

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

OLD TESTAMENT – Leviticus 19:9-18

Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

9 “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. 10 And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God. 11 “You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. 12 You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD. 13 “You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning. 14 You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the LORD. 15 “You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. 16 You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life[a] of your neighbor: I am the LORD. 17 “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. 18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

19:11-18 Israelites did not have personal copies of Scripture as we do. Instead the Bible was read to them in public. As the Israelites heard this section read they surely couldn't help noticing the repetition of certain words and phrases leading up to the great climax about loving their neighbors as themselves. (PBC)

The four units in this section consist mainly of prohibitions. By these prohibitions the Lord covered the members of His holy community with the canopy of His holiness and protected them from abuse by their associates. The prohibitions deal with those kinds of abuse and injustice that could not be treated in a normal court of law, but could only be judged by God. By prohibiting them, God made these acts of injustice sins against Himself and His holiness. (CC)

19:11–12 See Ex 20:7, 15–16. (CSB)

Why this particular order? And why mention these commandments in connection with each other? The reason is that a person who deceived others by falsely claiming ownership of a certain piece of property would actually be guilty of stealing that property, and the deceiver might be tempted to take an oath before God that he was telling the truth. (PBC)

The prohibitions in these verses protected the property of each Israelite. They recall the Seventh Commandment (Ex. 20:15) and deal with secret acts of theft and their subsequent denial. (CC)

- The first prohibition (“you shall not steal”) forbids the secret theft and furtive misappropriation of property. (CC)
- The second prohibition (“you shall not dissemble”) forbids the denial of the theft by dissembling or telling lies. (CC)
- The third prohibition (“nor lie”) forbids the affirmation of the lie as a truth by the thief, for often, when challenged, the thief would not only deny the theft, but claim ownership to what he had stolen. (CC)

- The fourth prohibition (“you shall not swear falsely...”) prohibits the use of God’s name in an oath on a witness stand, at the sanctuary (1 Kings 8:31-32), in personal self-defense in an attempt to cover up the theft. (CC)

19:13-14 These verses primarily forbid mistreating those unable to defend themselves in court. ((PBC)

The second set of commandments in these verses protected each member of the holy congregation from exploitation by powerful people. Three common forms of exploitation are singled out for consideration. (CC)

- First the Lord warns His people against legal exploitation by withholding property or payment from another person, as well as the illegal use of position and influence to gain property by robbery from a vulnerable person. (CC)
- Second, the Lord warns against any delay in paying day laborers. Day laborers could be either Israelites or foreigners (Deut. 24:14-15). They were among the poorest members of Israelite society. Since they had no property and since they lacked permanent employment, they needed their daily wages to support themselves and their families. God protected their livelihood by requiring their employers to pay them at the end of each day. (CC)
- Third and last, the Lord warns against hidden abuse of disadvantaged people. God’s people were forbidden to insult a deaf person or put an obstacle before a blind person. These acts took secret advantage of these people’s handicaps in order to harm them publicly, either out of spite or for persons gain. It was safe to do so because they did not know what was said or done. They were therefore unable to defend themselves by retaliation. By analogy with this, the Israelites were forbidden to insult each other in secret behind each other’s back or bring about someone’s downfall by setting a hidden obstacle before him. This kind of behavior was common in any close community that was riddled with jealousy and rivalry. In it powerful people often worked secretly to shame others who were weak or who did not support them. (CC)

19:13 *shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him* – Command against exploitation. (TLSB)

wages of a hired man. See Dt 24:14–15; Mt 20:8. (CSB)

Protection for society’s poor. (TLSB)

19:14 *not curse the deaf* – Disgusting is the picture of one smiling benignly while uttering curse words to a person unable to hear. (PBC)

stumbling block...blind – Equally despicable is the action of one finding insane pleasure in placing an obstacle in the path of a blind person which would cause him to stumble and fall. (PBC)

Anything that would cause the blind to fall. (TLSB)

A person could break these prohibitions in ways less obvious than outright cursing and placing obstacles. Not helping the deaf and blind is in effect cursing them (literally treating them as insignificant) and causing them to stumble. (PBC)

I am the Lord.” This sentence is meant to emphasize the fact that the Lord has made and given all that is on earth and therefore He is to be respected and obeyed. (CSB)

19:15-16 In response to His righteousness, the Lord expected fairness from His people. (TLSB)

