

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

OLD TESTAMENT – Jeremiah 23:1-6

“Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!” declares the LORD. 2 Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: “You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD. 3 Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. 4 I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the LORD. 5 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 6 In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’

23:1–8† A summary statement (probably dating to Zedekiah’s reign; see note on v. 6) that includes God’s intention to judge the wicked rulers and leaders of Judah (vv. 1–2), to ultimately bring his people back from exile (vv. 3–4, 7–8), and to raise up the Messianic Davidic King (vv. 5–6). (CSB)

23:1-6 The prophet Jeremiah lived at the end of the period of the monarchy, through the destruction of Jerusalem, and into the beginning of the exile. The failure of Judah’s kings and priests to be faithful to the teaching of God or to receive the message that God sent through Jeremiah and other prophets is a significant theme in the Book of Jeremiah and provides the background for our Old Testament Reading. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

The Text as Literature: The pericope consists of two oracles that together highlight the contrast between how things are in the world and how they will be in the messianic age. In the first of these oracles, vv 1–4, God condemns the failure of the present shepherds and promises to gather his scattered flock and replace the failed shepherds with shepherds who will care for his flock properly. The point of the oracle is highlighted by the contrast between the actions of the shepherds, who will “scatter” and “drive away” the flock, and God, who will “gather” and “bring back” the flock. The judgment of God is cast in terms of a pun using the Hebrew word *paqad*. The term is translated “attend to”

Just as God promised to replace failed shepherds with true shepherds in the first oracle, in the briefer second oracle, vv 5–6, God declares that he will replace the failed king with a proper descendant of David who will save God’s people and rule over them justly and righteously. The phrase “righteous Branch” (v 5) refers to a legitimate descendant and heir to the throne. In this case, the Hebrew term *tsadiq* does not have the moral overtones that modern readers normally associate with the term “righteous,” and instead means something more like “right” or “proper” or, in the context of discussing the heir to a dynastic throne, “legitimate.” As in the first oracle, the point is reinforced by means of a play on words or, in this case, a play on the names. The king of Judah at this time was named Zedekiah, a descendant of David who was placed on the throne by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar as a puppet after the Babylonians captured Jerusalem and took the former king (Jehoiachin) into exile around 597 BC. Zedekiah (also called Mattaniah) ruled for about eleven years, until the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of 587. The name Zedekiah means “Yahweh is my righteousness.” This is essentially the same meaning as the name that Jeremiah says will be given to the proper Davidic king to come, “Yahweh is our righteousness.” However, the elements of the name are reversed: zedeki–ya[weh] versus yahweh–zedeqenu. The reversal of the name captures the point of God’s message, that in the age to come the proper king of Israel will reverse the situation brought on by the failure of kings of the present. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

23:1–2 Arraignment of the wicked shepherds extends into the opening verses of ch 23. God will punish them as they deserve for neglect of their duties. (TLSB)

23:1 *woe* – hohee - Oh!!! Meant to get the reader’s/hearer’s attention. (QV)

shepherds - rawaw - A pastor or someone who cares for people or sheep. (QV)

The term “shepherd” is rich in biblical imagery. Being a shepherd was an independent, responsible, and dangerous job. It was also a descriptive word for kings, and the verb form is often translated “to rule.” The Lord Himself is a shepherd (Gen 48:15; 49:24; Ps 23:1; 80:1) and does the jobs of a shepherd: going before, guiding, leading, protecting, feeding, and carrying. Israel’s leaders are also called shepherds – but are condemned for their failure to take care of their charge. In this portion of Jeremiah and in 31:10 (also Is. 40:11; Eze 34) the Lord promises personally to gather His flock. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 4)

who destroy – awbad - To allow the sheep to wander away from safety so that they will perish. (QV)

scatter – oots - To break into many pieces and scatter to the four winds. They literally had driven them away from God which is not what a good shepherd does. Instead he goes ahead of them. (QV)

Israel and Judah, specifically the congregation of the Lord in the midst of the people, are called the flock of Jehovah's pasturage because He attends them with His particular care. All the more reason, therefore, to denounce the leaders who were so willfully forgetful of their duties. (Kretzmann)

John 10:2-5 “The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.”

sheep. The people of Judah (see v. 2). (CSB)

my pasture – meereeth - A place where the sheep could eat in peace and get the nourishment they needed. (QV)

Lord – Yehovaw - This is the personal and covenant name of God, emphasizing his role as Israel’s Redeemer and covenant Lord. (QV)

23:2 *you have scattered*. The same Hebrew root underlies both phrases. What Judah’s rulers had failed to do is summarized in Eze 34:4. (CSB)

The leaders of the Israelites, including the false prophets (23:9-40) and the unfaithful priests (23:11), are to blame for scattering of the flock instead of gathering them around God’s Word and sacrifices at the temple. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 4)

23:3 *remnant*. God will not let their wickedness frustrate His announced purpose to let Abraham’s descendants be instrumental in blessing “all the families of the earth.” To pursue His plan of salvation (Gn 17:19), He will first bring back a remnant from the Babylonian captivity. (TLSB)

I have driven. Although Judah’s sins and the sins of their leaders had caused them to be “driven ... away” (v. 2) into exile, the Lord himself ultimately carried out the results of his people’s repeated violations of their covenant commitments. (CSB)

Into exile. The shepherds and not God were responsible for this because of their ungodly leadership.

Although the people themselves had permitted themselves to be corrupted by their false leaders, yet the burden of the guilt lay on the rulers, this phase of the matter being emphasized in this instance. (Kretzmann)

be faithful and multiply. Man goes forth under this divine benediction—flourishing, filling the earth with his kind, and exercising dominion over the other earthly creatures (see v. 26; 2:15; Ps 8:6–8). Human culture, accordingly, is not anti-God (though fallen man often has turned his efforts into proud rebellion against God). As God’s representative in the creaturely realm, he is steward of God’s creatures. He is not to exploit, waste or despoil them, but to care for them and use them in the service of God and man. (CSB)

23:4 *will set shepherds* - Men like Ezra and Nehemiah.

Cf Ezk 34 for an expanded prophecy of the Good Shepherd; cf Jn 10:1–18 for its fulfillment. Cf Ps 80:1; 95:7. (TLSB)

fear...dismayed. The absence of a concerned shepherd invites attacks by wild animals (see Eze 34:8). (CSB)

Sheep that were left unattended were fair game for any wild animal or other predator. Being properly cared for would relieve that anxiety.

be missing. See Nu 31:49. The Hebrew root underlying this phrase is the same as that for “bestowed care” and “bestow punishment” in v. 2 (see note there). (CSB)

pawkad - To keep safe. To care for and be responsible for or there will be punishment at the time of accounting.

