

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

OLD TESTAMENT – Job 38:4-18

The Lord Answers Job

4 “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. 5 Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6 On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, 7 when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? 8 “Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, 9 when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, 10 and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, 11 and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed’? 12 “Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, 13 that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? 14 It is changed like clay under the seal, and its features stand out like a garment. 15 From the wicked their light is withheld, and their uplifted arm is broken. 16 “Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep? 17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? 18 Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare, if you know all this.

38:4–38 Inanimate creation testifies to God’s sovereignty and power (the earth, vv. 4–7, 18; the sea, vv. 8–11, 16; the sun, vv. 12–15; the netherworld, v. 17; light and darkness, vv. 19–20; the weather, vv. 22–30, 34–38; the constellations, vv. 31–33). See note on 38:39–39:30. (CSB)

38:4–5 See the similar questions of Agur, and the similar irony in his demand for a response (Pr 30:4). (CSB)

where were you – Job had set himself up as the judge of his situation. God needs to bring Job back to reality. This is reminiscent of 9:20-21 “But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’” Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?”

laid the foundation. The Lord speaks of creation in terms of building a house with plans (v 5) that are known to the Architect of the universe, but not to the laborers in the building. The Lord echoes Eliphaz’s sarcastic comment about Job being born “before the hills” (15:7). With sarcastic questions, the Lord shows Job how little he knows. All is under His control, as Job had acknowledged earlier (12:13). (TLSB)

understanding. Comes only from the One who is Wisdom Himself, the Word who was with God and who was God (Jn 1:1) at creation. (TLSB)

Proverbs 30:4 “Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and the name of his son? Tell me if you know!”

Psalms 104:5 “He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved.”

Isaiah 40:12-31 ¹²“Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of

the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales - and the hills in a balance? ¹³ Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor? ¹⁴ Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding? ¹⁵ Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. ¹⁶ Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, -nor its animals enough for burnt offerings. ¹⁷ Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing. ¹⁸ To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to? ¹⁹ As for an idol, a craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it. ²⁰ A man too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot. He looks for a skilled craftsman to set up an idol that will not topple. ²¹ Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? ²² He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. ²³ He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. ²⁴ No sooner are the planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. ²⁵ “To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One. ²⁶ Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. ²⁷ Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God”? ²⁸ Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. ²⁹ He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. ³⁰ Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; ³¹ but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

38:7 See Ps 148:2–3; see also note on Ps 65:13 (in the exuberant language of the psalmists, all creation—even its inanimate elements—joins the human chorus to celebrate the goodness of God in creation, blessing and redemption (see 89:12; 96:11–13; 98:8–9; 103:22; 145:10; 148:3–4, 7–10; see also Job 38:7; Isa 44:23; 49:13; 55:12). When the earth was created, the angels were there to sing the praises of the Creator, but Job was not (see vv. 4–5). He should therefore not expect to be able to understand even lesser aspects of God’s plans for the world and for mankind. (CSB)

morning stars sang together. Chemnitz: “He adds this regard to the angels” (*LTh* 1:165). Angels sang festively at creation. They rejoiced again at re-creation, which began at the incarnation of Jesus and culminated in Christ’s resurrection and ascension. There was celestial joy at the beginning of time, and there will be joy at the end of the world (Rv 19:1–3). The preeminent Morning Star is Jesus Himself (Rv 22:16). Yet Job was unaware of these heavenly hosts. (TLSB)

sons of God. People often ask the question, “On what day were the angels created?” Genesis chapter 1 doesn’t answer that question, perhaps because angels are invisible beings. This verse strongly suggests that God created angels on the one of first days of creation, perhaps the first day when he created light. Some angels rebelled against God and were banished from heaven (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). The devil was already at work in the Garden of Eden to tempt Adam and Eve as we read in Genesis 3. From these verse

it appears as if the angels were present at the time God created the earth and separated the land from the water. (PBC)

38:8 *shut in the sea with doors* – About three-fourths (some say four-fifths) of the earth’s surface is covered by water. What a powerful force water is! We have seen instances of the devastating damage inflicted upon homes that have been struck by hurricanes and flood. How much greater was the damage caused by the flood in the days of Noah! If he so willed, God could send another universal floods, but in his undeserved goodness he has promised not to do so (Genesis 8:21). God has the powerful forces of water under his control. Addressing God, the psalmist states: “You set a boundary they (the waters) cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth” (Psalm 104:9). (PBC)

when it burst out from the womb. Personifies creation of the seas as a birthing event. The infant waters gush into the swaddling clothes of the clouds (v 9). Many in the ancient Near East thought of water as an evil element, but it is a gracious gift from God, always under His caring dominion and delimitation (vv 10–11). Babylonian mythology described the creation as the destruction of a monster, Tiamat, whose body was used to construct the world. (TLSB)

To the people of that time the sea symbolized chaos and something to be feared. When John describes heaven he addresses that concern. Revelation 21:1 “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.”