In these verses the Lord prohibits the perpetration of injustice in Israel. This unit presupposes that all Israelites were involved in the local administration of God’s justice. This operated on two levels. (CC)

- On one hand, all adult males served as judges in the courts convened to hear legal cases in the gates of their villages. (CC)
- On the other hand, all Israelites served as witnesses for others both in their communal life and in the local courts of law. (CC)

19:15 *shall do no injustice* – In ancient Israel the elders of the village served as judges when a grievance was brought by one person against another. Everyone – judges, plaintiffs and defendants – probably knew each other well from daily contact in the community. Personal feelings about others could easily affect the judicial process. (PBC)

19:16 *shall not go around as a slander* – They were not to spread gossip or, because of personal animosity, unjustly accuse a person so he might receive the death penalty. (PBC)

This involves, of course, “casting aside all inhumane conduct, all ill will, as manifested in malicious belittling, blackening, and slandering, and especially in attempts against the life of a neighbor, whether in court or in private life. (Kretzmann)

19:17-18 The material in these verse presupposes a tribal society made up of close blood clans, a society governed by payback. In such a society each offense had to be avenged to preserve the society’s social and moral ecology. Payback operated positively as benefaction within the blood clan; it also operated negatively as revenge and hatred against those who stood outside it. The Lord therefore undermined the cycle of revenge by forbidding hatred and commanding love for all members of the Israelite congregation. (CC)

19:17 *Do not hate your brother.* See 1Jn 2:9, 11; 3:15; 4:20. (CSB)

A society filled with hatred will soon tear itself away from God and self-destruct. (TLSB)

Better than taking a person to court was settling the matter privately. That meant above all refusing to let hatred breed in the heart. (PBC)

That is, not bear a sin on his account by remaining silent, when a remonstrance in time might save one’s neighbor from severe transgressions. So even the Israelites, according to this precept, would become partakers of other men’s sins. (Kretzmann)

reason frankly with your neighbor – Jesus expounded this ordinance in Mt 18:15–17. (TLSB)

Matthew 18:15-17, “¹⁵“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. ¹⁶But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ ¹⁷If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

19:18 *shall not take vengeance* –God pays back evildoers (Ps 94:1; Na 1:2), so thoughts of personal revenge and violence are prohibited. God pays back evildoers (Ps 94:1; Na 1:2), so thoughts of personal revenge and violence are prohibited. Cyprian: “When a wrong is received, patience is to be maintained, and that vengeance is to be left to God” (ANF 5:555). (TLSB)

love your neighbor as yourself. Quoted by Christ (Mt 22:39; Mk 12:31; Lk 10:27), Paul (Ro 13:9; Gal 5:14) and James (2:8). The stricter Pharisees (school of Shammai) added to this command what they thought it implied: “Hate your enemy” (Mt 5:43). Jesus’ reaction, “Love your enemies,” was in line with true OT teaching (see vv. 17, 34) and was more in agreement with the middle-of-the-road Pharisees. Rabbi Nahmanides caught their sentiments: “One should place no limitations upon the love for the neighbor, but instead a person should love to do an abundance of good for his fellow being as he does for himself.” “Neighbor” does not merely mean one who lives nearby, but anyone with whom one comes in contact. (CSB)

The Hebrew words translated as “love” and “neighbor” mean doing every kind of good to all people. (PBC)

That is, not bear a sin on his account by remaining silent, when a remonstrance in time might save one’s neighbor from severe transgressions. So even the Israelites, according to this precept, would become partakers of other men’s sins. (Kretzmann)

19:9–18 God wants His holiness reflected in the lives and conduct of His people. The Israelite community shared in God’s holiness, and so do believers today (cf 1Co 1:2). We are hallowed in the Lord’s name. • Almighty Father, may our conduct reflect sincere faith in Your Gospel. Deliver us from evil thoughts and deeds for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – Colossians 1:1-14

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

1:1-2 The salutation was a standard part of any Greek letter in the first century A.D. In some of his letters, Paul uses the salutation to introduce important themes which he will treat in the body of the epistle (Rom 1:1–7; Gal 1:1–5; Titus 1:1–4). In the present letter, the apostle uses the overture (Col 1:3–20) for that purpose. Hence, his salutation is exceptionally brief, so that he may move on to introducing his subject matter in the overture (1:3–20). The main emphasis in the salutation is that Paul’s status as an apostle has come about through the *will* of God. By this Paul puts a stamp of divine authority on what he writes here. (CC p. 19)

