

Second Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING – Acts 4:32-35

32 Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold 35 and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

4:32-33 The trust theme again. And with the support of the whole community, the apostles did what they needed to do—witness to the resurrection. Surrounded and infused by the Word—the Word incarnate in Jesus, and spoken by him—they knew Christ’s love and strength, gave it away, and found new life in the grace that flowed directly from God’s heart. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

4:32 *one in heart and soul.* In complete accord, extending to their attitude toward personal possessions (see 2:44). (CSB)

Preview and foretaste of the restoration of Paradise-like conditions in heaven. God gives us property and resources for our neighbor’s benefit. The early Christians fully shared with one another, but not in the same way as the failed communist experiments of the 20th century. Here there is no compulsion or involvement of the State - only believers are affected, and only goods are shared, not their production. (TLSB)

And this picture is truly all the more remarkable because all the elements for disharmony and squabbling were present! This congregation, was made up of a vast variety of people, old and young, rich and poor, with many differences in occupations, education, gifts, temperaments, etc. This is food for serious thought for us: We have the same Word, and the same Holy Spirit stands ready and waiting to make us, too, more ready to share our blessings with those who have need of them. (LL)

The church’s unity expressed itself in a willingness to share. This was not a regulation of the apostles. The right to hold property and have personal possessions had not been abolished. “Much grace was upon them all” means that the results of the apostle’s work showed in the lives of the believers. (PBC)

4:33 *with great power the apostles.* Such preaching was the opposite of dull, distant reading from a manuscript. (TLSB)

testimony to the resurrection. As significant as the death of Christ was, the most compelling event was the resurrection—an event about which the disciples could not keep silent. (CSB)

A word study of *marturion*, “testimony, witness,” discloses how this general term for a person or message developed into the English word martyr. The believer put his or her life on the line—and often lost it—when he or she spoke about the Savior. Christians should not ask to be spared trials and dangers, but pray to be made strong enough to endure them. Instead of asking God to remove pressure and opposition, pray for boldness to confront the enemy. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

great grace - Likely high esteem from the average person in Jerusalem. Cf. Mark 7:37. (TLSB)

4:35 *distributed...as..need* -Voluntary, commendable. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – 1 John 1:1-2:2

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— 2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— 3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

1:1–4 The introduction to this letter deals with the same subject and uses several of the same words as the introduction to John’s Gospel (1:1–4)—“beginning,” “Word,” “life,” “with.” (CSB)

1Jn is traditionally known as a letter, but it lacks the typical introductory greetings of early Christian letters. Compare the teaching of these verses with Jn 1:1–18. (TLSB)

The purpose of John’s letter, similar to that of his gospel (Jn 20:31), is to bring the readers into communion with the Word of Life. By doing so they also become part of the “communion of saints” with the apostolic witnesses, and their joy is fulfilled. This is the “basic, pivotal statement on which he [John] builds the thoughts of the epistle in ever-widening circles” (Lenski, p. 69). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

This epistle begins with a long sentence. However, though long, it is quite intelligible. The object is placed in front to make it most emphatic. “that which was from the beginning” is what the following message is about. In verse 3 this object is repeated as it is joined with the predicate. “That which we have seen and heard proclaim we to you.” And what is the purpose of their proclamation? That is stated in verse 4. Also verse 2 with a further description belongs to the object as a modifier. Verse 3: “That which we have seen and heard we proclaim to you.” And verse 4: “That your joy may be complete.” Verse 2 is a parenthesis, also modifying the object. “And this (concerning the Word of life) we write to you.” Why does the Apostle change the form of the object at the end of the first sentence, putting it this way: “Concerning the Word of life.” No doubt by this variation of expression he would bring out the greater emphasis that he has a personal object in mind. The Apostle would set before the eyes of his readers that which was from the beginning. “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and which we have touched with our hands,” he has reference to a most remarkable person, the Word of life, the Son of God, Christ. John is going to set Christ before his readers. (Stoeckhart)

1:1 The whole substance and blessing of the Gospel is found in the unique person who is both God and man—Jesus Christ. (TLSB)

that which - “That which,” *ho*, is a neuter, perhaps because it “conveys more than the masculine would, namely in addition to the person all that this person was and is and ever will be for us” (Lenski, p. 370), including “life” and “fellowship” (both grammatically feminine). “From the beginning” connects the Epistle to the Gospel and Genesis, indicating the timelessness of God’s plan of salvation. The repetition of “that which” intensifies the apostolic witness to drive home the resurrection of Christ. The content of apostolic proclamation is the “Word of life” who was made flesh (cf. Jn 1:4,14; 5:26; 11:25; 14:6). “He is the truth about God, the ultimate reality, and a mediator of personal relationships that bring

complete and perfect joy” (Charles Laymon, ed., Interpreter’s One Volume Commentary [Nashville: Abingdon, 1971] 936). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

was from the beginning. Has always existed. (CSB)

“That which was from the beginning”: (cf. Gen 1:1), “In the beginning” (Jn 1:1). “In the beginning was the Word.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

we. John and the other apostles. (CSB)

heard ... seen ... looked at ... touched. The apostle had made a careful examination of the Word of life. He testifies that the one who has existed from eternity “became flesh” (Jn 1:14)—i.e., a flesh-and-blood man. He was true God and true man. At the outset, John contradicts the heresy of the Gnostics. (CSB)

(see Introduction: Gnosticism - CSB). - Follows below...

One of the most dangerous heresies of the first two centuries of the church was Gnosticism. Its central teaching was that spirit is entirely good and matter is entirely evil. From this unbiblical dualism flowed five important errors:

1. Man’s body, which is matter, is therefore evil. It is to be contrasted with God, who is wholly spirit and therefore good.
2. Salvation is the escape from the body, achieved not through faith in Christ but by special knowledge (the Greek word for “knowledge” is *gnosis*, hence Gnosticism).
3. Christ’s true humanity was denied in two ways: (1) Some said that Christ only seemed to have a body, a view called Docetism, from the Greek *dokeo* (“to seem”), and (2) others said that the divine Christ joined the man Jesus at baptism and left him before he died, a view called Cerinthianism, after its most prominent spokesman, Cerinthus. This view is the background of much of 1 John (see 1:1; 2:22; 4:2–3). See especially 5:6 and note.
4. Since the body was considered evil, it was to be treated harshly. This ascetic form of Gnosticism is the background of part of the letter to the Colossians (2:21–23).
5. Paradoxically, this dualism also led to licentiousness. The reasoning was that, since matter—and not the breaking of God’s law (1Jn 3:4)—was considered evil, breaking his law was of no moral consequence.

Satan’s assaults on the church, on God’s Word, and on Christ Himself never cease. Already in the first century, false teachings arose, put forth by respected and intelligent men like Cerinthus, which undermined the teachings of the apostles. Cerinthus was an Egyptian Jew who cobbled together teachings from the OT, fragments of Christianity, and pagan philosophy. This early movement promised that there was much more spiritual knowledge, secret knowledge, the Bible did not have. The Greek word for knowledge, *gnosis*, gave the name Gnosticism to this movement. Just like the new agers of today, gnostic teachers asserted the following: (PBC)

- There was no incarnation or virgin birth, not atoning death or bodily resurrection.
- The heavenly Christ and earthly Jesus were two separate things.
- All matter was evil and only mind and spirit were pure: thus since human bodies are basically evil anyway and just temporary tents for the soul, it didn’t matter how you live.
- The “spiritually advanced” gnostic leaders were no longer sinful.
- The Bible was an insufficient source of information.
- The apostles had no special authority for telling people how to think and live.

The sad result of Gnosticism was that believers were losing their confidence in the Bible, losing their certainty of being saved, drifting into unrepentant sinful lifestyles, growing selfish and hypocritical and unloving in their churches and families, becoming confused about leadership and authority, and losing their ability to distinguish truth from error. John's letter is a powerful blast of truth, rebuke, passionate exhortation, and love in order to bring people back into a stronger more vital relationship with their Lord. (PBC)

The Gnosticism addressed in the NT was an early form of the heresy, not the intricately developed system of the second and third centuries. In addition to that seen in Colossians and in John's letters, acquaintance with early Gnosticism is reflected in 1,2 Timothy, Titus, and 2 Peter and perhaps 1 Corinthians.