38:9 *clouds its garment* – God describes himself as making the clouds a garment for the sea and wrapping it in thick darkness. The picture is that of wrapping a baby. (PBC)

38:11 *thus far...and said.* God the Father controls the sea by speaking to it, as does God the Son (see Lk 8:24–25). (CSB)

God can control the mighty waters of the sea more easily than you or I can turn on a water faucet to fill a bathtub. (PBC)

38:12–13 The arrival of the dawn sends the wicked scurrying for cover. – In this section God reminds Job of the great marvels of the dawn, when the darkness of night yields to the light of the day. Like Job, we also take it for granted that each morning the sun will rise, and each evening it will set. We assume there will always be the regular sequence of night and day. We really don’t appreciate the marvelous creation of light. (PBC)

38:13 *skirts of the earth.* Edges of daylight—dusk and dawn—are portrayed as folds of a tablecloth or blanket, under which evil activities occur. (TLSB)

shaken. As the sun rises, the wicked are shaken out of the dark folds of their sinful practices and exposed by the bright light of God’s justice (cf Jn 3:19–21). (TLSB)

In a very striking manner the Lord describes the effects of dawn. As a homemaker takes a tablecloth by the corners and shakes out the food crumbs, so the rays of dawn shake out the wicked from the earth. (PBC)

38:14 *clay under a seal.* Either a cylinder seal – Probably a small cylinder seal of the type used to sign clay documents by rolling them over the clay. The owner wore it around his neck on a cord threaded through a hole drilled lengthwise through it) or a stamp seal. (CSB)

Once a seal is pressed into the clay, the image is clear. So also once the sunlight begins to brighten the eastern skies, the beautiful contours of creation take on greater clarity and details. Earth's colors become visible in the Lord's sunlight, as the texture of a garment becomes clear in daylight. (TLSB)

Just as a lump of clay is turned into a beautiful design beneath a seal, so too the earth glistens in beauty beneath the sun's first rays. (PBC)

38:15 *their light*. The night is when the wicked are active (see Jn 3:19; for the imagery cf. Lk 11:35). (CSB)

In ancient times as now, burglars, sex offenders, and murderers felt more secure committing their crimes under the cover of darkness than in broad daylight. (PBC)

uplifted arm is broken. Although the wicked literally raise their arms in violence, the Lord hampers them in His own ways. In the very midst of their evil acts, God has the power to intervene mercifully, as in the case of Abimelech (Gn 20:6) and Abraham (Gn 22:12). (TLSB)

38:16 *springs of the sea*. See Ge 7:11; 8:2. (CSB)

The ocean's depth continues to be explored today. Only God knows the full, extravagant beauty and oddities of nature. (TLSB)

These could include the rivers that feed into the ocean and the fountains below. People in ancient times expressed great wonder at the ocean. Even today, in spite of extensive research by oceanographers and marine experts, the ocean still holds many mysteries we can't comprehend. (PBC)

38:17 *gates of death*. See note on 17:16 (In Mesopotamian literature, all who entered the netherworld passed through a series of seven gates); see also 26:5–6. (CSB)

The Lord is refuting Job's earlier assertions about Sheol (10:21–22; 14:13–14; 17:13–16; see p 792). Earlier, Job and Zophar had spoken about death and the place of the dead as though they understood it (7:9; 11:8; 26:5–6; cf 33:18), but now such audacity is silenced. *death ... deep darkness? Hbr maweth ... tsalmaweth*; wordplay. Deepest depths are easily within the Lord's providential care. (TLSB)

This language suggests that when a person enters the realm of death the gates are closed behind him. There is no turning back to life in this world. (PBC)

EPISTLE – Romans 10:5-17

The Message of Salvation to All

5 For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. 6 But the righteousness based on faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord

of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. 13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

0:5 *The man who does these things will live by them.* † Lev 18:5 speaks of the righteousness to which Israel was called under the Sinai covenant. Some understand Paul’s purpose in quoting it here as describing the way of obtaining righteousness (“will live”) by keeping the law (see 2:6–10). Others think that the reference is to Christ, who perfectly fulfilled the law’s demands and thus gives salvation to all who believe (see Heb 5:9). (CSB)