1:1 *Paul.* † It was customary to put the writer’s name at the beginning of a letter for the convenience of the addressee(s), since letters were written on scrolls. (CSB)

an apostle – Although the term can be used in a general sense that includes co-workers of Paul (as in 1 Thess 2:6–7), when used in its specific sense, designating Paul or others personally called by Christ himself, it is a significant concept that is to be understood in light of the Hebrew term *shaliach* (שליח). (CC p. 21)

The apostles of Jesus Christ were chosen from those who had been eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor 9:1). The NT identifies a limited number of individuals as these apostles: the Twelve (Acts 1:21–22), Paul (1 Cor 9:1), James the brother of the Lord (Gal 1:19; 2:9), and perhaps Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14). (CC p. 22)

Paul bases his apostolic office on his being an eyewitness of the resurrection (1 Cor 9:1) through his calling on the road to Damascus (Gal 1:15–16; cf. 1 Cor 15:7–10). He was called to exercise his apostolate particularly for the benefit of non-Jews (Gal 1:15–16; see also Acts 9:16; 22:21; 26:17, 19, 23); hence, in Romans he identifies himself as the “apostle of the Gentiles” (11:13). (CC p. 22)

Christ. Paul is very Christ-centered, as seen by this short letter, in which he uses the title “Christ” 26 times and the title “Lord” (alone) 7 times. (CSB)

by the will of God – Paul did not choose to be an apostle but was called by God. (TLSB)

Timothy. Paul also mentions Timothy in 2 Corinthians, Philippians, 1,2 Thessalonians and Philemon, but Paul is really the sole author, as seen by the constant use of “I” (see especially 4:18). (CSB)

Τιμόθεος—Timothy was one of the apostle’s most beloved co-workers. Although the son of a Gentile father and a Jewish mother, he was a devout adherent of the OT faith (Acts 16:1–2; 2 Tim 1:3–5) in much the same way as were Simeon and Anna (Lk 2:25–38). Because of his mixed bloodline, Paul had him circumcised before he joined the apostle’s traveling missionary band on the second missionary journey, lest there be an offense to potential Jewish converts (Acts 16:3). Timothy often worked alongside the apostle (Acts 19:22; Rom 16:21; 1 Cor 16:10; Phil 2:22) and was often sent places by Paul as his representative (Acts 19:22; 1 Cor 4:17; Phil 2:19–21). He was especially dear to the apostle (1 Cor 4:17), who called him by the term “child” (1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2) and described him as genuinely concerned about those among whom he labored (Phil 2:19–21). Late in Paul’s career, he left Timothy to oversee the church at Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3). (CC p. 19)

A favorite co-worker of Paul. His father was a Gentile; his mother was Jewish. He often worked alongside Paul or was sent as his representative. (TLSB)

Paul was especially close to Timothy. He even referred to him as “my beloved and faithful child in the Lord” (1Co 4:17). Timothy should be considered a co-author of this Letter. (TLSB)

1 Corinthians 4:17 “For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.”

1:2 saints. Because of Christ’s substitutionary death for the Colossian believers, they are declared holy in the sight of God, and because of the Holy Spirit’s work, they are continuing to be made holy in their lives. (CSB)

faithful. See 1:7; 4:7, 9.

By virtue of their Baptism, all believers are “in Christ,” i.e., they are connected to Christ or belong to Him (2:11–13; Rm 6:3, 11; Gal 3:26–27; Eph 1:13; 3:6). (TLSB)

in Christ. Paul mentions the spiritual union with Christ 13 times in Colossians (see note on Eph 1:3). (CSB)

The addressees of this letter are said to be “in Christ.” This refers to an important concept in the letters of Paul, as seen both from the frequency of “in Christ” or equivalent phrases, such as “in him” or “in whom,” referring to Christ (by one count some 170 times in the thirteen letters by Paul) and from the near absence of “in Christ” throughout the rest of the NT. The phrase does not have a merely instrumental meaning, as though the preposition ἐν meant “by.” (CC p. 23)

Colossae. C 100 mi E of Ephesus. Most likely Epaphras brought the Gospel to Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. (TLSB)