"Which we have heard" (perfect). The words of Jesus made a lasting impression on their minds and hearts. Peter said, "Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68). The "we" emphasizes that it was more than a personal account of John's hearing and observing. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

There were other eyewitnesses: "have seen with our eyes" (perfect). "The perfects denote lasting effect" (*An Analysis of the Greek New Testament* [Rome: Typis Pontificiae Universitatis Gregoriana, 1984] 726). It was not John's imagination or an optical illusion. John saw Jesus with his own eyes in his ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension. "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (Jn 20:29). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

"Which we have looked at": (aorist of *theaomai* "to contemplate, look upon, behold"). John and the others did more than just "see" Jesus; they gazed upon him with intense scrutiny and interest. They contemplated who he was and where he came from. We see the same form in Jn 1:14, "We beheld his glory." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

"And our hands have touched": These same graphic words are used in the Gospel—"touch [feel] me and see" (Lk 24:39) and with Thomas last Sunday, "put your finger here" (Jn 20:27). Jesus was not a phantom. He had a physical body. He did not only "seem" human as the Docetists claimed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

"This we proclaim concerning the Word of life" (original language, "the word of the life"). Jesus is the divine Logos (John 1; Genesis 1). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

The expression, "touched with our hands," reminds us of Christ's appearance to His disciples a week after Easter, when Thomas touched the scars of Jesus's hands, feet and side. (Stoeckhardt)

Absolute affirmation of Christ's physical, human nature. Luther: "By the grace of God I have learned not to turn my eyes away from that Person who was born to Mary, and not to seek or acknowledge another god. One's eyes must be fixed on that Person who was born of the Virgin Mary. Where the Son of God is, there Christ is; where Christ is, there the Father is." (TLSB)

Word of life. The one who is life and reveals life (see v. 2 and note). "Word" here speaks of revelation. (CSB)

Christ is the personal Word (Logos), which has come from the innermost essence of the Father, even as a human word proceeds from the thoughts and desires of man's heart. (Stoeckhardt)

1:2-4 The Word of Life is further explicated. “The life appeared” from his Baptism to his ascension, the time span of the apostolic witness. The mission of the apostolic church is to testify to and proclaim Christ so as to bring humanity into communion with God. Faithfully carrying out this mission brings great joy to those who participate in it. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

1:2 *The life . . . the eternal life.* Christ. He is called “the life” because he is the living one who has life in himself (see Jn 11:25; 14:6). He is also the source of life and sovereign over life (5:11). The letter begins and ends (5:20) with the theme of eternal life. (CSB)

Eternal life is found in God the Son, who was conceived in human flesh in the womb of His mother, Mary, and born in Bethlehem. (TLSB)

“The life appeared”: He was “the life eternal.” He was the very incarnation and personification of God’s life; he was the incarnation and personification of God’s light (Jn 1:4–5); the incarnation and personification of God’s grace, “The grace of God . . . has appeared” (Titus 2:11); and the incarnation and personification of God’s love, “This is how God showed his love among us” (1 In 4:9). (Original language uses the same form: “by this was manifested the love of God.”) This is an astounding truth. Jesus is God’s life, light, grace, and love to us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

The Word (Logos), the Son, issued from the Father, was born of the very essence of the Father and is now with the Father. Person is with Person - - Logos, the Life, and the Father. The two stand in an intimate relation to each other. One is with the other. They are intimately connected. And now,, says the Apostle, He who was with the Father and remains with the Father and who not for a moment is out of communion with the Father – He we saw, heard, and touched, and Him we make known as One who actually appeared unto us. (Stoeckhardt)

testify to it - “We have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life”: John was an eyewitness of “the life eternal.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

with the Father - “Was with the Father and has appeared to us”: “He was with God in the beginning” (Jn 1:2). *Pros* “with” conveys a dynamic personal relationship. Note *pros* also in Jn 1:1, “with God.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

Jesus, the Eternal Word, has always been with the Father. He was with Him at creation. (TLSB)

1:3 *we have seen* - “What we have seen.” John states the third time that he saw the Word of Life with his own eyes. “We proclaim . . . so that . . .” His witness is that they might come to faith and fellowship. “Faith comes from hearing the message” (Rom 10:17). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

you. All Christians who read this Letter. (TLSB)

fellowship with us. Participation with us (vicariously) in our experience of hearing, seeing and touching the incarnate Christ (v. 1). Fellowship (Greek *koinonia*) is the spiritual union of the believer with Christ—as described in the figures of the vine and branches (Jn 15:1–5) and the body and the head (1Co 12:12; Col 1:18)—as well as communion with the Father and with fellow believers. (CSB)

More than friendship; a common share in something (or in this case, someone). Christians have a common share in God the Father through the human nature of Jesus. Since we are all members of one Body of Christ, we share in fellowship with all other Christians through Jesus. (TLSB)

us. John and the other apostles who saw, heard, and touched Jesus, even after He was crucified and raised from the dead. (TLSB)

What the Apostle here wants to bring home is that later Christians have full fellowship with Christ's own apostles. It is a faith-fellowship. (Stoeckhardt)

Here the subject of the fellowship is greatly widened: Our fellowship is with the Father and the Son. (Stoeckhardt)

“Fellowship”: *koinōnia*. John proclaims “the word of the life” so that they may “keep on having” (pres. act. subj.) fellowship with them (us) and with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

Jews also saw and heard the incarnate Word and with hostile hands also touched this Word, but they did not enter into fellowship with Christ. It is therefore self-evident the Apostle here speaks of such hearing and seeing which includes faith. (Stoeckhardt)

1:4 *our joy may be complete*. John's joy in the Lord could not be complete unless his readers shared the true knowledge of the Christ (see 2Jn 12). (CSB)

We can enjoy the intimate communion with Christ just as much as one did the apostles and early disciples, if we use the Scriptures properly. Those who have no more than the Scriptures may have complete joy. The faith of such can be just as great as it was in those who once were the intimate companions of Christ in the days of His earthly sojourn. Christ is just as near to us as once He was to His apostles. And the salvation which He brings He pours out into the hearts of those who hold to the Scripture in the same manner as once He did bestow it upon His immediate disciples. (Stoeckhardt)

“Our joy complete”: Some manuscripts have “your joy.” The end of fellowship with believers and the Father and the Son is complete joy. Jesus came to give joy: Jn 16:24; 17:13. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

1:1–4 John begins this Book much like his Gospel account, with the Eternal Word, who was always with the Father and was working with the Father at creation. But here John's point is that this same Word who is “eternal life” is the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ, whom all the apostles had physically seen, heard, and touched. We owe the Eternal Word our perfect obedience. Despite our disobedience—our lack of recognition and faithfulness of our Creator—the Eternal Word did not come to condemn us but to save us. • Heavenly Father, by the writings of the apostles, grant that we may ever share in Christ and His kingdom, that our joy may be complete. Amen. (TLSB)

Walking in the Light

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

1:5–2:27 Because false teachers have troubled congregations, John invites his “little children” (2:1) to examine their faith and practice in view of God's standards. (TLSB)

1:5-7 The fellowship of the church is a fellowship of “light.” The metaphor of darkness describes sin, the absence of the light of divine perfection. The Christian lifestyle requires a distinct separation from the darkness of the old life of sin under the domination of the old self, and walking in the light of Christ, whose blood has given us life by the forgiveness of sins. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

1:5 *from him.* From Christ. (CSB)

“The message we heard from him [Jesus]”: John is relaying the message from Jesus that “God is light; and in him there is no darkness at all.” The whole ministry of Jesus was to reveal the glory, goodness, and grace of God (Jn 17:5). God is the Light of life and “fount and source of all goodness” (Collect). “With you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light” (Ps 36:9). God “lives in unapproachable light” (1 Tim 6:16). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

light ... darkness. Light represents what is good, true and holy, while darkness represents what is evil and false (see Jn 3:19–21). (CSB)

Light in Scripture often is used as a figure of salvation. Compare to Isaiah 60. But this figurative expression may also have a different meaning, as it does have at this place. Light may be a symbol of holiness. And the context shows that it is so to be taken here. (Stoekhardt)