They will not be missed, that is, they would no more be lost from the flock, since the Lord's shepherds would take the best care of them. The Messianic import of this passage is unmistakable, but this factor is brought out even more strongly in the next paragraph. (Kretzmann)

23:5–6 One of the most important Messianic passages in Jeremiah, echoed in 33:15–16. (CSB)

23:5 *days are coming.* The language and concepts of the prophecy range back and forth between preliminary and final fulfillment, between shadow and the substance of what is to come (Col 2:17). (TLSB)

raise up. See 2Sa 7:12; see also 30:9; Eze 34:23–24; 37:24. The Hebrew for this phrase is translated “place” in v. 4. (CSB)

for David. The Messiah, unlike any previous descendant of David, would be the ideal King. He would sum up in himself all the finest qualities of the best rulers, and infinitely more. (CSB)

Branch. A Messianic title. The Targum (ancient Aramaic paraphrase) reads “Messiah” here. (CSB)

The Lord will shape history so that “the days are coming” when He will establish His messianic kingdom on earth. From the root of David’s lineage, He will let spring forth a branch, or descendant. Unlike Israel’s kings, He is righteous in His person (cf Zec 3:8; 6:12; Is 9:7). As indicated by His name, His subjects will also derive a unique benefit from His reign. For claiming His merits before the judgment seat of God, they, the unrighteous, will be declared righteous (Rm 3:21–26). (TLSB)

reign...wisely. This would be the ideal king who looks out for all the needs of each subject and keeps them safe from all harm.

Execute justice and righteousness. See 22:3, 15; said also of King David (see 2Sa 8:15). (CSB)

Hebrew *tsadaq*, “proved right” or “good order.” Used to describe a person in a right relationship with God trusting God’s promised salvation and living by the covenant promise. The Psalms describe how the wicked plot against the righteous, but the Lord watches over the righteous and delivers them. God is righteous because He faithfully and justly keeps His Word. (PBC)

23:6 *Judah ... and Israel.* † God’s reunited people will be restored, a pledge of the Messianic kingdom’s spiritual unity (see Eze 37:15–22). (CSB)

Israel and Judah, reunited to become one nation, are a pledge of the spiritual unity of the messianic kingdom. Saved from extinction in Babylon, the people of Israel foreshadow the perfect bliss awaiting the new Israel, the Church. The rule of good shepherds reaches its fullness when Jesus Christ will effect justice and righteousness (v 5). (TLSB)

After the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. (described in Jeremiah 39), Judah would never regain her political independence. Even after the return from exile, she would be dominated by other nations. Yet as T. Laetsch points out, the true Israel or “remnant” would enjoy the “spiritual peace and liberty flowing from the Righteous Branch. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 4)

A remnant of God’s people will be restored.

Ezekiel 37:15-22 “The word of the LORD came to me: Son of man, take a stick of wood and write on it, ‘Belonging to Judah and the Israelites associated with him.’ Then take another stick of wood, and write on it, ‘Ephraim’s stick, belonging to Joseph and all the house of Israel associated with him.’ Join them together into one stick so that they will become one in your hand. “When your countrymen ask you, ‘Won’t you tell us what you mean by this?’ say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am going to take the stick of Joseph—which is in Ephraim’s hand—and of the Israelite tribes associated with him, and join it to Judah’s stick, making them a single stick of wood, and they will become one in my hand.’ Hold before their eyes the sticks you have written on and say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms.”

The LORD Our Righteousness. † Although Zedekiah did not live up to the meaning of his name, “The LORD is my righteousness,” Jesus the Messiah would make it possible for his subjects to be accounted righteous in God’s sight and thus be saved and live in safety (see Eze 34:25–31). (CSB)

Through Him, we become righteous in God’s sight. “Christ alone is our Righteousness, who is true God and man, because in Him the divine and human natures are personally united with each other” (FC Ep III 1). (TLSB)

He is called them because he justifies us by his sinless life, death on the cross and resurrection from the dead.

This means “The Lord is my Righteousness.” If so, it shows how the Lord would work through the messianic King to bring the righteousness that both the unfaithful rulers and their subjects lacked. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 4)

Here the Messiah is spoken of by a name, in a figure, which is used also by Isaiah and Zechariah. To David, namely, as a descendant of Judah, as a member of his family, Jehovah will cause to arise a righteous Branch, a shoot characterized by, and distinguished for, righteousness. This Branch will at the same time be a King, who would have royal power and would make use of that power and authority in taking care of the affairs of His

kingdom in a prudent manner. The excellency of His rule would be brought out particularly by the fact that He would perform judgment and execute righteousness according to unquestioned standards, although unusual in the eyes of men. For He would show these traits in bringing salvation to Judah and in letting Israel dwell in safety, both expressions referring to the true spiritual Israel, the Church of Christ. No wonder, then, that His name would be called "Jehovah Our Righteousness," since, by virtue of His perfect atonement, all men may become partakers of the righteousness earned by Him for them (Kretzmann)

EPISTLE – Ephesians 2:11-22

11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

2:11–22 From the salvation of individuals, Paul moves to another aspect of salvation in which God reconciles Jews and Gentiles, previously hostile peoples, not only to himself but also to each other through Christ (vv. 11–16). Even more than that, God unites these now reconciled people in one body, a truth introduced in vv. 19–22 and explained in ch. 3. (CSB)

Directly addresses the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ. As in many early Christian churches, there must have been tension between the two groups at Ephesus. If salvation is by grace, there can be no such divisions. (TLSB)

2:11 *Therefore.* Refers to the state of those without Christ, described in vv. 1–10. (CSB)

you Gentiles. Most of the Ephesians (cf. 1:13, “And you also”). (CSB)

The flesh no longer defines Christians as it once did. (TLSB)

A great ethnic, moral, and religious barrier had divided Jew and Gentile for centuries. Jews hated Gentiles. The physical covenant of circumcision marked a Jew as other than a Gentile and Gentiles as other than a Jew. Jews spoke a daily prayer of thanks that they had not been create Gentiles. Intermarriage was forbidden, with funerals being held for Jew who did marry Gentiles. A Jew rubbing elbows with Gentiles in public was considered unclean. (LL)

“*uncircumcised*”... “*the circumcision.*” The rite of circumcision was applied to all Jewish male babies; so this physical act (“done in the body by the hands of men”) was a clear mark of distinction between Jew and Gentile, in which Jewish people naturally took pride. (CSB)

A term of derision for Gentiles, used by “the circumcision,” i.e., Jews. (TLSB)

in the flesh by hands – Circumcision as an external mark is now obsolete (Rm 2:28–29; Gal 6:15), in contrast to Baptism, which changes the heart. (TLSB)

2:12 *at that time*. Before salvation, in contrast to “But now” (v. 13). (CSB)

separate from Christ. All these expressions emphasize the distance of unbelieving Gentiles from Israel, as well as from Christ. (CSB)

Before Christ Gentiles had no promise of a Messiah, no legacy of prophets foretelling the Promised One. For Gentiles, schooled in Greek thought, history was a matter of cycles going nowhere. The Hebrew notion of a linear history with a plan and terminus was foreign to Greeks. For them history would cycle and recycle, destined to repetition and redundancy. (LL)

alienated from the commonwealth – Before Christ’s coming, God’s promises were located in His kingdom. (TLSB)

Recall that Jesus told the Samaritan woman, “Salvation is from the Jews (John 4:22). (PBC)

covenants. God had promised blessings to and through the Jewish people (see note on Ro 9:4). (CSB)

Israel received the promise of the coming Messiah. Through Christ, the Gentiles are now included (v 19; 3:6) (TLSB)

without God – It is not that they were atheists who denied the existence of a god. They had many gods, but they were false gods. They did not have the triune God, so they had no god at all to help them. (PBC)

Though they worshiped many gods, they did not worship the one true God (1Co 8:5–6). (TLSB)

2:13 *But now*. Not only contrasts with “at that time” (v. 12) but also introduces the contrast between “from Christ” (v. 12) and “in Christ” (here). (CSB)

have been brought near – The verb “brought” here is passive. The Gentiles did not do anything on their own to approach God. (PBC)

In the OT, Gentiles are “far off” (1 Kings 8:41; Is. 5:26), but Israel is near to God (Ps. 148:14). (TLSB)

blood of Christ. Expresses the violent death of Christ as he poured out his lifeblood as a sacrifice for us (cf. 1:7). (CSB)

Matthew 26:28 “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

Romans 5:9 “Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!”

