

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 29:11-19

11 And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, “Read this,” he says, “I cannot, for it is sealed.” **12** And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, “Read this,” he says, “I cannot read.” **13** And the Lord said: “Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men, **14** therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden.” **15** Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, “Who sees us? Who knows us?” **16** You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, “He did not make me”; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, “He has no understanding”? **17** Is it not yet a very little while until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest? **18** In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. **19** The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD, and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.

29:11 *vision.* † Because of their hardness of heart, unbelieving Israelites will not be able to understand the vision described by the prophet. (CSB)

a book that is sealed. A prose explanation of the poetry of vv 9–10. Because Judah’s actions deeply offended the Lord, He will no longer allow Judah to see or understand what He is doing. (TLSB)

29:12 *I cannot read* – This sealed and closed book benefits neither the reader nor the nonreader. This shows that the fruit of ungodliness is that neither readers nor nonreaders can understand. Paul attacks this in 2 Cor. 3:7 and 4:3, where he speaks of Moses’ veil, which is not on Moses but on the face of the people and on their heart. This is that veil and sealed book. (Luther)

29:13 Quoted in part by Jesus to show the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (Mt 15:8–9). (CSB)

This people. Not “my people” (cf. 8:6, 11–12; Jer 14:10–11; Hag 1:2). (CSB)

draw near with their mouth – Christ cites this passage in Matt. 15:8, where He adds the word “in vain.” With this single word He embraces this whole chapter and every attempt of the ungodly, who have zealously crucified themselves with their labors, who exercise themselves with vigils, “who draw near to Me in order to obtain Me,” and yet they are blinded. Why? Because they are hypocrites and self-righteous. *Draw near* properly refers to the state of mind of those who are externally zealous and glittering in appearance and boast that they are next to Christ. But they “draw near to Me” in this way that “they honor Me with their mouth and lips.” (Luther)

Jesus quoted this verse to expose the hypocritical recitation of religious formulas. (TLSB)

commandment taught by men – Where people have once forsaken the Word, it is inevitable that tradition will soon follow; or there is opinion, that is, error, on the part of those who erect their own idols according to their own ideas, and then error soon follows. Meanwhile, however, they always have their supreme boasting, also for these; for he says here “their fear.” (Luther)

29:14 Quoted in part in 1Co 1:19. (CSB)

wonder upon wonder. He who showed them wonders in the exodus (see Ex 15:11; Ps 78:12) will now show them wonders in judgment. (CSB)

Miracles and signs of God's blessings. (TLSB)

wisdom ... shall perish. Paul cites the second half of this verse in order to demonstrate the folly of the world's wisdom. In Isaiah's day—when faced with the approaching Assyrian army—the common wisdom was to form an alliance with Egypt (30:1–3), to rely on their horses, the multitude of their chariots, and in the great strength of their horsemen (31:1) TLSB)

This is the marvel of divine wrath, that these ungodly people believe nothing and are not persuaded by us, accepting nothing beyond their own security and replying to our admonitions: "If you get to heaven before me, do not dust out my eyes." Thus you see that they have no wisdom, no faith and understanding, no discernment of Scripture and the Word. The wise men are those who know the rule and analogy of faith. The understanding ones are those who test doctrines and adjudicate them by a keen judgment, those who in fear test all things according to the analogy of faith. The ungodly lack these gifts and have no understanding or faith but always snore away in their own smugness. Always the heart has remained the same. Therefore they remain in their dream, possessing nothing of faith or of love, because they are neither wise nor understanding. And when they will be most wise, they will be most ungodly; and when they want to be most understanding, they are the most stupid. This is so because they do not have the Word but their own traditions. (Luther)

29:15 *ah.* A new woe begins. (CSB)

Isaiah pronounces a woe, or death lament, on those who think they can hide their plans from the Lord. (TLSB)

deeds are in the dark. Perhaps the alliance between Ahaz and Assyria or between Hezekiah and Egypt (see 30:1–2). (CSB)

We have already heard about the ungodliness of these people and about the punishment for it, once the pretense of wisdom and understanding has been left behind and the truth of the matter has been brought in. Now such people begin to defend themselves and hide from the Lord. How can they hide from the Lord? I answer: He is speaking in the manner and from the point of view of the ungodly, who say: "I am not afraid of your Lord, whom you preach, for He does not see me." In other words, "Dear Isaiah, I have no fear of your God; He will not scald a finger for me." Psalm 14:1 describes it more fully: "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.' " "As for us, let us do our works; God will not notice those people." Psalm 10:11 reports: "He thinks in his heart, 'God has forgotten, He has hidden His face, He will never see it.' " Just so our adversaries all say that there is a God; but when we proclaim the true God to them, they do not want to accept Him but prefer to worship their own. They do not want the evangelical God, and so they have their own God and keep our true God hidden. They hide Him with their teaching, their good intention, and their divine obedience, in whatever manner a man can cheat. (Luther)

Who sees us? They think they are not seen by God, because they do everything in the pretense and appearance of godliness in the opinion that God does not see. They are censured by the prophets, who reject their hypocrisy. It is as if he were saying: "Who told you that our works are evil? How do you know? Who has shown you anything more upright than us? You think that you alone are wiser than we are."

29:16 *upside down!* They usurp God’s place.(TLSB)

potter. Imagery that dates back to the account of God forming Adam (Gn 2:7). For the clay to command the potter turns things upside down, making the creature the Creator (cf Is 41:25; 45:9; 64:8). (TLSB)

Quoted in part in Ro 9:20. Cf. the creation of Adam in Ge 2:7; also cf. Isa 10:15. (CSB)

I tell you that this your mask and godliness is perverted and prove it by the following comparisons: O you fools, do you think you are deceiving God? No, no, as the product cannot hide from the potter, so you cannot hide from God the Maker. He will see your ungodliness, however much you may do it with the appearance of godliness. (Luther)

29:17–24 Another sudden shift to the theme of redemption, as in 28:5–8. (CSB)

29:17 *Lebanon*. Perhaps symbolic of Assyria (see 10:34). The forests of Lebanon were unequalled (see 2:13), so “fertile field” represents a lesser status (see 32:15). (CSB)

Soon Lebanon will be humiliated (2:13; 10:34; 37:24). Illustrates the coming divine reversal, when the exalted will be humbled and the humble will be exalted. (TLSB)

I tell you that this your mask and godliness is perverted and prove it by the following comparisons: O you fools, do you think you are deceiving God? No, no, as the product cannot hide from the potter, so you cannot hide from God the Maker. He will see your ungodliness, however much you may do it with the appearance of godliness. (Luther)

fruitful field...as a forest – That is: “I will change things by a wonderful change, so that the Jewish people is not a people and the Gentiles, who are not a people, are a people, as a field is physically changed into a forest and a forest into a field.” (Luther)

What seems impressive among the nations will be sharply reduced in stature; what looks unimpressive will be far more highly esteemed. All this implies the eschatological future. (Leupold)

29:18–19 Jesus quotes this as evidence of His ministry. (TLSB)

29:18 *In that day*.† Beyond the day of destruction lies the day of restoration. (CSB)

deaf shall hear ... blind shall see.† Linked with the Messianic age in 35:5; cf. Mt 4:16; Jn 9:39. (CSB)

That is, the nations that seem *deaf shall hear the words of a book*, a book that is sealed to the blind Jews. “As Christ says in John 9:39: ‘For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind,’ so you, presumptuous hearers, will be deaf; and the deaf and ignorant, who do not think that they hear, these will hear. Thus the prophet fights against the stubbornness of the ignorant, as the Jews, who boast of their wisdom and of the fact that they hear a great deal, do not hear. The deaf Gentiles, however, who claim nothing for themselves, these hear *the words of a book*, that is, the Scripture. So in our time the Gospel is heard by those who acknowledge their error. (Luther)

