted in the preceding section, the people's question, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" reflected their surprise and curiosity. How and when did Jesus get to the present location? How did he manage to beat them there? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

Bonus Gospel lies in providing a broader and more profound answer to the people's question than they desired (an answer not given in the text but supplied elsewhere in the Bible). Listen, for example, to the answer of Gal 4:4–5. "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." ("When the time had fully come"—that's when the Rabbi got here!) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

Or listen to the answer of Lk 2:1–7. "In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David. . . . While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son." ("In those days. . . . While Quirinius was governor of Syria"—that's when the Rabbi got here!) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

Jesus does not respond with an explanation of His miracle. Instead, He immediately gets to the more pressing question of why they had followed Him. Was it out of faith or self-interest? (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume, Part 3)

The people who pursued Jesus across the lake betray predictably human curiosity: “Rabbi, when did you get here?” they asked. They were aware that Jesus had not come by the boat that had conveyed his disciples across the lake (v 22). So how—and when—had Jesus arrived? The very asking of the question indirectly corroborates the account of Jesus’ miraculous walking on the water (vv 19–20). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

“on the other side.” The walk halfway around the lake, the Sea of Galilee, is about ten miles. Since the crowds knew Jesus had not departed with the disciples by the one available boat (v 22), they were surprised he had arrived so quickly. They were unaware, of course, of his unique crossing (6:16–21). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

When they had finally located the object of their quest on the other side of the lake, they opened on Him with the question as to His manner of getting there, for the when includes the how. They were always scenting the abnormal, the miraculous, in connection with this man; it was the only thing which made their quest worth while, in their estimation. But the purposes of Jesus do not agree with their curiosity, and therefore He did not give them a direct answer. His telling of the walking on the water would have precipitated a crisis then and there. (Kretzmann)

**6:26** *truly, truly I say* – The expression “in very truth I say to” occurs here and in verse 32. Jesus uses it here because the people themselves did not know their own true character so well as did Jesus. For their own good He tells them. Their motive is utterly carnal. Note that Jesus did not answer their question. (Buls)

Lenski: He replies to men's hearts not merely to their words. (Buls)

Amen, amen: Jesus’ precursor of strong words to come. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 3)

“Jesus answered”—or did he? True, he did not answer the crowd’s specific question. Jesus wasted no time on trivial matters. But he “answered,” that is, spoke to, their urgent and immediate problem: their need for the “food that endures to eternal life” (v 27). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

Jesus knew the reason for their insistence, for the great interest they were showing at this time. With solemn emphasis He tells them that the reason why they sought Him was a wrong one. (Kretzmann)

*signs* – “Signs” in the plural without the article suggests that the feeding of the 5,000 (6:1–14) had multiple significance, revealing a number of things about Jesus. The people had physically seen the signs but had not understood or believed them to be divine signs. Their lack of faith was shown by their ill-conceived effort in 6:15, and will be shown again when they request a “sign” (singular) in v 30. Here Jesus affirms that they have already seen a number of “signs” (plural). See also 14:9, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

Faith in Jesus was the purpose of all the signs (20:3-31). At the miraculous feeding, the crowds saw only the gift, not the Giver. (TLSB)

Here, Jesus speaks of “signs”; the crowd he addresses will use the same word in the singular in v 30. As with most stop signs, people need to heed signs lest they put their lives in danger. Jesus did signs to support his mission to save people. He did them to serve, not to be served. In his state of humiliation,

Jesus tended to shelve his divine attributes so that he could be tempted like we are but without sinning. Jesus, as the Formula of Concord (Article VIII, “The Person of Christ”) reminds us, had his human nature and divine nature contribute toward (not detract from) the salvation of people in keeping with the promises of God. Jesus’ signs point to him as the one and only Savior of humankind. For a more detailed discussion of signs, one might wish to consult one or more of the following: Kittel and Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 7, pp 200–261; Alexander et al., eds., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, pp 775–81; Crim, ed., *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, Supplementary Volume, pp 824–25; *Wilson’s Dictionary of Bible Types*, pp 405–9; Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, vol. 2, pp 625–26. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

They had indeed seen some of His signs with their bodily eyes, but they had not given them the proper attention; they were altogether lacking in the understanding that these signs were evidences, proofs, of His divinity, of the fact that He is the Son of God, the Redeemer and Savior of mankind. Thus the meaning of the great signs before their eyes escaped them entirely. (Kretzmann)

Signs and baseball signs from coach.

