

## Second Sunday in Lent

OLD TESTAMENT – Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

**When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, 2 that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.” 3 Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, 4 “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. 6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. 7 And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.**

**17:1** *ninety-nine years old.* Thirteen years had passed since Ishmael’s birth (see 16:16; 17:24-25). (CSB)

It was now twenty-four years since God had first appeared to Abram with the promise that he would be the ancestor of the Savior. Humanly speaking, every shred of hope they had of ever becoming parents had been swept away. Martin Luther once made the statement: “It’s God’s way to empty a man first before filling him with His blessing.” (PBC)

Abram is now ninety-nine years old and received the promise twenty-four years earlier that God would make of him a great nation (Gen 12:2). Sarai is now eighty-nine years old. Both Abram and Sarai would laugh at the prospect of having a child at their age (Gen 17:17; 18:12). Since God had not provided a son since the promise of Gen 12:2, Abram and Sarai had taken matters into their own hands, and Ishmael was already thirteen years old (Gen 17:24–25). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

*God Almighty.* The Hebrew (*El-Shaddai*) perhaps means “God, the Mountain One,” either highlighting the invincible power of God or referring to the mountains as God’s symbolic home (see Ps 121:1). It was the special name by which God revealed himself to the patriarchs (see Ex 6:3). *Shaddai* occurs 31 times in the book of Job and 17 times in the rest of the Bible. (CSB)

The God who here appeared with good news for Abram is the God who can compel even nature to do His bidding. (PBC)

*walk before me and be blameless.* Perhaps equivalent to “walk with me and be blameless.” After Abram’s and Sarai’s attempt to obtain the promised offspring by using a surrogate mother, God appeared to Abram. The Lord made it clear that, if Abram was to receive God’s promised and covenanted benefits, he must be God’s faithful and obedient servant. His faith must be accompanied by the “obedience that comes from faith” (Ro 1:5; see ch. 22). (CSB)

Luther: “What else did God want than that Abraham should continue in the righteousness and faith because of which he had been declared righteous and that he should be uncorrupted, blameless, and perfect?” (AE 3:78). (TLSB)

“Perfect” (*tamim*), of course, involves not complete moral perfection; but since it involves the idea of “complete” and “sound,” it implies that no vital feature of a godly life is absent. Such a demand does not ask Abram to make himself fit to receive divine blessings, but it does warn him against doing those things whereby he renders himself unfit. (Leupold)

**17:2 my covenant.** See 12:2–3; 13:14–16; 15:4–5. The covenant is God’s. God calls it “my covenant” nine times in vv. 2–21, and he initiates (see 15:18), confirms (v. 2) and establishes (v. 7) it. (CSB)

God’s blessings and promises are always new. He had already made His covenant with Abram. He added a name (v. 5) and a sign (vv 10-11) by which Abram is to be sure that the original promise has not been forgotten. (TLSB)

Nine times throughout these verses God speaks of “my covenant” (*bərithi*), emphasizing God as the one who establishes the covenant, sets its conditions, and brings blessings that are his alone to bestow. In setting these conditions, God adds new detail to what had previously been promised to Abraham. First, this is to be an everlasting covenant *bərith ‘olam*, v 7), not a temporary covenant. The benefits and blessings of this covenant would last eternally for Abram, Sarai, and their descendants. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

In addition, it was a personal covenant with Israel to be their God—“to be God (*lā’lohim*) to you and to your offspring after you” (v 7). God simply and graciously chose Abram and Sarai, along with their descendants, to be the recipients of this covenant. It was nothing that Abram or Sarai did that made them “worthy” of this covenant. At its very core, it is God’s promise “to be God to you and to your offspring after you” that exists as pure Gospel. It is repeated throughout the Old Testament (Jer 24:7; 31:33; Ezek 34:30–31; Hos 2:23). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

Abram is predicted by God to become “the father of a multitude of nations” (v 4), and in v 6 God says, “I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.” Likewise, concerning Sarai, God says to Abraham, “I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her” (v 16). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

Putting all of these aspects of the covenant together, there are certainly immediate fulfillments in the Old Testament as the line of Abraham and Sarah produces both nations and kings. (See also Gen 35:11; 47:27; 48:19; Ex 1:7; Matthew 1.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

Yet there is a more significant fulfillment in the most notable descendant, the Christ (Matthew 1). Through his life, death, and resurrection, everlasting life in the presence of God is purchased for all. The promise to have nations as descendants is reflected in Christ’s command to go and make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19–20) and is ultimately fulfilled in people from all nations being grafted (*ek pisteōs Abraam*) into the seed of Abraham (Rom 4:11–18; 15:8–12; Gal 3:29; Rev 7:9; 21:24). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

The Pharisees believed that Abraham as their father (physical lineage) meant they were secure in their standing with God. Jesus quickly dispelled them of that misconception (Lk 3:7–9; Jn 8:39ff). Just as Christ condemns the Pharisees, saying they were of their father, the devil (Jn 8:44), so also all human beings since the fall hail from a lineage of death (Rom 5:12). Through Christ, we, the righteous, “reign in life” (Rom 5:17)! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

*multitude of nations.* See 13:16 and note. Earlier God had covenanted to keep his promise concerning the land (ch. 15); here he broadens his covenant to include the promised offspring. See chart on “Major Covenants in the OT”. (CSB)

**17:5 Abram ... Abraham.** The first name means “Exalted Father,” probably in reference to God (i.e., “[God is] Exalted Father”); the second means “father of many,” in reference to Abraham. (CSB)

“Abram” means “exalted father,” but “Abraham” means “father of many nations.” God added a new name to the patriarch, that by it he might be ever mindful of the promise. (TLSB)

*your name shall be.* By giving Abram a new name (see Ne 9:7) God marked him in a special way as his servant (see notes on 1:5; 2:19). (CSB)

**17:6** *nations ... kings.* This promise came also to Sarah (v. 16) and was renewed to Jacob (35:11; see 48:19). It referred to the proliferation of Abraham’s offspring, who, like the descendants of Noah (see ch. 10), would someday become many nations and spread over the earth. Ultimately it finds fulfillment in such passages as Ro 4:16–18; 15:8–12; Gal 3:29; Rev 7:9; 21:24. (CSB)

**17:7** *everlasting.* From God’s standpoint (see vv. 13, 19), but capable of being broken from man’s standpoint (see v. 14; cf. Isa 24:5; Jer 31:32). (CSB)

Lasting in Christ Jesus, who sent forth His apostles to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of Holy Spirit” (Mt. 28:19). In Christ, the promise God gave to Abraham extends to all nations. (TLSB)

*to be God to you.* The heart of God’s covenant promise, repeated over and over in the OT (see, e.g., v. 8; Jer 24:7; 31:33; Eze 34:30–31; Hos 2:23; Zec 8:8). This is God’s pledge to be the protector of his people and the One who provides for their well-being and guarantees their future blessing (see 15:1). (CSB)

God is not merely the Almighty; He is the Almighty for His people, i.e., for their life, forgiveness, and salvation. (TLSB)

**15 And God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. 16 I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.”**

**17:15** *Sarai ... Sarah.* Both names evidently mean “princess.” The renaming stressed that she was to be the mother of nations and kings (see v. 16) and thus to serve the Lord’s purpose (see note on v. 5). (CSB)

**17:16** *I will bless her* – As God blessed Adam and Eve, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply” (1:28). (TLSB)

*son.* Fulfilled in Isaac (see 21:2–3). (CSB)

*become nations* – Ultimately fulfilled by our Lord as He made disciples of all nations through Baptism and teaching (Mt. 28:19-20). (TLSB)

#### EPISTLE – Romans 5:1-11

**Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. 6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in**

**that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.**

Luther: “In chapter 5 [Paul] comes to the fruits and works of faith, such as peace, joy, love to God and to every man, as well as confidence, assurance, boldness, courage, and hope amid tribulation and suffering. For all this follows, if faith be true, because of the superabundant goodness that God shows us in Christ, causing Christ to die for us before we could ask it of him, indeed, while we were still enemies. Thus we have it that faith justifies without any works; and yet it does not follow that men are therefore to do no good works, but rather that the genuine works will not be lacking. Of these the work-righteous saints know nothing. They dream up works of their own in which there is no peace, joy, confidence, love, hope, boldness, or any of the qualities of true Christian work and faith. (TLSB)

“After this he digresses and makes a pleasant excursion, telling whence come sin and righteousness, death and life, and comparing Adam and Christ. He means to say that Christ had to come as a second Adam bequeathing his righteousness to us through a new spiritual birth in faith, just as the first Adam bequeathed sin to us through the old fleshly birth. Thus he declares and proves that no one by his own works can raise himself out of sin into righteousness, any more than he can prevent the birth of his own body. This is proved also by the fact that the divine law—which ought to assist toward righteousness, if anything can—has not only not helped, but has even increased sin. For the more the law forbids, the more our evil nature hates the law, and the more it wants to give reign to its own lust. Thus the law makes Christ all the more necessary, and more grace is needed to help our nature” (AE 35:374–75). (TLSB)

**5:1-11** The burden of our text and our message is to relate the peace of Christ to the conflicts within us and the afflictions we face during this life. Though peace with God has been established by Christ, the bitter conflict between flesh and spirit within us remains, and we experience trials and tribulations in this fallen world. Yet Paul argues that even the most distressing troubles cannot destroy the peace brought about by God’s justification of the sinner. Fear has been dispelled, rebellion muted, and reconciliation with God accomplished. This is the basis for Christian hope. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

This section in Romans 5 is closely related to what Paul develops further in chapter 8: the power and significance of God’s grace by which we are justified before God through Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension. The love of God is emphasized throughout. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

In 5:1–11 “Paul invites the Christian to join with him in joyful thanksgiving for what the gospel provides.” As a result, the polemical tone of the earlier chapters almost disappears. Under the surface, however, Paul may well be countering either a charge against or faulty conclusion about the Good News he has just expounded. Perhaps the falsehood is that the righteousness of God through faith is: (CC)

no more than a legal fiction—a “declaration” of a relationship that cannot be proved and which effects no change—and requires no change!—in this life and which offers no security for the day of judgment. (CC)