There is no evil or deception in Jesus, only truth. (TLSB)

1:6–7 *walk in the darkness ... in the light.* Two life-styles—one characterized by wickedness and error, the other by holiness and truth. (CSB)

To live and practice what is not truth, i.e., sin. The “walk” reveals the truthfulness of one’s claims and confession. (TLSB)

“If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in darkness, we lie”: We cannot keep on walking (pres. act. subj.) in the darkness and claim to have fellowship with God. “Fellowship” is a deep union “in Christ” like that of the vine and the branches. Note the many times “in me” occurs in John 15. It is worked by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:14; Eph 4:3). It is a “partnership in the gospel” (Phil 1:5) and one to be nurtured and enjoyed. “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship” (Acts 2:42). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

1:6 *we.* John and his readers. (CSB)

to have fellowship with him. To be in living, spiritual union with God. (CSB)

walk. A metaphor for living. (CSB)

If we call God our God and do the opposite of what that implies, namely, walk in darkness, live in sin, then it is evident that we do not do the truth. (Stoekhardt)

“Do not live by the truth”: (original language, “not doing the truth”). Truth is not just intellectual knowledge, it is willed and done in the way we live our daily lives. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

1:7 *walk in the light* – To live openly and honestly, without covering up our behavior, since we confess our sins to God daily. Although we are sinners and still have sinful and selfish thoughts, words, and deeds, we do not dwell on such thoughts. We do not cultivate such words and perpetuate such deeds. (TLSB)

as He is in the light. Jesus lives and does all things according to the truth (the Word of God) (TLSB)

fellowship with one another. Believers have a common share in Christ (His life, death, resurrection, and ascension), which brings forgiveness and grace equally and blessedly to each. (TLSB)

But if we “keep on walking”: (pres. act. subj.) “we have” (pres. act. ind.) fellowship with one another. And the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies (pres. tense). This is real. Jesus as the Son of God (no phantom) shed his blood. The blood is real. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

sin. A key word in 1 John, occurring 27 times in the Greek. (CSB)

cleanses us from all sin – Only Christ’s blood could atone and has atoned for the sin of the world. He alone is righteous. “The Scriptures speak not merely in general of the Son of Man, but also indicate clearly His received human nature.... This is true not only according to the merit <of Christ’s blood> that was once attained on the cross. But in this place John means that in the work or act of justification, not only the divine nature in Christ but also His blood actually cleanses us from all sins” (FC SD VIII 59). (TLSB)

“Purifies us from all sin”: (original language “catharsis”). His “purifying” is true (cf. Heb 9:14). There is no false security of a false, formal relationship with God. The walking, the having fellowship, the purifying is all a present reality in fellowship with Christ, the Light. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

Two thoughts are here joined in one sentence. The first thought is this one: If you Christians walk in the light, you will walk in the mind and spirit of the holy Apostles. But do not think that this walk will be all perfect. The second point which the Apostle would make is that the blood of Christ ever and again purges these recurring sins. In other words, Christian walk in the light and alongside of their action goes the actio9n of God continually forgiving their sins. (Stoekhardt)

1:8-10 We Christians can face our sins because as we live in the light of life, we also live in truth. A lie is contrary to the new life. The power of forgiveness is known only by those who confess their sins. Moreover, only those who are confident of forgiveness have the courage to confess their sins honestly and fully. The desire to be a part of the fellowship of life and light may tempt one to piously proclaim innocence instead of confessing sins. But this makes for liars and hypocrites, denies God’s love, and vitiates Christ’s sacrifice. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

1:8 *have no sin.*† Note the singular. A claim of Gnosticism. (Cf. v. 9, “sins”—a confession of Christians.) (CSB)

Sin is not only what we do against God’s commands in thought, word and deed, but is also what we do naturally from the moment of our conception (cf. Ps 51:5). Jesus taught that man’s corrupted nature is incapable of doing any good (cf. Jn 6:63; 15:5). Luther, “Although we have become a new creature, nevertheless the remnants of sin always remain in us. We still have sin, and the poison is still in us; and that sin incites us to the fruits of sin, as in the case of David, to whom inherent, encompassing, and indwelling sin said: ‘Slay Uriah (cf. 2 Sam. 11:15). David consented and sinned.... Although we are

Christians sprinkled with the blood of Christ, yet we often err. Therefore the true knowledge of Christ causes a person to feel that he has sin. Furthermore, it causes us to lament this.... Finally we should hold most firmly to this, that no one is or becomes righteous before God except through the blood of Jesus Christ. For God alone is righteous, truthful, and wise. Whatever we do out of faith, we should always say: 'It is sin' and 'We are unworthy servants,' Luke 17:10. But we gain salvation solely because of the righteousness of God, and it is because of this righteousness that we are saved. (TLSB)

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves”: It is a false claim. We follow the “father of lies.” Some of the Gnostics held there was no guilt since matter was evil and the soul remained pure. Therefore, it didn’t matter what you did with the flesh. But we are sinners. God knows it. Others know it, and we need to own up to it. “I kept silent. . . . Then I acknowledged my sin to you” (Ps 32:3–5). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

If a person imagines he is already above sin and has attained to sinlessness, he has put himself above Christianity itself. (Stoekhardt)

1:9 *if we confess our sins* – This is not so to be understood as if our confession were the condition which moved God to forgive. (Stoekhardt)

faithful and just. Here the phrase is virtually a single concept (faithful-and-just). It indicates that God’s response toward those who confess their sins will be in accordance with his nature and his gracious commitment to his people (see Ps 143:1; Zec 8:8). (CSB)

God always does what is just and righteous. God is faithful to His promises and always keeps His Word. (TLSB)

faithful. To his promise to forgive (see Jer 31:34; Mic 7:18–20; Heb 10:22–23). (CSB)

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful”: “I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD’—and you forgave the guilt of my sin” (Ps 32:5). He is “faithful.” God is trustworthy, worthy of trust (1 Cor 1:9; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Tim 2:13). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

He is and remains the same. One should never think that daily confession of one’s sins should annoy or weary Him. (Stoekhardt)

forgive us.† Will provide the forgiveness that restores the communion with God that had been interrupted by sins (as requested in the Lord’s Prayer, Mt 6:12). (CSB)

all unrighteousness. Sins we willfully commit (sins of commission), good deeds we fail to do (sins of omission), and the sinful nature of every person. (TLSB)

1:10 *we have not sinned.* Gnostics denied that their immoral actions were sinful. (CSB)

make him a liar – God has declared what fallen mankind cannot see; that all have sinned and fallen short of His glory. To deny this is to sit in judgment of God and declare Him to be untrue. Cf. Jb 40:8. (TLSB)

his word is not in us – Jesus Christ is the living Word who abides in those who abide in Him through faith. But He will not abide with lies, for He is the truth. Luther, “In the end God will prevail and gain the victory, either by His goodness or hereafter by His severity. It will do no good to be justified

before men or in our own eyes, for we must ignore this and wait in fear to learn what God thinks about it.” (TLSB)

1:5–10 John writes about faithfulness in our walk with God. Our sinful pride rejects God’s Word and seeks to deceive us so that we might not know ourselves as we are or know God as He has revealed Himself. God sees our true nature, and in Christ He reveals His nature, which is both just and gracious to us. For those who confess their sins, God is always faithful to His promise to forgive. This is just and right because of His Son, who has paid the price for our sins. • Heavenly Father, give us hearts to believe and to know ourselves as we are. Then we may truthfully confess our sins, trusting in Your forgiveness and mercy. Amen. (TLSB)

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

2:1-2 Being a part of God’s fellowship does not imply moral perfection, but gives us the incentive to bring our sins to the one who “speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.” No one is excluded from receiving God’s grace, from the light and life of fellowship with God; it is for the “whole world.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

2:1 *little children.* John, the aged apostle, often used this expression of endearment (vv. 12–13, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21; the term in 2:18 translates a different Greek word). (CSB)

A reference given by the one who proclaimed the Word of life to them, by which they were brought to the faith and given new birth. John later refers to them as “children of God” because all Christians are “born of God” (3:9). (TLSB)