29:19 *meek*. The Hebrew word מְצַדָּקִים means wretched, afflicted, and extremely unfortunate. It does not, strictly, mean *meek*. From such all boasting and bragging about works and merits has been removed, and they boast only in the Lord. These very people accept the Gospel, saying: “Although I am poor, wretched,

and lost, Christ is nevertheless my rich man and my Savior.” So it always follows that such people have tribulation in the world, but they have peace before God the Father. These are the אֲנִיִּי, that is, the poor. The afflicted in spirit, those who upon self-examination cry out that they are poor and afflicted—these alone boast of the glory, power, and riches of the Lord, not of their own resources, as Is. 9:3 says, that the ungodly do not rejoice in the Lord, but only the wretched and afflicted glory in Him. Therefore this text drives out all merits and every reliance on our righteousness. (Luther)

fresh. They will experience new things that bring them joy. (TLSB)

Holy One of Israel. Isaiah loves this term for God. Isaiah encountered this Holy One of Israel in the temple when the doorposts shook and the angels sang, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty” (6:3). It is a miracle of God’s power that sinful human hearts are turned from sin and rebellion against the Lord to faith, love, and joy in the Lord. This miracle occurs through the means of grace – the gospel. (PBC)

EPISTLE – Ephesians 5:22-33

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

5:21–6:9 In chs. 2–4 Paul showed the way God brought believing Jews and Gentiles together into a new relationship in Christ. In 4:1–6 he stressed the importance of unity. Now he shows how believers, filled with the Spirit, can live together in a practical way in various human relationships. This list of mutual responsibilities is similar to the pattern found in Col 3:18–4:1; 1Pe 2:13–3:12; cf. Ro 13:1–10.

5:21-33 St. Paul has been expounding the sanctified Christian life. He is now ready to apply these principles specifically to the relationships between spouses, between children and parents, and between slaves and masters. He puts all these under the umbrella of v 21. Our text focuses the divine spotlight on marriage and the blessed relationship that husbands and wives should and do have in Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

The apostle declares to the Ephesians in 2:14–16 that through the cross Christ has reconciled both circumcised and uncircumcised in his crucified body. In doing so, he has destroyed the enmity and the barrier between them in the sacrificial offering of his flesh. He admonishes them to live out this new unity in humility, meekness, patient endurance, and love. He summarizes his exhortation with three imperatives: to walk as wise, to understand the will of the Lord, and to be filled with the Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

With that backdrop, our passage gives specific instructions for a Christian marriage. They are not culturally based, but have their foundation in the relationship between Christ and his Church. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

After this description of a godly marriage, which begins a section on relationships in the home, the final exhortation of Paul's letter gives directives for putting on the full armor of God. The family needs the spiritual weapons and the power of God (6:10–18) to resist the attacks of the evil one directed at the most foundational of human relationships. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

5:22 – 6:9 Paul modifies a traditional “household-code.” For the Christian, the Gospel does not overturn the order of life, but gives it new meaning. Each relationship is reinterpreted “in the Lord.” Wives, children, and servants look on their husbands, parents, and masters as representatives of the Lord and submit to them. Husbands, parents, and masters likewise view the one entrusted to them as Christ viewed the Church: with self-sacrificing love. (TLSB)

From verses 22 to 6:9 we have what is known as *The Table of Duties*. The duty or obligation of wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves and masters, is spelled out. Look at Colossians 3:18-24 and 1 Peter 2:18-3:7. (Buls)

5:22 *Wives, submit.*† An aspect of the mutual submission taught in v. 21. To submit meant to yield one's own rights. It is a relationship that grows out of Christian faith and encourages mutual love. (CSB)

Submission is not mutual, but appropriate to each relationship. Within the marriage relationship, the wife “summits,” taking the place God has given her (1 Peter 3:1-6). (TLSB)

Papyrus 46 and Codex Vaticanus have no verb for this verse. Many manuscripts have “submit” in the third person plural. The Majority text has “submit” in second plural imperative. The first variant reading makes “husbands” third plural. The second makes it vocative case. All our versions, except JB, make it vocative case. “Your” clearly indicates that the husbands belong to them. (Buls)

Lenski: A special self-subjection is referred to, something entirely different from that mentioned in verse 21 . . . Galatians 3:28 lies on the plane of verse 21, not at all on that of verse 22. . . Paul is not subjecting all women to all men, but all wives to their own husbands. This is not a text on the inferiority of women to men; it is a text on the Christian marriage relation. (Buls)

This rule holds even if the wife is more intelligent and more gifted than her husband. See Genesis 3:16. (Buls)

To be obedient for the sake of good order.

In English it is hard to reflect the more neutral tone of the Greek verb we translate as “submit.” All of our English verbs tend to convey some negative connotations like “Me, Tarzan; you, Jane.” The root meaning of the Greek verbs means simply “to rank people or things in order under some specific pattern.” (To be obedient for the sake of good order.) It does not imply inferiority or lesser value, as our English verbs too easily suggest. To “be subordinate” might come closest to reflecting the Greek. (PBC)

Christ-like leadership leaves absolutely no room for a husband to be a dictator or tyrant. As he looks to Christ's example of headship over the Church, he will find no basis to be selfish or domineering. Nor will he be unconcerned about his wife's needs or unappreciative of what she brings to the marriage team.

All human comparisons limp, but a situation from the sports world can perhaps bring us a step closer to grasping the meaning of “submit.” Take the case of a pitcher and catcher on a baseball team. It’s a matter of assigned roles, a designated order of things. That’s the essence of team play. Consider some of the following concepts:

- Both are on the same team and have the same objective.
- Both want to make their contribution to winning the game.
- The catcher calls the pitch. The pitcher “submits” to that decision. That doesn’t mean he can’t ever “shake off” a pitch or that there might not be an occasional conference at the mound, but in general, the catcher calls the pitches.
- The catcher has to know the pitcher well and calls pitches according to the strength of the pitcher so the pitcher can succeed.
- The catcher is not better than pitcher – Pitcher is given the number 1 when it comes to scoring and nothing happens until he/she throws the ball.
- The catcher sacrifices his/her body and calls for a curve or knuckle ball if it means that that pitch will get the batter out.
- The catcher sacrifices his/her own needs by calling for something other than a fastball when a runner may be attempting to steal a base because anything less than a fastball will make it harder for the catcher to throw out the runner.
- The catcher often takes the blame for a stolen base even the pitcher may not have done his part to keep the runner close to the base.
- The catcher knows the batter and gives a target for optimum effect.
- The catcher directs where to throw the ball on a bunt situation because he/she has the best view of the whole field.
- The catcher needs to go out and encourage the pitcher when things are not going well.
- The pitcher needs to throw the pitch called for by the catcher or risk injury to the catcher.
- The pitcher position is the most glamorous and the catcher is not glamorous at all, but both are necessary for success. (tools of ignorance)

By nature all of us are inclined to inject our notions of equality and our ideas of “fairness” and conclude God is imposing an unfair arrangement on women. But Paul is not talking to natural man or unregenerate people here. He is confident that his readers are filled with the Spirit and are people who understand when he urges them to submit “out of reverence for Christ.” (PBC)

The original of this verse has no verb. The words translate, “Wives, to your own husbands as to the Lord.” The English translation takes its verb from v 21, where all believers are called to submit to one another. This connection strongly suggests that v 21 is specifically instructing both husbands and wives to submit to one another. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

The verb in v 21 is a participle and is parallel to four others in vv 19–20: speaking, singing, making music, and giving thanks. These are construed with the imperative “Be filled with the Spirit.” The logic is, then, “Be filled with the Spirit . . . submitting yourselves to one another out of reverence for Christ, wives to your husbands as to the Lord.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