10:6–7 † The purpose of the OT quotation is to explain the nature of the righteousness that is through faith. It does not require heroic feats such as bringing Christ down from heaven or up from the grave. Dt 30:12–13 in its original context refers to the law, and Paul here applies the basic principle to Christ. (CSB)

righteousness ... says. Paul personifies “righteousness,” having it speak in the language of Dt 30:11–14. Righteousness based on Law is unattainable. But Christ is not unreachable or distantly remote. He does not require us to search for Him in inaccessible regions high or low. For He has become one of us, has died, and has risen from the dead for our justification (4:25; 6:4; 8:3). (TLSB)

10:7 *ascend...descend* – These two phrases seem to have become proverbial for attempting the impossible. (Franzmann)

10:8 *The word is near you.* † In the OT passage the “word” is God’s word as found in the law. Paul takes the passage and applies it to the gospel, “the word of faith”—the main point being the accessibility of the gospel. Righteousness is gained through faith, not by deeds, and is readily available to anyone who will receive it freely from God through Christ. (CSB)

Main point of comparison with what is said of the Law in Dt 30. Christ has already accomplished everything for us, and now He is easily accessible (5:1–2). (TLSB)

God’s Word ushers the very God Himself into our beings. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Jesus and His father make their abode in us. Not only the Word is in our mouth and in our heart – God is! (Concordia Journal – January 1992)

word of faith – Gospel not Law. Something that you need only accept with its content of faith. (Stoeckhardt)

The Gospel is the source of faith because it both invites and creates faith. (TLSB)

The voice of righteousness by faith says not “Do!” but “It is done!” (Franzmann)

The substance of the Gospel is simple and near at hand. It is easily grasped by those who willing to receive it. (IB)

Since the medium, the uttered word, was the same, it should have been as easy for the Jews to receive the Gospel as to receive the Law. Easier, in fact, because the Gospel is a pure gift. But they received even the law only outwardly and not in the heart and closed their hearts against the Gospel. (Lenski)

Deuteronomy 11:18-21 “¹⁸ Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ¹⁹ Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ²⁰ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, ²¹ so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the LORD swore to give your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.”

10:9 *confess with your mouth* – True faith is never silent, it always confesses. (Lenski)

Two aspects of a single reality. See note, v 10. Following Dt 30:14, Paul says there is an inseparable link between faith as expressed outwardly and possessed inwardly. (TLSB)

If a man confesses with his lips that Jesus is Lord, then he has Jesus as his Lord and he has peace with God. If he believes that God raised Christ from the dead, he shares the resurrection life and glory with his Lord. (Concordia Journal – September, 1983)

Faith and confession are two aspects of one reality; they constitute one life before God under the lordship of Jesus Christ. No man who has the Lord Jesus for his Lord remains a silent servant of his Lord, ashamed to acknowledge Him before me (Mark 8:38) (Franzmann)

Matthew 10:32, “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.”

Philippians 2:11, “and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

James 2:14-17 “What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well, keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

Jesus is Lord. The earliest Christian confession of faith (cf. 1Co 12:3), probably used at baptisms. In view of the fact that “Lord” (Greek *kyrios*) is used over 6,000 times in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT) to translate the name of Israel’s God (Yahweh), it is clear that Paul, when using this word of Jesus, is ascribing deity to him. (CSB)

Early Christian confession and clear testimony to Christ’s deity (the Gk word for “Lord” was used over 6,000 times in the LXX to translate God’s name Yahweh, and to identify the risen Christ; cf Php 2:9). It may have been a confession from the baptismal liturgy. (TLSB)

in your heart. In Biblical terms the heart is not merely the seat of the emotions and affections, but also of the intellect and will. (CSB)

These words emphasize two aspects of our Christian faith. First, it is something internal, inside, deep down within us, going to the core of our being, permeating every nook and cranny; it is not superficial, not merely external. Second, faith is more than intellectual assent. More than the mind is involved – the heart is also. We don’t merely agree to a proposition about God, but we also trust Him with everything we’ve got. (Concordia Journal – January 1992)

Colossians 3:16, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”

God raised him from the dead. A bedrock truth of Christian doctrine (see 1Co 15:4, 14, 17) and the central thrust of apostolic preaching (see, e.g., Ac 2:31–32; 3:15; 4:10; 10:40). Christians believe not only that Jesus lived but also that he still lives. (CSB)

will be saved – We are freed from the evils in whose grip we were helpless and enter into the experience of abundant life and discover that in Christ we have the secret of a power which enables us to rise above daily problems. (IB)