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful”: “I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD’—and you forgave the guilt of my sin” (Ps 32:5). He is “faithful.” God is trustworthy, worthy of trust (1 Cor 1:9; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Tim 2:13). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

I am writing – What he has told them orally he gives them here in writing. (Stoekhardt)

may not sin – Christians are informed about their reconciliation through Christ, not that they should make light of sin, but rather that they should avoid all sin. Christians should not willingly, deliberately sin or yield to sin. They must never seek the enjoyment of sin. (Stoekhardt)

Christians are both sinners and saints at the same time. John is writing to enlighten, strengthen, and build up the saints so they may say no to sin. (TLSB)

if anyone does sin – But so that Christians may not misunderstand him, he immediately adds: “If anyone sins.” Even though a Christian with all his heart renounces sin, he cannot entirely avoid to be tricked into sin before he is aware of it. This is due to the weakness of his flesh and blood. (Stoekhardt)

we have an advocate. One Greek word underlies this phrase, which refers to someone who speaks in court in behalf of a defendant (see note on Jn 14:16). (CSB)

Jesus is the mediator between God and man. As such, Jesus is our defender, our intercessor, who constantly presents evidence in God’s court of justice in favor of our pardon. “This is the worship that He approves above all other worship, that He be called upon in all afflictions” (AC XXI 3). Luther; “He is righteous and unstained. He is without sin. Whatever righteousness I have, this my Comforter has, He

who cries out for me to the Father: ‘Spare him, and he has been spared! Forgive him! Help him!’ The righteousness of Jesus Christ is standing on our side. For the righteousness of God in Him is ours.” (AE 30:236). Luther: “This text should be written with golden letters and should be painted in the heart. Therefore you should get understanding and say: ‘Christ, I know Thee alone as the Advocate, the Comforter, and the Mediator; and I do not doubt that Thou are such a Person for me but cling firmly to this with my heart and believe’” (AE 30:236). (TLSB)

Jesus Christ is our attorney at the highest court of justice. He is in heaven with the Father to make intercession for us. This is His ongoing business at the throne of God. He causes the Father to look, not upon our sin, but at His own perfect atonement. (Stoeckhardt)

“One who speaks to the Father in our defense”: (advocate *paraklētos*). Used in John’s Gospel (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) for the Holy Spirit. One who is “called to our side” to help us, as we might have a legal counselor. He pleads our case to the Father. “You disowned the Holy and Righteous One” (Acts 3:14). The same idea is expressed in Rom 8:33–34 and Heb 7:25: He is able for he is “the Righteous One.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

the righteous. In God’s court the defender must be, and is, sinless. (CSB)

2:2 *propitiation for our sins*. God’s holiness demands punishment for man’s sin. God, therefore, out of love (4:10; Jn 3:16), sent his Son to make substitutionary atonement for the believer’s sin. In this way the Father’s wrath is propitiated (satisfied, appeased); his wrath against the Christian’s sin has been turned away and directed toward Christ. (CSB)

“Atoning sacrifice for our sins”: (*hilasmos*). In the NT only here and in 1 Jn 4:10. It denotes a sacrifice offered to meet and satisfy the just wrath of God for the sins of the whole world; an offering offered by God himself when he “gave his one and only Son” (Jn 3:16); and an offering of the Son when he gave himself willingly. “He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself “ (Heb 7:27). The offering was of a united will and a united love of the Father and the Son (Jn 17:1). It was not a pagan sacrifice, where a vengeful pagan god reluctantly is forced to forgive by a reluctant human sacrifice. It was a sacrifice freely and lovingly given to atone for our sins (1 in 4:10). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

There Christ steps in as the means of appeasement and by His expiatory sacrifice brings about a favorable change in God. But we should note that John asserts that Christ not only once was, but that He is, the propitiation, the means of appeasing for our sins. (Stoeckhardt)

Satisfaction for the demands of God’s Law. Jesus satisfied God’s demands for perfect obedience and perfect payment for sins. Through His life and death on the cross, Jesus became the means of forgiveness, the way of reconciling man to God. (TLSB)

for the sins of the whole world. † Forgiveness through Christ’s atoning sacrifice is not limited to one particular group only; it has worldwide application (see Jn 1:29). It must, however, be received by faith (see Jn 3:16). Thus this verse does not teach universalism (that all people ultimately will be saved), but that Christ died for the sins of all mankind. (CSB)

His intercession consists in this that He points God to His scarred hands and feet, which once and for all time were pierced on the cross for the sins of the whole world. (Stoeckhardt)

Jesus made complete satisfaction for the sins of all mankind from the beginning of the world to the Last Day (objective justification). Jesus came that “He might taste death for everyone” (Heb 2:9) – even for those who reject Him, “denying the Master who bought them (2 Pt 2:1). These verses repudiate the false teaching of a “limited atonement” (that Christ did not atone for all mankind, but only for the elect). Luther: “He does not sit at the right hand of the Father to terrify us, but He is the expiation....Christ, who does not spurn a contrite and humble heart, wants to be the Lord and Author of life, not sin.” (TLSB)

GOSPEL – John 20:19-31

19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

20:19-31 Today’s lesson begins on the evening of Easter day with the disciples locked in a room in fear of the Jews. When Jesus appears to them, their initial reaction is greater fear still. But their fear begins to give way to the peace that Jesus brings them. A week later the disciples are once again found behind locked doors, implying that they remained fearful. Big fears go away slowly and require much encouraging. Thomas’s doubting was a symptom of his fear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

humin, “Peace be with you.” Throughout the New **20:19, 21, 26** *eirēnē* Testament, the Greek recalls the Hebrew *shalom*. In this one word is comprehended—and conveyed—the entire essence of the Gospel. So much more than absence of war or conflict, *shalom* describes the full condition of well-being that accrues when God and man are at one. Since the fall, of course, this is possible only when sin, which put enmity between God and his creatures, has been removed. And this, then, takes us specifically to the cross, where the reconciliation took place. It was peace that was promised in the first expression of Gospel (enmity between the serpent and Eve’s seed meant reconciliation of her offspring to God, Gen 3:15), and it is peace that is described in the final images of Scripture, when the well-being of creation is restored (Revelation 21–22). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

Moreover, the blessing of peace, which Jesus extends three times in this text, is never simply a pious wish, but actually conveys all of this. When Aaron would speak the *shalom* upon Israel, God promised, “I will bless them” (Num 6:27). Many a pastor has wisely instructed his confirmation class that if they should miss the entire Divine Service and arrive only in time for the Benediction, the trip is eternally valuable. In those words of peace alone, hearers *have*, have been given, every blessing of a reconciled, all-powerful and all-loving God to his people. The disciples received all this each time Jesus spoke the blessing in this text. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

Notice the way a speaking of peace introduces each major movement of the story: the reinstatement of the Ten (vv 19–20), the giving of the Office of the Keys (vv 21–23), and the restoration of Thomas (vv 26–29). These three occurrences for these three movements shape the outline here offered. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

This passage is paralleled at Luke 24:36-49 and Mark 16:14-18 which ought be read. It was late in the evening. The group was composed of the disciples, those with them and the two Emmaus disciples. They were eating. (Buls)

Word of Jesus' resurrection has already reached the disciples by Easter evening. Mary Magdalene and other women have seen the Lord and, we can be sure, have dutifully carried out their assignment to bring word to Jesus' brethren, especially Peter (20:17-18; also Mt 28:10; Mk 16:7; Lk 24:9-10). Peter himself, with John, had seen the empty tomb, and John had even "believed" (Jn 20:6-8). Further, the personal appearance to Peter ("Simon," Lk 24:34; "Cephas," 1 Cor 15:5) has almost surely taken place before our text. The fact that Jesus had risen could no longer have seemed like the "idle tale" the disciples had taken it to be earlier (Lk 24:11). What remains to make *this* appearance so noteworthy? Fear of Jesus himself! The disciples had abandoned him at the most crucial moment. Was it entirely good news that he was alive? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

20:19 *first day of the week* – "That first day of the week" is a conscious effort to inform the reader that we are still on Easter Day. The identification of the risen Christ with the crucified Jesus is made at the first appearances. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 2)