As redeemed believers are filled with the Spirit through the hearing of the Gospel, they will be empowered and will demonstrate the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives by submitting to one another in reverence for Christ. Specifically, husbands and wives will submit to each other, but they will show their submission in different ways. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

The apostle begins with the submission of the wife. Clinton Arnold makes the following three points about *hupotassō*, the word translated “submit” in v 21:

1. The verb was commonly used for ordered relationships in a social structure.
2. It is to be distinguished from “obey” (*hupokouō*).
3. The middle voice suggests that Paul is appealing to the women to make a voluntary choice (Clinton E. Arnold, gen. ed., *Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 380). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

“Paul instructs the women to consider how they respond to the leadership that the risen Christ provides to the Church. The way they respond to Christ should then inform the way they respond to their husbands” (ibid). The wife willingly acknowledges the responsibility God has given her husband to lead and to nurture and care for her. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

as to the Lord. Does not put a woman’s husband in the place of the Lord, but shows rather that a woman ought to submit to her husband as an act of submission to the Lord. (CSB)

She is to view her husband as an image and representative of Christ. (TLSB)

Now comes the specific application to spouse relationships. Note the critical importance of studying the two prescribed sets of responsibilities for husbands and wives as one unit. Taken as a whole, the passage precludes both rabid feminism and male chauvinism. It may be helpful to note at the outset that the holy writer uses twice as many words to talk about the husband’s responsibilities as he does about the wife’s. Paul assigns to the husband a role that is harder and that involves far greater self-sacrifice! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Luther comments in his characteristically blunt manner: “A woman should either be subject to her husband or should not marry. If she does not want a master, then let her keep from taking a man; for this is the order God has ordained through his apostles and Scripture” (Ewald Plass, *What Luther Says* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1959] p. 906). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

5:23 *head of the wife*. Headship is not tyranny, but pictures one’s leader and source (1 Cor. 11:3-12). If we think of the husband as the head of a marriage and the wife as the heart of a marriage (Paul uses “body”), we see that one is not more important than the other – neither can survive alone. Paul demonstrates their vital yet distinct roles. (TLSB)

This verse gives the reason for verse 22. “Head” speaks of authority and direction. The relationship between husband and wife and Christ and the Church are not alike in all respects. Only Christ is the Savior of the body, that is, the Church. The husband is not the savior of the wife. But the similarity is applicable with reference to the idea of “head.” (Buls)

Lenski: Paul brings forward his great comparison which lifts Christian marriage to a plane so high that we are astounded. It is like the marriage of the Lamb, Revelation 19:7, his Bride the Church, the Lamb’s wife, Revelation 21:9; 22:17 . . . The married couple is a unity. It can have but one head . . . Two heads would produce a monstrosity. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: The fact that He is the Savior does not remove the obligation of the congregation to obey Him, and in accordance with this the wives are to be obedient to their husbands. . . Of course, it is self-evident that the lordship of the husband and the subjection of the wife are confined to the natural realm, to which married life belongs. Galatians 3:28. (Buls)

Kretzmann: In the case of Christ it is a matter both of superiority and of headship, for He is both God and the Savior of the body In the case of the husband not all points of comparison can be stressed. It may not be a question of superiority, but it is always very distinctly a question of headship. It is God's will that the husband be the head of the wife; the provision made at the time of creation is thus confirmed for the time of the New Testament. (Buls)

This attitude describes submission for the woman because “the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the Church, his body.” Some argue that “head” means “source” rather than “leader.” It cannot mean “source” in this context because Paul is speaking of “head” in relationship to “body.” The head is never the source of the body. Rather, the head gives direction to the body. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Head in Greek means “origin of.” What Paul is drawing on is the statement in Genesis 2 that woman was taken out of man. The sequence is God-man-woman. This in no way implies inferiority. It is a flow of oneness from God and is for our welfare in life. This is servility or male domination.

as Christ. The analogy between the relationship of Christ to the church and that of the husband to the wife is basic to the entire passage. (CSB)

The church’s submitting to Christ is not a demeaning thing but something that brings great blessing. Such is the case also in a marriage where the wife accepts the headship of her husband. (PBC)

Christ is described as the head over every authority in Col 2:10, and as the head of the church, his body, also in Eph 1:22; 4:15; Col 1:18. 1 Cor 11:3 describes God as the head of Christ, Christ as the head of the man, and man as the head of the woman. The Biblical metaphor of the head can be used as a clear and powerful sermon illustration: the head directs the body, having authority to lead and guide it, but also having the responsibility to care for the health, safety, and well-being of the whole body. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

his body. See 2:16; 4:4, 12, 16. (CSB)

Savior. Christ earned, so to speak, the right to his special relationship to the church. (CSB)

5:24 now – “Now” means that though the husband is not his wife's savior, nevertheless with regard to headship the two relationships are exactly alike. (Buls)

as the church submits to Christ – The Church’s primary relationship to Christ is defined not as Law (Obedience), but as Gospel (receiving). As the Church does not try to save herself, but graciously receives salvation from Christ, so the wife cherishes her husband’s self-sacrifice for her. Bed, the Venerable: “O truly blessed Mother Church! So illuminated by the honor of Divines condescension... Endeavour now beloved, each for yourselves, in each kind of honor, to obtain your own dignity – crowns, snow-white for chastity, or purple for passion (martyrdom)” (FSEP, p. 2). (TLSB)

Lenski: In all earthly matters the husband functions as the head. In this connection read Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:12; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1, which are to the same effect. (Buls)

To summarize: In all earthly matters in marriage Ephesians 5:24 pertains but in all spiritual matters Galatians 3:28 pertains. The husband and wife who clearly understand this distinction will have a blessed, happy relationship which ends only at death. (Buls)

To make the instruction complete, Paul repeats the comparison between the Church submitting to Christ and wives to their husbands and ends with the phrase “in everything.” In every area of the marriage, the wife is not to usurp the responsibility God has placed on the husband. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

The Life Application Bible (Tyndale, 1988, p. 1816) notes appropriately, “Although some people have distorted Paul’s teaching . . . by giving unlimited authority, to husbands, we cannot get around it—Paul told wives to submit to their husbands. The fact that a teaching is not popular is no reason to discard it . . . man is the spiritual head of the family and his wife goes along with his leadership. But real spiritual leadership is service. Just as Christ served the disciples, even to the point of washing their feet, so the husband is to serve his wife. A wise and Christ-honoring husband will not take advantage of his role, and a wise and Christ-honoring wife will not try to undermine her husband’s leadership. Either approach causes disunity and friction in marriage.” Note that the same verb used earlier for the wife submitting is used here of the church submitting to Christ. Note also the emphatic verse ending *en panti*, “in everything.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

in everything – pas – This word has the meaning that there is absolutely nothing that is excluded. (QV)

5:25-27 Husbands demonstrate mutual submission differently. Where the wives were directed with a participle, the Scriptures instruct husbands with an imperative. “Husbands, love your wives.” They are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church, even to the point of laying down their lives (v 25), and they are to love their wives as their own bodies, nurturing and caring for them just as Christ cares for the Church (v 28). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

The Word commands the husband to emulate Christ’s sacrificial love. Besides actually laying down his life, he is called to put the needs of his wife before his own, even putting her need for emotional connection with him before his desire for physical gratification. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

5:25 *Husbands*. Paul now shows that this is not a one-sided submission, but a reciprocal relationship. (CSB)

"Husbands" is unmistakably vocative case. The present imperfect calls for a constant action and attitude. (Buls)

love. Explained by what follows. (CSB)

In contrast to the culture of the time, the husband is told not to rule his wife but to love her (cf. 3:19). (TLSB)

