

## Third Sunday in Lent

OLD TESTAMENT – Exodus 17:1-7

**The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup> So they quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” Moses replied, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?” <sup>3</sup> But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?” <sup>4</sup> Then Moses cried out to the LORD, “What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.” <sup>5</sup> The LORD answered Moses, “Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup> I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. <sup>7</sup> And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”**

**17:1** *traveling from place to place.* For a list of specific sites see Nu 33:12–14. (CSB)

*Rephidim.* Probably either the Wadi Refayid or the Wadi Feiran, both near Jebel Musa (see note on 3:1) in southern Sinai. (CSB)

Rephidim, the next camping place of the Israelites reported in Exodus after the Desert of Sin, was not far from Mount Sinai. The rock which Moses struck there to get water was “at Horeb.” Horeb, was the mountain range where Moses had tended sheep for his father-in-law Jethro. Mount Sinai was one of the peaks in this Horeb mountain range. After the experience of receiving manna and quail in the Desert of Sin the Israelites camped at two other places before reaching Rephidim. These two places, Dophkah and Alush, were mentioned by Moses later when he gave a list of all the places where Israel camped, as we read in Numbers 33:12, 13. (PBC)

Nothing of special note seems to have happened at Dophkah and Alush, but we call attention to this in order to appreciate better the situation at Rephidim. Israel has been on the move again for several days. The hills are getting higher, the valleys narrower and full of huge rocks, and springs of water are nowhere to be found. (PBC)

**17:2** **QUARRELED WITH MOSES** – This time the Israelites not only complain. They argue with Moses and even threaten to stone him. (PBC)

*put the LORD to the test.* Israel fails the Lord’s testing of her (see 16:4) by putting the Lord to the test. (CSB)

Despite His promise of sustenance (16:4), the people accused God of abandoning them. (TLSB)

The second question was the explanation of the first, for in attacking Moses the people rebelled against the Lord and provoked Him to anger. (Kretzmann)

**17:3** *grumbled*. See note on 15:24 – (During their desert wanderings, the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron whenever they faced a crisis (see 16:2; 17:3; Nu 14:2; 16:11, 41). In reality, however, they were grumbling “against the LORD” (16:8). Paul warns us not to follow their example (see 1Co 10:10). (CSB)

CHILDREN AND LIVESTOCK – Herders were nearly as concerned for their animals as for their families. (TLSB)

**17:4** *these people*. The same note of distance and alienation (“these people” instead of “my people”) in such situations is found often in the prophets (see, e.g., Isa 6:9; Hag 1:2). (CSB)

Reflecting their estrangement, Moses did not call them “my people” or “Your people.” (TLSB)

STONE ME – They held Moses responsible for the impending ruin, and assumed such an ugly attitude as to cause Moses to fear the worst. (Kretzmann)

The Israelites are in rebellion against Moses and, by extension, God. (TLSB)

**17:5** THE STAFF – the shepherd’s staff which was his symbol of authority, take in thine hand and go. The solemn departure of Moses and the elders from the camp was to draw the attention of the entire army to their actions. (Kretzmann)

This staff was a symbol of God’s authority. (TLSB)

**17:6** *I will stand there ... by the rock*. Paul may have had this incident in mind when he spoke of Christ as “the spiritual rock that accompanied” Israel (see 1Co 10:4; see also Heb 11:24–26). (CSB)

God assured Moses of His presence and definitely promised him a miracle. (Kretzmann)

*Horeb*. See note on 3:1. (CSB)

*Strike the rock, and water will come out*. The event was later celebrated by Israel’s hymn writers and prophets (see Ps 78:15–16, 20; 105:41; 114:8; Isa 48:21). (CSB)

Ambrose : “for them water flowed from the rock, for you Blood flowed from Christ; water satisfied them for a time, the Blood satiates you for eternity... You after drinking will be beyond the power of thirsting; that was in a shadow, this is in truth.” (TLSB)

Luther: “faith is the prerequisite before everything. If one has faith, all other things gush forth from it, like water from the rock and stone.” (TLSB)