HAD YOUR FILL – *Echortasthēte*, “you were satisfied”: this verb, meaning “to be full, satiated,” is used by the synoptic evangelists for the miraculous feedings of the 5,000 and the 4,000 and a few other times (Mt 5:6; 14:20; 15:33, 37; Mk 6:42; 7:27; 8:4, 8; Lk 6:21; 9:17; 15:16; 16:21), but John used the passive *empimplēmi*, “to fill, satisfy” in Jn 6:12. The Johannine writings have *chortazō* only here and in Rev 19:21. It is also the LXX term in Ps 78:29; 105:40 for God miraculously providing food for Israel in the wilderness during the exodus. Jesus, therefore, is affirming that his own work is a divine miracle of deliverance. Luther’s translation has *sett*, akin to “satiated.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

They sought Him because their concern was for their bodies and stomachs. If these were but filled; their souls were not a matter of concern to them. (Kretzmann)

**6:27** *food* – *brōsin* “food” is a general term for anything eaten; in contrast to *sarx*, “flesh” (6:51 *passim*) and *kreas*, “meat” (Rom 14:21). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

*that perishes* – *Apollumenēn*, “perishing,” means death is certain; not only the food perishes, but also those who eat it. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

This verse contains a prohibition, then a command followed by an explanation. Jesus uses the word “work” of the attitude and endeavor of the regenerate Christian. Its true character unfolds in verses 27-29. In verse 27 Jesus means “make the lasting food your constant endeavor.” In verse 28 the mob uses the same word in a work-righteous manner. And in verse 30 they use the same word with reference to Jesus as if He had never done a sign. (Buls)

Jesus compares the temporary good with the eternal food. Daily food and eternal food are both a gift of God. Where you have the one, you have the other. Who will give this gift? The Son of Man. Jesus is laying stress on His humanity which has received divine gifts from His divinity. Jesus uses the word “endures” or “remains” to get their minds off of mere physical food. But the crowd returns to the use of the word “bread” in verse 31. Jesus goes along with them and uses the word “bread,” but in a different sense: It is heavenly, genuine bread, God’s gift to them. In verse 33 He adds that it constantly comes from heaven and gives spiritual life to the whole world, not just to the Jews. Then in verse 35 He identifies

Himself with that bread. It is both living and life-giving. Manna was neither of these. It is received by faith, not by human endeavor, and lastingly does away with spiritual hunger and thirst. A masterpiece in train of thought. (Buls)

This man standing before them is truly God. "Because God has set His seal" explains how this can happen. (Buls)

Bengel: 'Has sealed' -- has pointed out and distinguished Him by this very miracle. (Buls)

A "food" for which the world strives: youthfulness. In *Time Flies* (New York: Doubleday, 1987, pp. 98, 150, 164, 176), Bill Cosby wrote on the youth culture as he turned 50:

Like everyone else who makes the mistake of getting older, I begin each day with coffee and obituaries. . . . I do not mind, of course, if a few of them were ninety-five; but when I find ages close to mine, I get a chill in my aching bones. . . . At fifty, I know the way of all flesh intellectually, but a part of me still feels as immortal as a child. . . . I cannot deny that I am getting older in a country where a major religion is the Church of Acne. . . . Am I aging gracefully? Aging gracefully is for Baryshnikov; Cosby stumbles along, doing as well as he can and doing it in the here and now. The past is a ghost, the future a dream, and all we ever have is now. This philosophical flash may belong in a fortune cookie, but it's the best I can do at fifty. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

Compare this verse with v 35 and note the progression in Jesus' revelation of the truth. In v 27, Jesus points out that he gives the food of eternal life, but in v 35 he reveals that he *is* the food of eternal life. The Giver and the gift are one and the same! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

Jesus posed an absolute contrast between physical and spiritual "food" without denying the importance of the physical. (TLSB)