Hebrews 9:14 “How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, ^b so that we may serve the living God!”

1 Peter 1:18-19 “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”

1 John 1:7 “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Revelation 7:14 “I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

2:14 *he himself is our peace* – Not just absence of war, but well-being, unity, and salvation. Christ makes peace and is also the place where it is found (v 15; Jn 14:27; 20:19). (TLSB)

Isaiah 53:5 “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”

Romans 5:1-2 “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”

Colossians 1:20 “and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

both. Believing Jews and believing Gentiles. (CSB)

Jews and Gentiles (v 16). Bern: “What place, then, in the kingdom of Christ and of God has he who is an enemy of charity, peace, and unity?” (SLSB, p 4). (TLSB)

dividing wall. Vivid description of the total religious isolation Jews and Gentiles experienced from each other. (CSB)

In Herod’s temple at Jerusalem, a wall separated the (inner) court of the Jews from the (outer) court of the Gentiles. Paul was arrested on the charge of violating this boundary (Ac 21:27–29). Here, it symbolizes the Law (Eph 2:15). In Christ, Jews and Gentiles are no longer divided in their worship of God or reception of His gifts (Jn 4:21–24). (TLSB)

hostility. Between Jews and Gentiles. (CSB)

Matthew 15:26-27 “He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs.” Yes, Lord,” she said, “but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”

Revelation 22:15 “Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.”

2:15 *abolishing ... the law.*† Since Mt 5:17 and Ro 3:31 teach that God’s moral standard expressed in the OT law is not changed by the coming of Christ, what is abolished here is the effect of the specific “commandments and regulations” in separating Jews from Gentiles, whose nonobservance of the Jewish law renders them ritually unclean. (CSB)

Although the Law itself is not abolished (Mt 5:17; Rm 3:31), the precepts that separated Jews from Gentiles are gone (Col 3:11). Christ also overcame the Law’s ability to condemn believers (Rm 7:4–6; 8:1–2). (TLSB)

The OT ceremonial law called for God’s people to remain separate from uncircumcised Gentiles in many aspects of life. By NT times Jews would not eat with Gentiles because that would mean ceremonial defilement. Gentiles were considered to be reprobate sinners, with whom a God-fearing Jew was not to associate on any

level. This practice caused a great deal of anger among the Gentiles. The moral law, too, by its very nature brought Gentiles (as well as disobedient Jews) under condemnation because of their lifestyles reflected their opposition to God. The OT civil law also reflected that God's people served a different king – the Lord himself. – and even though the political independence of God's people was gone by NT times, it still remained a fervent aspiration (Acts 1:6). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 3)

DOGS – The Jews utterly despised the Gentiles; they considered them dogs, vile, unclean (Mt. 15:27; Rev 22:15). One must know the status of dogs in the Orient. The Gentiles reciprocated in kind and hated the Jews because of their arrogance, their scornful separation, their peculiar religious laws and ways. (Lenski)

The term “dog” in the East was used for impure and profane persons. (Unger)

The purpose of these civil and ceremonial laws, unique to Israel, was to keep Israel a separate nation. The many carefully spelled out regulations were to hedge and protect Israel for heathen influence until the promised Messiah was born. (PBC)

Matthew 5:17, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

Romans 3:31, “Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.”

Revelation 22:15, “Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.”

God in one body. Probably refers to the death of Christ. (CSB)

Christ fused Jews and Gentiles together by abolishing the law and forming one new person in himself, granting all people peace with one another under his Lordship. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 3)

one new man. The united body of believers, the church. (CSB)

All of humanity is reunited in Christ, the Second Adam (Rm 5:12–21; 1Co 15:21–22). (TLSB)

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

Ephesians 4:24 “and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

making peace – If Christ has made peace, then those who are in him can have or make peace with one another (James 3:18). (TLSB)

2:16 in one body. While this could possibly mean the body of Christ offered on the cross (cf. “in his flesh,” v. 15), it probably refers to the “one new man” just mentioned, the body of believers. (CSB)

All humanity died with Christ on the cross (Rom. 7:4), exhausting God's wrath; the benefits are found in one Body, the Church. (TLSB)

This was the church, the new Israel of God (Gal 6:16). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 3)

TO RECONCILE – More important, Christ removed the hostility between all people and God (2Co 5:17–20). (TLSB)

2 Corinthians 5:18 “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”

Colossians 1:20 “and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

both to God – All humanity died with Christ on the cross (Rm 7:4), exhausting God’s wrath; the benefits are found in one Body, the Church. (TLSB)

killing the hostility – ἀποκτείνας τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν αὐτῷ—means: “by killing.” “Killing the hostility,” though accomplished through a literal death (of Christ), is another figure for rendering the Law incapable of arousing hostility. ἐν αὐτῷ could refer either to the cross (“by it”) or to Christ (“in him[self]”). Although the former is syntactically more likely, as “the cross” is the nearer antecedent, Paul’s consistent usage of ἐν αὐτῷ in Ephesians to mean “in him [Christ]” is persuasive, as is the parallelism in the two statements of purpose: (CC)

2:17 preached peace – As prophesied by Isaiah, the risen Messiah brought a message of peace that His death and resurrection achieved (cf Jn 20:19, 21). Through the apostles, Christ preached peace throughout the world (Eph 1:2; 3:1–9). (TLSB)

far off... near. Gentiles and Jews respectively. (CSB)

Paul uses a word for “reconcile” that is used of enemies making friends. We were God’s enemies. In Christ we have become God’s friends. The means of reconciliation is the cross. The hostility between Jew and Gentile disappear as both come under the influence of the immense sacrifice of Christ. (LL)

The Word that he has preached and himself preaches is gospel, glad tidings. The content of these tidings is peace, peace with God, the salvation which Christ has merited by his blood and cross. (Stoeckhardt)

2:18 both have access – Temple-like walls no longer bar access to the triune God (Mt 27:51; Heb 6:19). (TLSB)

Access (prosagoga) literally means “a coming near.” Access to the Father is only through Jesus Christ (John 14:6), and in, or under the influence of, the Holy Spirit. Access means that Jew and Gentile now may approach the heavenly Father with the confidence that he accepts all who are in Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 3)