**5:1** *have been justified* – dikaiothentez – This is an aorist which is forensic and passive, making it clear that by a past decisive act of God those who have faith in Christ have been justified, that is declared righteous. With this on word everything that was said in 3:21 to 4:25 is applied to all believers, including Paul and the Roman Christians. All that follows is the result of this new status before God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

Paul begins to respond in positive terms by stating how and why “being declared righteous” (δικαιωθέντες, 5:1) gives peace in the present and hope for the future. (CC)

Not by works; summary of chs 1–4. (TLSB)

The second Greek word of 5:1, οὖν, “therefore,” is a postpositive word, so its thought comes first. In light of all the first person plural forms in 5:1–11, the section might be tied most directly to the introduction of those pronouns in 4:24–25. But οὖν effectively recalls all of Romans 1–4. As a result, one cannot fully or even properly grasp the content of anything which follows without having an understanding of all that precedes one little οὖν. (CC)

A typical translation of 5:1 is “therefore, since we have been justified *by* faith” (ESV). Here the opening is rendered as “therefore, after being declared righteous *from* faith.” “Declared righteous” is used, first of all, for consistency in utilizing “righteousness” language for δικαιόω and its cognates in English whenever possible. Another, more important, factor is to retain the forensic nature of this declaration by God. The legal metaphor was a dominant feature throughout chapters 1–4. The notion that reality is what God declares or states it to be (4:17) has already been discussed and was evident in the faith of father Abraham (see the commentary on 3:28; 4:3, 8, 22, all of which have λογίζομαι, “to conclude; credit; charge; count”). As will be shown, that view continues to inform this portion of the letter (e.g., λογίζομαι, “to count,” in 6:11; 8:18). (CC)

The use of “*from* faith” for ἐκ πίστεως may sound awkward, but it is the most basic sense of the preposition ἐκ and maintains consistency with its thematic use in 1:17. “Through faith,” used by some English translations, recalls the more common Pauline expression διὰ πίστεως (see “The Place and Coherence of Romans 3:21–31” before the commentary on 3:21–31). Indeed, Paul uses διὰ, “through,” in 5:1 and 5:2, but both times with Jesus as the object. In any case, the meaning “through” is a stretch for ἐκ (“from”). The ESV’s “*by* faith” is not objectionable, but it may be misleading in view of the divine passive force of the verb, “declared righteous” *by* God. If Paul wanted to state the one by which/whom the action was performed, the preposition ἐκ would be followed by θεοῦ, “God.” The full meaning may be paraphrased as “therefore after being declared righteous *by* God, which (declaration) we receive from faith.” (CC)

The mood of the main verb in 5:1, “have,” provides a classic example used to illustrate the key factors involved in textual criticism (see the fourth textual note on 5:1). The weight of external manuscript evidence supports reading the subjunctive, ἔχωμεν, but any potential notion that “*we might* have peace” seems utterly un-Pauline. As a result, and on the basis of the internal evidence, most commentators and translators accept the indicative as original, ἔχομεν, “*we do* have.” Theologically, the indicative is most satisfying in the context of Paul’s overall thought and the argument of Romans in particular. However, Lenski notes that, first, this ruling goes against the preponderance of the manuscript evidence, and second, “the old canon is not applied in this instance that the more difficult reading takes precedence over the easier one.” Proper caution should be exercised on both counts. (CC)

If the form is read as a subjunctive, the thought is not “let us keep peace; let us be peaceful toward God and stop fighting him!” Instead, on the basis of the switch to first person plural language, Lenski argues: (CC)

Here is direct personal address, which enables Paul to use hortation in the most natural way when he begins the account of the effects. “We have peace” states far less than he wants to say. We have it; but do all of us realize it, get the full effect of it in our hearts and our lives especially also when we are in tribulation? “Let us inwardly, in our very hearts, have and taste this peace in relation to God.” (CC)

The object of whichever form of “have” (ἔχω) Paul intends is “peace” (εἰρήνην). One aspect of contemporary notions about peace tends to match the Greek view. Peace is understood largely in negative terms as the absence of war or conflict. A more positive side prevails in the NT, largely due to the influence of the Hebrew שָׁלוֹם, *shalom*. Here too, however, modern conceptions of peace are often emotional and inward. In response, von Rad points out: “When we consider the rich possibilities of שָׁלוֹם in the OT we are struck by the negative fact that there is no specific text in which it denotes the specifically spiritual attitude of inward peace.”<sup>45</sup> Here εἰρήνη, “peace,” denotes “not subjective feelings of peace (though these may indeed result),” but much more profoundly “the objective state of being at peace instead of being enemies” (5:10). (CC)

This is reflected in the OT, where peace is often associated with God’s covenant relationship with his people (e.g., Num 6:22–27; Ps 55:18–19 [MT 55:19–20]; Is 48:17–22; Jer 14:19–21). For example, in the Aaronic benediction, which the priests were to pronounce regularly upon the congregation, “peace” (Num 6:26) is the result of Yahweh’s actions of being gracious and showing his favor (Num 6:24–25), with the imposition of his saving covenant name on his redeemed people (Num 6:27). Furthermore, peace and righteousness are often “overlapping or complementary concepts.” Finally, peace is an aspect of OT eschatological hope (e.g., Is 54:10; Ezek 34:25), one which Paul says believers enjoy already now. (CC)

Peace, then, is a relationship we have “toward” or “with God” (πρὸς τὸν θεόν, 5:1). Romans 1–4 has made it abundantly clear that the establishment of this relationship did not come about in any way from us to God, even for Abraham (3:19–20; 4:2). The point is emphatically reaffirmed in 5:8–9. Instead, our relationship of peace with God is inaugurated solely by his declaring us righteous (δικαιωθέντες, 5:1). It is only “through our Lord Jesus Christ” (5:1). This key phrase was discussed in “Introduction to Romans 5 and Romans 5–8” before this pericope. It is retrieved from 4:24 (which has a similar phrase) and repeated identically in 5:11 (see also 5:21; 6:23; 7:25; 8:39). (CC)

*peace with God.* Not merely a subjective feeling (peace of mind) but primarily an objective status, a new relationship with God: Once we were his enemies, but now we are his friends (see v. 10; Eph 2:16; Col 1:21–22). (CSB)

Justification does not merely mean escaping punishment; we are now in a positive relationship with God. Luther: “Note how the apostle places this spiritual peace only after righteousness has preceded it. For first he says, ‘since we have been justified ... by faith,’ and then ‘we have peace’ ” (AE 25:285). “Spiritually inexperienced people despise this teaching. However, God-fearing and anxious consciences find by experience that it brings the greatest consolation” (AC XX 15). (TLSB)

*Peace (v 1):* We can look at Romans 5:1 as a counterpart to the Father’s welcome of the prodigal son in Luke 15. Both passages highlight God’s amazing clemency as he welcomes back the contrite man of faith in peace. Where there is the peace ( *eirēnē*, *shalom*) of Christ, there is access to God. Things are as they should be. The peace that Paul presents is not just a mental attitude but a reality, a factual, objective relationship between God and us sinners. Through Christ we become the opposite of what we are by nature: righteous and justified. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

*eirana* – This is more than the cessation of hostilities. Both in OT and NT signifies a soundness, wholeness and health. It was this peace that was laid upon the people in the Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6:26). Jesus was called the Prince of Peace in Is. 9:6; Mt. 9:5 and Lk. 2:14. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

*through our Lord* - Reconciliation through Christ: A frequent construction in our text is *dia* with the genitive, meaning “through (Christ)” (vv 1, 2, 9, 10, and twice in 11; v 5 uses the same construction to

refer to the work of the Holy Spirit). This construction stresses the mediation of Christ and his present influence as risen Lord. Only through Christ, not through some other human or saintly intermediary, do we have access and reconciliation to God. Jesus alone brings us into the divine presence. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

**5:2-5 Hope (vv 2–5):** Hope (*elpis*, vv 2, 4, 5), the great Christian virtue, is also emphasized in our text. This hope stems from the promise of the glory of God (v 2). Martin Franzmann<sup>1</sup> says that the Christian “sees the present as the stairway to future glory and resolutely climbs the stairs one by one by the light that falls on them from the opened door at the head of the stairs.” Hope derives from dependence on God’s grace regardless of what comes to us in life. That grace is sure because it depends on God’s love for us in Christ, not on our love of him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

**5:2-4** A man named Parnell Baily toured an orange grove once where an irrigation pump had broken. The season was dry and some of the trees were dying because they lacked water. The man giving the tour then took Baily to his own orchard where irrigation was used sparingly. (CSB)

**5:2** And there is much more! Through him “we have obtained and retain access [by faith] into this grace” (5:2). The perfect tense of ἐσχίκαμεν conveys both what was received and what is still presently possessed through Christ. Paul describes it as “the access” (τὴν προσαγωγήν). It is tempting to read this with Hebrews as entrance into the holy places or sanctuary. “We have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus” (Heb 10:19). At Jesus’ death, the restrictive temple veil was torn (Lk 23:45). Thereby, access was granted to us. However, the noun προσαγωγή, “access,” in Rom 5:2 is not used in Heb 10:19, and the term never occurs in the LXX (see the textual note). The reference to Jesus as “Lord” (κύριος) in this verse might point more toward a royal image of entrance before the king. (CC)

Here, Paul says, the access is “by faith.” τῇ πίστει presents another textual issue (see the textual note). If original, the bare Greek dative is not Paul’s common way of using πίστις, “faith,” but it expresses means and is reminiscent of 3:28. Whether or not the noun was in the original of 5:2, πίστις, “faith,” is in 5:1. It is interesting that “faith” (πίστις) does not occur again until 9:30. Furthermore, its cognates are used only once throughout Romans 5–8 (πιστεύομεν, “we believe,” in 6:8). This surely reveals a shift in emphasis from Romans 1–4, where the words are utilized thirty-four times. (CC)