But their efforts were worthy of a higher cause; they should work with equal diligence, not for the perishable food of the body, but for that food which will last into life everlasting. (Kretzmann)

People can eat only a certain amount of food, and they usually need less than they eat. What's left eventually spoils. In the hot Mediterranean climate without modern refrigeration, food would not keep long at all. So Jesus warned the people not to focus all their energies on getting the "food that spoils, but...food that endures to eternal life. (PBC)

*eternal life*. Not something to be achieved but to be received by faith in Christ. (CSB)

*eis*, "to eternal life," is both temporal and teleological (cf. *TDNT* 2:426–29). The food of Christ lasts (does not spoil or perish) until eternity, and it sustains the faithful who eat it on their journey toward the goal of eternal life. Luther: "in das ewige Leben." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

For there is such a food which nourishes the soul and preserves the soul unto eternal life. That food alone was worth acquiring, for its effects would never lose their power. "Ye should not seek Me for the sake of transitory things; for I (this He wishes to say) am a different teacher, who does not preach of perishable food, how sowing, baking, plowing should be done; for all this ye know well even before, and Moses has taught you how ye should work. My teaching has not that aim, neither should ye come to Me for that, but that I give you an eternal food." (Kretzmann)

The apostle John uncharacteristically reported the feeding of the five thousand after the three other gospel writers had also included it. We have noted how John usually assumed his readers were familiar with the other gospel accounts. But only John's gospel has recorded the discourse that now follows, which is most meaningful when we realize it happened the day after the miraculous multiplying of bread. (PBC)

Matthew 24:35, Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."

*Son of Man.* Submission of the Son to the Father is one of John's major themes (see note on 4:34). (CSB)

On the relative clause "which the Son of Man shall give you" Lenski remarks: "'shall give' removes every synergistic notion from the command 'work for'." And on "sealed" he writes: "The seal he affixed to Jesus these people had seen on the previous day in the miracles he worked especially in that of the bread." (Buls)

This is Jesus' messianic self-designation, drawing on Dan 7:13-14: the heavenly one, given "authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped Him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume, Part 3)

*Father has set his seal* – esphragisen – To put a stamp of approval on something to verify that in this case Jesus is the one who bring eternal life. This verb speaks of something that has taken place in the past and that was at Jesus' Baptism.

Note from Jeremiah 32:10... Seals were lumps of clay stamped with a signet ring or cylinder that impressed the clay with a person's official insignia. They were placed over the strings that bound a folded document, which kept it closed. Nearly 400 clay seals (bullae) have been discovered in Israel, many from the "house of Bullae" in Jerusalem, which was likely burned when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in 587 BC. The fire hardened and preserved these seals. Two seals have been discovered that name Baruch the Son of Neriah the scribe (v. 12), which could have come from Jeremiah's secretary. (TLSB)

This spiritual food, which would strengthen unto eternal life, the Son of Man would give them, not because of special merit on their part, but freely, out of divine love and grace. For He had gone forth from the Father, as a proof of which He bore the seal of God. The miracle of the day before and other signs showed that God had commissioned Jesus as the Minister to give the food which nourishes unto everlasting life. They were a proof that the eternal Son of God could give eternal life to such as accepted Him in faith. "And that He says: The Son of Man, therewith He indicates clearly and publicly that God the Father has a Son whom they can see before their eyes, take hold of, hear, and feel; as St. John also says of Him: Which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled; that same bodily person, born of the Virgin Mary, He will give you an eternal food." (Kretzmann)

In Luke 15:22, the father's ring signals his approval and giving of authority. Hag 2:23 promises that the "ideal Zerubbabel" will come as God's signet ring. The verb is aorist, a one-time action in the past. When did this happen? At Jesus' baptism the Spirit's visible descent and the Father's voice unmistakably declare Jesus to the Son. The same verb is used of God "sealing/stamping" Christians with the Spirit (Eph 1:13) – an allusion to Baptism. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume, Part 3)



**6:28** *What must we do ... ?* They missed the point that eternal life is Christ's gift and were thinking in terms of achieving it by pious works. (CSB)

In their question they lay stress on "we." "What must WE do in order that WE might work the works of God?" (Buls)

Kretzmann: They were caught in the idea that there must be some merit on their part, that they must perform something for their salvation.