"Evening of that first day of the week"—this is a resurrection day event. "It is still Easter," we would say. "The disciples" includes more than the 10 (Judas and Thomas missing) as Lk 24:33-36 supports. Security-conscious, out of fear for what the Jewish leaders might do to them, the disciples had all doors locked. "Jesus came and stood among them." He was suddenly there! "Peace be with you!" never meant so much to the disciples (cf in 14:27). They might have expected to be taken to task for their conduct on the past Thursday and Friday. Instead, Jesus comforts and reassures his followers. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

ousēs oun opsias tēi hēmerai ekeinēi tēi miai sabbatōn, "On the evening of that day, the first day of the week." Time is often hard to determine in John's Gospel, but clearly this is the evening of Easter Day. Jesus announces peace to the whole assembly of gathered disciples and gives the Holy Spirit. The giving of the Holy Spirit is something associated with Pentecost. The Spirit is given to commission the Church and lead it to confess Jesus as Lord before the world so that all may have life in Jesus' name (v 31). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

disciples. Probably includes others besides the apostles, "the Twelve" (v. 24). (CSB)

hoi mathētai, "the disciples." This may be a group as large as 120 (Acts 1:15). It includes more than the Twelve, as v 24 seems to indicate in its designation of Thomas. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

This includes more than the 10 (Judas and Thomas are missing). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 2)

doors being locked – Security-conscious, out of fear for what the Jewish leaders might do to them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 2)

"the doors being locked . . . for fear of the Jews." That was the disciples' obvious fear, but if Jesus was alive *and on their side*, the Jews would be of no concern. The disciples' rejection of Jesus' mission left them in doubt as to whether Jesus was their friend any longer or rather might abandon them—or worse. This is the beauty behind Jesus' word "Peace" (also vv 21, 26). They *are* reconciled! Thank God our

faithlessness does not stop Jesus from coming with his blessing of peace. This is a peace defined by Jesus' character and work and delivered on his terms. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

They knew that Caiaphas could have his soldiers drag them into the night and hold a trial that even quicker than Jesus' trial. After all, as long as Pilate had agreed to Jesus' death, he would have to be consistent and agree to theirs. So a sense of fear and dread filled the room. (LifeLight)

But just as heavy was the sadness. Despite the reports of the women, the disciples were still convinced that everything was over. Three years of hoping, learning, and growing were gone. God was now far off again instead of being as near as Jesus' presence. The ugliness of the cross was still etched in their memories. It was all over. They were weeping not only for themselves, but also for Israel and for the world. (LifeLight)

Yet they heard again and again the strange stories – the message by the angels to the women (Matt 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-8; John 20:10-13), the appearances of Jesus to the women (Matt 28:8-10; John 20:14-17) and the appearance of Jesus to the Emmaus disciples (Luke 24:13-35). Did they dare to hope? The mind plays tricks when one is sorrowing and fervently wishing that things aren't as they are. (LifeLight)

Besides showing how utterly the Jew rejected Jesus, it clearly shows the disciples' lack of faith at this time. After the Ascension and Pentecost they are joyful and fearless. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

the Jews. The disciples were afraid that they would be arrested for supporting Jesus' alleged conspiracy against the authority of imperial Rome. (TLSB)

came and stood among them – The body of Jesus, now glorified, was no longer contained by time and space limitations. He could suddenly be there. John's gospel began with the marvelous assertion that the Word, The Son of God, "became flesh and made His dwelling among us" (1:14). Now here He was again coming just as quietly as He had the first time when He was born in a stable in a quiet and insignificant village to two unimportant people, as the world counts unimportance. Standing in their midst made all the difference in the world. Now they would know and believe. Now they would listen and wait. Now Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit would come. Now they would make a difference. (LifeLight)

estē eis to meson, "stood among them." The Word that became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:14) continues to dwell in the midst of his people. This is the reason his people have peace, can forgive sin, and witness to the signs so others believe and have life in his name. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

After His resurrection, Jesus more fully manifested His divine attributes. Thus, though still completely human, He did not allow physical barriers to keep Him from revealing Himself to His disciples. Luther states, "The evangelist says not that they saw him enter, but 'He appeared or stood in their midst' (Luke 24:36), which sounds as if he had been there already, hidden, and now revealed himself, as he also did to Mary Magdalene at the grave (John 20:14), and with all to whom he appeared" (AE 37:66). (TLSB)

Peace be with you! The normal Hebrew greeting (cf. Da 10:19). Because of their behavior the previous Friday, they may have expected rebuke and censure; but Jesus calmed their fears (CSB)

"Fear of the Jews" paralyzed the disciples. Closed doors shut out the enemy, but did not shut out the risen Christ, who came to them to dispel their guilt and fear with a message of peace. "Peace be with you!" is,

in this context, far more than a casual greeting. This is the peace all the prophets declare, the peace Jesus himself promised to give to his disciples (Jn 14:27). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

The *shalom* “shalom” behind the Greek *Eirēnē*, “peace” has many implications about salvation of the whole person. Used with the dative of address, this is a translation of the common greeting on arrival (1 Sam 25:6). Instead of rebuking the disciples for their conduct on Good Friday, Jesus bestows his peace on them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

eirhvnh uJmi'n, “peace be with you”: Though the disciples were huddled together in fear, Jesus does not come to them saying, “Don’t be afraid,” but instead greets them with, “Peace be with you.” Peace is the antithesis of fear. Jesus only uses this greeting in the context of appearing to his disciples after the resurrection (here and in Lk 24:36). This greeting is common in the Epistles, especially in the opening words, echoing the peace that Jesus extended to his first disciples. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

The greeting of “peace” in the OT wished prosperity in body and soul to the person being greeted. It occurs many times in Luke: (1) Mary (1:28), (2) Birth (2:14), (3) Forgive sins (7:50), Healed (8:48), Sending of 72 (10:5-7), Palm Sunday (19:38). (CSB)

eirēnē humin, “peace be with you.” In John, “peace be with you” is the equivalent of the Synoptics’ “fear not.” Fear can be set aside because of the one who is present. While the resurrected Jesus is present when not visible, he makes this visit Easter evening and eight days later to assure the disciples that he is in their midst. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

Now the Father’s anger over sin had been satisfied through the death of His son, the perfect substitute for our sins. (LifeLight)

This is not an empty greeting. This is full Gospel. It is an absolution. The greeting is in keeping with the Greeter. The first thing He does is to forgive their sins and declare that all is well. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:20 *his hands and side*. Where the wounds were (John does not refer to the wounds in the feet). According to Lk 24:37 they thought they were seeing a ghost. Jesus was clearly identifying himself. (CSB)

“Showed them his hands and side”—He flashed his “identification badges” to establish who he was, the Teacher and Lord they had known so intimately for three years, Jesus of Nazareth. This was not an apparition produced by intense fear or mob psychology. His wounds prove that the same body that hung on the cross is now risen. For their own faith, as well as their future testimony, it was essential that the disciples positively identify him. The holy wounds of Jesus continue to bring joy and assurance to us today. They are evidence of Jesus’ atoning sacrifice. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Jesus is always reaching out and teaching. For their own faith, as well as their future testimony, it was essential that the disciples positively identify him. The wounds of Jesus bring joy and assurance to us today. They are proof of Jesus’ death and resurrection. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 2)

“After he said this.” The greeting of peace is to be connected to the actions that follow. Jesus chose to retain in his glorified body the mortal wounds of the crucifixion. He did so because these are the wounds that heal and the marks of “the punishment that brought us peace” (Is 53:5). They are not marks of shame, but of victory because, through them, the sinner has been reconciled to God. (“Behold his hands and side,

Rich wounds, yet visible above, In beauty glorified” [LW 278:3].) The wounds verify that this man standing among the disciples was the very Jesus who died on a cross on Friday. They are, of course, filled with joy, just as Jesus had promised (Jn 16:20). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

“He showed them his hands and his side.” Salvation is an “in the dirt” affair. He became “sin who knew no sin” (2 Cor 5:21) so that we might be saved. He got his hands dirty and bloody. Salvation is also an event in history. These are not metaphorical hands; these are the hands of Jesus, the one who was crucified, died, and was buried. The salvation of God has handprints and footprints in history so that “peace on earth, goodwill toward men” might be visible to all. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

This was no ghost, no figment of battered imaginations. This really was the Lord with a real body, the same body that had seen suffering on the cross! Finally, all their fears and forebodings and hopelessness disappeared in the joy of recognition and realization. Jesus was truly alive and in their midst! (LifeLight)

Proved beyond doubt that the risen Lord, though appearing with a glorified body, was the same person as the crucified Christ. Luther, “So the very same Christ who was born of Mary and who was nailed to the cross truly rose again. It was He and no other, as He showed His disciples the scars in His hands and His side. (TLSB)

were glad – *chairo* – to be full of “*cheer*”, that is, calmly *happy* or well off.