Luther: “ St Paul does not say that the rock which Moses struck is Christ. His words say very plainly: They ate of the same spiritual food of which we eat, and they drank of the same spiritual drink of which we drink, and so forth... He does not say that Christ is signified by, but that Christ himself actually is, the spiritual Rock – and one signified by that physical rock. That is why Paul was careful to add the word ‘spiritual’ to the word ‘Rock,’ so that no one could ever construe it to mean that physical rock. Moreover, he says it was a Rock which was yet to come, from which they drank spiritually.” (TLSB)

IN THE SIGHT OF THE ELDERS – They were witnesses to the miracle and could testify before the people as to the manner in which water had been produced.  
(Kretzmann)

**17:7** *Massah and Meribah.* Heb 3:7–8, 15 (quoting Ps 95:7–8) gives the meaning “testing” for Massah and “rebellion” for Meribah. Another Meribah, where a similar incident occurred near Kadesh Barnea (see note on Ge 14:7), is referred to in Nu 20:13, 24; 27:14; Dt 32:51; 33:8; Ps 81:7; 106:32; Eze 47:19; 48:28. (CSB)

*Is the LORD among us or not?* The Lord shows them plainly that He is present with them. They have not yet learned to live by faith. (TLSB)

So that had been their real transgression, the doubts as to the presence of the Lord with their army, the pillar of cloud and of fire apparently not being sufficient any more to uphold their faith. The events here narrated were considered an example of warning throughout the time of the Old Testament as well as in the New, Ps. 95, 8; Heb. 4, 9. And as it was Christ who journeyed with His people at that time and strengthened the faith of those who noted His presence in the miracle, so it is He who gives us at all times the true spiritual water to quench the thirst of our souls. (Kretzmann)

**17:1–7** When Israel runs out of water, they grumble instead of turning to God, their Rock, for help. God in His graciousness does not deal with them according to their folly but furnishes the water they desperately need. He was stricken Himself for what they deserve. Christ Jesus is the Rock of Israel and our Rock of salvation. • O Lord, our Rock, grant us the insight of faith, and give us the stability, refuge, and living water that we need. Amen. (TLSB)

#### EPISTLE – Romans 5:1-8

**Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. <sup>6</sup> You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. <sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

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 δικαιώω 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 *día* 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 ἐσχήκαμεν 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 ἣ ἑστήκαμεν). 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” (καυχάομαι) occurs initially in Romans 2. There, the Jewish person engaged by Paul is depicted with καυχᾶσαι 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 פָּטַח, “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 WE NOW 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 NOW 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 θλίψις 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 הַיְקָוָה, 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)

SUFERING PRODUCES PERSEVERANCE – *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)

PERSEVERANCE, 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 disappoint us.* 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, *Antiquities*,] 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 (ἐν τῷ ἁμαρτωλῶν ὄντων ἡμῶν). God’s love was exhibited most fully by Christ’s death in behalf of us sinners (cf. “for proof,” εἰς ἔνδειξιν, 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.”

**POWERLESS** – 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. (Stoeckhardt)

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. (Stoeckhardt)

**5:8** GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN 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. (Stoeckhardt)

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."

#### GOSPEL – John 4:5-26

<sup>5</sup> So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. <sup>7</sup> When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, **"Will you give me a drink?"** <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) <sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, **"If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."** <sup>11</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?" <sup>13</sup> Jesus answered, **"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."** <sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." <sup>16</sup> He told her, **"Go, call your husband and come back."** <sup>17</sup> "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, **"You are right when you say you have no husband. <sup>18</sup> The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."** <sup>19</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." <sup>21</sup> Jesus declared, **"Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup> You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."** <sup>25</sup> The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." <sup>26</sup> Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