Husbands, whose most natural sin is domineering, are admonished to love their wives and to do so in every way. For love that is active is what the apostle wishes to have understood, as the entire context and above all the reference to Christ’s conduct towards His Church indicate. (Stoeckhardt)

Note that the word for "love" is *agape*, not *fileo*. Ideally a husband should both love and like his wife. But, if need be, he can love her without liking her. And there will be such times. (Buls)

Lenski: The love now described is one that makes it a delight for the wife to subject herself to such a loving husband. . . No wife can cultivate the self-subjection intended by the Lord without this intelligent and purposeful love.(Buls)

The point is well taken. Christ's love for the Church causes the self-subjection of the Church to Christ. Likewise, the husband's love for his wife causes her to subject herself to him.(Buls)

Christ loved the church – Paul’s word to the husband is far longer than to the wife, for it is an opportunity to rejoice in the Gospel. Christ’s marriage to the Church is a major Gospel image in the NT (Mt. 9:15; 25:1-3; 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 21:9). If the husband’s love for his wife is Christ-like, he is willing to give up his very life for her (Gal. 2:20; 2 Tim. 2:14; 1 John 3:16). (TLSB)

"Just as" means "precisely as." A marvelous comparison. How did Christ love the Church? By giving Himself in her stead. (Buls)

By the way, this verse is not maintaining a limited atonement. The thought of the Church as Christ's Bride necessitates the language of this verse. (Buls)

gave himself up for her. Not only the expression of our Lord’s love, but also an example of how the husband ought to devote himself to his wife’s good. To give oneself up to death for the beloved is a more extreme expression of devotion than the wife is called on to make. (CSB)

There are two incredible examples of love in the passages below: The Exodus test is about Moses love for Israel even if they are being very trying at the time. The Romans verse has to do with Paul’s love for his fellow Jews.

Exodus 32:30-32: ³⁰ The next day Moses said to the people, “You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” ³¹ So Moses went back to the LORD and said, “Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. ³² But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.”

Romans 9:2-3 ² I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, ⁴ the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.

Once again, the apostle is talking about *agapē* love for husbands to give their wives, as Christ did and does for his redeemed. Note also the present tense of the verb, denoting continual, habitual action. Phillips paraphrases, “But, remember, this means that the husband must give his wife the same sort of love that Christ gave the church, when he sacrificed himself for her.” Luther, exhorting and encouraging the use of sermon illustrations, cites this verse (Plass, p. 1129). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

There is much to be learned from the relationship between Jesus and his Church. First he had an “agape” love which expects nothing in return for any favor shown. The word “gave” (hehowtoo) suggests that Jesus gave himself up to God’s will and emptied himself of all self-pride. In the same sense more is asked of the husband than of his wife.

5:26 *washing with water through the word.* † The Lord Jesus died not only to bring forgiveness, but also to effect a new life of holiness in the church, which is his “bride.” Paul is speaking of the sanctification of believers, begun in the sacrament of baptism and to be perfected on the last day (see Tit 3:5; 1Pe 3:21 and notes). A study of the concepts of washing, of water and of the word should include reference to Jn 3:5; Tit 3:5; 1Pe 3:21. (CSB)

Baptism, by which Christ sanctified (made holy) His bride, the Church (John 3:3-6; 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 Peter 3:21). “The Church... should be cleansed in order to be holy. He adds the outward marks, the Word and Sacraments” (Ap VII and VIII 7). Augustine: “When the Word is joined to the element or natural substance, it becomes a Sacrament” (SA III V 1). The “word” is Christ’s mandate, including the name of the Holy Trinity (Mt. 28:19). (TLSB)

In verses 26 and 27 we have three "so that" clauses. These two verses apply only to what Christ has done and is still doing for His Church. These verses show how deeply Christ has and still does love the Church. We have marvelous Gospel in the midst of the *Table of Duties*. (Buls)

"To make holy" means "to set aside for a specific purpose." Stoeckhardt and Kretzmann think that this refers to the sanctification of the Church. Lenski thinks it refers to the justification of the Church. Either is possible. The former think that the verse should read "after He cleansed her," but Lenski thinks it denotes simultaneous action "by cleansing, etc." (Buls)

Stoeckhardt and Kretzmann: The water of Baptism cleanses from the corruption of inherited sin, it has the power to regenerate, to renew heart and mind, the nature of man, see Romans 6:3; Colossians 2:12; Titus 3:5.(Buls)

Lenski: By means of the "justitia imputata" cleansing us from all sin and guilt in justification. (Buls)

In any case, we take this to mean a "water washing." In fact, it is a "water with Word washing." (Buls)

Smalcald Articles (Tappert 310.1): Baptism is nothing else than the Word of God in water, commanded by the institution of Christ; or as Paul says, 'the washing of water with the word' Ephesians 5:26; or, again, as Augustine puts it 'the Word is added to the element and it becomes a sacrament.' (Buls)

In v 26, Paul recounts the wonders of Christ’s love for the Church. Christ gave himself to sanctify us and to cleanse us. “Both take place in Baptism, the only bath of which we know in which water and the spoken Word are combined” (R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, and to the Philippians* [Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1946], 632). Christ is preparing the Church “in order that he might present to himself the Church in all its splendor” (“ἔνδοξος,” Johannes P. Louw, Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* [New York: United Bible Societies, 1988], 696). His Bride will be perfect “without spot or wrinkle or any such thing” and “holy and without blemish.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

The word translated “wrinkle” literally means “lines or creases in the skin” (“ῥυτίς,” *ibid*, 101). The Greek word for “without blemish” usually refers to believers as blameless or without fault, and twice refers to Christ, who offered himself to God unblemished (Heb 9:14) and as a lamb without blemish (1 Pet 1:19). “Christ’s bride will be extraordinarily beautiful, with no wrinkles of age or blemishes of any kind” (Arnold, 390). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

That comparison with the Church should cause every Christian husband to reflect. Neither the memories of faults experienced nor the effects of aging should diminish the husband's love for his wife. Never will he hold the past against her or compare her to others. He should always see her in Christ as the beautiful, pure bride he married. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

While many commentators fail to recognize the allusion to Holy Baptism in this verse, the reference is obvious. The text includes the word "water" to emphasize the point it is not just a figurative or symbolic washing, but a real, physical" washing *with water*." As in John 3:5, "water" comes before "the word" as if to prevent the reader from missing the allusion to Baptism. Unfortunately, the NIV translates *en rēmati* as if it is only a figurative washing "through the word," not through the water *with the Word*. A more accurate translation would be "the washing of water with the Word." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

The object of Christ was to clean her with water and Word as the purifying agents. The difference between selfish and unselfish love is seen here: a selfish lover cares for his wife in his own interest – like Samson, desires to have her simply because she pleases him, and in contrast thinks not of her good, but of his own enjoyment. The love of an unselfish lover has him seeking her good, to do nothing that will hurt her and damage her in any manner, but to do everything that believes will advance her well-being, especially in the highest sense. (PC)

5:27 *splendor...without or wrinkle* – Without stain from the outside or wrinkle developed on the inside. (PBC)

"The Church is His bride which He will present to Himself." (Buls)

He will present the Church to Himself glorious. The word is explained by the words which follow it. "Not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing" is figurative, explained by the words which follow. These following words "holy and blameless" are literal. Here look at Ephesians 1:4. When a bride presents herself to her husband she is to be immaculate, spotless, clean. And on the last day when the flesh of all Christians will forever have been put away, the Church as one person will be presented to Jesus as His bride. Look at 1 John 3:2. (Buls)

Kretzmann: The sanctification of this present time will reach its climax in the final glorification. (Buls)

holy and without blemish. The white robe of Baptism is pictured as a wedding gown. Notably, the Bridegroom Himself prepares the Bride (Ezk. 16:8-14; Rev. 21:2, 9-11). (TLSB)