John 14:6 “Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

2:19 so then. Paul indicates that the unity described in vv. 19–22 is based on what Christ did through his death, described in vv. 14–18. (CSB)

It is as if he were saying: Since you Ephesians have the same direct access to God as the covenant people always had, it follows that “you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household.” (PBC)

you. The Gentiles at Ephesus are particularly in mind here. (CSB)

citizens ... household. Familiar imagery. The household in ancient times was what we today might call an “extended family.” (CSB)

In Caesarea, where Paul was imprisoned, there was open hostility between Jews and Gentiles over the right of citizenship. Unlike other early Christian leaders, Paul strove to make the Gentile believers welcome in the largely Jewish churches of the first century. Paul points to their joint membership in the kingdom of heaven. Bede, the Venerable: “The gates of this city are opened to us by fortitude; and faith will afford us a broad entrance” (FSEP, p. 3). (TLSB)

Those who were once alien from the commonwealth of Israel and stranger to the covenant of promise are no longer strangers; nor are they foreigners without rights of citizenship, as were once those Gentiles who loved among the Jews, who indeed lived in the Holy Land but did not have equal rights. (Stoeckhardt)

They are not only citizens of the same kingdom, but they are even closer than that. They are members of the same family. God is, after all, their Father, and they have access to Him just as the Jewish believers do. (PBC)

When men are reconciled to God, they are reconciled to one another. Notice that Christ not only creates Christians, but immediately binds them into a new corporate personality – the Church.

You are not guest or occasional visitors, but permanent dwellers in the house and members of the family. (PC)

Galatians 4:5 “to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”

members of God’s household – The Christian Church appears not only as a commonwealth in which God is the Lord and King but also as the household of God, as a great, holy family whose Father is God, whose children are the saints or believers. They at all times have free access unto the Father. For them God’s paternal heart stands open. And the Gentile Christians are members of God’s family as are all saints. They have domestic, filial, hereditary rights in God’s house. (Stoeckhardt)

Romans 8:16 “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”

2:20 *foundation*. Further metaphorical language to convey the idea of a solid, integrated structure. (CSB)

As Christ’s work figuratively destroyed the old temple (John 2:19), He erected a new spiritual house of God, the Church (1 Peter 2:4-10), built on the preaching of the apostles and NT prophets (Rm. 15:20; 1 Cor.3:10). (TLSB)

The firm foundation of the Ephesians congregation, Paul states, is the doctrine Christ gave them through the OT prophets and NT apostles. Throughout the ages there has been only one plan of salvation. OT believers looked forward to the Messiah or Savior who was to come. NT believers look back to the Savior who has come. (PBC)

The apostles are not designated as those who have laid the foundation by their preaching, but they appear as the substructure, lower layer of stone in God’s house. They are the foundation of the whole structure, which grows continually until the end of days. (Stoeckhardt)

apostles and prophets. Probably refers to the founding work of the early Christian apostles and prophets as they preached and taught God’s word (cf. 1Co 3:10–11). (CSB)

cornerstone. Isa 28:16, which uses the same term in its pre-Christian Greek translation (the Septuagint), refers to a foundation with a “tested” stone at the corner. (CSB)

Establishes the direction of two walls and anchors them together (1 Peter 2:6-7). (TLSB)

The foundation and the corner-stone, however, do not in this spiritual building lie beside each other. Christ Jesus is the very Center of prophetic and apostolic Scriptures. Christ Jesus is to be found in, with and under His Word and only in the Word, nowhere else. He who has, grasps and holds the Word has, grasps and holds Christ. (Stoeckhardt)

Psalm 118:22 “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone;”

Matthew 7:24- “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

1 Peter 2:6 “For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

2:21 *whole structure* – The apostle does not speak of a complete edifice but of one in the process of construction, according to which “a; the building” is as much as what is built or what is being built. (Stoeckhardt)

joined together. Cf. 4:16 for the same word. Both passages speak of the close relationship between believers. (CSB)

The Greek verb for “joined together” occurs only here and in 4:16, where it describes how the members of a body are joined. It reinforces the “cornerstone” idea – that all the parts must be in harmony with Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 3)

grows. The description of a building under construction conveys the sense of the dynamic growth of the church. (CSB)

The Church as Christ’s body is a living temple (1 Peter 2:5). God gives growth (1 Cor. 2:19) as He adds new “stones” (people), but also as it matures by learning the truth, rejecting error, and loving one another. (TLSB)

The living stones, of which the structure of the Church is composed, are not the raw materials. Men, as they are by nature, without Christ, and do not get along well with one another; they live in dissension and hatred. Christians are sanctified through faith in Christ. They are saints. And so they have a new nature. They have the mind of Christ. They live not unto themselves but serve one another in love. Each is concerned about the other’s interests not about his own. (Stoeckhardt)

holy temple. Paul now uses the metaphor of a temple, thereby indicating the purpose (“to become”) for which God has established his church. (CSB)

Unredeemed man can build towers of Babel and skyscrapers, but only the Holy Spirit can build a Christian Church. (IB)

1 Peter 2:5, “you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

2:22 dwelling. The church is to be a people or community in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. (CSB)

God certainly dwells in individual believers (1 Cor. 6:19), but here Paul emphasizes the corporate nature of the Church, which together is God’s temple. (TLSB)

As carpenters and craftsmen add more and more component parts to a building as it proceeds toward completion, so too Christ is building his church – one believer at a time. Each believer is carefully fitted into his or her niche. All are known by name. All are important to the Builder. All fulfill a purpose. (PBC)

Kretzmann says: “This wonderful glory and dignity of the Church is at present still hidden from the eyes of men. But on the last day the Church will appear before the eyes of an astonished world as a temple of beauty and magnificence, and the splendor and glory of the Lord will shine forth from this singular structure. (Rev. 21:3.” (Buls)

1 Corinthians 3:16 “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?”

1 Corinthians 6:19 “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own”

1 Peter 2:5 “you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

GOD LIVES BY HIS SPIRIT – The three persons of the Godhead, the Lord, God, the Spirit, are mentioned side by side. The Christian Church is a temple, a habitation of the holy Trinity. The great, wonderful God, the Triune God, who sits in the high heaven, whom the very heavens are not able to contain, also has a place, a throne on earth, amid the sinful children of men, which is the Lord’s Church. (Stoeckhardt)

2:11–22 Notions of favoritism divided the earliest Christian churches and still affect our churches today. Paul urges all of us to remember who we were apart from Christ and to rejoice in what Christ has made us to be: His one Body. • Lord, forgive my prejudices and teach me to see Your Son in every Christian. Amen.