Our access is “into this grace” (εἰς τὴν χάριν ταύτην). “This grace” expresses the full theological sense of God’s undeserved kindness and favor as described more fully in 3:24 (see the commentary there). “Since a reference to royal ‘favor’ is also a quite natural part of its broader Greek usage, ... its use here strengthens the court imagery of προσαγωγή [‘access’].” In any case, the picture is of God’s gracious presence being a safe and secure location in which to reside by faith. Grace is further defined with “in which we stand” (ἐν ᾗ ἐστήκαμεν). It provides a sheltered place. Theologically speaking, we did not stand ourselves up in grace by any exertion of our own. It is God’s declaration of righteousness which did so “through the redemption, the one in Christ Jesus” (3:24). The perfect of ἵστημι, “stand,” therefore emphasizes our resulting state of being (see the textual note), but it also provides encouragement to remain standing where God has placed us. (CC)

As we do so, Paul says, “We boast upon hope of the glory of God” (5:2). The entire clause is related to references from earlier in the letter. “To boast” (καυχᾶσθαι) occurs initially in Romans 2. There, the Jewish person engaged by Paul is depicted with καυχᾶσθαι twice: “you rely upon the Law and you *boast* in God” (2:17), and, later, “you ... are *boasting* in the Law” (2:23). But by 3:27, the noun “boast” (καύχησις) was shut out. Even Abraham has no boast toward God (4:2). In light of those uses, it is best to maintain the translation “boast” here, rather than switch to “rejoice” (e.g., ESV, RSV, NKJV) and lose the connection. The critical factor is the ground of boasting (see the fourth textual note on 2:17). Boasting in the Law or in our works is excluded. But boasting in the things of God is proper and praised here in 5:2, as well as in 5:11; 1 Cor 1:31 and 2 Cor 10:17, both quoting Jer 9:24 (MT 9:23); Gal 6:14; Phil 3:3.

Origen diagnoses why the connotations of “boast” (καυχάομαι) can be either positive or negative: “For if someone rejoices [boasts] in his wisdom or strength or riches, he is wrong to do so, but if he rejoices [boasts] in knowing God and in understanding his judgments of mercy and righteousness, he is right to do so.” (CC)

The basis of our boast is expressed positively by a prepositional phrase, “upon hope of the glory of God” (ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ). “Hope” (ἐλπίς) is discussed extensively in regard to Abraham’s faith in 4:18. Although Classical Greek employed ἐλπίς for simple expectation, the influence of the OT Hebrew verb פָּצַח, “to trust,” shaped its meaning in the LXX in a more positive direction. “Hope” (ἐλπίς) became “closely allied to trust, trustful hope, hope as confidence in God.” “Hope” is referred to again in 5:4 and 5:5. (CC)

This hope is “of the glory of God” (τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ). Thus far, references to God’s “glory” (δόξα) have been in negative contexts. “The glory of God” was exchanged away for idolatry in 1:23. In 3:23, Paul charges that “all sinned and are lacking the glory of God” (τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ). But now, “after being declared righteous from faith” (5:1), “the glory of God” conveys our hope for a fully restored experience of his image and presence. (CC)

All of the blessed benefits articulated in 5:1–2 flow from faith. These two verses express some of what has already been received, the present state in which we stand, and also our certain hope for the future. The Formula of Concord recognizes the significance of “from faith” (ἐκ πίστεως), which stands prominently in 5:1. It serves as the culmination of Paul’s message throughout Romans 1–4, but also moves us forward with confident assurance into the topic of chapters 5–8, the life that is in our Lord Jesus Christ. (CC)

*access.* Jesus ushers us into the presence of God. The heavy curtain (of the temple) that separated man from God and God from man has been removed (see note on Mt 27:51). (CSB)

*grace in which we stand* – Grace is not a one-time gift; we live in it eternally. John Chrysostom: “If then He has brought us near to Himself, when we were far off, much more will He keep us now that we are near” (NPNF 1 11:396). (TLSB)

*hope of the glory of God.* The Christian’s confidence that the purpose for which God created him will be ultimately realized (see note on 3:23). (CSB)

The promise of eternal life in heaven. “St. Paul ... credits the beginning, middle, and end to *faith alone*” (FC SD IV 34). (TLSB)

elpis which is a primary word (to *anticipate*, usually with pleasure); *expectation* (abstract or concrete) or *confidence*:—faith, hope. (QV)

*we stand* – The verb is in the perfect tense, meaning “in which we have stood, now stand, and will continue to stand. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 2)

**5:3-5** Paul is not listing virtues that his readers will achieve by their own will. These are effects of the Holy Spirit’s work in Christian lives. As God helps us through suffering, He teaches endurance, He develops character in us, and He gives us hope. Suffering is transformed by our relationship with God. (TLSB)

**5:3** “And not only [this],” but “we are also boasting within pressures” (καυχώμεθα ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν, 5:3). Paul explains that our boasting entails more than confident expectation about the future. It is also “present



tense” boasting. Whereas specific suffering, persecution, and tribulation are all included, it is best to understand θλιψις here as Paul uses it most often: it is broadly descriptive of “any ‘external pressure’ ... that may afflict the believer in this life.” The concept of suffering introduces similar linked groupings in 1 Pet 1:6–7 and James 1:2–4. Heb 12:5–6 also speaks positively of the value of discipline and hardship, citing Prov 3:11–12. As in all these other passages, “characteristically, Paul takes an offensive posture. Not only do sufferings not overthrow the reality of the blessings, but they are themselves occasions for joyful boasting!” (CC)

Notice that Paul does not say our suffering itself is good (see 8:28); nor does he mean these afflictions are actually “the basis of the exultation.” But hope enables us to continue boasting even “in the midst” (ἐν) of them. One reason is because hope looks ahead to the ultimate enjoyment of the glory of God. As Basil remarks: “Tribulations are, for those well prepared, like certain foods and exercises for athletes which lead the contestant on to the hereditary glory.” Even in this present life, boasting is possible because of how *God desires* to move us ahead when we experience any and all sorts of pressures. (CC)

Perhaps “knowing” (εἰδότες) then serves as an often-necessary reminder. We are able to boast amidst the pressures of life while “knowing that pressure is accomplishing patient endurance” (5:3). (CC)

“Endurance” (ὕπομονή) is a favorite virtue for Paul, who praises it sixteen times. It was also “highly prized both within Greek thought, particularly by the Stoics (*TDNT* 4:582–83) and in contemporary Judaism (*Pss. Sol.* 2:36; *T[estament of] Jos[eph]* 2:7; 10:1–2; frequently in *4 Maccabees* to describe the steadfastness of the martyrs ...).” “Endurance” (ὕπομονή) also has significant connections with “hope” (ἐλπίς). In the LXX both words are used to translate the Hebrew noun נִחְמָה, usually rendered as “hope.” Paul connects the two in 12:12 (which has ἐλπίς, “hope,” and the verb ὑπομένω, “to endure”). In 1 Thess 1:3 he even speaks of “the endurance of hope” (τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος). (CC)

The noun translated as “patient endurance,” ὑπομονή, is formed from the verb μένω, “remain, abide,” with the prefixed preposition ὑπό, “under.” While one needs to be cautious about reading too much into etymology, the more passive sense of “remaining under” is appropriate to this context (see the textual note). God has stood us up in his grace (5:2). “Patient endurance” means “to stay standing there” in the midst of pressures pushing in various other directions or trying to knock us down. In other contexts, recognizing a more active sense in ὑπομονή is appropriate, for example, “perseverance” in Heb 12:1. But in all cases, the essential point remains. “Where God sustains faith, tribulation produces ὑπομονή [‘endurance’].” (CC)

*rejoice in our sufferings.* Not “because of” but “in.” Paul does not advocate a morbid view of life but a joyous and triumphant one. (CSB)

Suffering cannot steal the peace Christ brings. Christians do not rejoice in suffering per se, but they realize that God can produce good things through suffering. (TLSB)

Even tribulations are understood by the believer not as manifestations of divine wrath, but rather as occasions for rejoicing and boasting in Christ (v 3). We rejoice in suffering since we have insight into its purpose and significance. God uses it to build perseverance, character, and hope. In spite of whatever present suffering we endure, we keep in mind the promised consummation of history and know that God is in control. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

Glorying in suffering does not deny or exclude pain as a reality. Occasionally, even despondency may occur, but pain and despondency will be overcome as God leads us toward glory. We rejoice in our troubles because of the assurance of God’s grace and his certain promise of future glory. Tribulations are inevitable for the believer (cf. Acts 14:22; Rev 7:14). But tribulations do not change the objective love

and grace of God, so we glory also in them as we glory in the peace of God. Though we often cannot know the meaning of the tribulation in which we stand, we know that God knows, and we trust him. The love of God is poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, giving us a hope which will not be put to shame (v 5). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

*suffering produces endurance* – *hpomona* – This is a noble Greek word that represents a combination of manliness and patience, a brave patience, which willingly remains under the a load of affliction without faltering or complaint. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

From cheerful (or hopeful) *endurance, constancy*:—enduring, patience, patient continuance (waiting). (QV)

That resilient and athletic temper which is so sure of the future that it can live of the future and bear manfully the pressure of the present. (Franzmann)

**5:4** “Patient endurance [is accomplishing] tested character” (δοκιμή, 5:4). The picture here comes from the testing of metals by refining them with fire. This picture aligns well with the use of “pressures” in 5:3. A comparable word, “tested genuineness” (δοκίμιον), evokes the same picture in James 1:3 and 1 Pet 1:7. The implication of testing is also present in Rom 1:28 with the verb δοκιμάζω. There fallen humanity “*did not approve* to have God in [proper] recognition” (οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν, 1:28). In that instance, the negated verb indicates that the testing resulted in rejection of God. Here the cognate noun, δοκιμή, similarly gives “special ref[erence] to the result,” but now positively expresses that “a process of enduring something amounts to a test that promotes and validates the character of the one undergoing it” (BDAG, 2). It is difficult to translate the entire sequence of “testing followed by examination and evaluation” with a single word in English. “Tested character” or “approved character” are most adequate. (CC)