This connotes the fact that we have sinned and are thus doomed as being dead in sins and then God declares that the confessing and believing sinner shall be rescued and put into permanent safety by Jesus. (Lenski)

10:10† Faith involves inward belief (“with your heart”) as well as outward confession (“with your mouth”). (CSB)

Reverse order from v 9 reinforces the oneness of faith and confession in the Christian experience, as well as the blessings received. “We think that the adversaries admit that confession justifies or saves, not by the outward act, but only because of the faith of the heart. Paul says that confession saves in order to show what sort of faith receives eternal life, namely, that which is firm and active. That faith, however, that does not present itself in confession is not firm” (Ap V 263–64). (TLSB)

The confession of the mouth is a fruit and work of faith and has nothing to do with apprehending Christ. And so the confession of the mouth is proof that faith lives in the heart, proof of a true and living faith. (Stoeckhardt)

A genuine belief cannot be suppressed, and the inward conviction will find outward expression. (IB)

The double result is “righteousness and salvation.” One who believes and thereby justified confesses and shows that his faith is genuine, and the result is salvation, he is saved already now. (Lenski)

10:11 *everyone who believes* – Paul’s wording of Is 28:16, which has already been quoted in 9:33, stresses that Christ’s salvation is available to all. (TLSB)

will not be put to shame – Believers in Christ await a forgiving Father, not a stern, condemning Judge. (TLSB)

Shame, confusion, fleeing in terror from the face of the great judge shall not be the lot of him who rests his trust on Christ. (Lenski)

Paul cites Is 28:16 again, as in 9:33. However, there are two slight but significant differences here. One is this: in the OT the object of faith is the Lord, the covenant God of Israel. The other difference is this: Paul emphasizes the universality of the promise made in Isaiah; “he who becomes ‘every one who’” (rendered as “no one who” by the RSV in the interest of style). This universality is suggested in the original, though it is not stated explicitly; for if access to the Lord and His salvation is by faith, then the Lord is accessible to all, both those under the Law and those without the Law (cf. 3:22-24; 28-30) (Franzmann)

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

10:12 *no distinction between Jew and Greek.* In the sense that both are on the same footing as far as salvation is concerned (see v. 13). (CSB)

As all Jews and Gentiles are equally sinners (3:23), so the gates of God’s mercy are open to all. (TLSB)

Ezekiel 18:23 “Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?”

1 Timothy 2:4 “Who wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

John 10:16, “I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.”

Acts 10:34, “Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism.”

Lord of all – In Christ, distinctions between Jews and Gentiles are finally irrelevant. (TLSB)

bestowing his riches – God is inexhaustibly generous with His gifts (Eph 3:8) to all who embrace Him in faith, a theme especially evident in Eph (1:7–8 [grace]; 1:18 [glory]; 2:4 [mercy]; 2:7 [grace, kindness]). (TLSB)

10:13 Peter cited this same passage (Joel 2:32) on the day of Pentecost (Ac 2:21). (CSB)

God promises deliverance to all who call on Him in faith, in the face of “the great and awesome day” of judgment (Jl 2:31). (TLSB)

name of the Lord – This is more than a combination of letters that spell a name of Jesus. It is more than a label by which we address Him. The “name” of the Lord is His whole being, His nature. It is He Himself. (“I am that I am”) It is everything He has done for us. (“Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.”) To “call upon” His name, therefore, means to call upon Him, to want Him, yearn for Him, trust Him, love Him – and all that He has done for us. (Concordia Journal – January 1992)

Paul cites Joel to give the exalted Christ the name “Lord,” reaffirming Christ’s deity and announcing salvation in His name (v 9). (TLSB)

10:14–15 Since it might be argued that Jews had never had a fair opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel, Paul, by means of a series of rhetorical questions, states (in reverse order) the conditions necessary to call on Christ and be saved: (1) a preacher sent from God, (2) proclamation of the message, (3) hearing the message, (4) believing the message. (CSB)

A person needs only to call on the name of the Lord and the Lord is found. But to call upon Him is an act of faith, and faith is created by the Word of God. God’s way of salvation is not discovered by the individual, by his own thinking and willing. Man comes to faith when he hears the Word, the Gospel; he does not have the Good News of God within himself. Before you call upon God, you will believe in Him; before you believe you must have knowledge; to have knowledge you must have someone tell you about the Lord; the telling persons must be sent. (Concordia Journal – September, 1983)

10:14 *how are they believe...heard...someone preaching* – Man needs only to call upon the name of the Lord, this Savior of men, and the Lord is to be found. But to call upon His name is an act of faith, and faith is created only by the Word of God. (Franzmann)