Christ has chosen it from the beginning of the world, has bought it with His blood, has sanctified it with His Spirit. So He himself will then present the church, this His chosen and beloved, in all its beauty and splendor. He will set it at His side as His bride, in order then to bring it home to His heavenly habitation to give it the joys of His kingdom, to enter with it into the closest and most blessed communion. (Stoeckhardt)

This verse portrays the blessed results of Christ's selfless sacrifice of love, whose benefits are conveyed in Baptism. The implication is that when the husband (and wife) exercise their roles guided by Christ's love, the wife (and husband) will be preserved in this glorious and holy state. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Christ's love will compel him daily to strive for the ideal illustrated by our Savior's love for the church. (PBC)

In 2 Corinthians 5:14 the word "compel is described by Greek word "sunechao." This has the concept of compressing something and doing so by an irresistible outside force. (QV)

As Christ's love cleanses and perfects the church, so the love of a husband is busy enhancing, beautifying, and caring for his wife. (LL)

5:28-30 The apostle repeats the command and adds the imperative "ought." Husbands are morally obligated as redeemed sinners to love their wives. Christ's nurturing and care for the Church provides the example. One could misunderstand Paul to be saying that a husband should care for his wife just as he cares for his own physical needs. The point is rather that he and his wife are one body (v 31). Not to care for her would mean not caring for part of his body, and "no one ever hated his own flesh." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

The words behind "feed" and "care" contain rich metaphors. In the Septuagint, the word *ektrepō*, "feed," describes Joseph providing for his family in Egypt (Gen 45:7, 11) and God tending the vine that gave shade to Jonah (Jonah 4:10). The word *thalpō* originally meant to provide heat. It is used of a mother bird brooding over her nest in Deut 22:6 and of a nursing mother caring for her own children in 1 Thess 2:7. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

5:28-29 *as their own bodies ... loves himself*. The basis for such expressions and for the teaching of these verses is the quotation from Ge 2:24 in v. 31. If the husband and wife become "one flesh," then for the man to love his wife is to love one who has become part of himself. (CSB)

As Christians are one Body in Christ, so also husbands and wives are one flesh. (TLSB)

The wife is the husband's body. The husband's love for his wife is self-love. (Stoekhardt)

Christians are obligated to do God's will. Look at this same verb in Romans 13:8. We call it the *Table of Duties* not *Table of Privileges*. The relationship of a man to his wife is motivated by the renewed will, not mere feelings. He will love his wife whether he feels like it or not. It is his duty. First of all his great model is the love of Christ for the Church. Secondly, the rule is "as they love their own bodies." This implies that the body of the husband and that of the wife are really one. (Buls)

This is followed by a sentence in the singular number to individualize the idea. It is a startling sentence. A husband is not really taking good care of himself unless he is taking good care of his wife. A man who does not love his wife, who does not live for and sacrifice himself for his wife, is detrimental to himself. (Buls)

Only three verses, 22-24, are devoted to wives. But seven verses, 25-31, are devoted to husbands. Theirs is the greater burden. They must take the lead as Christ took the lead. (Buls)

Reinecker identifies *opheilousin* as to "owe someone a debt," or have a "moral obligation." The present tense denotes continuous action. Barnes (p. 111): "The doctrine here is, that a husband should have the same care for the comfort of his wife which he has for himself . . . as he protects his own body from cold and hunger, and, when sick and suffering, endeavors to restore it to health, so he should regard and treat

her . . . If a man wishes to promote his own happiness in the most effective way, he had better begin by showing kindness to his wife.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Lenski (p. 638): “Remember how the Jews regarded marriage—any husband could dismiss his wife for the most trivial cause or for no cause at all, and she had no recourse. The pagan world . . . was worse. The church was composed of converts from both. Paul knows what he is doing when he especially expounds the obligation of the husband, as he does here. God knows, his exposition is still needed.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

nourishes and cherishes – By Christ’s ministry (4:11-16) of Word (1 Tim. 4:6), and Supper (John 6:53-58). (TLSB)

Men constantly nourish and cherish their flesh, protecting it from hurt, seeking to heal it when hurt and generally to promote its welfare and comfort, so ought husbands to act towards their wives. (PC)

This is an explanation. It introduces an axiom. It is quite plain that Paul is comparing a man in his physical dealing with himself, and Christ Who deals with the Church in a spiritual way. The words stress the natural role, not the exception. The masochist would be an exception. There are people who enjoy harm to their own bodies. They are not natural. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: No normal person injures or gives pain to himself.(Buls)

A normal man takes good physical care of himself just as Christ takes care of the Church. It is implied that he should take just as good care of his wife. (Buls)

5:30 MEMBERS – TEV makes verses 29-30 parenthetical. No other English version does this. We, individually, are members of His body, the Church. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: We owe our spiritual life to Christ, that we have the spirit, mind and life of Christ. (Buls)

Bengel: The Church is propagated from Christ, as Eve was from Adam; and this propagation is the foundation of the spiritual marriage. (Buls)

Note that the words "of his flesh and of his bones," found in the Majority text, are not found in the Nestle Greek text. The following quotation from the *Formula of Concord (Tappert 607.78-79)* indicates that the Majority text was used at that time. (Buls)

Christ is present not only according to his deity, but also according to and with his assumed human nature, according to which he is our brother and we flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, Ephesians 5:30. To make certainty and assurance doubly sure on this point, he instituted his Holy Supper that he might be present with us, dwell in us, work and be mighty in us according to that nature, too, according to which he has flesh and blood. (Buls)

5:31-32 Paul now demonstrates that we are members of Christ’s Body by pointing back to the institution of marriage in creation. The mystery is not the one-flesh union of man and woman. Nor is the mystery an inscrutable thought. Rather, it was a mystery that has now been revealed in Christ. The mystery is that the union of a man and woman as one flesh in marriage actually reflects the relationship of Christ and the Church. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Genesis 2:24 describes the institution of marriage, which takes on added meaning when viewed in the light of Christ. This is the mystery, now revealed; from the beginning God designed marriage to be a Gospel picture of Christ and the Church. (TLSB)

5:31 *hold fast* - *proskollayo* – To glue or adhere in way that makes permanent. (QV)

There seems to be no connection between this verse and what precedes. The old *Concordia Bible with Notes* says: (Buls)

On account of the oneness which God has formed between a man and his wife, which represents the union between Christ and believers, and is somewhat like the union between the soul and body. (Buls)

Lenski: Paul does as Jesus did, Matthew 19:8;22:29, he goes back to the beginning, to Scriptures, to the institution of marriage itself.(Buls)

True. Married Christian couples should constantly remind themselves of the creation account. Husband and wife are one flesh. That is a mysterious statement. They are not one person. But they are a unit. They must treat each other as a unit. Units do not fight themselves.(Buls)

Cf. Gen 2:24; Matt 19:4–6. Reinecker says *proskollēthēsetai* means “to be glued to, to be joined to, hence here the complete separation of all former ties: a new relation.” *The Life Application Bible* notes, “The union of husband and wife merges two persons in such a way that little can affect one without affecting the other. Oneness in marriage does not mean losing your personality in the personality of the other. Instead it means caring for your spouse as you care for yourself, learning to anticipate the other person’s needs, helping the other person become all he or she can be.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

5:32 *mystery*. The profound truth of the union of Christ and his “bride,” the church, is beyond unaided human understanding. It is not that the relationship of husband and wife provides an illustration of the union of Christ and the church, but that the basic reality is the latter, with marriage a human echo of that relationship. (CSB)