Lenski: These people imagine that there is an entire scale of such works, a multiplicity of meritorious deeds to be done by them . . . . Jesus speaks of grace; they think of work-righteousness. (Buls)

They are thinking of the multitudinous legal works required by Judaism. (Buls)

The human penchant for salvation by works betrays itself in the people's question, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Remember the rich young ruler? He had the same problem. "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" he asked (Mk 10:17). Similarly, Paul and Silas's jailer: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). The problem of works-righteousness is as old—and as continuously persistent—as the problem of sin. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

*ergadzomahee* – Means the toil and commitment required. They had missed the point and were thinking of earning something by their own deeds that is why the word "works" plural, is used.

"Work God's works?" reuses Jesus' verb *ergazomai* from v 27 and adds the plural noun *erga* from the same root. The present subjunctive verb denotes continual activity. The plural, "God's works," suggests that the questioners anticipate the continual doing of many works. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

What must we do? What's the meaning of life? An essentially religious question. Hamlet answers, "How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable / Seem to me all the uses of this world!" (Act I, Scene 2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

Which works? Can we find hope in the Law/Morality? In "God Whose Gifts in Gracious Flood," Victor Hugo, like many others, seemed to think so:

God whose gifts in gracious flood

Unto all who seek are sent,

Only asks you to be good

And is content (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

Some of the people in the multitude at least were impressed by this statement of Jesus that they should labor, that they should earnestly strive to acquire food with such wonderful power, and they wanted to know what they must do in order to make themselves fit to perform such works as would be acceptable before God, as would be well-pleasing to Him. They were caught in the idea that there must be some merit on their part, that they must perform something for their salvation. (Kretzmann)

**6:29** *work of God.* Believing in Jesus Christ is the indispensable "work" God calls for—the one that leads to eternal life. (CSB)

The crowd asked about righteous “works” (v. 28), but Jesus singled out one necessary work: faith in Him, which is God’s gift. (TLSB)

The proper understanding of this verse is crucial to the whole pericope. Note that "work" is singular. Furthermore, contextually "of God" must be subjective genitive in the sense of "which God gives." The verb "believe" is in the present tense, a continued believing. (Buls)

Lutherans have a unique understanding of the word "faith." (Buls)

*Formula of Concord*, S.D., Art. II, Free Will, 25-27 (Tappert p. 526 where John 6:29 and 44 are quoted): Holy Scripture ascribe conversion, faith in Christ, regeneration, renewal, and everything that belongs to its real beginning and completion in no way to the human powers of the natural free will, be it entirely or one-half or the least and tiniest part, but altogether and alone to the divine operation and the Holy Spirit, as the Apology declares. (Buls)

Luther, Lenski, Ylvisaker, Kretzmann and Stoeckhardt are worth reading on verse 29. (Buls)

Lenski: We, indeed, must do the believing, but our believing is the work of God. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: Faith is nothing but willingness, a work of man which pleases God. But God Himself and God alone works this willingness, brings about this work in man. (Buls)

Luther: Faith is a divine work which God demands of us; but at the same time He Himself must implant it in us, for we cannot believe by ourselves. (Buls)

What a thrilling surprise is Jesus’ answer: “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” We work in God’s behalf—how? By letting God work in our behalf! To show our response to God, we’re directed to believe in him—and that, too, incidentally, is the work of God (the Holy Spirit), not of ourselves. And why are we asked to believe in him? So that through our belief in him, he might give us the gift of eternal life! The first thing we’re urged to do by way of thanking God for all his benefits toward us is to accept another benefit from him: salvation. We repay God for all his blessings by merely receiving another blessing. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

The work of God is not a work we do for God. It is the work of God does in us so we believe in His Son. We believe and live. (PBC)

ergon – The act, deed or labor necessary. There is only one act of believing in Christ as our savior that is needed. It is not a good work on our part but a response to God’s offer of grace. Even the faith we receive through grace is a gift from God. We did not choose him, he chose us. John 15:16.