With mounting rhetorical force, Paul's questions are designed to teach that by God's design, faith is created only through the Word proclaimed. (TLSB)

10:15–16 Paul quotes Is 52:7, where people rejoiced at the heralds who brought good news of release from the Babylonian captivity, saying "Your God reigns!" But then he quotes Is 53:1 to tell how quickly Israel rejected the Good News and to indicate that Israel's reception of God's Suffering Servant (cf Is 53:3; Mk 9:12) was not unexpected. (TLSB)

10:15 *unless they are sent?* Preachers proclaim as divinely authorized representatives (cf Lk 10:16). God speaks through them (cf Rm 1:16). (TLSB)

How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news! The quotation is from Is. 52:7, which refers to those who bring the exiles the good news of their imminent release from captivity in Babylon. Here it is applied to gospel preachers, who bring the good news of release from captivity to sin. (CSB)

Proclaimers of the Gospel are a beautiful sight to behold! (TLSB)

10:16 *not all obeyed* – Isaiah spoke of the Servant of the Lord who was to be a light to the nations, suffering and dying to bear the sins of all. This Lord in a servant's form seemed unlovely and undesirable as the Man of sorrows. So the proclamation of the Gospel receives a mixed response. We also need to ask, "Who has believed what he has heard from us?" (Concordia Journal – September, 1983)

10:17 *faith comes from hearing* – NT meanings include the act of hearing, the ear, or the message heard. The message is the meaning here. "Although the work is done and the forgiveness of sins is secured by the cross [John 19:30], it cannot come to us in any other way than through the Word" (LC V 31). "It is God's will that His Word should be heard and that a person's ears should not be closed (Psalm 95:8). With this Word the Holy Spirit is present and opens hearts, so that people (like Lydia in Acts 16:14) pay attention to it and are converted only through the Holy Spirit's grace and power, who alone does the work of converting a person" (FC Ep II 5). (TLSB)

word of Christ. Either (1) the gospel concerning Christ, or (2) Christ speaking his message through his messengers. (CSB)

The spoken word of the Gospel—the content being Christ—is a means by which God creates faith. "Repentance consists of two parts. One part is contrition, that is, terrors striking the conscience through the knowledge of sin. The other part is faith, which is born of the Gospel [Romans 10:17] or the Absolution and believes that for Christ's sake, sins are forgiven. It comforts the conscience and delivers it from terror. Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruit of repentance" (AC XII 3–6). (TLSB)

10:5–21 Like a loving father waiting for his children to come home, God yearns to show mercy on all (cf Lk 15:11–32). Those who refuse to accept God's gracious invitation to share in the riches of His grace are accountable to Him for their unbelief. However, Christ Jesus is always near to us in His Word. He stands ready to forgive and renew us. • We praise You, O Lord, for welcoming us through the words of all those who bring to us the Good News of Your love. Place that faith-creating Word on our lips, that we may speak to those who have not yet heard or believed. Amen. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus Walks on the Water

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. 26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” and they cried out in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” 28 And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” 29 He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Jesus had just finished feeding the five thousand (Mt 14:13–21). There should have been no doubt in Peter’s mind about Jesus’ mighty power over every area of life and nature. But how soon the disciples, and we, forget. When we confront frightening events and challenges in our lives, our faith often becomes weak and fragile because we rely on our own wisdom and strength instead of on the power and wisdom of God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 3)

John’s gospel gives a fuller picture of the immediate context. After feeding of the 5000, the crowds made a confession of faith: “Surely this the Prophet who is to come into the world” (Jn 6:14; cf. v. 33 of our text). But their vision of Him was more as a Savior from earthly problems, i.e., hunger, so they “intended to come and make Him king by force” (Jn 6:15). The crowds desire to make Him that sort of “bread king” resembles the devil’s earlier temptations for Jesus to turn stones into bread and rule a worldly kingdom (Mt 4:1-11). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

It was for this reason that Jesus immediately sent His disciples off in the boat by themselves. He may have wished to prevent that twisted view of His mission from rubbing off on the twelve. He may also have desired time alone to commune with His Father in order to strengthen His own resolve to carry out His true mission. As in the earlier temptations, we see our Lord combating doubt – and prevailing. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

14:22-23 Why did Jesus “compel” the disciples to go on ahead of him to the other side of the lake? Did he realize their faith was still fragile, even after the feeding of the five thousand? Did he know they would need another dramatic sign in order to be able to believe and proclaim, “Truly you are the Son of God” (v 33)? Or did he simply need some time alone with his heavenly Father in prayer? We need to encourage our people to spend more time alone with their heavenly Father in prayer, especially when their faith is fragile or their loved ones are in danger from the storms of life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