“And tested character [is accomplishing] hope” (5:4). Paul is back to where he started in 5:2 with boasting “upon hope.” But concluding the progression where it began makes an important point about the linked events Paul has just explained. “The chain sequence certainly implies a process of maturing, but not distinguishable stages in faith ... since its end point is no different from the hope into which they entered on first believing (v 2).” It should also be affirmed that this is *God’s intention* for his people. The reality, of course, is that this divinely intended cycle does not always work out this way in the lives of believers. However, Paul’s words assure us of what God wants to happen when we are afflicted with any and all pressures in this life. God’s intention is that they accomplish (κατεργάζεται, 5:3) patient endurance, which leads to approved character, which then works its way right back to hope. Chrysostom concludes: “Does our good really lie in hope? Yes, but not in human hopes, which often vanish and leave only embarrassment behind. Our hope is in God and is therefore sure and immovable.” (CC)

A Christian can rejoice in suffering because he knows that it is not meaningless. Part of God’s purpose is to produce character in his children. (CSB)

*endurance produces character* – *dokimaz* – This verb was used with reference to testing the genuineness and the weight of coins to determine whether or not they met the established standards and requirement. By means of suffering and perseverance, God tests and changes raw recruits into tempered veterans. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

**5:5** In 5:5 Paul adds a concluding thought, as well as his explanation of why all of this is reliably true, even to the point of boasting within it. First, Paul speaks further of the hope depicted in 5:1–4. If accented as a present indicative, as in NA<sup>27</sup>, the negated verb, κατασχύνει means that hope is not currently “putting [us] to shame.” On the contrary, hope survives and thrives right now in the midst of the trials. This is consistent with Paul’s use of the present tense of ἐπαισχύνομαι in 1:16: “I am not ashamed.” The present

tense also correlates with the present impact of the perfect tense of ἐκκέχυται, “has been poured out *and remains*,” in the explanatory “because” (ὅτι) clause that follows. If so, “the present effect of the hope may mark some distinction from the predominantly future-oriented, passive use of the verb in the Jewish tradition.” (CC)

The same letters can, however, be accented as a future indicative, κατασχυνεῖ. This is more in line with the dominant eschatological tone of the verb in the LXX. There the verb is commonly used in relation to the future judgment.<sup>c</sup> Paul’s use of “will not be put to shame” (οὐ κατασχυνθήσεται) in citing Is 28:16 in Rom 9:33 and 10:11 support reading the verb here in 5:5 as a future. This is also buttressed by the “*hope of the glory of God*” in 5:2, and the future forms of “save” (σώζω) in 5:9 and 5:10. Paul’s point is more likely that the Christian “hope will not put [us] to shame” in the judgment on the Last Day, when unbelievers will be publicly humiliated and shamed. (Cf. 2 Cor 10:8; Phil 1:20; 2 Tim 1:12; 1 Pet 2:6; 1 Jn 2:28; Rev 3:18) (CC)

Paul then proceeds to express the basis for such a confident hope. It exists only “because the love of God has been poured out and remains within our hearts” (5:5). The adjective related to “love” (ἀγάπη), “beloved” (ἀγαπητός), has appeared once thus far, in 1:7. Here is the first of nine occurrences of the noun “love” (ἀγάπη) in Romans (see especially 12:9). The verb “to love” (ἀγαπάω) does not show up until 8:28. It might seem warranted, then, to conclude that “love” (ἀγάπη) is more appropriately associated with John and his writings. However, Paul uses the noun in seventy-five of its one hundred sixteen NT appearances.<sup>66</sup> Perhaps he is the apostle of love after all! (CC)

Paul employs the phrase “the love of God” (ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ) only here and in Rom 8:39; 2 Cor 13:13 (ET 13:14); 2 Thess 3:5. With Augustine, Luther reads the genitive as objective: “It is called ‘God’s love’ because by it we love God alone.” Calvin responds: “It is indeed a pious sentiment, but not what Paul means.”<sup>68</sup> The subjective genitive is almost certainly correct. In this context, “a statement of the fact of God’s love for us is a more cogent proof of the security of our hope than a statement of the fact of our love for Him would be.” (CC)

Paul graphically says God’s love “has been poured out and remains within our hearts” (ἐκκέχυται ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν, 5:5). Both aspects of the perfect of ἐκχέω are significant, as is the divine passive voice. God’s love is in our hearts only because he has poured it out into them. His love seeks to replace the impure desires of a heart which has become senseless and darkened (1:21, 24). At least initially, therefore, his love must come *extra nos*, from “outside ourselves.” It does so “through the Holy Spirit, who was given to us.” “Given” (δοθέντος) is another divine passive, which makes clear the Spirit is a gift which is freely given (see also Lk 11:13; Acts 5:32; 8:18; 11:17; 15:8; 1 Thess 4:8). The perfect tense rendered as “poured out and remains” also means his love is not without continuing effect. It continues to dwell within our hearts through that same Spirit (as in Rom 8:9, 11). (CC)

The interrelationship between God’s love (ἀγάπη) being “poured out” into our hearts “through the Holy Spirit” (διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου) is significant. The Spirit and love are also linked by Paul in Rom 15:30; 2 Cor 6:6; Gal 5:22; Phil 2:1; Col 1:8; 2 Tim 1:7. Paul similarly speaks of the Spirit in our hearts in Gal 4:6: “God sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts” (ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν). It is certainly clear that “Paul was not greatly concerned to make a clear distinction between the gift of the Spirit and the outpouring of love.” Paul’s use of “pour out” (ἐκχέω) both here and in Titus 3:6 (ἐξέχεεν) in connection with the Holy Spirit is aligned with the outpouring promised in Joel 2:28–29 (MT/LXX 3:1–2) and fulfilled in Acts 2 (see Acts 2:17–18, 33; 10:45). The outpouring of the Spirit is a sign that “the end of the ages has come” (1 Cor 10:11). (CC)

The language of being “poured out” coupled with the giving of the Holy Spirit almost certainly alludes to Baptism. This is especially evident in light of passages such as Titus 3:5–6: “he saved us ... through [the] washing of regeneration and [the] renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out upon us [οὗ ἐξέχεεν

ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς] richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.” (See also Acts 2:38 and the excursus “Baptism in Paul” following the commentary on 6:1–11). But this verse should not be exclusively restricted to Baptism; the Spirit always accompanies the Word. As Chrysostom puts it: “God has given us the greatest gift possible and in profusion.... What is this gift? It is the Holy Spirit.” Together with the Holy Spirit, we receive the innumerable blessings of God’s love outpoured with his “unstinting lavishness.” (CC)

*hope does not put us shame.* The believer’s hope is not to be equated with unfounded optimism. On the contrary, it is the blessed assurance of our future destiny and is based on God’s love, which is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit and objectively demonstrated to us in the death of Christ. Paul has moved from faith (v. 1) to hope (vv. 2, 4–5) to love (v. 5; see 1Co 13:13; see also note on 1Th 1:3). (CSB)

This is what Christians harbor in their hearts as a result of the love of God in Christ, a hope that is made stronger by suffering and the resultant perseverance and character. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

By being false. (TLSB)

*has poured out.*† Through the Holy Spirit God has poured out his love in our hearts, and his love for us continues to dwell in us. (CSB)

An abundance of love. (TLSB)

*Holy Spirit ... given to us.* The indwelling Holy Spirit shows that our hope is not misplaced. (TLSB)

**5:6-8** *God’s love proven by Christ’s death* (vv 6–8): At God’s chosen time ( *kairos*) that we could not do for ourselves, Christ did for us by his death: he reconciled us to God. We could not redeem ourselves for, as the heaping up of descriptive terms demonstrates, we were powerless (literally, “weak”) and ungodly (v 6), sinners (v 8), and enemies of God (v 10). Paul concedes that for a good man some noble person might give his life. But Jesus gave his life for sinners—despite and even because of their sin—since no other deliverance was possible for them. The uniqueness of Christ’s sacrifice is contrasted with the noblest sacrifice of other humans. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

With “for” (γάρ) at the beginning of 5:6, Paul begins to reinforce why all of these good things from God have come to fill our lives. Rom 5:6–8 encapsulates the argument of all of 1:18–4:25. It clearly expresses who we were apart from our Lord Jesus Christ and what he accomplished so that we might be reconciled and saved as detailed in 5:9–11. References to God’s “love” (ἀγάπη) in 5:5 and 5:8 nicely frame 5:6–8. Since the structure of these three verses is quite redundant, they are grouped together below and will be followed by summarizing comments. (CC)

<sup>6</sup>For while we were still being weak, yet at the opportune moment, Christ died in behalf of the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>For only rarely will someone die in behalf of a righteous person. Indeed, in behalf of the good person someone perhaps is brave enough to die. <sup>8</sup>But God demonstrates his own love toward us in that while we were still being sinners, Christ died in behalf of us. (CC)

The grammar of 5:6–8 seems to stumble at times (see the textual notes), but Paul’s repeated and enhanced descriptions drive two points home clearly. On the one hand, the first is about us. In a manner reminiscent of 1:18–32, Paul depicts humanity in starkly negative terms. In 5:6 Paul describes us as “weak” (ἀσθενής) and “ungodly” (ἀσεβής). The latter is a key term in 4:5, where Abraham’s faith is defined as believing upon the God “who declares the ungodly [τὸν ἀσεβῆ] righteous” (see the commentary). In 5:8 we are identified specifically as “sinners” (ἁμαρτωλῶν). All of these merge into outright hostility with the

enmity conveyed by “enemies” (ἐχθροί) in 5:10. The combined effect eliminates even the faintest notion that “God helps those who help themselves.” Instead, Paul emphasizes that God’s love is a “love that is not the result of any worth in its objects but is self-caused and in its freedom itself confers worth upon them.” (CC)

The hypothetical example of “someone” (τίς) being courageous enough to die in behalf of those who might be perceived to deserve it is introduced in 5:7. The overall notion of dying for a worthy person or cause

was already familiar in Jewish circles as martyr terminology, in reference to the Maccabean martyrs (2 Macc 7:9; 8:21; 4 Macc 1:8, 10; Josephus, *Ant[iquities,]* 13.5–6; cf. John 18:14). Paul was probably aware of this other usage, since his own formula is such a shocking contrast to it: Christ died for the *ungodly*. (CC)