1:1–2 Faithful Epaphras established a tiny foothold for the kingdom of God at Colossae and nearby cities. Now this young church is threatened by false belief, which directs people away from Christ and His work to themselves. But God does not give up. He uses Paul, Timothy, and other faithful servants to establish the truth and love of Christ in their hearts. God does not give up on us either, when we or those we love are tempted by false teachings. • O Lord, send from heaven and save me; put to shame him who tramples on me. Send out Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness! Amen. (paraphrase of Ps 57:4). (TLSB)

Thanksgiving and Prayer

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4** since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, **5** because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, **6** which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, **7** just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf **8** and has made known to us your love in the Spirit. **9** And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10** so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; **11** being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; **12** giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. **13** He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

1:3 *We.* Paul and Timothy. (CSB)

thank God. Every one of Paul’s letters, except Galatians, begins with thanks or praise (see note on Php 1:3–4). In Colossians thanks is an important theme (see v. 12; 2:7; 3:15–17; 4:2). (CSB)

Indicates God’s triune nature in the loving relationship between Father and Son. Yet the Son is “Lord” (TLSB)

Paul sets a great example for all Christians by beginning his prayer for others by giving thanks for their spiritual qualities (VV. 4-6) (CSB)

pray for you – Paul often states that he prays for people (Romans 1:9; Eph.1:16; Phil 1:4). Jesus too prayed for others (Mt. 14:23 and parallels; 19:13; John 17). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

Fervent prayer is an important part of Christian ministry. Cf 1:9; 4:2–3, 12. (TLSB)

1:4 *we have heard* – Apart from a few individuals, Paul had not met the Colossians face-to-face. Cf 2:1. (TLSB)

faith in Christ Jesus – ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ— “In Christ Jesus” denotes not the object of faith, but the saving relationship with Christ that one has through saving faith. (CC p. 29)

1:5 The three great Christian virtues of faith, love and hope appear also in Ro 5:2–5; 1Co 13:13; Gal 5:5–6; 1Th 1:3; 5:8; Heb 10:22–24. (CSB)

The meaning of three significant words in this section—faith, love, and hope—is seen not only from the contextual usage of the terms themselves but also from their relationship to one another. “Faith” (πίστις) is mentioned first by the apostle because of its importance and because love and hope are born of faith. Here it denotes the “state of believing on the basis of the reliability of the one trusted” (BDAG, 2), “faith in Christ” (BDAG, 2 b β). It is this faith that justifies a sinner, as Ap IV 48–121 expounds in detail. (CC p. 31)

Outside of biblical teaching, “hope” was largely absent in the ancient world (Eph 2:12). Some considered it preferable never to have been born. The *Pax Romana* under Augustus Caesar led to his birth being hailed as the beginning of a new hope, but such hopes quickly ended when Augustus was succeeded by “Tiberius and other emperors even more mad than he.” (CC p. 31)

hope. Not wishful thinking but a firm assurance. For this unusual thought of faith and love coming from hope see Tit 1:2. (CSB)

Most people in the Greco-Roman world lived without hope (cf Eph 2:12). Hope can be thought of as faith directed toward the future. (TLSB)

1:6 *which has come to you* – As the founding missionary of the Colossian Church, Epaphras had brought the Gospel (v 7). (TLSB)

in the whole world. Hyperbole, to dramatize the rapid spread of the gospel into every quarter of the Roman empire within three decades of Pentecost (see v. 23; Ro 1:8; 10:18; 16:19). In refutation of the charge of the false teachers, Paul insists that the Christian faith is not merely local or regional but worldwide. (CSB)

In less than three decades since Pentecost, the Gospel was being proclaimed to the entire Roman world (cf 1Tm 3:16). (TLSB)

bearing fruit – This shows that God is at work through his Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

Emphasizing both the truth and the power of the Word that was proclaimed to them under his auspices, Paul takes note of the great things that that Word has accomplished among his readers. Those great things are the work of Almighty God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—centering in the work of Jesus Christ and involving a relationship of faith in him. (Luther)

The Gospel (v 5) produces faith and good works. Cf Gal 5:22–23. (TLSB)

Isaiah 55:11 “so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

1:7 Epaphras. A native (4:12) and probably founder of the Colossian church, and an evangelist in nearby Laodicea and Hierapolis (4:13). Paul loved and admired him, calling him a “fellow prisoner” (Phm 23), his dear fellow servant and a faithful minister of Christ. Epaphras was the one who told Paul at Rome about the Colossian church problem and thereby stimulated him to write this letter (vv. 4, 8). His name, a shortened form of Epaphroditus (from “Aphrodite,” the Greek goddess of love), suggests that he was a convert from paganism. He is not the Epaphroditus of Php 2:25; 4:18. (CSB)