GOSPEL – Mark 6:30-44

30 The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. 31 And he said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. 32 And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. 33 Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34 When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. 35 And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. 36 Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” 37 But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii[f] worth of bread and give it to them to eat?” 38 And he said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they had found out, they

said, “Five, and two fish.” 39 Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. 41 And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. 42 And they all ate and were satisfied. 43 And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. 44 And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

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)

6:30-34 The disciples had just returned from a teaching mission (Mark 6:7–13, last Sunday’s Gospel). They preached for repentance, cast out evil spirits, healed the sick, and taught that the kingdom of God had come in the person of Jesus. As every pastor knows, ministry is strenuous work which requires periods of renewal, both physical and spiritual. The death of John the Baptizer immediately preceding our text (Mark 6:14–29) also impacted the disciples, and they needed comfort and instruction. In our text, Jesus seeks a secluded retreat with his disciples for renewal as well as instruction. Adapted from *The Concordia Pulpit* for 1979, pages 189–91. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

The feeding of the five thousand which follows our text is the only miracle of Jesus recorded in all four gospels (Matt 14:13–21; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:1–15). Exodus 16 tells of the feeding of Israel in the wilderness which manifested God’s grace. Elijah too was fed miraculously in the wilderness (1 Kings 19:4–8). Jesus’ contemporaries may have anticipated that the Christ, the fulfillment of the Old Testament hope, would do something similar but greater. Adapted from *The Concordia Pulpit* for 1979, pages 189–91. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

The events recorded in our text take place at the close of Christ’s Galilean ministry. It is Passover time, a year before Jesus’ crucifixion, death, and resurrection. In last Sunday’s Gospel (Mk 6:7–13) Jesus sent the Twelve to exorcise, heal, and preach throughout the villages of Galilee. Our assigned Gospel records the conclusion of that activity as the disciples return to Jesus to report “all they had done and taught” (see Mk 6:30). The second part of the text (vv 32–34) begins the account of the feeding of the five thousand (vv 32–44), which is narrated by all four evangelists and, interestingly, is the last event reported by all four until Christ’s final visit to Jerusalem. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

At this point in the Gospel accounts it is Passover time, a year before Jesus’ crucifixion and death. While the Apostles were on their missionary tour Jesus received news of the Baptist’s death. The Galilean ministry was coming to a close. He and His disciples had been working very hard. There was much excitement about Jesus. But much of it was just plain curiosity, not faith. (Buls)

Next week's Gospel is the feeding of the 5,000. Look at John 6:14-15. How did the people react to the miracle of the feeding? They wanted to make Him king. How did they treat Him on the day following that miracle? All but the Apostles left Him. (Buls)

Fahling: The quiet rest which Jesus had planned was spoiled. The sad feature of it was that it was not a Savior-seeking, but a miracle-seeking crowd. (Buls)

Kretzmann: Curiosity, for the most part; what an immense factor in the destiny of individuals and of nations! (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: Through the preaching of Christ and the preaching about Christ everywhere in the land many disciples were won. But the majority of the people had hardened themselves against the Word and Work of Christ. (Buls)

What is truly remarkable, in view of these facts, is the tender compassion of Jesus toward the masses. His heart went out to them. "They were as sheep which have no shepherd." Sheep are very dependent animals. They need constant guidance. If they do not receive guidance, they wander aimlessly. (Buls)

These masses of people were spiritually starved. Read Ezekiel 34:1-6 and John 10:7-15. The rabbis had not fed the people's souls. And, though these people would reject Jesus the next day, John 6, He compassionately taught them many things. (Buls)

Compare the parallel accounts in Matthew 14:13-14 and Luke 9:10-11. Much of the material in Mark 6:30-31 and 34 is peculiar to Mark. If Matthew or Luke "copied" or "redacted" Mark, why did they omit these materials? By the way, the parallel accounts in the Synoptics beautifully supplement each other. (Buls)

6:30 *apostles*. In Mark's Gospel the word occurs only here and in 3:14 (in some manuscripts). The apostles were Jesus' authorized agents or representatives (see note on Heb 3:1). In the NT the word is sometimes used quite generally (see Jn 13:16, where the Greek *apostolos* is translated "messenger"). In the technical sense it is used (1) of the Twelve, (3:14)—in which sense it is also applied to Paul (Rom 1:1)—and (2) of a larger group including Barnabas (Ac 14:14), James the Lord's brother (Gal 1:19), and possibly Andronicus and Junias (Ro 16:7). (CSB)

Only here in Mark are the twelve called Apostles. It is fitting for their first missionary tour. They freely and willingly tell Him everything. They must have worked very hard. They did and taught. (Buls)

Only Mark uses *apostoloi*, "apostles," for the disciples in this miracle account. It refers to those who had been sent out on the missionary tour and had returned to report "all they had done and taught." Pastors too are responsible to Christ for what they do and teach. They are called to teach and tell only of Christ, and one day will have to give an account of their ministry to him. Adapted from *The Concordia Pulpit* for 1979, pages 189–91. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume

The undershepherds return to Jesus to report the results of their mission. They had done what he said, and the results were as he promised. Their faithfulness stands in stark contrast to the dereliction of the evil shepherds in the OT Reading. All undershepherds will be held accountable to the Good Shepherd, who sent them forth in his name and authority. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

Only here in Mark's gospel (and in some manuscripts at Mk 3:14) do we find the term *apostolos* "apostle"—a fitting title on the occasion of the first missionary journey of the Twelve. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)
1, Part 3)

The day begins with the news of the death of John the Baptist. It continues with the return of the disciples from a short-term missionary journey. Following the disciples are five thousand men and their families. Jesus tried to get away from the crowd by crossing the sea, only to find the crowd waiting for him on the other side. He wanted to mourn in solitude, but instead he was surrounded by people. He wanted to spend time with just the disciples, but instead he got a crowd. He wanted time to think, but instead he had people to face. (A Gentle Thunder – Hearing God Through the Storm – Max Lucado p. 90)

told him all they had done and taught. Because he had commissioned them as his representatives. They were returning from a third preaching tour in Galilee. (CSB)

Story begun in vv. 7-13 resumes. Intervening account of John's death (vv. 14-29) is a somber reminder that Jesus and His disciples will face the wrath of rulers like Herod. (TLSB)

6:31-32 The news of John the Baptist's death (reported in Mt 14:1–13; Mk 6:14–29) and the demanding work of the apostles' "vicarage" lead to these comforting words of Christ. This is one of several occasions in Scripture where Jesus speaks of *physical* rest from labor as well as spiritual rejuvenation. (Cf. also Mt 11:28. In Rev 6:11; 14:13, Jesus speaks of the physical and spiritual rest of the saints in heaven.) His words here reveal a concern for the disciples' complete well-being. The invitation to "rest" provides a vivid picture of the Sabbath day and the Divine Service as a foretaste of eternal rest for believers. The liturgy of Word and Sacrament is the means by which Christ draws near, invites the baptized to withdraw from the world's pressures, feeds them, and grants them refreshing rest. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

Despite an unending list of ministry tasks to get done, Jesus made time for Himself and His disciples to rest and recover. Presumably, this time of rest included instruction and prayer (cf. 1:35; 7:17). (TLSB)

6:31 NOT HAVE CHANCE TO EAT – οὐδὲ φαγεῖν εὐκαίρουν, "they habitually did not have opportunity even to eat" (6:31): The contrast in terms of "opportunity-ness" (external entailment!) between this verse and "a propitious day" for "a dinner" in 6:21 is striking. There the opportunity was for self-indulgence and death. Here it is for service and restoration and life. Note that Jesus' popularity is still strong and growing. The situation confirms his need for a boat (see 3:9)! (CC)