It is difficult to know if Paul intends a distinction between “a righteous person” (δικαίου) and “the good person” (τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ) in 5:7. The most plausible proposal is that the former indicates someone who is upright and the latter encompasses a person who has also done good to you. Even though the chance is still remote, this increases the likelihood that “perhaps” (τάχα) you might give up your life for such a noble person. In any event, the point of both “a righteous person” and “the good person” is one of *extreme contrast* with us who are, in reality, “weak,” “ungodly” (5:6), and “sinners” (5:8). (CC)

There is also a contrast between us and Christ. The second major theme in 5:6–8 is revealed by the final Greek word of each verse. These three verses all conclude with a reference to the death of Christ, each one emphatically ending with a form of the verb “die” (ἀποθνήσκω). The purpose of Christ’s death is described repeatedly through the key preposition ὑπέρ, translated as “in behalf of.” This Greek preposition occurs four times in these three verses. Christ’s death on behalf of sinners is a common theme in Paul. Indeed, it is among the primary elements (ἐν πρώτοις) of the Good News he proclaims: “Christ died in behalf of our sins according to the Scriptures” (Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφάς, 1 Cor 15:3). One need not limit ὑπέρ to convey that his death is either “in our behalf” or “for us.” It is proper to understand that ὑπέρ expresses substitutionary atonement (see the textual note). Indeed, it is ultimately necessary to assert that “his death is *for* us because it is death suffered *in our place*.” (CC)

The timing of the event when Christ “died” (ἀπέθανεν) is expressed in 5:6 as “at the opportune moment” (κατὰ καιρόν). This is equivalent to “in the present momentous time” (ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ) in 3:26. It emphasizes eschatological fulfillment (as in Mk 1:15; cf. “the fullness of time,” τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, in Gal 4:4). This coincides with the inaugural outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Rom 5:5. (CC)

This brief section is drawn together in 5:8. In the initial clause the Greek subject (ὁ θεός) is placed last for emphasis, but translated first: “but *God* demonstrates his own love toward us” (εἰς ἡμᾶς). The reflexive pronoun “his own” (ἑαυτοῦ) in between “the ... love” (τὴν ... ἀγάπην) emphasizes the personal nature of his love and reinforces the interpretation of “the love of God” (ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ) in 5:5 as having a subjective genitive. God’s own love is not merely a feeling or disposition. It springs into action; it is demonstrable. The present tense of “demonstrates” (συνίστησιν) indicates that the demonstration continues to us in our present, sinful condition (ἔτι ἁμαρτωλῶν ὄντων ἡμῶν). God’s love was exhibited most fully by Christ’s death in behalf of us sinners (cf. “for proof,” εἰς ἐνδειξιν, in 3:25). And this same love has been poured out and remains within our hearts through the Holy Spirit (5:5). (CC)

**5:6** *the right time*. The appointed moment in God’s redemptive plan (Mk 1:15; Gal 4:4). (CSB)

We can enumerate some of the providences which helped to open the way for the gospel such as the

- ✓ vast extent of the Roman Empire,

- ✓ the spread of the Greek language,
- ✓ the facility of travel throughout the empire,
- ✓ the extensive diaspora of the Jews,
- ✓ its many proselytes from Gentilism, etc.

All of these aided the spread of the gospel. What God saw and regarded as the fullness of the time in the spiritual condition of men, barbarian as well as Greek, is too difficult for us to predicate because His thoughts and judgments are too unsearchable for us. (Lenski)

Romans 5:6, “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”

2 Peter 3:8,9, “But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

Romans 11:33-36, “<sup>33</sup>Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! <sup>34</sup>“Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?” <sup>35</sup>“Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?” <sup>36</sup>For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.”

*still weak* – Greek term describes someone afflicted with illness, one who is completely powerless. (TLSB)

*right time*. The perfect timing, known by God. (TLSB)

*Christ died for the ungodly*. Christ’s love is grounded in God’s free grace and is not the result of any inherent worthiness found in its objects (mankind). In fact, it is lavished on us in spite of our undesirable character. (CSB)

This designates the moral unworthiness and the impotence of mankind. Our problem was and is sin, and we were/are utterly incapable of coping with it. (Stoekhardt)

Romans 7:18, “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.”

**5:7-8** Humans are reluctant to sacrifice for others. A few people might die for one who seemed particularly righteous or for one who had done them some good, but these are rare occurrences. Christ died, not for righteous people or for those who had helped Him, but for sinners. This is grace. (TLSB)

**5:7** *righteous man ... good man*. We were neither righteous nor good, but sinners, when Christ died for us (see v. 8; 3:10–12). – The former means the just man who rarely benefits anyone whereas the good man does good things for other people and therefore someone might dare to die in his stead if the need arises. We were neither righteous nor good. (CSB)

The righteous man is just, upright and honest. A good man is not only just, but kind and compassionate, and governed by love to God and men. (Concordia Bible)

Human love generally doesn't extend to the point of a person's dying for his neighbor. What doesn't happen among people, God did. (PBC)

Naturally, the apostle only speaks of what is righteous and good in the natural sphere, of civil righteousness, in spite of which man remains before God what he is by nature, an ungodly person. (Stoekhardt)

**5:8** *God shows his love* – With humans love succeeds, but only in unusual cases. That is the unique, incomparable love of God. It transcends all thought. Even the unjust are not beyond the reach of his bounty.

But God has documented His love in an act that lies on another plane Altogether. Christ died for us while we were yet sinners, still men in revolt against God, still holding in wild contempt the high majesty of the God who all the while invited our worship and thanksgiving (Rom. 1:19-21). (Franzmann)

The Greek language had a number of verbs to differentiate, to some extent at least, between varying levels of affection and attachment. It is important to realize that the word used here for God's love is agape, the term indicating a one-way, unreciprocated love coming entirely from God. There are no endearing qualities in rebellious humanity that moved or influenced God. It wasn't like in human friendship where both parties bring endearing qualities to the relationship so that a mutual affection develops. No, in the situation Paul is describing, all the good things originate on God's side of the relationship. (PBC)

Christ came when we were powerless. Even if we had wanted him to come, which was not the case, we couldn't have anything positive to bring it about. But the infinitely worse situation was that by nature we didn't want anything to do with God and His promised Savior, because we were ungodly. And yet, for such ungodly people as us, the Father sent his Son to die. That's one-way love, the kind one can hardly find even the faintest approximation of in the human experience. (PBC)

God gave His Son, Christ Himself, into death for such who were sinful and wicked, who possessed no moral qualities and were not worthy of any love – nothing being lost has had they been damned. That is the unique, incomparable love of God. It transcends all thought. It surpasses by far all human demonstration and thoughts of love. (Stoekhardt)

We caused the rift in our relationship with God. We had rebelled and declared war. We declared our independence from our King as we walked away from His love. Our actions, hostility, and estrangement made reconciliation necessary. Yet, nothing we could do could make reconciliation possible. (LL)

God alone brought this peace, this reconciliation, through our Lord Jesus Christ. We did not have to agree to it before it became effective. The peace treaty is not bilateral, but unilateral. We declared war on God and His kingdom. But God has declared peace with sinners because of Christ's work for us. (LL)

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."

1 Timothy 1:15, "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst."

1 John 3:1, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him."

**5:9-11** *Reconciled to God (vv 9-11)*: The believer, seeing Christ's sacrifice and its benefits for himself, knows with unquenchable certainty the love of God. God's love has been actively demonstrated: Jesus'

blood is the means of our reconciliation to God (v 9). That blood assures the sinner’s salvation. Our text describes the gracious act of God in Christ by two terms. The sinner is now justified (v 9); the terms of God’s law and justice have been met by Christ. The sinner is also now reconciled (vv 10–11); reconciliation describes grace in terms of interpersonal relationships. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

**5:9** *by his death*. By laying down his life as a sacrifice—a reference to Christ’s death for our sins (see 3:25). (CSB)

Our redemption required Christ’s sacrifice. (TLSB)

*wrath of God*. The final judgment, as the verb “shall be saved” makes clear (cf. 1Th 1:9–10). (CSB)

We may experience the temporal consequence of sin, but the justified never experience God’s wrath in eternity. (TLSB)

Romans 5:1, “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**5:10** *while we were enemies*. † The hostility between God and man must be removed if reconciliation is to be accomplished. God brought this about through the death of his Son (see v. 11; Col 1:21–22). (CSB)

Candid assessment of sin. We were completely opposed to God. (TLSB)

*reconciled*. To reconcile is “to put an end to hostility,” and is closely related to the term “justify,” as the parallelism in vv. 9–10 indicates: (CSB)

|                   |                              |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| v. 9              | v. 10                        |
| Justified         | Reconciled                   |
| by his blood      | through the death of his Son |
| shall we be saved | shall we be saved            |

A personal, loving relationship between God and humans has been restored by Christ. (TLSB)

The following points help to further explain reconciliation:

- It is an act of God that is not natural or automatic. The problem with which it deals is a hostility so deep and settled that it would persist indefinitely unless drastic action were taken.
- It has as its chief object man. In his ignorance man either disregards Gods or fears him. We are cut off from God and he knows it.
- It declares that people who were hostile and alienated are so no longer.
- There is the most intimate connection between our experience of reconciliation and the fact of Christ’s death.
- It declares the magnitude of their own sin and the inexhaustible richness of God’s love. (IB)

From Kittel we have the following:

- In the NT only Paul uses the word in and God relationships.
- It is not reciprocal in the sense that both equally become friends.
- There is a change not merely in the disposition of man or his legal relationship to God, but in the total state of his life.
- The love of God has become a present and active reality.
- Men are made active in this work.



- Reconciliation of the world is not finished.

Reconciliation is not an especially important word in the cultic vocabulary of Greek religion or Judaism, though it is used from time to time of man's relationship to God. The word appears to belong especially neither to cultic nor legal technical terminology, but rather to the sphere of personal relationships. The noun and the verb appear here in Romans 5:10-11 in the context of God's love. God so loved the world that He makes sinful enemies His friends (Jn 3:16; 15:15). God's justification involves a real self-engagement to the sinner on His part. It is not a matter of a dispassionate judge handing down a verdict. God is a waiting father, eager to be reconciled (Lk 15:20). Christ is loving bridegroom, eager for his bride to be brought into communion with himself.