According to the context this mystery can only refer to the marital relation. This lies exclusively in the sphere of creation and has nothing to do with the sphere of salvation, with the mysteries of the kingdom of God. But the apostle expressly adds that he say and mean this in reference to Christ and the Church. Marriage is a mystery of faith in as far as through it the relation of Christ to the Church and of the Church to Christ, therefore the great mystery about which he has dealt in his whole letter, 1:9ff; 3:4ff; 3:9ff., is typically sketched. (Stoeckhardt)

5:33 *However each one love ... respect*. A rephrasing and summary of the whole passage. (CSB)

That love is one that loses itself in another, that sacrifices itself. It is a love that is willing to die for another. (LL)

Though the Gospel purpose of marriage is primary, Paul does not neglect the admonition with which he began (vv. 21-22, 25). “Everyone should live chaste in thought, word, and deed in his condition – that is, especially in the estate of marriage. But also everyone should love and value the spouse God gave to him” (LC I 219). (TLSB)

Although that ideal is not fully attainable in our sinful world, it is a goal all married people should diligently strive for. (PBC)

In this summary statement, Paul switches from plural commands to singular, personal imperatives directed to each individual. He also changes the verb for the wife's responsibility from *hupotassō* to *phobeō*. This word is the cognate of the noun in v 21 translated "reverence." Here it means "to have a profound measure of respect for" ("φοβέω," Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000], 1061). This change gives further support to the idea that one should include v 21 with the text. Having a profound measure of respect further interprets what it means to submit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

These redeemed attitudes of Christian couples demonstrate the undoing of the fall through the Gospel. In Gen 3:16, God pronounced this judgment to Eve: "Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." The Hebrew of this verse is best understood as saying, "Your desire will be to rule over your husband, but you will find that he will rule over you." At the core of each sinner is the desire to rule. But in the Gospel, redeemed sinners are empowered to serve one another. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Paul expresses this service as a mutual submission shown by the woman respecting her husband's God-given responsibility to lead, even as she respects Christ and the husband obeying God's command to love his wife. Considering how unnatural and countercultural this behavior is, no wonder the participle in v 21 connects to the main verb in v 18, "Be filled with the Spirit." Only the power of the Gospel can enable such voluntary serving. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

5:22–33 If we say with Paul that the husband is the "head" in a marriage, then we may say the wife is the "heart." Is one more important? No, both heart and head are necessary for life. We are inclined today to view our marriages selfishly: what can I get out of it? Instead, we should consider what we can offer to our spouse and see behind each action a picture of the Gospel itself. • Father, may our marriages always be living pictures of Christ's love and forgiveness. Amen. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Mark 7:1-13

Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, 2 they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, 4 and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches. 5 And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” 6 And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, ““This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; 7 in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ 8 You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.” 9 And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! 10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ 11 But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban”’ (that is, given to God) — 12 then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, 13 thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

6:14-8:30 The new section introduced by Ch 6:14 and extending to Ch 8:30 focuses upon a period during which Jesus was frequently in retirement beyond the borders of Galilee. During the mission of the Twelve, Mark calls attention to the reaction of Herod Antipas, who has heard of the mighty works of Jesus. Herod’s suspicion that Jesus is John returned from the dead (Ch 6:14-16) introduces the parenthetical account of the imprisonment and execution of the Baptist (Ch 6:17-29). At the return of the Twelve Jesus withdraws to a solitary place, pursued by multitude. In compassion He provides bread in the wilderness, and five thousand are fed (Ch 6:35-44). A second feeding of four thousand is reported in the region of the Decapolis (Ch 8:1-10), and the striking recurrence of the word “bread” throughout this section provides the pervading motif (Chs. 6:52; 7:2, 28; 8:14 ff). The importance of the two feeding miracles is emphasized when the disciples’ own misunderstanding of Jesus are traced to their failure to understand the significance of the abundant provision of bread. While a single instance of the public teaching occurs in Ch 7:1-23, the accent falls on the instruction of the disciples, whose hardness of heart, unbelief and failure to understand is a prominent element in the record. A point of transition is provided by Ch 8:22-26 where the restoring of sight to a man who was blind signals the opening of the eyes of the disciples as well. A climax in Mark’s narrative is achieved in Ch 8:27-29 when Jesus and His company approach Caesarea Philippi where Jesus’ dignity as Messiah is acknowledged for the first time. (Lane)

7:1-13 Reading past Mk 7:13, we understand that the Pharisees were so concerned about ceremonial washings because they feared becoming spiritually and ceremonially “defiled,” assuming the things that defile a person are external. Jesus corrects this: “From within, out of the heart of man” (7:21) come the evils that defile. We find it much more convenient to blame external forces for sin than to confess our fault, our own fault, our own most grievous fault. What a contrast is then provided by the Syrophenician woman (7:24–30). She humbly confesses her defilement: “Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

7:1-8 Jesus’ point is that traditional rules added by the community are always outranked by divine statute. (For a treatment of ceremonial washing, see D. E. Nineham, *Saint Mark* [London: Penguin, 1963] 190–91). The rabbis seem to have required many ordinary people to follow divine statutes that originally were only applicable to the priests. It sounds similar to Jesus’ controversy with the leadership about healing on the Sabbath (2:23–3:6). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

Over centuries of time, the Jewish rabbis collected, codified, and passed down a host of various rules, all intended to “build a fence around the Torah,” i.e., to keep people from coming anywhere close to violating a biblical injunction. On subjects where Scripture was silent, they spoke loudly. The massive collection of these rules was known as the “oral Torah” because it was taught orally until it was finally written down in the period A.D. 200–600 in the Talmud. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

But Jesus says that human traditions, no matter how good their intended purposes, do not infallibly capture God’s intent. In fact, they may result in lip service that barely conceals hypocrisy within the heart. “Councils and popes have often erred,” Luther wrote.

7:1-5 The Pharisees and teachers of the law have come as a delegation from Jerusalem, most likely to keep close tabs on Jesus and perhaps to see if they can find some way to discredit him. They latch onto the fact that the disciples are eating their bread “with hands that were defiled” (*koinais*, v 2). They were defiled because they hadn’t been ceremonially washed prior to the meal, in keeping with the traditions of the elders (*tēn paradōsin tōn presbuterōn*, v 3). This lack of respect for the traditions of the elders was what concerned the delegation from Jerusalem. These traditions, which were often treated as if they were of equal authority with the law of God, were interpretations of that law that had developed over time among the Jews. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

If one punctuates according to the Nestle's Greek text, verse 1 is a complete sentence and verses 2-5 are the second sentence with the main verb in verse 5. In that case, "kai" means "then," when they had observed the disciples. If one punctuates according to Westcott/Hort Greek text he places a comma after verse 1 and a period after verse 2, linking the two participles in verses 1 and 2. In any case, verses 3-4 are parenthetical, introduced by explanatory "you see." (Buls)

7:1 *The Pharisees ... had come down from Jerusalem.* Another delegation of fact-finding religious leaders from Jerusalem (see 3:22) sent to investigate the Galilean activities of Jesus. . (CSB)

In contrast to the sincerity of the throngs in Gennesaret, Jesus’ adversaries renew hostilities. They were sticklers for the observance of detailed interpretations of the law. (TLSB)

The presence of Pharisees and scribes indicates that Jesus is in a Jewish area (they never appear in Gentile lands). The Jewish leaders are perhaps an investigation committee (cf. Acts 8:14–15). (CC)

The fact that they are not mentioned from verse 14 on, likely indicates that they found precisely what they wanted, a heretic. It was a bitter confrontation. (Buls)

By the way, Pharisees were a religious party, Scribes a religious profession. But they joined in attacking Jesus on this occasion. (Buls)