Lenski remarks: “Jesus appeared again and again, intensifying faith and joy, until nothing could ever disturb the solid certainty. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

the Lord – This the title used in vv 18,25, 28 by those who believed in His resurrection. John is writing this from the perspective of post-Easter faith as he records its awakening in the disciples. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 2)

20:21-23 The peace won for them and offered to them is now to be carried by the disciples to the whole world. Repeating the greeting of peace, Jesus commissions the disciples to undertake a mission of peace carrying the word of peace. The First Adam received the breath of life from God. Jesus, the Last Adam, now breathes the divine breath that bestows the Spirit of life to the disciples. This Spirit will empower them to carry out the mission of forgiving and retaining sins. Jesus speaks of forgiving as “releasing” sins, *ajfh'te*. The opposite of releasing is “grasping,” or retaining, sins, *krath'te*. Both words of the church actually convey what is spoken, as Luther says in the Small Catechism. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

These verses demonstrate that the essence of Jesus’ work is forgiveness achieved and delivered. These verses, like Mt 28:18–20, also demonstrate that God’s gifts of life and salvation are for all. The disciples are to be agents of his grace, ambassadors of his reconciliation by the power of the Holy Spirit. Even this work is not our work for him, but the Holy Spirit’s work in us for others. Graced people get to live gracious lives. Forgiven people get to live forgiving lives. Eph 2:8–10 says it well—that we are saved by grace and are given works that he already prepared beforehand for us to do. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

20:21 *Peace be with you!* “Peace” is at the very heart of the Gospel message (Rom 5a:1–5) that the disciples would now be sent to proclaim. The sending is repeated in Mt 28:19–20 and Acts 1:8; connected with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Christ’s giving the Spirit by breathing on his disciples at this time is seen by Lenski as a “preliminary stage” to Pentecost. By his word from the cross “It is

finished” Jesus established a “done” religion, a salvation accomplished and paid for, so that the disciples would work with a completed justification as they went out to “forgive” or “not forgive” sins (in what we know as the Office of the Keys). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Peace is at the heart of the Gospel message.

First He actually bestowed the only peace to them personally. Now He does it again for their important office, not just to the disciples, for more than disciples were present. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

Father has send me – apostello - *set apart*, that is, (by implication) to *send out* (properly on a mission). – Jesus was sent in a unique way for a unique mission.

Note the different verbs used for send: *ajpostevllw* is used by Jesus to describe how the Father had sent him, while *pevmpw* is used to describe how Jesus is sending his disciples. Jesus was sent in a unique way for a unique mission. We are sent to proclaim his work—to echo the Gospel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

I am sending you. *pempo* - to *dispatch*, send, thrust. We are sent to proclaim his work – echo the Gospel.

Christ sends forth His disciples in equality, without any distinction... He says, ‘As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.’ He says that He sends them individually in the same way He Himself was sent (John 12:44-50). Hus, “Jesus sends them to bear testimony to the truth, to preach the word of salvation, and, by life and teaching, to show the way of blessedness to the people. (TLSB)

20:22 *breathed on them* – *empusao* - *blow at* or *on*:—breathe on.

Greek term used only here in NT. Jesus’ words, formed by breaths of air, delivered the Spirit to the disciples (Greek *pneuma* translates as “spirit” or “wind” [breath]). Augustine says, “ That bodily breathing, proceeding from the body with the feeling of bodily touching, was not the substance of the Holy Spirit, but a declaration by a fitting sign, that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but also from the Son” (NPNF). (TLSB)

enephusēsen: aorist of *emphusaō*, “to breathe on.” Suggests new creation. Jesus creates the authority to loose and bind. There are overtones of Gen 2:7 and the creation of a people here. The chief character of this new creation is the vehicle of God’s forgiveness in Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

In close connection to the sending of the disciples, Jesus breathes on them, *ejnefvshsen*, to give them the Holy Spirit. This is reminiscent of Gen 2:7 and may indicate the new creation ushered in by Jesus’ victory over sin, death, and the devil. It is the giving of the Spirit for a specific purpose—in this case in connection with the establishment of the Office of the Keys (v 23). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

The word *emphusaō* means “to breathe on” and takes the dative. In the LXX of Gen 2:7 it is used with *eis*, “into,” as the Lord God blows into the man and he becomes a living being. In Ezek 37:9 the Spirit or wind blows into the en fleshed dry bones, and they become alive—a type of resurrection. Although the preposition is not used here, “John expects his readers to see a parallel between God’s creative breath in

Gen 2:7 and Jesus' act of breathing here" (Newman and Nida, p 615). The life imparted here is not mere physical life, but new life in the Spirit, and in particular the ability granted by the Spirit to carry out the office of the keys, described in the next verse. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

The word uses in 2 Tim 3:16, *theopneustos*, "God-breathed, inspired," comes from a different root, *pneō*. Jesus blows his Spirit on the disciples, and the Spirit has called, gathered, enlightened, and kept us all, but the church is not inspired in the same way Scripture is inspired. The accent in 2 Tim 3:16 is on the effectiveness of the written Word, not the reported news. However, we dare not denigrate the proclamation, which carries the Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

Receive the Holy Spirit. Thus anticipating what happened 50 days later on the day of Pentecost (Ac 2). The disciples needed God's help to carry out the commission they had just been given. (CSB)

By giving the Holy Spirit, Jesus was equipping the disciples for the ongoing work assigned to them, including especially the exercise of the Office of the Keys. (TLSB)

The gift is the Holy Spirit for a specific purpose. They already had the Holy Spirit for they were believers. And this is not the same bestowal of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost for that is called "power from on high." Here Jesus bestows the Office of the Keys, a permanent bestowal on all Christians. Cf. Mt. 16:19; 18:17, 20. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:23† Lit. "Those whose sins you forgive have already been forgiven; those whose sins you do not forgive have not been forgiven." God does not forgive people's sins because we do so, nor does he withhold forgiveness because we do. Rather, those who proclaim the gospel are in effect forgiving or not forgiving sins, depending on whether the hearers believe in Jesus Christ or not. (CSB)

There are only two classes of people, those who are to be absolved and those who are not be absolved. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

they are forgiven – *aphiemi* - to *send forth*, forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let (alone, be, go, have), omit, put (send) away, remit, suffer, yield up. – In Leviticus 16:10 on the Day of Atonement the sins of the people were laid on the scapegoat and sent away from the sight of God and the people.

"They are forgiven" (v. 23) is a common translation of the perfect tense expressing the present state which results from previous action. However, "in a conditional sentence it emphasized the continuous character of the action," as in "God forgives them, and they remain forgiven" (Newman and Nida). The tense therefore emphasizes the efficacy of absolution. The textual variants (the present and future tenses) are more poorly attested. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

These words show that the Keys are given to all the apostles alike and that all apostles are sent forth alike. In addition, it must be recognized that the Keys belong not to the person of one particular man, but to the Church. Many most clear and firm arguments show this. For Christ, speaking about the Keys, adds, for example, "If two of you agree on earth" (Mt. 18:19). Therefore, He grants the Keys first and directly to the Church. This is why it is first the Church that has the right of calling. (TLSB)

Lenski rightly quotes Psalm 103:12; Micah 7:19; Isaiah 43:25. Forgiven sins are buried and gone. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

Psalms 103:12, “as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

Micah 7:19, “You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.”

Isaiah 43:25, “I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.”