Restates v 6, emphasizing that natural human beings are not just powerless and ungodly; they are enemies of God. In light of this, reconciliation is an immense and miraculous achievement by Christ. Paul implies that the forensic justification and reconciliation of sinners was the most difficult part of Christ's work. Now that Christ has already accomplished this by his death, we are to rest assured that it easily follows that we will be saved from God's anger on the future day of judgment (v 9). If we have been reconciled to God by Christ's death, then how much more shall we be saved now that he lives again (v 10)! Our risen and living Lord serves as a constant reminder of our future salvation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

2 Corinthians 5:18-19, "18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message 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."

*saved by his life.* A reference to the unending life and ministry of the resurrected Christ for his people (see Heb 7:25). Since we were reconciled when we were God's enemies, we will be saved because Christ lives to keep us. (CSB)

Christ's resurrection brings salvation. (TLSB)

Christ has earned for us a share in his resurrection glory. Instead of being afraid of God, the believer can now exult as he or she thinks of God (v 11). No suffering can rob our lives of meaning or sever our relationship with God, for reconciliation is a *fait accompli* through Jesus Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

**5:11** Christians pondering what they have received through Christ's death and resurrection will respond in worship and praise. (TLSB)

*we have now received reconciliation.* Reconciliation, like justification (v. 1), is a present reality for Christians and is something to rejoice about. (CSB)

**5:1-11** We naturally seek to avoid pain and suffering. Yet, there are times when suffering is unavoidable. Focused on Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection, we know that suffering is not the whole story. God will use afflictions for our good and to bless others. He will keep His promises, and we will overcome our sufferings by faith. • Lord Christ, You suffered for us. When we must suffer, lead us in faith. Amen. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Mark 8:27-38

**27 And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” 28 And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” 29 And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” 30 And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.**

**8:27-35** The Gospel readings for the last several weeks have presented a mini-series of continuing stories. Jesus has been involved in the lives of many people: individuals, small groups, and a crowd of 5,000. He has ministered in a variety of ways. The disciples have been witnesses, not just to short snapshots of Jesus—they had opportunity to piece the pictures together into a panoramic view of who Jesus was. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

The *Gospel* (Mk 8:27–38), which features both Peter’s declaration about Jesus (vv 27–30) and Jesus’ foretelling of his death and resurrection (vv 31–38), occurs within a section of Mark’s Gospel referred to as “Withdrawals from Galilee” (*Concordia Self-Study Bible* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986], 1500). Roughly the first third of Mark’s Gospel features Jesus’ Galilean ministry (1:14–6:29). At Mk 6:32, however, the evangelist records that Jesus and his band went away by themselves to a solitary place. Thereupon follow the feeding of the five thousand on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee (6:30–52), a run-in with Pharisees at Gennesaret (7:1–23), the healing of the Syrophenician’s daughter at Tyre on the way to Sidon (7:24–31), an excursion through the Decapolis (7:31–8:10), and a final foray with the disciples to the region of Caesarea Philippi (8:11–9:32; cf. map in *CSSB*, p. 1516). Hence, it is in the environs of Caesarea Philippi—located at the foot of Mount Hermon, a capital city of the north founded by Philip the Tetrarch (D. F. Payne, “Caesarea Philippi,” in *The New Bible Dictionary* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979], 175)—that Peter revealed the truth about Jesus (8:29b) and Jesus spoke “plainly” about his impending suffering, dying, and rising again after three days (8:31–32a). The sermon text falls in a section of Mark’s Gospel where Jesus virtually is on the run from Pharisees who confront him at several turns (cf. 7:1, 5; 8:11). Jesus will return to Galilee more briefly (9:33–50), engage in further ministry in Judea and Perea (10:1–52), and begin his Passion with the triumphal entry (11:1–11). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

**8:27-28** As Jesus and his disciples travel in northern Galilee, he takes a public opinion poll. What are the disciples hearing as they mingle with the crowds? Jesus obviously doesn’t need to find out what he already knows; he intends to help the disciples understand that people who experience miracles do not always understand and believe in the source of their aid. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

The answers represent a variety of messianic expectations. Some thought God had validated John the Baptist’s ministry by raising him from the dead; these people misunderstood who had prepared for whom. Others thought Jesus fulfilled the promise of Elijah’s return, found in Mal 4:5. In the Jewish Passover tradition, an empty place was set at the table for Elijah, should he return. Since he had been taken alive to heaven, was it not possible for him to return alive and continue his ministry? Still others saw in Jesus the culmination of the ministry and messianic hope of other prophets. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

People recognized Jesus as more than a teacher or clever speaker. They saw the power of God in him, but most had not understood his divinity. They were elated that God had sent a prophet, but had not caught on that God himself had established residency in their community. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

**8:27 went** – The little word *exēlthen* connects the sermon text to the previous story, the healing of a blind man at Bethsaida (Mk 8:22–26). From Bethsaida, Jesus and the Twelve moved north, following the course of the Upper Jordan to its source, literally, “to the villages of Philip’s Caesarea” (*eis tas kōmas*

*Kaisareias tēs Philippou*). This Caesarea was in Philip’s jurisdiction (cf. Lk 3:1), to be distinguished from Caesarea Maritima (“Caesarea on-the-sea”), named after Augustus and headquarters for the Roman occupation (cf. Acts 8:40; 9:30; 10:1, 24; 11:11, among others). Philip’s Caesarea also was a thoroughly Romanized area, and it may be significant theologically that Peter’s confession that Jesus was the Christ occurred where locals were devoted to the idea of Caesar’s lordship (W. L. Lane, *Gospel according to Mark* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974], 289). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

*Caesarea Philippi*. Northernmost Galilean city Jesus visited, 25 miles north of Bethsaida, in the largely Gentile region of the Sea of Galilee. (TLSB)

**8:27b-28** Jesus asked his question “on the way” (*en tēi hodōi*), that is, in a setting where he could instruct the Twelve. The Galilean ministry was now practically ended, and the way to the cross lay before him. Now was the time to question the Twelve about what they had seen and heard (cf. Mk 7:37; 8:17–21) and prepare them for the future. Some felt that Jesus represented a raised John the Baptizer (Mk 6:14; Lk 9:7); others, that he was an Elijah redivivus (Mk 6:15a; Lk 9:8a); still others, that he was Jeremiah or another prophet (Mt 16:14b; Mk 6:15b; Lk 9:8b). Few in Galilee, it seems, had entertained the idea that Jesus was the Christ, though this possibility had been discussed in Judea (cf. Jn 7:28–31, 41; 9:22), in Samaria (Jn 4:29), and perhaps even in Phoenicia (Mt 15:22). Now, Jesus wants to know, what did the disciples think? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

**8:29-30** Jesus then asks the crucial question: “What about you? Who do you say I am?” The Twelve saw all that the general public had seen. But had they perceived more? Would they let the revelations lead them to a different conclusion? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

Peter answers for them all: “You are the Christ.” Unchurched people today may assume that Christ is Jesus’ last name, but it is a title which asserts that Jesus of Nazareth fulfills God’s OT promises. Greek Christ translates Hebrew *Messiah*, “Anointed One.” The technical term is so important that it is adopted into other languages, but the word translation also requires a cultural one. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

The OT practice of anointing was common. A “messiah/anointed one” was one chosen and consecrated by God for a special assignment, most often as high priest (Lev 4:3, 5, 16; 6:15; cf. Ps 84:9), or as king (1 Sam 24:7–11; 26:9–23; cf. Is 45:1). While all the kings and priests foreshadowed Jesus, God’s “Messiah/Anointed One,” he is prominently in view in passages such as Pss 2:2; 18:50; 89:51; 132:10, 17; Dan 9:25–26. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

An example of anointing that illustrates the future promise is in 1 Samuel 16. Samuel anoints the boy David. He does not become king until many years and battles later, but God had chosen him for the job. It was his, by God’s promise. *Contemporary illustration:* In November of leap years we elect a president. He is president-elect, the “chosen one,” until January 20, when he actually assumes the office. Though the Father chose his Son to save us back in eternity, and declared that choice to mankind in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:15), thousands of years passed before the Son arrived to assume his throne via the cross. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

“Messiah” became an important, though often misdefined, term in Judaism. Peter has the right definition. Parallel accounts in Matthew (16:16) and Luke (9:20) tell us that Peter recognizes the unique person of Christ as the Son of God. We confess the same when we say that Jesus is the only-begotten Son of God. We may not know exactly how the Son is begotten from eternity, but we know that only the Father and the Son have this relationship. Peter picks Jesus out of a line-up. Jesus is different from all the prophets. After centuries of promises, Jesus so rapidly fulfills the OT that those who have been watching him closely identify him as the Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

We see Jesus as the Christ today not as a promise given, but as a promise kept. In a sense the meaning of “Messiah” has changed because we are no longer looking for him; we have seen him. But as Jesus predicted, impostors still send in their resumes for the job. David Koresh got attention, but not the job. About 800 people in the United States today claim to be the Messiah. But Peter and we who share his confession of faith know that the job was reserved from eternity for Jesus alone, and we read in the gospels how he carried it out. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

The pronoun *humeis* makes Jesus’ question emphatic: “But who do *you* [*humeis*] say that I am?” Probably the disciples were flummoxed by the question. Then Peter comes to the fore, possibly serving as the spokesman for the apostles (Lane, 290, on the basis of Mk 9:5; 10:28; 11:21; 14:29): “You [*su*] are the Christ.” This is much shorter—and so more poignant—than Luke’s “the Christ of God” (Lk 9:20) or Matthew’s “the Christ, the son of the living God” (Mt 16:16). But in each account the essence of the confession is the same. In the Old Testament, the priest or king is God’s anointed (cf. 1 Sam 26:9, 11; 2 Sam 23:1; Ps 105:15), and in Ps 2:2, “Anointed” clearly refers to the Christ (cf. Dan 9:25; Lk 4:18; Acts 4:25–26; 10:38; Heb 1:9). Peter’s confession was borne of faith yet, as the course of this text shows, indicates a misunderstanding (Mk 8:31–33; 10:35–45). False hopes were associated with the title “Christ” in the first century, so Jesus charged the disciples to say nothing to anyone—as indeed he had done earlier when demons identified him (Mk 1:25; 3:12). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