You yourselves. ὑμεῖς αὐτοί, "you yourselves": This phraseology indicates the importance of the Twelve. (CC)

The death of John the Baptist and the strenuous work of the Apostles caused Jesus to say what He did here. Jesus' command reads literally: "Come you yourselves privately to an uninhabited place and rest a while." This plainly indicates that they had been working hard and also the true humanity of Jesus. Though Jesus tells them to rest, it is of short duration. Whether the rest was limited to the voyage or shortly thereafter, it was not long. (Buls)

This is the sole place in the Gospels where this idea occurs. And the only other place where "rest from labors" is mentioned is Revelation 14:13, in heaven. Christians get little rest in this life. Many people in our culture are preoccupied with leisure and it often leads to a lot of unhappiness. (Buls)

Deserted place. Jesus called the disciples apart to "rest" for a time to restore their strength and vision. It was to be a time for spiritual renewal. Adapted from *The Concordia Pulpit* for 1979, pages 189–91. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Even before Jesus extends his compassion to the crowd, he invites his disciples to retreat to a private place for renewal. This renewal included physical rest as well as undisturbed consultation with their master. Jesus has a gracious habit of showing genuine compassion for those in need and for all levels of need. Preceding the raising

of the widow's son, Luke records, "When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her" (7:13). Out of compassion flow acts of mercy and kindness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

What is in view is the concept of rest within the wilderness. Mark indicates this by repeating the expressions "a wilderness-place apart" in verses 31 and 32. The site toward which the disciples set sail cannot be identified with any degree of certainty; but this was not important to the evangelist. What was significant was the character of the place to which Jesus and His disciples withdrew, and this is sufficiently indicated by the descriptive phrase "wilderness place." That God provides rest for His people within the wilderness is a recurring theme in the Scripture. It was the literal rest of the wilderness generation led by Moses and Joshua which became the type of the final rest promised to the people of God in the second exodus in the preaching of Isaiah and Jeremiah. The ancient hope of rest within the wilderness is to be fulfilled as Jesus gathers His disciples to a wilderness-place that they may be by themselves. The disciples and the multitudes who pursue them prove to be people of the new exodus. The presence of Jesus and the provision of God will give to this time of withdrawal the character of rest within the wilderness. (Lane)

6:32 *they went away in a boat to a desolate.* John reports that they went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (Jn 6:1). Luke, more specifically, says they went to Bethsaida (Lk 9:10), which locates the feeding of the 5,000 on the northeast shore (see note on 7:24). (CSB)

desolate place – Not a desert, since there was green grass there. The TLSB note on Luke 9:10 says, "Jesus brings the Twelve to an isolated place, away from the crowds. He probably did this in order to provide a time of rest for the apostles and debrief them after their just-completed mission. (TLSB)

Despite an unending list of ministry tasks to get done, Jesus made time for Himself and His disciples to rest and recover. Presumably, this time of rest included instruction and prayer (cf. 1:35; 7:17). (TLSB)

Jesus took his disciples "to a solitary place." However, the people were so eager to see Jesus and receive his help that they traveled by foot and got there ahead of him. Adapted from *The Concordia Pulpit* for 1979, pages 189–91. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

The actions in this verse weld the Twelve ever closer to Jesus and to his preaching/ministry. Now, as they go to a deserted place, they replicate Jesus' own activity in 1:35, namely, retreating "to a deserted/desert place" (the identical wording, εἰς ἔρημον τόπον, is in 1:35; cf. also ἔρημος, "deserted/desert," in 1:12–13, 45), which means that their entire lives are coming to be conformed to his. Jesus seems to focus ever more intently on the Twelve as his own mission plays itself out. This will be become even more apparent from 8:27 onward. (CC)

6:33 *ran there on foot ... and got there ahead of them.* Perhaps a strong headwind slowed down the boat so that the people had time to go on foot around the lake and arrive before the boat. (CSB)

From the parallel at Luke 9:10 we learn that Jesus and His disciples were headed for Bethsaida which was evidently on the eastern shore of the lake. (Buls)

Underlying verses 31 and 33 is the great hunger of these people, spiritual hunger. It is true that they are curious. but if their spiritual needs would be satisfied they would no longer run around as sheep without a shepherd. (Buls)

Note that Jesus does not become impatient or disgusted with them.

The expression "from all the towns" is quite strong. It likely means that they came in large numbers as we shall see in next Sunday's text. (Buls)

KJV and NKJV read: "They arrived before them and came together to Him." All of the versions say the subject is the people who got there ahead of Jesus and the Apostles. (Buls)

Lenski and Hendriksen disagree. They say that Jesus and the Apostles got there before the people. Our translations, in verse 34, say Jesus "landed," getting out of the boat. But Lenski and Hendriksen insist that the Greek word means that Jesus and the Apostles were coming down from the hill after a brief rest, having arrived there before the crowds. They do this to avoid a contradiction with Matthew 14:13-14; Luke 9:11 and John 6:3. (Buls)

The distance around the northern part of the lake was about ten miles. The distance by boat, straight across, was about four miles. The comparative distance adds fuel to Lenski and Hendriksen's argument. But if there was little wind for the boat and in view of the intense desire of the people to see Jesus, perhaps it is not too unthinkable for the people to cover ten miles while the boat covered only four. Furthermore, this indicates that the Apostles did get the rest which Jesus desired for them. Perhaps Jesus made sure that the boat proceeded slowly so that there would be time for rest. And yet, the "uninhabited place" might well have been the middle of the lake. (Buls)

From Lk 9:10 we learn that they sailed to the vicinity of Bethsaida on the northeast shore of the lake. The crowds who had been with Jesus saw him leave with his disciples by boat and noted his direction. Excited and curious by what they had already heard and seen of Jesus, they pursued him on land. As they went through neighboring villages along the coastal route, additional people from the towns may have joined the pursuit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

There is some textual uncertainty on who arrived at the destination first—the people or Jesus and his disciples. Many translators and commentators follow the reading *proēlthon autous*, "They [the crowds] went ahead of them [Jesus and his disciples]" since it has the better manuscript authority (a and B). Others, notably Lenski and Hendrickson, prefer the reading *prosēlthon autois* "They [the crowds] approached them [Jesus and his disciples]" on the basis of the parallel account in Jn 6:3 5, which has Jesus and his disciples going up to a mountainside before the people reached them. In that case *exelthōn* in v 34 would mean "coming off/down" the mountain instead of "coming out" of the boat. This unresolved textual variance does not compromise the point of the account. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

Jesus actually managed to get away in a boat alone with His disciples; but His embarking was nevertheless witnessed by some people, and His identity was too well known in the district, probably the neighborhood of Bethsaida. Besides, they noted and drew correct conclusions as to the course which they were taking in their boat, and the part of the country toward which they were heading. And the news was rapidly passed along the line. While Jesus, therefore, was slowly sailing across the sea, the multitude, swelled by additional inquisitive people from the cities on the northwest shore, made the trip around the north side of the lake afoot, a distance of some ten miles. They walked very rapidly; they ran together, and came ahead of them; they beat them to their destination. Curiosity, for the most part; what an immense factor in the destiny of individuals and of nations! (Kretzmann)