Paul was very close to him and called him a “fellow prisoner” in Phm 23. (TLSB)

beloved fellow servant – Some manuscripts have “your,” but many scholars prefer “our” because it shows the connection between Paul, Epaphras, and the Colossians. (TLSB)

faithful minister – Gk *doulos*, usually means “slave” or “one who is wholly owned and who owes undivided allegiance and obedience to a master.” See p 1903. Many OT believers were called slaves (servants) of God: Moses (Ps 105:26), Joshua (Jsh 24:29), David (2Sm 7:5), and Jeremiah (Jer 7:25). (TLSB)

1:8 your love in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the source of all Christian love. (CSB)

Love as well as faith is the work of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel. (TLSB)

1:9-14 Paul prays for our entire Christian life: for faith (v 9), for the living of our faith (v 10), for strength when we meet resistance (v 11), and for the final outcome of faith—eternal life (v 12). (TLSB)

1:9 have not ceased to pray for you – Paul’s attention to regular prayer is an integral aspect of his ministry. (TLSB)

the knowledge of his will. Biblical knowledge is not merely the possession of facts. Rather, knowledge and wisdom in the Bible are practical, having to do with godly living. This is borne out by vv. 10–12, where knowledge, wisdom and understanding result in a life worthy of the Lord. (CSB)

False teachers had promoted another kind of knowledge. Paul prays for knowledge that is centered in God’s forgiveness in Christ (v 14) and revealed by the Holy Spirit. (TLSB)

Using our sanctified minds we can gather facts listen to the advice of others, search the Word, pray for guidance and accept personal responsibility for our decisions. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

wisdom – Gk *sophia*. Paul uses this word six times in Col (1:9, 28; 2:3, 23; 3:16; 4:5). It is the practical application of faith in Christ. (TLSB)

understanding – Insight. A clear analysis and application of knowledge guided by the Holy Spirit. (TLSB)

1:10 walk in a manner worthy – In verse 10-12 Paul identifies what the fruits of a sanctified life are. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

περιπατῆσαι—“Walk” here, as often in both testaments, refers to ethical conduct in Christian faith, one’s “way of life.” In English, instead of “to walk,” we would more likely say “to live” or “to conduct yourselves.” (CC p. 35)

Gk *axios*, “suitable to.” Related to Eng “axiomatic,” “taken for granted.” We should have high expectations for the new life of faith, since it comes from Christ. (TLSB)

1:11 *strengthened...all power...glorious might* – Gk *dynamis*. Related to Eng “dynamite.” God empowers His people for service. *glorious might*. Great power; used only of God in the NT. (TLSB)

endurance – εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομονήν— “Endurance” is perseverance in Christ in the face of attacks. It remains through suffering (2 Cor 1:6) by holding fast to its hope for the future according to God’s promise (Rom 8:25; 15:4), so that it persists in good works (Rom 2:7) and produces proven character (Rom 5:4). (CC p. 36)

patience – καὶ μακροθυμίαν – “Patience” may also be rendered “longsuffering.” In human relationships, it includes giving the other person all the time he needs to deal with his defects. See further “The Relational Virtues of the Christian Life” at 3:5–17. (CC p. 36)

with joy – μετὰ χαρᾶς—“With joy” is an adverbial phrase best taken as modifying the following verb rather than being attached to the preceding clause. As that which is to characterize the giving of thanks, “joy” is deeper than mere happiness. As a fruit of saving faith (Phil 1:25) and gift of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22; 1 Thess 1:6), joy endures even in the face of affliction (2 Cor 7:4; 1 Thess 1:6). For more on “joy,” see “The Relational Virtues of the Christian Life” at Col 3:5–17. (CC p. 36)

1:12 *qualified* – Sin disqualifies us. God qualified us through Christ’s redemption (v 14). (TLSB)