But just one “work” (*ergon*, singular) is Jesus’ answer. “Believe” is present tense, denoting a continuing posture of trust, not a once-and-for-all decision. Lest the verse be misunderstood to imply that faith/believing is a good work done by man, note that Jesus is stating *what* one should do; here he is not describing *how* one is enabled to do it. Just a few verses later Jesus will address the issue of *how* one is brought to faith, and he makes clear that faith is the work of God in man, not man’s work (Jn 6:44). See also Jn 12:32; and the work of the Spirit in Jn 14:15–31; 16:5–15. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

But Jesus corrects that notion. There is only one thing which they should do, and that is to believe on Him whom God has sent. Faith is here spoken of as a work of man which he does in order to obtain salvation. That side of faith, trust, full and complete reliance in Jesus and His salvation, that is brought out here: the fact that every believer must accept and hold Jesus and His salvation. That is actually a work of the believer, an act of reason and will. True, this faith must be wrought by God and cannot come into being without God's power; also, faith is not a work which merits redemption, it is not that its moral excellence saves men. But when God has worked faith in the heart of man, when spiritual life has been engendered in the heart of man, then man is active in accepting that wonderful food which nourishes unto life eternal. (Kretzmann)

Romans 10:17, “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”

**6:30** *What will you do?* They seek from Jesus a sign greater than the gift of manna that had accompanied Moses' ministry. (CSB)

The answer in verses 30-31 betrays their spiritual blindness. Though they had witnessed a sign they now ask Jesus to work one so that they believe. (Buls)

Luther: The learned and the work-righteous always know better. They love God as lice love a tramp; far from being interested in his welfare, their one concern is to feed on him and suck his blood. (Buls)

Whenever man prescribes a condition on which he will believe, it is not faith but work-righteousness which is speaking. (Buls)

When hearts grow hard in unbelief, no miracle is enough to change that condition. These people had just seen Jesus multiply bread and fish to feed them, yet the next morning they asked Him to give them a sign that would move them to believe. (PBC)

Strack-Billerbeck (*Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud and Midrasch*, Munich, 1922–28) quote a rabbinic saying that Jews must listen to a prophet who gives a “sign and wonder.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

“See . . . and believe” contrasts with the implication in v 26: they saw but didn't believe. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

“What will you do . . .” uses *ergazomai* again, as in vv 27 and 28. The force of their challenge is, “What labor will you do that will prompt our labor for which you called (v 27)—labor to earn spiritual food?” They are thinking in terms of works-righteousness: they want a work done by Jesus to merit their own meritorious “works of God” (v 28). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

That Jesus demanded faith in Himself as a condition of their obtaining salvation, this the Jews now understood. They therefore demanded proof of His ambassadorship and of His ministry, which, as He claimed, elevated Him to the divine rank. It is a most peculiar thing that they did not yet understand the relation between the miracles of Jesus and His divine mission, His deity. They challenge Him to produce some extraordinary sign which would convince them beyond question, which would oblige them to believe. (Kretzmann)

**6:31-35** “bread.” Bread was treated respectfully as a gift from God that was not to be taken for granted. If bread is found on the ground in the Holy Land, it is not to be stepped on. Some have fed it to dogs or put it on an elevated branch for the birds to eat. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

**6:31** *manna*. A popular Jewish expectation was that when the Messiah came he would renew the sending of manna. The crowd probably reasoned that Jesus had done little compared to Moses. He had fed 5,000; Moses had fed a nation. He did it once; Moses did it for 40 years. He gave ordinary bread; Moses gave “bread from heaven.” (CSB)

Manna: See Ex 16:15, “What is it?” Jesus’ reply in v 32 implies that the people still don’t know that he is the true spiritual food from heaven. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

The crowd quoted the OT to support their demand that Jesus perform a miracle like Moses had done, which they assumed was greater than Jesus’ signs. (TLSB)

They back up their statement with Scripture. What are they saying? (Bulls)

- a. That Moses did a greater work than did Jesus; and,
- b. That the gift of manna was greater than the feeding of the 5,000.