The sins have already been lastingly forgiven. Christians merely declare what is already true. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

All Christians exercise the Office of the Keys privately. The pastor by virtue of his call, exercises it publicly for the specific congregation to which he is called. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:19–23 The once-crucified Jesus appears to His disciples, commissioning them for their work and equipping them with the Holy Spirit. Christians have received the most precious treasure on earth—the Gospel of forgiveness—but often keep it hidden from others. Pray that the Lord would grant you boldness. God raised Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and will equip us with every good thing to do His will (Heb 13:20–21). • O God, give us Your eternal peace and also boldness through the Holy Spirit. Amen. (TLSB)

Jesus and Thomas

24 Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.” **26** Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” **27** Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” **28** Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” **29** Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

20:24-25 The first “mission project” of the disciples falls on hard ground. Their fellow apostle Thomas refuses to believe the testimony they bring to him. He insists upon seeing and touching before he believes. “I will not believe” is emphatic. These are the words of hardened, determined, willful unbelief, not just weakness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

Jesus breaks through walls of fear to get to the disciples. With Thomas, he bursts through a wall of doubt. Thomas’s doubt reaffirms the uniqueness of Jesus’ actions; he is the Messiah who must serve. Thomas knew that Jesus was the Crucified One with nail prints and a hole in his side. Yet, like Peter (Mt 16:21–23), Thomas struggled with how a “crucified Messiah” could be the Savior. False expectations of Jesus’ mission (expecting glory rather than a cross) caused Thomas to stumble. His doubt is emphatic in the Greek. It is resolute unbelief. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

20:24 *Thomas was not with the twelve.* Perhaps some necessity kept him away. Perhaps he was overcome with despair and hopelessness. – Sadly many miss the Lord today because they do not join the gathering of fellow Christians in worship and study of the Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

Since Thomas was absent from the gathering of Christ's people, he missed so much—in this case, seeing the risen Lord. Sadly, many miss the Lord today because they do not join the gathering of Christian brothers and sisters in worship and study of the Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Why he was absent is not known. But to absent one's self from Christian brethren in a time of crisis leads to trouble. Christians assemble for mutual comfort in Christ. Heb. 10:25. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:25 *other disciples told him – Elegon*, imperfect, indicates that the other disciples kept, repeatedly telling Thomas that they had seen the Lord. Note also the contrast here between the witness of the 10 disciples and the hardheadedness of Thomas, who insists on seeing Christ's identification marks and touching them with his own hands. He rejects the testimony of others as invalid or unreliable. How many today still reject the apostolic testimony? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Unless I see ... and put ... I will not believe. Hardheaded skepticism can scarcely go further than this. (CSB)

Thomas insists on irrefutable, physical evidence despite the word of 10 faithful witnesses. His statement "I will not believe," *ouj mh; pisteuwsw*, is an emphatic, categorical denial. It shows that Thomas lacked faith, *pivsti*", both in the testimony of the other disciples and in the words of the Lord to which they were testifying. In this state of unbelief he resorts to a worldly standard for acceptance and trust: I will only believe that which can be proven. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

Instead of accepting the testimony of fellow disciples, Thomas remained deeply skeptical and demanded tactile proof of Jesus' physical resurrection. (TLSB)

pisteuo to *have faith* (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), to *entrust* (especially one's spiritual well being to Christ):—believe (-r), commit (to trust), put in trust with. – This is an emphatic and categorical denial of both what the disciples and Jesus said. In this state of unbelief he resorts to a worldly standard for acceptance and trust: I will only believe that which can be proven. How many today still reject the testimony of the Scriptures.

This is an emphatic, categorical denial. It shows that Thomas lacked faith, *pistos*, both in the testimony of the other disciples and in the words of the Lord to which they were testifying. In this state of unbelief he resorts to a worldly standard for acceptance and trust: I will only believe that which can be proven. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 2)

Thomas was not just doubting. Thomas would not believe. And in this state he speaks in a superior, demanding fashion. He was not *si* "gullible" as were the rest, he maintained. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:26-27 What patient, seeking love of the Savior! He condescends to Thomas' requirement for both visual and physical "proof" of his resurrection, adding the plea, "Stop doubting and believe." Was it really necessary for Thomas to physically touch Jesus before he would believe? Most likely, the sight of the living Jesus was enough. Here is one more example of Jesus conquering unbelief. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Jesus recognizes Thomas's unbelief. He calls him to believe, if not on the testimony of his fellow disciples, then on the evidence standing before him. Jesus' command to Thomas, *mh; givnou a[pisto*"

ajlla; pistov", is a present imperative with a negation. The structure indicates that a present action should cease and a new action begin in its place. Thomas's response shows that Jesus not only commands faith, but he works the faith he commands. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

Jesus graciously provided Thomas the proof he demanded. Thomas, after all, as an apostle, had to be an eyewitness of the risen Christ. Again—and again through closed doors—the risen Christ brought the message of peace, but knowing the thoughts and words of Thomas, he offered the nail marks in his hands and the wound in his side to the finger and hand of the unbelieving disciple. This offer was given together with a rebuke, “Stop doubting and believe.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

Jesus comes looking for Thomas as he does for us. Faith is always a gift. Jesus comes with peace that opens a doubting heart. He offers again the witness of his suffering and death, his hands and side, so Thomas could see the victory that comes only through the cross. Jesus' rebuke is also an invitation: “Stop your doubting and believe.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

20:26 *a week later* – The following Sunday (calculated by using Jewish inclusive reckoning). (TLSB)

inside again – Perhaps same location as in verse 19. (TLSB)

Why the disciples had not yet gone to Galilee (Mk. 16:7) is not known. Ylvisaker says: None of them could summon the courage necessary for such a journey.” Lenski remarks: “As far as making the start for Galilee is concerned, the safest view is that the disciples awaited specific directions from the Lord.” In any case, their waiting in Jerusalem was providential, for its afforded opportunity to retrieve unbelieving Thomas. Jesus cared much for Peter who had denied Him, Mary Magdalene, from whom He had driven seven evil spirits, and Thomas who would not believe. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

Peace. A common Hebrew greeting (20:19, 21, 26), which Jesus uses here in an unusual way. The term speaks, in effect, of the salvation that Christ's redemptive work will achieve for his disciples—total well-being and inner rest of spirit, in fellowship with God. All true peace is his gift, which the repetition emphasizes. *I do not give ... as the world gives.* In its greetings of peace the world can only express a longing or wish. But Jesus' peace is real and present.) (CSB)

20:27 *put...see...put your hand* – What patient, seeking love of the Savior! He condescends to Thomas' requirement for both visual and physical proof of his resurrection, adding the plea, “Stop doubting and believe.” Here is one more example of Jesus conquering unbelief. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

Jesus graciously accommodated Thomas's request, to his astonishment and perhaps even his shame. (TLSB)

Jesus condescendingly meets all demand made by Thomas. Thomas ended with a categorical denial. Jesus ends with a prohibition. The display of omniscience in the human nature of Jesus must have impressed Thomas deeply, plus the fact that Jesus' human nature not fully used the omnipresence of the of the divine nature. Did Thomas actually feel Jesus' wounds? WE know not. But we know what 1 John 1:1 says. Did he kneel or prostrate himself before Jesus? We know not but we know what he said in verse 28. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

The present imperative means that the action to be stopped is presently going on. Jesus bids Thomas to stop being an unbeliever and to become a believer. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 2)

believing – Literally, “become believing.” (TLSB)

The words *apistos* and *pistos* are often used to distinguish between unbelievers and Christians, respectively. The present imperative means that the action to be stopped is presently going on. Jesus bids Thomas to stop being an unbeliever and to become a believer. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

Jesus conquers unbelief by His Word. With the prohibition comes the power to believe. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:28-29 Thomas was convinced by seeing the risen Jesus. He immediately humbled himself before Jesus and declared him to be Lord and God, both clearly divine names. Jesus used the joyful occasion of Thomas’s “conversion” to pronounce a greater blessing on those who believe without seeing such proof, namely, on the basis of the Word alone. In the very near future, the whole church would be gathered through this Word alone. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

20:28 *My Lord and my God!* The high point of faith. (CSB)

How fitting is the bold confession of Thomas, “My Lord and my God.” *Kurios* and *theos* is a combination found in the LXX for the name of the God of Israel (*Yhvh elohim* “Yahweh Elohim/God”; see, for instance, Gen 2:4; Pss 72:18 [MT 72:19]; 84:8, 11 [MT 84:9, 12].) John’s book has come full circle from 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word . . . with God . . . was God” to the clear, awesome identification of Jesus as “Lord . . . God.” Jesus had not been addressed this way before, but is commonly spoken of this way in the remainder of the New Testament. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Restatement of 1:1, a central Christological affirmation in John. (TLSB)

To understand Thomas’ answer as a mere exclamation of surprise is blasphemous in view of the context. The words are, of course, an exclamation, but at the same times, an address (vocative) and a humble confession of sin and confession of faith. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:29 *because you have seen* – Even though Thomas believes, Jesus criticizes him for rejecting the witness of the other disciples and believing only when the evidence was overwhelming. Because Thomas had been with him longer Jesus was disappointed that Thomas had still not gotten it. BUT he didn’t give up on him and uses this opportunity to teach others who will read about this account.