14:22 *Immediately* – Cf vv 27, 31. Emphasizes key events in Mt: Baptism of Jesus (3:16), call of the first disciples (4:20, 22), Palm Sunday (21:2), some healings (8:3; 20:34). (TLSB)

he made the disciples get into the boat – *enankasen*, literally, “compelled.” The fact that Jesus made the disciples get into the boat is clear here and in Mark’s parallel account (Mk 6:45). The disciples weren’t on some careless ride under the direction of their sinful natures. They were following the Lord’s instructions—carefully calculated to remove them from the temptation of instant popularity (Jn 6:15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 21, Part 3)

other side. To the northwest shore of the sea, the Plain of Gennesaret (v 34). (TLSB)

he dismissed the crowd – From John 6:22 we learn that not all left. Some stayed and followed Jesus to Capernaum the next day. Lenski remarks: “That multitude wanting to make him king was one of Satan’s temptation to Jesus, and the sending these crowds away shows the temptation overcome.

14:23 *mountain* – Or, hill, of which there are several in the area. (TLSB)

by himself to pray – All alone with his Father Jesus must have spent at least eight hours in prayer. What did he pray about? Suggestions: a) The news of the Baptist’s death (verse 12) must have filled him with foreboding of his own death, a year hence (John 6:4); b) As pointed out above he had just overcome the temptation to be proclaimed an earthly king; c) Likely he foresaw that the remnants of the 5000 would totally reject him, the living bread from heaven, the next day (John 6:60-66); d) As pointed out above the Twelve were in danger for a number of reasons and needed to pass a severe the next day (John 6:67-69).

Matthew’s report that Jesus prayed by Himself suggests that an important moment in His ministry was about to take place. Lk often notes that Jesus prayed at significant times in His life. (TLSB)

14:24-25 The “fourth watch of the night” by Roman standards was 3:00–6:00 A.M. As the wind on the lake picked up, the disciples were getting anxious. They may have been thinking, as some people think today, Where is Jesus when you need him? But the truth is that Jesus always comes to us, as he did to the disciples, in the midst of the storms and struggles of life. He comes to calm our fears and strengthen our faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

14:24 *long way* – Jn 6:19 reports that they had rowed c 3–4 mi. (TLSB)

wind was against them – Sudden, violent storms were common on the Sea of Galilee, but the disciples were well qualified to deal with such a storm. Some of them were fishermen who had previously made their living on that same lake. But this storm was more violent than most, and weary disciples were not making much progress on the way back to the western shore. (PBC)

The disciples were having a hard time fighting the wind, but there isn’t the same sense of danger and fear for their lives that there was in Mark 4:35–41. It was difficult, but they made it halfway across and didn’t say anything about perishing or fearing for their lives. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

14:25-26 The fear comes from seeing someone walking halfway across a rough sea on the water. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 21, Part 3)

14:25 *fourth watch* – 3:00–6:00 A.M. According to Roman reckoning the night was divided into four watches: (1) 6:00–9:00 P.M., (2) 9:00–midnight, (3) midnight–3:00 A.M. and (4) 3:00–6:00 A.M. The Jews had only three watches during the night: (1) sunset–10:00 P.M., (2) 10:00 P.M.–2:00 A.M. and (3) 2:00 A.M.–sunrise (see Jdg 7:19; 1Sa 11:11). (CSB)

Early morning; 3 to 6 a.m. Romans divided nighttime into four segments of three hours each. (TLSB)

When the exhausted disciples were over three miles from land (Jn 6:19), Jesus came to them through the storm. He saw the disciples and their problem. The Savior has the same constant concern for us today. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

walking on the sea – Jesus revealed His divine nature when He made His presence known to His disciples in this way. (TLSB)

14:25 *came to them* – Jesus, in his omniscience, knew their plight. He neither is ignorant of, nor indifferent to, the situation of his disciples. Nothing escapes his eyes.