*bread from heaven* – Ps 78:24, “grain of heaven”; and 105:40, “bread from heaven.” The LXX translates both by *artos*, “bread,” the word Jesus uses throughout John 6 for himself. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

**6:32** *truly, truly I say* – Here is another “In very truth I tell you.” Jesus uses it to correct them. The Father, not Moses, gave them manna. (Bulls)

Furthermore, the genuine bread from heaven is a present fact, a gift of God. Note that the verb “gives you” denotes a permanent giving. Manna was very temporary. Manna was not the genuine, heavenly bread. It was only a type thereof. (Bulls)

As Jesus is standing there He is offering Himself to these unbelievers. (Bulls)

Luther: Christ denies Moses all power to help obtain eternal life. (Bulls)

Lenski: Note the contrasts: Moses -- my Father; did not give -- is giving; bread out of heaven, as these people understand it -- bread out of heaven, as Jesus understands it; out of heaven, not applicable to the manna, which never was in heaven -- out of heaven, applicable to the genuine bread, which actually was in heaven and actually comes down out of heaven. (Bulls)

Jesus corrected them, pointing out that the manna in the desert did not come from Moses but from God, and that the Father still “gives” (the present tense is important) the true bread from heaven (life through the Son). (CSB)

Jesus supplies two correctives to the crowd’s comment in the prior verse. First, the correct antecedent for the “he” in “He gave them bread from heaven to eat” (v 31) is God, not Moses. God was the ultimate source for the manna and quail provided for the Israelites in their desert wandering. Second, even that food that God provided was “food that spoils” (v 27). It only sustained bodily life, a life that would

eventually end. At best, that food was only a type, a foreshadowing, of the food, Jesus, the bread of life, standing before the crowd that very moment. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

Is Jesus saying that it was not Moses who gave the manna, or that the manna given through Moses was not the true bread from heaven? The negative *ou* preceding “Moses” and the perfect verb *dedōken* suggest the literal translation, “It is not Moses who has given you the bread out from heaven.” The meaning is that the manna that began in the wilderness was a perishable, physical gift—from God, through Moses; and more importantly, Jesus affirms that “my Father gives (*didōsin*, present tense: continues to give) you the true (*alēthinōs*, “true, genuine, authentic”; Luther: *rechte*) spiritual bread from heaven.” That bread is Jesus himself. Later, Jesus will say that *he himself* gives the bread—claiming unity with the Father—and that the bread he gives is his flesh for the life of the world (v 51). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

Are you as capable as Moses? The crowd knew and enjoyed the physical food provided in the feeding of the 5,000. But that was a one-time event. “Are you able to be like Moses, who continually fed us ‘angel food’ through 40 years in the wilderness; and who fed not just 5,000 people but a whole nation?” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

They put the matter so as to make Him responsible for their faith or unbelief. They expect a sign from Him something like that of Moses, who produced manna for the Israelites in the wilderness. They refer to a passage from Scripture, Ps. 78: 24-25, which speaks of this wonderful feeding with bread from heaven. In a way, the expression “bread from heaven” could stand, since the manna had fallen down from the sky with the dew, but at best this was merely a figurative expression. (Kretzmann)

**6:33** *the bread of God*. Jesus moved the discussion to something (and Someone) much more important than manna. (CSB)

This verse explains Jesus' previous statement. “Of God” distinguishes this bread from all others. Jesus is, of course, speaking of Himself when He says: “Which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” Jesus differs from manna in these respects: (Buls)

1. He is the bread of God;
2. He, unlike manna, comes down from heaven;
3. He gives life. Manna was unable to do that;
4. He gives life to the world, all people.

Manna merely sustained life, and was limited to the covenant people. Manna was given to living people to keep them alive. The genuine bread gives life to people who are dead, spiritually dead. (Buls)

“The bread of God” (previously “the bread of heaven”) is Jesus, who comes down from heaven. The participle *katabainōn*, used also for the descending Spirit in Jn 1:32, is present tense, indicating more than Jesus’ descent at his incarnation: today Jesus continues to come down through Word and Sacrament to give us life. *Zōē* is true, indestructible life, in contrast to the qualified-by-death life of the body; a life that can be given (and taken away) only by the God who has life in himself. This life is in the One who came down and who alone gives it to the whole world (*kosmos*) and not just to Israel, as Moses did. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