Few have had sight-based faith as did Thomas. Peter speaks of those who, without seeing, love and believe in the Christ and have the same joy as those who saw him (1 Pet 1:8). Down through the ages faith has come by means of hearing the message of Christ since the Spirit works through the Word (Rom 10:17). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

those who have not seen and yet have believed. Would have been very few at this time. All whom John mentions had seen in some sense. The words, of course, apply to future believers as well. (CSB)

hoi mē idontes kai pisteusantes, “those not seeing and believing.” We are not eyewitnesses and yet are blessed because we believe. This is also a challenge to Thomas and the rest who did not believe Jesus was present. We may rethink our misconception about doubting Thomas and consider the doubting disciples. Do we see? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

Even though Thomas believes, Jesus criticizes him for rejecting the witness of the other disciples and believing only when the evidence was overwhelming. *makavrio*, “blessed,” reminds us of the Beatitudes and the blessings of faith that come through the Word. Unlike Thomas, we have not seen but have come to faith through the Gospel—the same Gospel that was first proclaimed by the disciples who were locked in the Upper Room on Easter night in fear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

Makarios – supremely *blest*; by extension *fortunate, well off*:—blessed, happy – Blessed reminds us of the Beatitudes and the blessings of faith that come through the Word.

Down through the ages faith has come by means of hearing the message of Christ since the Spirit works through the Word. (Romans 10:17). This is the same Gospel that was first proclaimed by the disciples who were locked in the Upper Room on Easter night in fear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

After Jesus’ ascension, people would come to faith without seeing Jesus, on the sole basis of the apostles’ witness (cf. 17:18, 20; Rm 10:17). (TLSB)

What Jesus is really criticizing is not merely “seeing” but the fact that Thomas categorically rejected the witness of the other disciples. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:24–29 Jesus appears before a skeptical Thomas, who upon seeing Jesus is moved to confess Him as Lord and God. Today, we live in a skeptical age that operates by the saying “I’ll believe it when I see it.” However, in the Word and the Sacraments, we see and we do receive the benefits of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Those who believe receive God’s divine favor, for whoever believes has everlasting life (3:36). • Even though I do not now see You, Lord, I believe and rejoice with inexpressible joy. Amen. (TLSB)

The Purpose of This Book

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

20:30-31 οὐκ connects these two verses with the story of Thomas or, at least, Jesus’ blessing upon those who believe without seeing. Though John’s conclusion applies to the whole Gospel, it is also directly related to the immediate context. The disciples saw many other signs besides those recorded, but these recorded testimonies (in John’s Gospel) were written by the evangelist for the purpose of engendering faith in the one who hears without seeing. Through these written words, the hearer may and should believe that Jesus is the Christ, the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises concerning the Messiah, the Son of God. This faith leads the believer to “life in his name.” The purpose of John’s Gospel, indeed of all Scripture, is to make sinners “wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 3:15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

John reminds us that Jesus is coming to us through the testimony of these words. The fear of the disciples and the doubt of Thomas were met with the grace and peace of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. These things are not only “written” but testified to, so that we might believe also. The very lives of the disciples, who are transformed from fearful ones to faithful, courageous ones, bear witness to the hands and side of Jesus Christ for you and me. John, like Luke (Lk 1:1–4), challenges the reader to put his or her trust in

this Jesus who is testified to in these words, for there is life in his name. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

20:30 *many other signs.* John had selected from among many. (CSB)

The word *sēmeion*, “miraculous sign,” is used in the synoptic gospels to denote the signs the Jews requested from Jesus but which he did not perform for them. It is also used of “the sign of the Son of Man,” which will appear in the last days. It is often tied to *terata* (“wonders”) as evidences accompanying the Messiah. But the synoptics do not use *sēmeion* for the miracles of Jesus; instead, they use the word *dunamis*, “power; miracle.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

However, John uses *sēmeion* 17 times, usually referring to Christ’s miracles. The “miraculous signs” are markers pointing beyond themselves to hidden divine truths. They are understood after Easter and Pentecost, but seldom when they occur. Because the Sacraments are also part of the reality toward which they point, Brown (p 186) sees them as continuations of *sēmeia*, “signs.” (See Morris, pp 684–91, for an excellent discussion of these words and their theological significance.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

The signs spoken of in verses 30 and 31 do not refer to proofs (Acts 1:3) of His resurrection, but those performed throughout His life beginning with the first miracle in Cana. Do they include His Resurrection? Yes, but it is not called that here, because it was not performed “in the presence of His disciples.” (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

in the presence of his disciples. Those who could testify to what he had done. John again stresses testimony (see note on 1:7). (CSB)

20:31 *that you may believe.*† Expresses John’s purpose. See NIV text note and Introduction: Purpose and Emphases. (CSB)

believe. This crucial verse summarizes John’s purpose in writing his gospel, and the reason we (and everyone) should read it. John’s gospel contains 98 occurrences of *pisteuō*, “to believe.” “Believing and Christ are so much part of one another that the former inevitably implies the latter. . . . (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

This verse summarizes not only all of Easter but also John’s Gospel account. Every sign, every word, every name and title given to Jesus is given so we may believe and have life in his name. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

John admits that his gospel reports relatively few of all the “miraculous signs” of our Lord but enough is written that you may believe, *pisteu[s]ēte*. Why is the sigma in brackets? Both readings are equally good. Without the sigma it would be a present subjunctive, “that you may continue believing.” This would indicate that John was writing to Christians. However, with the sigma it is an aorist subjunctive, “that you may believe.” This would indicate that John’s intended readers were not yet believers. “By believing you may have life in his name” is another application of John’s words in chapter 1, “In him was life” (v 4), which was based on a new relationship with God as his children. (See the earlier sermon for Palm/Passion Sunday for more on the life-giving name of Jesus.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

pisteuo - to *have faith* (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), to *entrust* (especially one's spiritual well being to Christ):—believe (-r), commit (to trust), put in trust with. – In this case the form means “to keep on believing.” - This is really the purpose of John's gospel and the purpose for our witness to Scriptural truths.

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Faith has content. (CSB)

the Christ. This whole Gospel is written to show the truth of Jesus' Messiahship and to present him as the Son of God, so that the readers may believe in him. (CSB)

that by believing you may have life. Another expression of purpose—to bring about faith that leads to life. (CSB)

name. Represents all that he is and stands for. (CSB)

Believing . . . takes the believer out of himself and makes him one with Christ” (Morris, p 337). The phrase “in his name” is equivalent to “in him” (Newman and Nida, p 621). The name of Jesus conveys his person and all his blessings. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

John not only states the purpose of his Book, but summarizes succinctly its content. (TLSB)

20:30–31 John, the author of this Gospel, clearly states its purpose and summarizes its central message. People commonly and mistakenly think that biblical books were written mainly to provide rules for godly living. Speaking through John, God announces the Good News that Jesus is His Son and that by faith in His name, we have life and salvation—the core message of the entire Scripture. • Let me gladly share this Good News, O God, that others may believe and live. Amen. (TLSB)