The miracle of walking on the sea may indicate more than His mastery over nature; it may point to His victory over Satan. Scripture often portrays the sea as the realm of chaos that opposes God's order. For that reason, the sea is said to be the dwelling place of the ancient serpent, who is God's primordial and eschatological enemy (Is 27:1; Amos 9:3). In the description of God's awesome power over everything, He "treads the waves of the sea" (Job 9:8). Finally, because of this association of the sea with the devil, in the new heavens and earth there will be no more sea (Rev. 21:1). [*Commentary from Rev. 21:1 says The absence of the sea from the new heaven and earth in the context of 21:1-8 suggests not the absence of water in the geophysically renewed earth, but an absence of any fear of water and terror that the sea evoked, especially the absence of any painful reminder that God's saints had once been separated from him. (CC pp. 593, 595)*] All this indicates that Jesus' walking on the water demonstrates not only His divinity, but also His conquest of the evil foe. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

14:26-29 When the disciples saw a *phantasma*, a phantomlike figure approaching in the darkness, they were terrified. Jesus immediately identified himself and spoke to calm their fears. Then Peter took a bold step. Perhaps it was just another of Peter's impetuous acts. But he did trust Jesus enough to say *keleuson me elthein*, "command me to come." Jesus did and Peter did. At Jesus' invitation Peter stepped out in faith and actually began walking on the water toward Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

14:26 *its a ghost* – Exhausted, wet, and windblown, these experienced fishermen saw something that terrified them. When God reveals Himself, mortals tremble (Ex 3:6; 20:18; Is 6:5). (TLSB)

It is no surprise that the disciples did not immediately recognize Jesus. After all, it was dark and stormy, and they were not expecting to see Him there. So their immediate reaction was to be terrified and to imagine they were seeing a ghost. (PBC)

Even though the waves are tormenting the boat, the disciples know what they are doing and they have already progressed many stades out into the lake. Their problems are caused when they are confronted by the true identity of Jesus and they don't know that here is a man who is also, at the same time and mysteriously, God. (CC)

Davies and Allison, Matthew, 2504, maintain: "The crux to understanding the Christology of 14:22-33 is the fact that walking on the sea has its background in the OT, where Yahweh the omnipotent creator treads upon the waters...The powers of the deity have become incarnate in God's Son. (CC)

14:27 *immediately Jesus spoke* – Jesus never permits the frightened, penitent sinner to flounder. It is like a frightened child who hears the voice of mother or father with the result that fears dissolve.

Jesus replies “immediately” (euthus) in triple fashion, matching the disciples’ responses perfectly. Because they are troubled, Jesus calms them with His invitation “be courageous.” Because their anti-confession shows that they don’t who He is, Jesus responds simply and absolutely, with overtones of Yahweh’s own speech, “It is I.” Because they have cried out from fear, Jesus speaks assuring words, “Stop being afraid.” He has matched their need, immediately, there in their presence. (CC)

don’t be afraid – Jesus spoke a word of encouragement and self-revelation. (TLSB)

It is I – Gk ego eimi. God made Himself known to Moses using similar words: “I AM WHO I AM” (Ex 3:14). (TLSB)

Sermon Illustrations:

Sometimes the Lord calms the storm. Sometimes he lets the storm rage and calms his child.

Unknown.

One summer night during a severe thunderstorm a mother was tucking her small son into bed. She was about to turn the light off when he asked in a trembling voice, "Mommy, will you stay with me all night?" Smiling, the mother gave him a warm, reassuring hug and said tenderly, "I can't dear. I have to sleep in Daddy's room." A long silence followed. At last it was broken by a shaky voice saying, "The big sissy!"

Unknown.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University reported that 30 years ago, the greatest fears of grade school children were: 1) Animals, 2) Being in a dark room, 3) High places, 4) Strangers, 5) Loud noises. Today, kids are afraid of the following: 1) Divorce, 2) Nuclear war, 3) Cancer, 4) Pollution, 5) Being mugged.

Back to the Bible Today, Summer, 1990, p. 5.

14:28 *command be to come* – First of three scenes where Peter’s role is prominent (16:13–23; 17:24–27). Peter’s request exhibits his impetuous yet genuine faith. *if it is You.* Or, “since it is You,” an expression of Peter’s faith. (TLSB)

It seems clear, however, that Peter does not consider Jesus’ word to be enough, and he asks for something more, something bizarre. (CC)

A look at the other times that Peter speaks in this Gospel certainly suggests that Peter is speaking from a lack of understanding at best, and perhaps from a far worse motive. When Peter speaks, bad things come out of his mouth. The one clear exception to the pattern occurs in 16:16, of course, where Peter speaks wonderful truth. He only does so, however, because the Father has given him the words to speak. (CC)

Peter serves remarkably well as an illustration of the struggles all of us Christians have in this life. Bold Peter first asks Jesus to invite him to participate in the miracle. Christ’s word empowers him to literally “step out in faith.” But the instant Peter’s focus shifts from his Lord and His Word of promise, he begins to sink in doubt. Yet our gracious Lord does not let him perish, but rescues him so that his “little faith” may increase. “A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not snuff out” (Is 42:3).