Jesus therefore declares, with great emphasis: Not Moses gave you bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true Bread from heaven. Even in the desert it was not Moses that gave the children of Israel the manna, and so, at best, Moses can be spoken of in this connection by courtesy only; he had nothing to do with the miracle. But here matters are different; here is the true Bread from heaven given to all men by the Father. He that comes down from heaven with the purpose of giving life to the world, He is the Bread of God, Jesus the Savior. He is the Bread from heaven in deed and in truth, and by His work of giving salvation He establishes that fact beyond doubt. (Kretzmann)

**6:34-35** A simple request is given a direct, immediate answer. Jesus' audience asks for the bread of life, and Jesus responds, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

**6:34** *sir* - Considering the speakers, *kurie* (usually "Lord") is better translated as a polite "Sir." Their request for him always to give such heavenly bread is similar to the Samaritan woman's request for Jesus always to give her living water (Jn 4:15). In both cases the speakers understand water/bread in a physical sense, and are groping for a true and spiritual understanding of Jesus' gifts. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

LB, TEV, NIV, JB and NEB translate "Sir." That is very likely correct because they are still unbelievers. Compare their answer with that of the Samaritan woman at 4:15. They really do want this bread, but they think that Jesus is speaking only of physical bread. (Buls)

*this bread.* Probably another misunderstanding, like that by the woman at the well (4:15; cf. also Nicodemus, 3:4). Their minds ran along materialistic lines. (CSB)

This saying impressed the Jews very deeply; they had but a faint conception of what the Lord might mean in speaking of this wonderful Bread, something like the woman of Samaria. They begged Jesus that He would always, at all times, give them that bread. Their understanding was still not clear, but they have caught enough of His earnestness and enthusiasm, and desire plain information. Note: A great deal has been gained if we can get the unbelievers to ask questions concerning Jesus and His salvation, perhaps persuade them of the fact that Christianity in itself is worthwhile, invite them to come to church. (Kretzmann)

*Give us this bread always.* The people continue to understand daily bread as something physical, as something separate and distinct from the person of Jesus/God. We too eagerly go after that which nourishes the body; but we have a greater need. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

**6:35-51** The bread of life discourse occurs in a Passover context (6:4), bringing to mind the sacrifice this Incarnate One will offer to atone for sin. By giving his flesh for the life of the world, Jesus declares this atonement is universal and not particular. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

Jesus' teaching here will soon divide those who believe in him (his disciples) from those who do not; those offended by his words about eating his flesh will withdraw from him (6:66). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

**6:35** *I am.* The first of seven self-descriptions of Jesus introduced by "I am" (see 8:12; 9:5; 10:7, 9; 10:11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5). In the Greek the words are solemnly emphatic and echo Ex 3:14. (CSB)

Jesus clearly identified Himself as the source of real life, which lasts forever. (TLSB)

Bengel: 'I am' -- To those who seek Him, He offers Himself immediately. (Buls)

Westcott: This form of expression (I am) is not found in the Synoptists. It occurs not infrequently in John's Gospel, and the figures with which it is connected furnish a complete study of the Lord's work. (Buls)

This is the first of the seven "I am" passages in this Gospel. It is repeated in verses 41, 48, and 51 in this chapter. The others are found at 8:12; 10:7-9; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; and 15:1-5. The combination "I am" with reference to Christ also appears in 4:26; 6:20; 8:18; 13:19; 14:3 and 18:5. In each case it means: "I (and no one else) am, etc." (Buls)

John makes extensive use of the "I am" statements of Jesus. This phrase harkens back to Ex 3:14–15, where God reveals himself to Moses in the theophany of the burning bush that is not consumed. Moses asks God for his name and God responds: "I AM WHO I AM." This Johannine phenomenon is discussed in many reference books and commentaries (*The Lutheran Study Bible* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009], 1784–85; Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*; Green, McKnight, and Marshall, eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*; and the last Appendix in the Anchor Bible, vol. 29, Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII*, to name a few). The significance of this designation as a claim to be God can probably be seen best in Jn 8:58–59, where the reaction to Jesus' use of this term was a hostile crowd seeking to stone (cf. Lev 24:16) Jesus for what their hard hearts supposed to be blasphemy on his part. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

This "I AM" comes from Exodus 3:14. . It also means "He is" or "He will be." Basically it is an assertion of authority.