τῷ ἰκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς—ικανώσαντι, “made sufficient,” is a grace word, since the Father provided what we could not provide for ourselves (1 Cor 15:9; 2 Cor 3:5–6). The aorist participle denotes that the Father’s act of making sufficient preceded that of the thanksgiving given to him. In the context of the aorist indicatives of Col 1:13, the participle here points to Baptism as a past event incorporating one into the past event of the death and resurrection of Christ. (CC pp.36-37)

inheritance – Recalls the inheritance of the Promised Land that was allotted to the families of Israel according to God’s promises and not because of their righteousness (Dt 9:5). (TLSB)

light. Symbolizes holiness (Mt 5:14; 6:23; Ac 26:18; 1Jn 1:5), truth (Ps 36:9; 119:105, 130; 2Co 4:6), love (Jas 1:17; 1Jn 2:9–10), glory (Isa 60:1–3; 1Ti 6:16) and life (Jn 1:4). Accordingly, God (1Jn 1:5), Christ (Jn 8:12) and the Christian (Eph 5:8) are characterized by light. The “kingdom of light” is the opposite of the “dominion of darkness” (v. 13). (CSB)

Believers are no longer separated from God, who is light (Jn 8:12). (TLSB)

1:13 *delivered* – The past tense points us back to Baptism, which incorporated us into Christ’s saving work (2:6–15). (TLSB)

domain of darkness – Human nature has been delivered into slavery and is held captive by the devil” (Ap II 47). The NT often uses light/darkness for the contrast between God/Satan, salvation/sin (Ac 26:18). Biblical usage differs from that of some later Gnostics and Manichaeans, who used this comparison as though God and Satan were equal forces. God’s power to save from the darkness of sin applies for all people. (TLSB)

kingdom. † Does not here refer to a territory but to the authority, rule or power of a king. Here it means that the Christian is no longer under the dominion of evil (darkness) but under the benevolent rule of God’s Son. (CSB)

Jesus taught that God's kingdom was the rule of His grace, which began with His ministry (Mt 4:17). The beginning of God's kingdom is the forgiveness of sins (v 14). (TLSB)

1:14 redemption. Deliverance and freedom from the penalty of sin by the payment of a ransom—the substitutionary death of Christ. (CSB)

Paul puts these (redemption and forgiveness) teachings together. This may have been in contrast to the idea that forgiveness was a preliminary step of salvation, a teaching held by later Gnostics. “No one is baptized in order that he may become a prince, but, as the words say, that he ‘be saved.’ We know that to be saved is nothing other than to be delivered from sin, death, and the devil” (LC IV 24–25). (TLSB)

1:3–14 Paul cares very much for these new Christians, and he knows that God cares for them even more. Unfortunately, false teachings that lead people to look to themselves instead of looking to God compete for the Colossians' attention. We have all been tempted to look to other things instead of Jesus for our salvation. God is the only one who can overcome this evil. In the background, Paul is praying fervently for them. In the foreground, Paul is boldly proclaiming the truth of salvation in Jesus. • Thank You, O God, for Your patience and persistence to save us through Your beloved Son. Amen. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Luke 10:25-37

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Central Point – Christianity is a way of life

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The first round begins with the lawyer "putting [Jesus] to the test" (ἐκπειράζων; 10:25). The hearer might recall that the only other time this phrase is used is in the temptation of Jesus by the devil. Following the devil's third temptation, Jesus responds, "You will not tempt the Lord your God" (4:12). The lawyer, like the devil, does not acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God. The first question is put forth by the lawyer: "Having done what shall I inherit eternal life?" (10:25). It is *the most important question*. It shapes the narrative, and the other three questions are attempts to answer this first question. (CC p. 451)

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

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

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

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

how do you read that – The second question is by Jesus. Since God has already answered the lawyer’s question in the Torah, Jesus points him there: “In the Law what is written?” (10:26). This is a natural question to pose to a lawyer. The lawyer is astute. He answers Jesus’ question according to the Torah with the right answer: love God and love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus confirms that the lawyer’s answer is correct. “Do this and you will live” (10:28). The heart of the Torah is God’s mercy and love. The human response in faith is likewise a response in love and mercy, as Jesus will illustrate by the Good Samaritan story. Again, a quote from St. Paul elucidates Jesus’ point: “Love is the fulfillment of the Law” (Rom 13:10; cf. also Rom 13:8; Gal 5:14; James 2:8). Jesus led the lawyer to answer his own question from Scripture (Jesus did the same in dealing with the devil’s tests). The debate should be over. But the lawyer is not content with God’s answer of love. He wants to stay focused on codifying his deeds of love; he wants to assert his own righteousness and his claim to deserve eternal life. (CC p. 451)