Christ responds favorably to the prayer, “I do believe, help me overcome my unbelief!” (Mk 9:24). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

It was Jesus’ power, not Peter’s faith, that kept Peter from sinking, but his doubts momentarily separated him from Jesus’ power. We, too, often miss out on blessings that our Lord would be happy to give us because we don’t quite believe He will really keep all of His promises. We, too, need to ask our Lord to increase our faith. But then we must not sit idly back and wait for something wonderful to happen to our faith. The Scriptures clearly tell us that the Holy Spirit increases our faith through the power of the gospel of Christ in Word and sacrament, the means of grace. So any sincere prayer for a stronger faith will surely be followed by faithful use of the means our Lord has provided for that purpose. (PBC)

14:29 *he said come* – Blepon is the almighty Word of God. It enabled Peter to walk on the water.

14:30 *but when he saw the wind* – Similarly, when our eyes and hearts are distracted or diverted from Jesus and His cross, we will be overwhelmed by the winds and waves of life, and we may sink into doubt or despair or sin or shame. With a faith and hope made sure by the cross and empty tomb we cry out with Peter, “Lord save me!” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

Peter’s fear resulted from his failure to concentrate on the object of faith: Jesus. (TLSB)

beginning to sink – Faith dare not be unsteady like a falling and rising wave but steady as calm water. Doubt is the beginning of unbelief. The doubter begins to sink, here literally, otherwise metaphorically.

Was there ever a Master more patient and gracious than this Jesus, whose power and authority go out to all who call upon Him in their need – even when they themselves have created their fatal situation of need? (CC)

Similarly, when our eyes and hearts are distracted or diverted from Jesus and His cross, we will be overwhelmed by the winds and waves of life, and we may sink into doubt or despair or sin or shame. With faith and hope made sure by the cross and empty tomb we cry out with Peter, “Lord, save me!” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

Hebrews 12:1-3, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. ² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

Lord, save me – Peter’s shout for help repeated the disciples’ prayer during an earlier storm. (TLSB)

14:31 *you of little faith* – Jesus rebuked Peter for his lack of faith (cf 8:26). Peter still had much to learn, as will become evident. (TLSB)

Jesus can save, and He will save all who have even only a little faith in Him – even if at times we too doubt. (CC)

why did you doubt – Jesus directs the same question at us when we doubt His Word or question the power of His saving grace. But He also offers us the same unconditional forgiveness and acceptance that He offered to Peter. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

14:32 *wind ceased* – Abrupt evidence of a divinely wrought miracle. (TLSB)

14:33 *worshiped him* – Lit, “bow low,” “fall at another’s feet.” See p 1276. The disciples’ expression of reverence for Jesus right there in the boat is striking. In their worship, they joined the Magi who had honored the child Jesus (2:2, 8, 11). The women (28:9) and the 11 disciples (28:17) would also worship the risen Savior. (TLSB)

Prompted by the grace and guidance of the Holy Spirit we respond in faith as the disciples did, by worshipping Jesus as our Lord and Savior and proclaiming that He is truly “the Son of God.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 3)

They worship Him, although not as fully as they will after His resurrection (28:17) (CC)

truly you are the son of God – This reminds us of Nathanael’s confession (John 1:48) or that of the centurion (Matthew 27:54) and that of Peter the next day (John 6:69). In fact, we think that the Lord permitted all of this to happen to strengthen the disciples in view of their insensitivity to the miracle of the loaves and fishes (Mark 6:52) and also in view of the ordeal in Capernaum the next day (John 6) when, after all the others left Jesus, Peter, in the name of the disciples made such a wonderful confession.

When Jesus had previously calmed a storm, the disciples wondered what sort of man He was (8:27). Now they confidently confess that He is the Son of God (cf 3:17; 4:3, 6; 8:29). (TLSB)

The text culminates in the confession of the disciple and in their worship of Christ. . (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

14:22–33 When Jesus reveals His divine presence to His disciples by walking on the sea, they can only conclude: “Truly You are the Son of God.” As long as Peter keeps his eyes on Jesus, he also is able to walk on the water. Like Peter, we often look away from the object of our faith and focus on our problems and doubts. Although we know the Son of God is with us and provides for all our needs, we still worry and fear. Jesus states, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” His powerful arm reaches out to steady us and guide us into His safe harbor. • Divine Savior, when the storms of life threaten to shipwreck my faith, assure me of Your loving presence and protecting care. Amen. (TLSB)