*the bread of life.* † May mean "the bread that is living" and/or "the bread that gives life." What is implied in v. 33 is now made explicit and repeated with minor variations in vv. 41, 48, 51. It is possible that both meanings are implied.. (CSB)

"Of life" means both "living" in verse 51 and "life-giving" in verse 54. Manna was neither of these. (Buls)

Luther: To come to Christ is the same as to believe in Christ . . . He is speaking of bread in the sense of coming to Christ, that is, believing in Christ. For to eat, to come to Christ, and to believe in Christ are all one and the same thing . . . It is obvious, therefore, that in this chapter the Lord is speaking of spiritual eating. (Buls)

Lenski: 'The bread of life' like 'the water of life' in chapter four is Biblical allegory which unites the figure 'bread' with the reality 'life' and thus always interprets itself. (Buls)

Here Jesus introduces the idea of drinking as well as eating. Later in the chapter he will speak of eating his body and drinking his blood (vv 53–56). Luther comments (Luther's Works, vol. 23, *Sermons on the Gospel of John, Chapters 6–8*):

It is faith which eats him. . . . To "eat" here refers to a spiritual eating and consuming (p. 116).

"I will be the Donor, the Baker, the Brewer, and the Farmer. Yes, I Myself will be the Food; I Myself will be the Bread. It must be your concern to eat" (p. 14).

We cannot give ourselves this food; we must obtain it from the Son of Man. Therefore all that is necessary is that Christ affix His seal, and I am assured that my God is gracious to me (p. 15).

When I have this food, I will reject not only physical food but also the spiritual food served by the fanatics and schismatic spirits (p. 19).

“What must we do . . . ?” [v 28]. The Lord replies [v 29]: “[B]elieve on the Son. . . .” With this one statement the Lord directs our attention to the subject of faith, overthrowing all their external worship of the Law and of works (p. 22). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

At this point Jesus becomes clear and emphatic. “Do you understand? I am the bread of life. If you receive Me by faith, you will have eternal life. You will be in a loving, saving relationship with Me and with My Father. And that relationship will never end. Even death will not end it. (LL)

Jesus now makes a plain, frank statement. He had not said that He would give the wonderful bread that came down from heaven, but He had asserted that this miraculous Bread which came down from heaven had the power to give eternal life. He Himself is that Bread of Life. No matter who it is that comes to Him, he will no more suffer with hunger, just as he that drinks of the living water of His salvation will never again be bothered with thirst. To come to Jesus means to believe in Him as the Savior of the world. All the desires and longings of the soul find their complete gratification in Him and His mercy. (Kretzmann)

*will come to me* – “Comes” can be interchanged with “believe” and “hungry” with “thirsty.” In Jesus all spiritual hunger and thirst is satisfied. WE have that blessing from Jesus as long as we believe in Him. (PBC)

*shall never thirst* – This alludes to Jesus as the living water that quenches thirst forever. Notes – Acts 2:42.

“Thirst” alludes again to Jesus as the living water that quenches thirst forever (Jn 4:14). In light of “born of water and the Spirit” in Jn 3:5 and the identification of the flowing water with the gift of the Spirit in Jn 7:37–39, Jesus’ promise here is fulfilled in Holy Baptism; that is the occasion when one “comes to me [Jesus]” and by the Spirit’s power “believes in me.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

John 3:5 “Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.”

John 4:14 “but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 7:37-39 “On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

The following OT references that tell about God’s wisdom and revelation helping with hunger and thirst and giving life. Notes – Acts 2:42..



Psalms 119:103 “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”

Proverbs 3:18 “She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed.”

Proverbs 4:4 “he taught me and said, “Lay hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and you will live.”

Proverbs 8:35 “or whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the LORD.”

There are further parallels in OT wisdom literature where God’s wisdom or revelation satisfies hunger and thirst, and gives life (Ps 119:103, 131; Prov 3:18; 4:4; 8:35; 9:1–12). Compare also Sirach 24:20, where wisdom personified says of herself, “Those who eat me will hunger for more, and those who drink me will thirst for more.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)