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

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

Love ... God ... Love your neighbor. Elsewhere Jesus uses these words in reply to another question (Mt 22:35–40; Mk 12:28–32), putting the same two Scriptures together (Dt 6:5; Lev 19:18). Whether a

fourfold love (heart, soul, strength and mind, as here and in Mk 12:30) or threefold (Dt 6:5; Mt 22:37; Mk 12:33), the significance is that total devotion is demanded. (CSB)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is why there is a second round, which begins much like the first one. The lawyer, instead of testing Jesus, now becomes defensive, “wishing to justify himself” (Lk 10:29). His defensiveness comes from his knowledge that he has been put into an untenable position. He knows that if he claims he does love God, he should love his neighbor as well. To profess love for God but to hate one’s neighbor is hypocrisy. If the lawyer professes to love his neighbor as himself, someone can ask, “Where is the evidence?” This is the point at which the lawyer really starts to squirm. He tries to deflect attention away from himself by implying that the Law is the problem, that the Law is unclear. It is necessary to clarify who is “neighbor” and who is not, to divide between “us” and “them.” The lawyer—and the reader—might suppose that the next step will be to delineate bloodlines and genealogies, to define who qualifies to be included within the covenantal community of Israel as “neighbor.” The question “Who is my neighbor?” (10:29) implies that there are some people who are *not* my neighbor. By asking the question, the lawyer asks Jesus to interpret

the Torah as to the kinds of people Jesus would *exclude* from his love. Anyone even vaguely familiar with Jesus' ministry up to this point should know that as Jesus fulfills the OT in his ministry, absolutely *no one* is excluded from his love. (CC pp. 451-452)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

took care of him – ἐπεμελήθη αὐτοῦ—K. Bailey notes that due to the Middle Eastern principles of retaliation, the Samaritan put himself at risk by identifying himself as one making amends. He might be attacked by the victim’s family in revenge for the attack by the bandits since the actual attackers could not

be found. Bailey says that attacking the Samaritan would be “an irrational response” but one that any Middle Eastern traveler had to consider (pp. 51–53). In many modern cultures too, one who stops to help a stranger puts himself at risk by becoming involved, even if he does no wrong and offers generous assistance. (CC pp. 448-449)

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

This mercy is shown by bandaging, then pouring on oil and wine. Oil and wine are associated with love in Song 1:2–3, and James 5:14 reflects early Christian use of oil. In Lk 7:38, oil and myrrh are poured out on Jesus in a libation of love.

Many have noticed that the order of the Samaritan’s actions seems to be the reverse of what one would expect. Oil is to clean the wound, wine is to disinfect it, and then it would be bound by a bandage. But K. Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes*, 49–50, citing J. D. M. Derrett (*Law in the New Testament* [London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1970]), suggests a theological rationale for the order since Yahweh binds Israel’s wounds and heals her (cf. Jer 30:17 and Hos 6:1–10, where there are clear parallels to this passage). Bailey is insightful in suggesting that this mercy is clearly demonstrated in the liturgical acts of binding the man’s wounds and applying oil and wine:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10:37 *do likewise* – The Samaritan risked his own neck to help a Jew, and then spent a sizable amount of money to provide for his ongoing recovery. He invested much in order to rescue a traditional enemy. See note, Mi 6:8. God requires us to act in love toward all people, even our enemies and esp those in need. Luth: “Our neighbor is any human being, especially one who needs our help, as Christ interprets it in Luke 10:30–37. Even one who has done me some sort of injury or harm ... does not stop being my neighbor” (AE 27:58). The Samaritan in the parable likely represents Christ, who had recently sought to work with the Samaritans (9:51–56). (TLSB)

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

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

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

Robert Farrar Capon, *The Parables of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 60–61, suggests that the chief Christ figure in the parable is the man who fell among thieves, was stripped, beaten, and left

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

10:25–37 Jesus tells the famous parable of the Good Samaritan to clarify that He expects His followers to do good to all people. However, His concluding exhortation, “Go, and do likewise,” reminds us just how far we are from the loving, self-sacrificing behaviors the Lord expects. So it was that Jesus became the Good Samaritan for us. He laid down His life, befriended us while we were yet His enemies. He promises us full restoration and life everlasting. • Lord, make me more like You, that I grow in faith and love for my neighbor. May people see You in my actions as I reach out to them with Your love. Amen. (TLSB)