**8:29** *who do you say I am* – Jesus’ point in pressing this question of His identity is to get the disciples to recognize and acclaim Him as the Christ. (TLSB)

*Christ.* Because popular Jewish ideas associated with the term “Christ” were largely political and national, Jesus seldom used it. Of its seven occurrences in Mark, only three appear in the sayings of Jesus (9:41; 12:35; 13:21), and in none of these does he use the title of himself (with the possible exception of 9:41). Mark identifies Jesus as the Christ in 1:1. (CSB)

Although Mark begins by identifying Jesus as the Christ (1:1, 11), this is the first time the disciples correctly identify Jesus as the Messiah. In Mark, however, Peter does not confess at this time that Jesus is the Son of God. (TLSB)

**8:27-30** For the first time in Mk, one of the Twelve recognizes Jesus as the Christ, God’s Anointed One. How slow we are and how dull is our understanding of Jesus’ divinity! We see and yet do not see. And so it is that Jesus graciously continues revealing Himself to us through Word and Sacrament. His Spirit works in us the faith that claims, “Jesus is the Christ.” • Lord Jesus, help us to see You as the true Son of the Father, the Christ anointed as our prophet, priest, and king. Rule us graciously for all eternity. Amen. (TLSB)

### *Jesus Predicts His Death*

**31 And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”**

**34 And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. 36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? 37 For what can a man give in return**

**for his soul? 38 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”**

**8:31–10:52** A new section begins in 8:31 and centers on three predictions of Jesus’ death (8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34). It indicates a geographical shift from Galilee, where most of Jesus’ public ministry reported by Mark took place, to Jerusalem and the closing days of Jesus’ life on earth. In this section Jesus defines the true meaning of “Christ” as the title applies to him. (CSB)

**8:31-35** Because Peter got the first answer right (remember the commendation that Jesus gives him in other gospels), Jesus goes on to the next lesson. He tells them in clear language what must happen because he is the Messiah. He gives a Reader’s Digest version of our OT Reading and Isaiah 53. Peter, perhaps with head swollen from knowing the right answer to the first question, disagrees with the Teacher in the next lesson. He warns that talk of rejection and death does not sit well with the general public, nor with the Teacher’s students. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

Then Jesus, who had given Peter an A+ for the first answer, kicks Peter out of the class. “Out of my sight, Satan!” is strong language. Jesus must reject the temptation to skip the part in the Messiah’s job description about suffering and dying. That assignment comes from God, not people; and only Satan would benefit from changing it. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

Those of us who preach get to proclaim the message, “You are the Christ,” as we point to Jesus of Nazareth. In repeating Peter’s confession we give our own. Could we follow our confession by putting our foot in our mouth as Peter did? Could we also try to change Jesus’ plan? Do we like (and do we follow) Jesus’ instructions to love sinners, look for the strays, accept the rejected, feed the hungry, etc.? When we confess that Jesus is the Messiah of God, we also commit ourselves to love all people, even when that means bearing a cross ourselves. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

Peter’s confession immediately preceding our text (vv 27–30) is most important. The parallel accounts in Mt 16:13–28 and Lk 9:18–27 provide further insight. Peter proclaims Jesus as the Christ, the Anointed One. Peter’s confession, however, is quickly followed by allowing himself to be an instrument of Satan, tempting Jesus to forsake his mission as the Christ. Our text then presents the true role and purpose of the Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

**8:31-32** The first three infinitives in v 31 that depend on the impersonal *dei* (“it is necessary”)—namely, *pathein* (“to suffer”), *apodokimasthēnai* (“to be rejected [after scrutiny]”), and *apoktanthēnai* (“to be killed”)—provide “a remarkably complete outline of the Passion” (H. B. Swete, *Commentary on Mark* [Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1978], 178; all quotations used by permission), such as we might expect in the Lenten season. However, the last infinitive of the series (*anastēnai*, “to arise”) anticipates Easter and our Lord’s great victory “after three days” (*meta treis hēmeras* [also in Mk 9:31; 10:34]; cf. *dia triōn hēmerōn*, Mk 14:58). The latter turns of phrase possibly derive from Hos 6:2 (LXX, author’s translation, emphasis added): “He shall heal us after two days; *on the third day* we shall rise [*en tēi hēmerai tēi tritēi anastēsometha*]” (so argues Swete, 179). Hence, it was Easter victory, and not just gory details associated with the Passion, that Jesus elaborated upon during his close proximity with the Twelve (cf. v 32a: “he said this plainly [*parrēsiai*]”). Peter could not abide it. His rebuke of Jesus for proclaiming the Gospel [*ho Petros auton ērxato epitiman autōi*] recalls Jesus’ earlier rebuke of the disciples for bruiting about the idea that Jesus was a “Messiah” in the popular misunderstanding (cf. v 30 above). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

**8:31 began** – Peter’s confession (v 29) and Jesus’ teaching of his suffering initiate a turning point in his ministry, indicated by “began.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

The time had come for the impending Passion to be presented to the disciples in a straightforward way. They still have in mind the things of men and glory. The theology of the cross was a necessity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

*Son of Man.* Jesus' most common title for himself, used 81 times in the Gospels and never used by anyone but Jesus. In Da 7:13–14 the Son of Man is pictured as a heavenly figure who in the end times is entrusted by God with authority, glory and sovereign power. That Jesus used "Son of Man" as a Messianic title is evident by his use of it (v. 31) in juxtaposition to Peter's use of "Christ" (v. 29). (CSB)

*must suffer.* As predicted in the suffering servant passage in Isa 52:13–53:12 (see Mk 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33–34; 14:21, 41). (CSB)

*dei:* Jesus' suffering and death was necessary. His resurrection on the third day is clearly stated. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Though Isaiah 52:13-53:12 predicted that God's Servant would suffer and die for the benefit of His people, the disciples would prove unable to accept such suffering. Jesus repeats this prediction twice in Mark (9:31; 10:33-34), so that there end up being three Passion predictions, one for each of Peter's denials in 14:66-72. After each Passion prediction, Jesus continues by teaching about discipleship. (TLSB)

*be rejected* – Apodokimasthēnai means "to be rejected after scrutiny," referring to the examinations of Christ during his trial. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

*elders.* The lay members of the Sanhedrin, the high court of the Jews. (CSB)

*chief priests.* These included the ruling high priest, Caiaphas; the former high priest, Annas; and the high priestly families. (CSB)

*teachers of the law.* Representatives of the three groups mentioned here constituted the Sanhedrin. (CSB)

*after three days* – He also added a note of final victory. But this the disciples constantly forgot, so shocked were they by the fact that he, their Lord and Master, would suffer and die. That's why the resurrection actually took them by surprise. These words at first glance seem to be in accordance with the fact that "on" the third day Christ rose from the dead. However, this was the Hebrew way of speaking. "After three days" did not necessarily mean after three full days, but the passing of parts of three days. (PBC)

**8:32 said this plainly** – He did this in order that his disciples might understand that his being Christ, as Peter had confessed him in their name, did not make him an earthly king – a false hope that continued to linger in their hearts until his ascension. (PBC)

There was constant misunderstanding. And "afraid" is a constant state of fear even to ask a single question. By the way, their lack of understanding cannot be blamed on Jesus. Look at Matthew 17:23 and Luke 9:45. The amazing thing is that Jesus was so patient (and still is with us.) Lack of faith was displaced by fear which led to the pride about to be revealed in the next verses. (Buls)

Parrēsiai means "plainly, frankly" (BAGD, p. 630), no longer in parables or figures of speech (Jn 16:29). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

Jesus was explicit (“plainly,” *parrēsia*). Peter understood quite well that suffering and death were not a part of his view of the Messiah’s role. Peter’s rebuke of Jesus for thinking of such a defeat, rather than envisioning triumph and victory, is so natural to the human mind. Only God himself could have come forward with his perfect plan of salvation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

*Peter ... began to rebuke him.* Suffering and rejection had no place in Peter’s conception of the Messiah, and he rebuked Jesus for teaching what to him seemed not only inconceivable but terribly wrong. (CSB)

Peter will not accept a suffering Christ until after the resurrection. Like most Jews of his day, Peter expects a powerful warrior and conquering Messiah. Ironically, Jesus has been the one to silence others (cf. 1:25-26). Now, however, Peter tries to silence Jesus. (TLSB)

**8:33-35** Jesus turned sharply on Peter (for *epistrapheis*, cf. Mk 5:30; Jn 21:20) and, upon seeing the disciples (who probably entertained similar views), immediately took Peter to task: “The Lord recognizes his great adversary in Peter, who for the moment acts Satan’s part” (Swete, 181). But by his dying and rising, Jesus beats down Satan underfoot (cf. the Litany, *LSB*, p. 289), a reality to be shared not only with Peter by way of rebuke but also with the other disciples, the crowd (whom Jesus now summons to his side), and—indeed—any Christian. Thus, taking up one’s cross, following Jesus, and losing one’s life for Jesus’ sake has less to do with loyal self-sacrifice (thus Swete, 182) or personal commitment (thus Lane, 305) than being conjoined to Jesus in one’s own dying and rising with him (cf. Rom 6:5–7; Gal 2:20). This happens in Baptism and as one shoulders the cross that God gives. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

**8:33** *turning and seeing his disciples* – They all had the wrong view and needed correction. (PBC)

*rebuked Peter* – Jesus is, in fact, correcting all of the Twelve, since none can accept the necessity of His sacrificial death. (TLSB)

*Satan.* Peter’s attempt to dissuade Jesus from going to the cross held the same temptation Satan gave at the outset of Jesus’ ministry (see Mt 4:8–10), so Jesus severely rebuked him. (CSB)

The refusal to accept God’s plan of having Jesus die for all is devilish, for it threaten to undo the divine plan of salvation. (TLSB)

Satana -*the accuser*, that is, the *devil*:—Satan. (QV)