6:34 Those who see the people arriving first, see Jesus getting out of the boat to greet them. Those who see Jesus and the Apostles arriving first, going up the hill, resting, then see Jesus and the Apostles coming down to greet the people. (Buls)

compassion – It is an aorist passive meaning to “to have pity, to feel sympathy, to show mercy, to be moved with compassion.” This verb occurs 12 times in the NT, all in the synoptic gospels, and all either describing Christ Himself or describing Christ-like compassion shown by someone in one of Jesus’ parables. The result of Christ’s compassion can be either an action, as when He heals (Mt. 14:14; 20:34; Mk 1:41), or miraculously feeds (Mt. 15:32; Mk. 8:2), exorcises (Mk. 9:22), or raises the dead (Lk. 7:13); or speech, as when Jesus teaches the crowds in our text. Christ has compassion on the crowds (Mt. 9:26; 14:14; 15:32); Mk. 6:34; 8:2), on a leper crying out to Him (Mt. 20:34), on a father and his demon-possessed son (Mk. 9:22), and on the widow of Nain whose son has died (Lk 7:13). The word is used in three parables describing the father of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:20), the king with the unforgiving servant (Mt. 18:27), and the good Samaritan (Lk. 10:33). All the passages where this verb is used point not merely to an inner feeling, but to an emotion that bears fruit in outward action of providing assistance, which can be either physical aid or the verbal provision of God’s Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 3)

When Jesus saw the great crowd, he had compassion—he felt deep emotional concern for the people and their needs. They needed a shepherd to feed and lead them, to rescue them from danger and death, to guide them to life with God. The image of the Savior as a shepherd occurs frequently throughout the Old Testament, with Ps 23 and Ezekiel 34 (especially vv 23–24) perhaps the best-known passages. Jesus often appropriated this image for himself (particularly in John 10), and those who bear the Latin word for shepherd, *pastor*, serve as Christ’s undershepherds. Adapted from *The Concordia Pulpit* for 1979, pages 189–91. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Began to teach them. καὶ ἤρξατο διδάσκειν αὐτοὺς πολλὰ, “and he began to teach them a lot” (6:34): Here Jesus is represented as a Moses figure who teaches his people in the desert (6:35), even as did that great prophet (see Exodus 20–40; Leviticus; Numbers; Deuteronomy). Again, another OT vision for the future comes to fruition, namely, that of Deut 18:15, where Moses says that the Lord God will raise up “a prophet” (עֵזְרָא; LXX: προφήτης) like him from among the people: “him you shall hear” (LXX: αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε). (See also Mk 9:7 and the voice on the mount of transfiguration: ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ, “hear him!”) As is appropriate in the Marcan verses that follow (6:35–44), features of Moses’ ministry to God’s people in the desert are also present in the feeding of the five thousand men. It must not be forgotten, however, that Jesus’ teaching continues a key theme in Mark’s Gospel, namely, that the spreading of the Word by proclamation (1:14–15) and especially by teaching (1:21, 27) is central to the implementation of the eschatological reign and rule of God. (CC)

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, fulfills the needs of His flock. Here, He provides instruction as well as an unforgettable meal. Christian worship services today typically have Jesus’ teaching and a miraculous meal as their most important elements. (TLSB)

Esplagchnisthē (v 34) is the aorist passive of *splagchnizomai*, “to have pity, to feel sympathy, to show mercy, to be moved with compassion.” This verb occurs 12 times in the NT, all in the synoptic gospels, and all either describing Christ himself or describing Christ-like compassion shown by someone in one of Jesus’ parables. The result of Christ’s compassion can be either an action, as when he heals (Mt 14:14; 20:34; Mk 1:41), miraculously feeds (Mt 15:32; Mk 8:2), exorcises (Mk 9:22), or raises the dead (Lk 7:13); or speech, as when Jesus teaches the crowds in our text. Christ has compassion on the crowds (Mt 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; Mk 6:34; 8:2), on a leper crying out for help (Mk 1:41), on two blind men who call out to him (Mt 20:34), on a father and his demon-possessed son (Mk 9:22), and on the widow of Nain whose son has died (Lk 7:13). The word is used in three parables describing the father of the prodigal son (Lk 15:20), the king with the unforgiving servant (Mt 18:27), and the good Samaritan (Lk 10:33). The compassion of the father and the king results in an act of forgiveness toward a sinner and a debtor, respectively, while the Samaritan’s compassion leads him to assist a victim. Therefore in all the passages where this verb is used, it points not merely to an inner feeling, but to an emotion that bears fruit in outward action of providing assistance, which can be either physical aid or the verbal provision of God’s Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

esplagchnisthē . . . probata mē echonta poimena, “compassion . . . sheep without a shepherd.” The theme of compassion and the metaphor of sheep and a shepherd are naturally connected. This produces a clear opportunity

for Law (sheep without a shepherd) and Gospel (he had compassion on them). Sheep without a shepherd wander and perish. This is the fate of all who walk apart from Christ and his life-giving and life-sustaining Gospel. The Greek for “compassion” indicates that deep, in-the-gut ache for those in need. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

The word used for "compassion" is always used of God and his great compassion for sinner. (Buls)

Without a shepherd sheep are lost and are vulnerable. The lives of these people were aimless and exposed to paganism and false teaching. (Buls)

Bengel: He began afresh, as if He had not taught them previously. There is need of real compassion to enable one to teach; and compassion is the virtue of a good teacher. (Buls)

Jesus gave them thorough instruction. We learn from the next pericope what Jesus taught them. (Buls)

Fahling: The sad feature of it was that it was not a Savior-seeking, but a miracle-seeking crowd. (This is brought out in the Johannine account.) (Buls)

Stoekhardt: Through the preaching of Christ and the preaching about Christ everywhere in the land many disciples were won. But the majority of the people hardened themselves against the Word and Work of Christ. (Buls)

Ylvisaker: The Synoptists call attention to the fact that Jesus first provides for their spiritual needs. (Buls)

Fahling: When Jesus came out and saw so many people, the vision of Ezekiel flashed into his mind, Ezekiel 34:1-15; Numbers 27:17. (Buls)

Kretzmann: In all the synagogues of Galilee there were rabbis and scribes, but the food which they supplied to their congregations was a diluted pap and treacle of matter which the Jerusalem schools were teaching the young theologians. The people were in a state of greatest spiritual neglect. And so the great friend of sinners forgot His own weariness, His urgent need of rest, and He began a long sermon to them, He taught them many things, things that pertained to their salvation. (Buls)

Lenski: Mark notes the main part of this shepherding 'he began to teach them many things.' Luke is more specific 'he spoke unto them of the kingdom of God.' Matthew and Luke add that he healed the sick 'the strengthless one' (Matthew), 'them that had need of healing' (Luke) . . . Jesus had a few hours to himself before He was compelled to meet the crowd. (Buls)