Ylvisaker: Matthew and Mark connect this account with the feeding of the 5,000. We must suppose, therefore, that the following rebuke was administered while Jesus sojourned in the land of Gennesaret, before He set out for the north and west. (Buls)

Jesus’ teaching differed fundamentally from that of the Pharisees on essential points of common piety. This has already been illustrated with respect to sharing table-fellowship with outcasts (2:15-17), fasting (2:18-22) and Sabbath observance (2:23-28), and is now exhibited in regard to ritual defilement. (Lane)

An instance of typical pharisaic pedantry, of deliberate, unwarranted faultfinding. Jesus had returned to Capernaum for a few days after the exciting and wearying experiences of a strenuous week. Here He

finds a company of His enemies assembled; the contrast between the Lord's popularity during the last few days and the hostility of the Jewish religious leaders is brought out very strongly. It may be that this delegation of Pharisees and scribes was the same one that was dogging Christ's footsteps since the casting out of devils, chapter 3, 22; or the authorities may have sent down even more learned and disputatious men than at first, as they were learning to respect the clear arguments and the sharp tongue of the Galilean Rabbi. The purpose of their coming was frankly not to hear the Word of Life, but to provoke disputes. (Kretzmann)

7:2 *unwashed* – This was not so much an issue of hygiene, but of ritual observance. (TLSB)

"Define" or "unclean" had a particular local usage in those days. "Some of His disciples," the Pharisees and Scribes cleverly and hypocritically attack Jesus through His disciples. (Buls)

Lenski: Mark explains "unclean" for his Gentile readers. (Buls)

Their opportunity came very soon. They saw some of Christ's disciples eat with common, with unwashed hands. This was their cue for an attack upon Jesus. Note: Not the question of sanitation caused them concern, but one which they considered affecting the standing of a believing Jew in the sight of God. (Kretzmann)

The eating of bread without proper concern for the removal of ritual defilement was merely the immediate occasion for this confrontation. Its ultimate occasion was Jesus' evident disregard for the whole structure of oral tradition which examined virtually every aspect of personal and corporate life and sought to regulate it in a manner consistent with the Law under conditions vastly different from those in which the Law was first handed down. In areas where the Law was silent the tradition was vocal, drawing conclusions felt to be implicit in the mandates of the written code. The result was a vast legal complex, oral in form but definite in formulation, which was entrusted to the scribes, the recognized interpreters of the Law, and regarded as binding upon all Israel. (Lane)

7:3-4 Cf. Ex. 30:17-21; Lev. 22:4-7 for laws intended for priests. This lengthy aside explains that the Pharisees required ritual washings, not only of those returning from the market, but also of different cooking utensils and even furniture. To "wash" in Greek is the word "baptize;" and is the same term used when referring to Christian Baptism. Though this verb may denote immersion, it also describes washings by pouring or sprinkling. Didache: "Baptize into the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, in living water. But if you have not living water, baptize into other water; and if you cannot in cold, in warm. But if you have not either, pour out water thrice upon the head into the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit" (ANF7:379). This shows the flexibility of earliest Christian practice as it adapted from the customs of Judaism. Archaeologists have discovered ritual washing pools or tanks (Hebrew *miqwa'oth*) that held c 60 gallons of water, which would have been running or "living" (cf. John 4:10-11; 7:37-38) according to rabbinic custom. ESV has "dining couches" which were cushions. (TLSB)

In verses 3 and 4 we have three difficulties in textual criticism: (Buls)

- AAT: "without washing their hands up to the wrist." NASB renders this same word with "carefully." KJV: "Often." RSV and NEB, according to some manuscripts, omit the word altogether.
- "Wash" from the Greek word "Baptize," or "apply water to." In KJV, NEB, AAT and NIV the word is translated "wash." RSV uses "purify."

- "And tables" is maintained by KJV. AAT translates "couches." The other translations omit the word. There is sufficient evidence here to prove that "baptize" need not mean "to immerse." Look at Luke 11:38.

7:3 *the tradition of the elders.* Considered to be binding (see v. 5 and note on Mt 15:2). (CSB)

7:4 *marketplace.* Where Jews would come into contact with Gentiles, or with Jews who did not observe the ceremonial law, and thus become ceremonially unclean. (CSB)

When coming back from market especially, where they might unknowingly have touched something unclean, the strict Jews were most inexorable and oppressive in their demands for cleanliness, a thorough washing of the hands and arms, if not of the whole body, being a prime requisite at that time. This care had become so excessive that it extended to the dishes and the furniture of the house as a matter of Levitical purification. They had received, and adhered most firmly to, the tradition regarding the washing of drinking-cups, of wooden and brazen vessels, and even of couches or sofas. The word used here for utensils of brass is really a Latin word, meaning a Roman measure equal to about 1 1/2 pints. Earthen vessels are not mentioned, since they had to be broken if defiled, Lev. 15, 12. Thus the whole life of the Jews, down to the most minute performances of every-day life, was governed by such laws and precepts. (Kretzmann)

7:5 The Pharisees and scribes expected the disciples and Jesus to follow their ritual practices, especially those involving washing. (TLSB)

The Greek word indicates a way of life. The way of life of the disciples did not follow the tradition of the elders. What a wonderful observation! (Buls)

Bengel: The Pharisees were always giving their whole zeal to mere questionings. (Buls)

Correct. They could never contribute anything positive. They were always asking defensive questions. (Buls)

Ylvisaker: The Talmud is a work in two parts, the Mishnah, containing the traditional legal enactments, and Gemara, with the corresponding interpretative annotations. It is these traditional regulations which are designated 'the tradition of the elders.' These were based on Deuteronomy 4:14 and 17:10. In the 'tradition of the elders' there was one to the effect that a person should not eat with unwashed hands, in accordance with Leviticus 15:11 . . . Rabbi Jones contended that it was just as sinful to eat with unwashed hands as to commit adultery. (Buls)

Lenski: They are convinced that Jesus cannot answer their question. . . . They are so steeped in their traditionalism and formalism that they are utterly blind to the true teaching of their own divine Torah. (Buls)

7:6-8 Jesus does not answer by becoming defensive about the practices of his disciples. Instead, Jesus responds by quoting Is 29:13 (from today's Old Testament Reading) and applying it to the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees. Their hypocrisy consists of the fact that while giving lip service to the authority of God's Word, they have in fact elevated "the tradition of the elders" (v 3) to a place equal to or even above the Scriptures. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

Jesus quotes is to rebuke the hypocrisy of His pharisaical accusers. This passage contrasts insincere lip service with heartfelt obedience. (TLSB)

7:6 *Isaiah ... prophesied*. Isaiah roundly denounced the religious leaders of his day (Isa 29:13), and Jesus uses a quotation from this prophet to describe the tradition of the elders as “rules taught by men” (v. 7). (CSB)

"Rightly did Isaiah prophesy" NASB. Thus the other versions, other than KJV. Isaiah spoke as God's inspired mouthpiece for his own time, for Jesus' time and our time. Jesus attacks the Pharisees with the Word of God, not on His own. (Buls)

The intended sense of the Massoretic text, the LXX, and Mark 7:6 are the same. (Buls)

"You, the hypocrites" applies this prophesy personally to Jesus' questioners. Of course Jesus does not mean that it is limited to them. The word "hypocrite" is found ten times in Matthew, three in Luke, but only here in Mark. Not elsewhere in the New Testament. (Buls)

Bengel: We may derive a definition of hypocrisy from this passage. (Buls)

Lenski: The hypocrite tries to appear before men, as marks of fully developed hypocrites are presented in Jehovah's characterization: honor that is mere pretense (with the lips, not with the heart); teachings that are likewise empty pretense (presenting as divine, when they are only put forward by men). The two always go together; for, the moment the heart keeps far from God it leaves also His Word. (Buls)