Jesus addresses Peter as Satana, the Aramaic form of the Hebrew name and term satan, “Satan, accuser.” The theology of glory appeals to natural man, who seeks to obtain glory the easy way—without suffering and death. Peter appeals to Jesus in the same vein as Satan did during Jesus’ 40-day temptation (Mk 1:12–13; Mt 4:1–11). God’s way, however, is the theology of the cross. The suffering and death of Christ, and of the Old Adam in each of us, must precede entrance into glory. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

*not setting your mind on the things of God* – This inability to accept a suffering Savior involves the refusal of the will of God, whose sovereign disposition of the problem of sin and human rebellion fails to conform to the niceties of human expectations. Jesus shows no inclination to justify the ways of God to men. He simply affirms that the way of the cross is the will of God. (Lane)

To accept Jesus’ suffering and believe in the resurrection is a divine gift. Cf. Php. 2:5-11). (TLSB)

We can easily relate to Peter's struggle. Isaiah brings it home: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways" (Is 55:8). Our sinful flesh has in mind the things of men. It is precisely because of this, though, that Jesus must go to the cross. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

**8:34-38** Jesus now applies the implications of His own Messiahship to the lives of His followers. Just as He willingly submits to God's will, even when that is painful, so they must also submit. Augustine: "The first destruction of man was the love of himself...Prefer to this God's will; learn to love yourself by not loving yourself" (NPNF1 6:408). (TLSB)

**8:34** *calling the crowd to him* – By doing this Jesus indicates that the conditions for following him are relevant for all believers, and not for the disciples alone. (Lane)

Many in the crowds had been following Christ for entirely material reason. Many were also defecting when it became clear that Jesus would not consent to become an earthly "bread" king. (PBC)

*deny himself.* Cease to make self the object of his life and actions. (CSB)

The present tense of "follow" indicates a continuing activity. There is no instant "quick fix" to avoid suffering; rather, cross-bearing lasts throughout the follower's life. Jesus addresses his words to everyone, not only the disciples; they apply not just to pastors today, but to all church members. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

*hostis thelei opisō mou elthein*, "If anyone would come after me . . ." To "come after me" is to be attached to Jesus. Attached how? *aparnēsasthō heauton, kai aratō ton stauron autou, kai akoloutheitō moi*, "he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." This is wonderfully stated by Paul: "And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Cor 5:15). Jesus' Passion is our passion to serve him, not because we must, but because we now desire to, by his grace. "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions" (Gal 5:24). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

*aparneoma* to *deny utterly*, that is, *disown, abstain* (QV) – Jerome James, Seattle SuperSonic's Center, responding to coach Nate McMillians's charges that he is selfish: "I don't have the first clue who he is talking about, because all I worry about is Jerome." (Sports Illustrated – Feb. 17, 2003)

*take up his cross.* The picture is of a man, already condemned, required to carry the beam of his own cross to the place of execution (see Jn 19:17). Cross-bearing is a willingness to suffer and die for the Lord's sake. – The cross was an instrument of death, and the phrase "take up his cross" refers to hardships and even death suffered as a result of being a follower of Jesus. While many today use the phrase "bearing a cross" to refer to everything from illnesses to layoffs, the phrase is properly used to refer to suffering which occurs as a direct result of the Christian faith. (CSB)

Accept the burdens of being an imitator of Christ. Augustine: "Let him bear whatever trouble he has, so let him follow Me. From when he shall begin to follow Me in conformity to My life and precept, he will have many to contradict him...and that from among those are even as it were Christ's companions. (TLSB)

Bearing the cross was not a Jewish metaphor, and Jesus' statement must have sounded repugnant to the crowd and the disciples alike. The saying evokes the picture of a condemned man going out to die who is forced to carry on his back the cross-beam upon which he is to be nailed at the place of execution. By the time Mark prepared his Gospel this had become cruel reality, both for Jesus and the church. (Lane)



The idea of carrying a cross while following Jesus probably refers to the fact that the condemned criminal carried the cross-beam to the stake at the place of execution. Crucifixion developed from a variety of methods of impaling that were practiced by the Babylonians and Persians. The Romans used it for executing political enemies of the state, as was well known in Palestine; e.g. ca. 2 B.C. the Roman governor Varus crucified 2000 Jews in quelling a revolt. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

*and follow me.* Implying that his own death would be by crucifixion. (CSB)

Christians follow Jesus through suffering and death and into resurrection. (TLSB)

akoloutaeo to *be in the same way with*, that is, to *accompany* (specifically as a disciple):—follow, reach. (QV)

There is no instant “quick fix” to avoid suffering; rather, cross-bearing last throughout the follower’s life. Jesus addresses his words to everyone, not only the disciples; they apply not just to pastors today, but to all members. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

**8:35** *save his life.* Physical life may be saved by denying Jesus, but eternal life will be lost. Conversely, discipleship may result in the loss of physical life, but that loss is insignificant when compared with gaining eternal life. (CSB)

The mystery of Jesus’ suffering for the life of the world turns upside down everything the disciples know and imagine. In order to save their lives they must be willing to give them up. (TLSB)

In developing the thought of the supreme value of life in its deepest sense, Jesus employed language drawn from commercial life: profit, gain, loss, give in exchange. A comparison of values is the proper setting for consideration of profit and loss. Corresponding to the advantage gained – the whole world – is the payment which must be forfeited – authentic life. But the ledger involves values which cannot really be compared. The loss even of ordinary human life is in no way compensated by winning the world; how much more is this true of eternal life. (Lane)

The principle of discipleship now follows. *Psuchē* can mean “life,” “soul,” or “self,” and here probably includes all three. The person who is saved gains eternal life and the preservation of his soul, while those who are lost enter the “second death” and experience everlasting destruction of their selves. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

Here again we see the paradoxical nature of the theology of the cross. Attempts at self-preservation fail, while those who risk all for Christ and live with selfless abandon will be saved. Note that losing one’s life for the Gospel is equivalent to losing it for Christ himself. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

Losing one’s life (literally, “his soul,” *tēn psuchēn autou*) is possible when it is done for the sake of the Gospel. Losing is saving (*sōsei*, from *sōzō*). Jesus is the ultimate example, as he lost his life so we could be saved. For the sake of the Gospel and its salvation, we, by grace, no longer want to live for ourselves. A miracle! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Mark’s first readers had already experienced that in their lives and were to experience even more. Christians today also are not being spared. In many countries they are being persecuted because of their

faith. In our own country atheistic propaganda is growing more powerful and, at times, even influences laws and courts. The cross and being loyal to Christ always go together. (PBC)

**8:36-37** These verses give the eternal perspective. Other “gains” in this world may be far more appealing and for the moment seem far more worthy of pursuit than following a crucified Criminal. But in light of eternity, isn’t it well worth the “loss” of all worldly prizes, since none of them, not even all of them combined, could possibly amount to the redemption price of our soul/life/self? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

Jesus perhaps chose several of the technical expressions (e.g., *kerdēsai*, “to gain,” v 36a; *zēmiōthēnai*, “to forfeit,” v 36b; *antallagma*, “recompense,” v 37) because the population of the northern towns was deeply occupied in the pursuit of wealth (Swete, 183). Luther supposed that being ashamed of Christ and not speaking up for him means compromise in the face of persecution. The Christian, however, must bear up. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

“What can a man give in exchange for his soul?” Nothing! It took God in human flesh dying on the cursed tree. This is sticker shock for those who think they can come up with the payment themselves. May we, “in this adulterous and sinful generation” (*en tēi geneai tautēi tēi moichalidi kai hamartōlōi*), remain faithful to the covenant of marriage with him, the Bridegroom. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Jesus underlines the foolishness of chasing after a fading world while being robbed of eternal life. No wealth but Christ’s blood can be exchanged for one’ soul (1 Peter 1:18-19). Augustine: “Great is the world, but greater is He by whom the world was made. Fair is the world; but fairer is He by whom the world was made. Evil is the world; and good is He by whom the world was made” (NPNF1 6:410). (TLSB)

**8:36** *the whole world*. All the things that could possibly be achieved or acquired in this life. (CSB)

In developing the thought of the supreme value of life in its deepest sense, Jesus employed language drawn from commercial life: profit, gain, loss, give in exchange. A comparison of values is the proper setting for a consideration of profit and loss. Corresponding to the advantage gained – the whole world – is the payment which must be forfeited – authentic life. But the ledger involves values which cannot really be compared. The loss even of ordinary human life is in no way compensated by winning the world; how much more is this true of eternal life! (Lane)

*soul*. That is, eternal life (also in v. 37). (CSB)

**8:37** GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL – Here Jesus supposes the case of a man who has lost his soul and now wants to regain it. The answer to the question Jesus possesses is “nothing.” (Buls)

**8:38** *ashamed of me and of my words*. Contrast Ro 1:16. A person who is more concerned about fitting into and pleasing his own “adulterous and sinful generation” than about following and pleasing Christ will have no part in God’s kingdom. (CSB)

The disciples as yet refuse to accept Jesus as the suffering Messiah or to confess Him truly. Jesus graciously promises a reward for those who accept the necessity of His death and confess Him as Savior before the world (Mt. 10:32). Jesus emphasizes His Word (“gospels,” v. 35) as the basis of faith, life and salvation. This continues the emphasis on preaching begun (1:14-15). (TLSB)

There will be many such persons who are ashamed, since the cross is a scandal. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

*this adulterous and sinful sinful generation* – The word “adulterous” harkens back to the OT picture of God’s people, Israel, as his wife who is unfaithful to him (e.g. Hosea; Ezekiel 16 and 23). The NT picture of the church as Christ’s spotless bride (Eph 5:21-33) contrasts with the world as Babylon, the mother of harlots (Revelation 17). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

*when he comes in the glory of his Father.* See 2Th 1:6–10. The situation in which Jesus is rejected, humiliated and put to death will be reversed when he returns in glory as the Judge of all men. (CSB)

Ambrose: “The angels come in obedience, He comes in glory: they are His retainers, He sits upon His throne: they stand, He is seated – to borrow terms of the daily dealings of human life, He is the judge: they are the officers of the court” (NPNF2 10:257). (TLSB)