6:35-36 Because it was likely late afternoon, the people would have time to buy food at the market. (TLSB)

6:35 ἔρημος, “deserted”: The deserted area/desert as the scene of the feeding is critical to the theological significance of many features of this pericope, not the least of which is the connection to the figure of Moses. (CC)

6:36 He should dismiss them; they could go to the farmhouses and the little villages situated within a radius of a few miles and buy themselves something to eat. (Kretzmann)

6:37 *you give them* - When Jesus somewhat bluntly suggests that the disciples give the crowd something to eat (*dote*, imperative), he introduces the impossible solution to the people’s needs. No one can satisfy God’s people but Christ himself. Our Lord’s statement redirects both the disciples’ and the readers’ attention from their own (and our own) insufficiency to his own singular sufficiency. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

eight months of a man's wages. See NIV text note. The usual pay for a day's work was one denarius (see Mt 20:2), meaning that about 200 denarii would be earned in eight months. – Note from John 6:5 *Philip*. Since he came from nearby Bethsaida (1:44), it was appropriate to ask him. (CSB)

Keep in mind that Philip has been forcing out demons and healing the sick (Mark 6:13). We'd expect him to be optimistic. A bit of faith would be appropriate. After all, he had just spend several weeks seeing the impossible happen. He can recite the stats, but can't see how to help. He can crunch the numbers, but he can't construct the answer. (manager vs. leader) And though the answer to prayer is standing next to him, he doesn't even pray. Equally disturbing is the silence of the other disciples. It never occurred to the disciples to turn the problem over to Jesus. God's faithfulness has never depended on the faithfulness of his children. He is faithful even when we aren't. No, we don't give up. We look up. We trust. We believe. We remember of baptism. And our optimism is not hollow. Christ has proven worthy. (A Gentle Thunder – Hearing God Through the Storm – Max Lucado pp. 90-93)

6:38 God's affinity for the finite is evident with the fish and the bread. Sacramental theology rests upon the communication of spiritual gifts through physical means. Whereas this is not a sacramental situation, it can point to the consistent pattern of anti-Gnostic tendencies of our Lord. Even more anti-Gnostic than the use of bread and fish is the physical presence of God in the flesh—Jesus Christ. We also see here our Lord's answer to his own prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

Obviously, this amount of food was insufficient for Jesus and the Twelve, let alone the multitude. (TLSB)

πέντε, καὶ δύο ἰχθύας, "five, and two fish" (6:38): Why these numbers? Perhaps because five plus two equals seven, which is a number of divine completeness (cf. Gen 2:1–3), or perhaps because there simply were that many! More important is the question "why these two items?" The loaves of bread continue the exodus/new exodus motif, with Jesus taking on the functions of both Yahweh and Moses in providing the basics (see the manna in Exodus 16), and instantiating the promise that in the new exodus God's people would feed upon the way (Is 49:9) and not be hungry (Is 49:10; cf. Mk 6:42). (CC)

6:39 *green grass.* Grass is green around the Sea of Galilee after the late winter or early spring rains. (CSB)

Only Mark records this detail, possibly a vivid recollection from the disciple's memory. (TLSB)

6:40 *groups of hundreds and fifties.* Recalls the order of the Mosaic camp in the desert (e.g., Ex 18:21). The word translated "groups" means "garden plots," a picturesque figure (v. 39). (CSB)

6:41 This sequence – taking the bread, speaking a blessing, breaking, and then giving – also occurs in the institution of the Lord's Supper, which may be foreshadowed here. (TLSB)

In Judaism it was a stringent rule that nothing should be eaten without thanking God before and after the meal. (Lane)

6:42 *all ate and were satisfied.* Attempts to explain away this miracle (e.g., by suggesting that Jesus and his disciples shared their lunch and the crowd followed their good example) are inadequate. If Jesus was, as he claimed to be, God incarnate, the miracle presents no difficulties. God had promised that when the true Shepherd came the desert would become rich pasture where the sheep would be gathered and fed (Eze 34:23–31), and here the Messiah feasts with followers in the desert (cf. Isa 25:6–9). Jesus is the Shepherd who provides for all our needs so that we lack nothing (cf. Ps 23:1). (CSB)

The Lord's superabundant provision was such that, despite the overwhelming number of people, no one went away hungry. (TLSB)

echortasthēsan, “were satisfied.” This verse introduces the theme. They ate. They were full. There were leftovers (v 43). One can’t get much more satisfied than that. We continue to feed upon Christ and his grace. We are full. And there are leftovers. The task of the Church is to continue feeding upon the Gospel and to share the leftovers with other sheep. Like Jesus, the Church is to attend to the needs of both body and soul, knowing that ultimately Jesus is still the source. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

6:43 *twelve baskets full of broken pieces of bread and fish.* Bread was regarded by Jews as a gift of God, and it was required that scraps that fell on the ground during a meal be picked up. The fragments were collected in small wicker baskets that were carried as a part of daily attire. Each of the disciples returned with his basket full. (CSB)

One for each of the doubting disciples. They had more than they had started with. (PBC)

The fragments were collected in the small wicker baskets that every Jew carried with him as a part of his daily attire. These baskets were used to hold such items as a light lunch and general odds and ends. (Lane)

6:44 *men.* Lit. “males,” as in all four Gospels. Matthew further emphasizes the point by adding “besides women and children” (Mt 14:21). (CSB)

Women and children were fed but not included in the number. (TLSB)

five thousand. The size of the crowd is amazing in light of the fact that the neighboring towns of Capernaum and Bethsaida probably had a population of only 2,000–3,000 each. (CSB)

The miracle took place before the multitude, but there is no indication in the Marcan text that they had any realization of what was taking place. The simplicity of the meal Jesus provided is congruous with His general reluctance to perform miracles and give signs; there was nothing extraordinary in the peasants’ fare which would call attention to itself. The event is intended to be revelatory to the disciples alone. They are the ones who prompt the action, who bring the loaves and the fish, who distribute the meal and who gather the fragments. In contrast to their usually passive stance Jesus actively involved them in the total proceeding. His extended discussion with them prior to the event baffled them, while His wordless disclosure of His divine power through the event exceeded all understanding. In the eyes of the people Jesus remained an enigmatic prophetic teacher (Cf. Ch 6:14 F.), but He should have been recognized by the disciples as the Son of God at whose disposal are all of the riches of His Father. The people fail to perceive who Jesus is and they do not understand Him. The disciples do not understand Him although they were given an abundant opportunity to see His glory. That is why they alone are reproved for their hardness of heart and their failure to grasp the meaning of the miracle of the loaves in the subsequent narrative (6:52; 8:17-21). (Lane)

6:30–44 When a multitude of Jesus’ followers have far too little food for all to eat, Jesus multiplies five loaves and two fishes so that all are satisfied. When problems threaten us and needs overwhelm our resources, what is our reaction? Do we turn first to the Lord? We should, as His Word makes clear, for He still treats His flock with compassion and more than provides for every need of body and soul. • Lord, thank You for providing so abundantly and for graciously sustaining our bodies and souls. Teach us to turn to You first in every want and need. Amen. (TLSB)