Hendriksen: The hypocrite is the man who hides or tries to hide his real intentions under a mask of simulated virtue. As the passage now under study presents it: he honors God with his lips but his heart is far from God . . . Their real intention was the destruction of the Very Son of God. (Buls)

Hypocrisy is so dangerous because it is always allied with work-righteousness. Compare the example of Peter in Galatians 2:13. Though Peter knew better, he played the hypocrite and drew Barnabas and the other Christians into hypocritical work-righteousness, by his actions denying that the righteousness of God in Christ is sufficient for the justification of man before God. (Buls)

The quotation from Isaiah 29:13 is from the Septuagint, which has added “They worship me in vain” to the Hebrew text (*Interpreter's Bible*, 7:749–50). Jesus uses strong prophetic language to judge the behavior of the Pharisees and scribes. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

7:7 "Worship" here denotes the entire religious worship of heart, mouth and deed. The nouns "teachings" and "commandments" are predicate to each other. Note that verb and participle are in the present tense, denoting a continuous and customary action. (Buls)

Jesus is not condemning human traditions and ceremonies per se. But when they displace God's Word and righteousness is attached to them, then hypocrisy results and the traditions become sin. Paul did not condemn circumcision. But when the Judaizers insisted on circumcision in addition to justification through faith, then it became wrong and led to hypocrisy. (Buls)

Ylvisaker: These Pharisees and scribes are dead, but their spiritual children have not departed with them. . . There are many who are strict in the matter of self-made commandments but who simultaneously evince an inconceivable moral laxity in matters pertaining to the definite and revealed will of God. (Buls)

7:8 *teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.* Jesus clearly contrasts the two. God’s commands are found in Scripture and are binding; the traditions of the elders (v. 3) are not Biblical and therefore not authoritative or binding. (CSB)

Jesus’ rebuke is aimed particularly at the Pharisees’ elevation of human tradition above divine commandment. (TLSB)

The rebuke of Jesus exactly strikes the sore spot: they put aside the command of God and cling to the tradition of men. (Kretzmann)

7:9-13 In these verses, Jesus gives a practical example of how the Pharisees and scribes have used the traditions in order to set aside the clear meaning of God’s Commandments in order to legitimize sinful behavior on their part. The key in these verses is the word *Corban*, which is a transliteration into Greek of the Hebrew word for offering. A *Corban*, in the sense that Jesus was using it here, was a religious vow. According to the text, a son who wanted to get out from under the financial burden of caring for his aging parents could dedicate his wealth to God. That act of dedication was called a *Corban*. The son could then claim that his wealth was already dedicated to God and couldn’t be used to care for his parents. Yet even though his wealth had been dedicated to God, the son was under no obligation to use it for the temple or synagogue or some other religious purpose. He was free to use it for his own wants and needs. The *Corban* was simply a way to use the “traditions” to excuse his failure to keep the Fourth Commandment to honor his mother and father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

Jesus gives a concrete example of the Pharisees’ hypocritical piety: He describes them as failing to obey the Fourth Commandment (“Honor your father and mother”) because they consider it more important to give special offerings to support elderly parents. Such piety is ultimately self-serving and a sham. Corbin was an offering above and beyond the tithes required by Mosaic Law. (TLSB)

7:9 Having defended Himself successfully and silenced His detractors, the Lord now assumes the offensive. He employs pointed sarcasm: It is a fine way in which you frustrate the commandment of God that your tradition may be upheld! (Kretzmann)

7:10† The fourth commandment is cited in both its positive and negative forms.

7:11 *Corban.* The transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning “offering.” By using this word in a religious vow an irresponsible Jewish son could formally dedicate to God (i.e., to the temple) his earnings that otherwise would have gone for the support of his parents. The money, however, did not necessarily have to go for religious purposes. The Corban formula was simply a means of circumventing the clear responsibility of children toward their parents as prescribed in the law. The teachers of the law held that the Corban oath was binding, even when uttered rashly. The practice was one of many traditions that adhered to the letter of the law while ignoring its spirit. (*that is, a gift devoted to God*). By explaining this Hebrew word, Mark reveals that he is addressing Gentile readers, probably Romans primarily. (CSB)

The Pharisees not only placed the precepts of tradition on the same level with those of God, but by their peculiar emphasis upon them actually set the latter aside. An example of this irreverent and blasphemous method: setting aside the Fourth Commandment for the sake of a probable sacrifice. God’s Law is clear on the relation of children to parents, Ex. 20, 12; Deut. 5, 16, also regarding the punishment of those that disregard the rights of the parents, Ex. 21, 17; Lev. 20, 9. He had placed the service to parents next to that of Himself. But the Pharisees took advantage of the fact that God had sanctioned free-will offerings or sacrifices. They taught: If a man says to his father or his mother, Corban, that is, a free-will gift, let that be what you would have from me for your benefit or help. (Kretzmann)

The strongest accusation in the section is omitted from the Gospel reading, but flavors the whole text. The Corban controversy brought divine law and human rule into direct conflict. The command to honor father and mother is a divine absolute. “Corban” was a religious vow stipulating that something could not be used for ordinary purposes. “If the son declared his property *qorban* to his parents, he neither promised it to the Temple nor prohibited its use to himself, but he legally excluded his parents from the right of benefit” (W. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974] 1251). Once made, the rabbis held that the vow could not be withdrawn. The plight of the parents and the divine command were not enough to get the scribes to set the human rule aside (IDNT 3:862–66). Rabbinic literature after Jesus’ time does in fact correct this practice, attesting to the validity of the charge Jesus made against his contemporaries. Jesus’ point: God’s Word outranks everything else (see also Nineham, pp. 195–96). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

7:12 The final understanding of the expression came to be: if a son or daughter took the money, the goods, the earnings, the means, with which he could and should assist his poor and needy parents, and dedicated it to God as a sacrifice or free-will offering for the Temple, he did well. The Pharisees held the mere making of such a vow, the mere use of the expression Corban, for a service done to God, which could very well take precedence of the service due to parents. In doing so, they set aside even the plain truth of the Old Testament, Prov. 28, 24. (Kretzmann)

7:13 *Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition.* The teachers of the law appealed to Nu 30:1–2 in support of the Corban vow, but Jesus categorically rejects the practice of using one Biblical teaching to nullify another. The scribal interpretation of Nu 30:1–2 satisfied the letter of the passage but missed the meaning of the law as a whole. God never intended obedience to one command to nullify another. (CSB)

A mere appearance of piety does not please God. He prefers that people simply obey His Commandments. (TLSB)

Jesus categorically rejects the practice of using one biblical commandment to negate another. In their concern for the fulfillment of the letter of Scripture they forgot that the Law was provided not for its own sake but to benefit men. It is an expression of God’s covenant faithfulness as well as of His righteousness and in no circumstance was obedience to one commandment intended to nullify another. The fault lay not in the commandments but in an interpretive tradition which failed to see Scripture in its wholeness. Jesus implicated the scribes who stood before Him in this indictment when He referred pointedly to “your tradition, which you have delivered.” They are not merely passive guardians of an inherited tradition but have had an active and responsible role in shaping and transmitting the oral law. The case of the corban vow, Jesus adds, is not an isolated example, but one of many which could be cited where the intention of Scripture had been obscured by the scribal tradition. (Lane)

7:1–13 Jesus criticizes the Pharisees for being overly concerned with man-made observances while failing to fulfill God’s Commandments. Such hypocrisy still abounds, as most people worry more about human opinions than what God thinks. Given our own failures in this regard, it is a good thing that the Lord not only commands in His Word, but also graciously forgives and promises goodness. • Lord, cleanse us each day from our sins. We thank You that Jesus was made a fragrant, sacrificial offering for us. Amen. (TLSB)