**4:5-26** Our text is an outstanding story of Jesus Christ's love—overcoming ethnic and religious prejudice for the sake of a soul. What a Christ-like challenge for us, in opposition to the concept of exclusive homogenous church growth! Jesus uses a chance meeting to speak of salvation to a Samaritan woman. Christ wants all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Not long after Jesus shares “the Gospel in a nutshell” with Nicodemus, he is speaking with this woman in Samaria. How better could the evangelist show that Jesus really meant what he said when he told Nicodemus that God loved “the world”? Who is it that struggles with the thought of Jesus as the Messiah? In ch 3 it is the religious establishment (in Jerusalem, Nicodemus, the Pharisee, a true Jew) and the religious uprising (John's disciples, true followers of a new way). In ch 4 we see quite a contrast as Jesus encourages a dialogue with the religious opposition (in Samaria, a Samaritan, a woman and one of bad reputation!). Leave behind your opinions of a local savior (Gerizim vs. Jerusalem) and see the One who comes for all people, “the light of the world,” so that all the world may know him as Abraham did, by faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

**4:5 HE CAME** – *erchetai* puts the stress on Jesus coming. While the disciples are along this is all about Jesus.

The divine “necessity” of v 4 (*Edei*) brings Jesus to Sychar's well. Geography is not involved; the will and plans of God are. Not to be overlooked is the specificity of John's account: this place, this time of day, this woman at this particular point in Jesus' life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Jesus enters Samaria. Pious Jews traveling between Judea and Galilee usually took the longer route on the east side of the Jordan in order to avoid Samaria. The statement in v 4 that Jesus “had to” is best understood as meaning that it was the Father's plan for his Son to begin the ministry to all nations. St. John often uses the word *dei* to denote the divine compulsion of Jesus to fulfill the mission for which he was sent (Jn 3:14; 9:4; 10:16; 12:34; 20:9). Contrast Mt 10:5, where Jesus ordered his disciples not to enter Samaria, but to concentrate their first efforts on the people of Israel. The church began to reach out to other peoples in earnest only after Pentecost. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

*Sychar*. A small village near Shechem. Jacob bought some land in the vicinity of Shechem (Ge 33:18–19), and it was apparently this land that he gave to Joseph (Ge 48:21–22). (CSB)

Probably the modern city of Askar, just east of Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, c 1 mi NE of Jacob's well. (TLSB)

On His journey north with His disciples, Jesus came to the little city of Sychar, which was located almost in the center of Samaria. Near this town there was a piece of land which the patriarch Jacob had given to his son Joseph in addition to his share of the country, Gen. 48, 22. (Kretzmann)

**4:6** *Jacob's well*. Mentioned nowhere else in Scripture. (CSB)

Intercepts an underground stream. (TLSB)

It was on this piece of land that Joseph was buried. And here was also a well or cistern which Jacob had dug after his return from Mesopotamia. The well, which is now known as Jacob's Well, is within ten minutes walk of the present village of Askar. (It is about a hundred feet deep and is protected by a wall and a coping. (Kretzmann)

paga means spring. The well was fed by a spring.

TIRED – kopiao means to work hard and indicates a state of fatigue. Jesus has walked from Judea to Samaria – a distance of 40 or 50 miles, perhaps spread over several days – and he needed rest. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 2)

Reveals Jesus' true humanity. (TLSB)

The humanity of Jesus is on display in the word “wearied.” The “well” itself will be the site and source of the conversation to follow. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Jesus, being a true man, had become very tired literally, tired out — by the long journey of the morning; for it was now high noon. So He sat down at the well, either on the low wall which served as a railing, or on one of the steps leading to the water's edge. (Kretzmann)

The perfect participle of *kopiaō*, “to work hard; to be tired” indicates a state of fatigue. Jesus has walked from Judea to Samaria—a distance of 40 or 50 miles, perhaps spread over several days—and he needed rest. While St. John often stresses Christ's divinity more clearly than the other evangelists, he does not shrink from also stressing the true humanity of our Lord, as here and in v 7, where his thirst is implied. The Word made flesh—the Word who is God (1:1, 14)—is tired! It is John who also records that Jesus wept (11:35). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

*about the sixth hour*. About 12:00 noon. (CSB)

Depending on John's reckoning of time, the hour may be noon or 6 a.m. (TLSB)

**4:7 to draw water.** People normally drew water at the end of the day rather than in the heat of midday (see Ge 24:11 and note). But the practice is attested by Josephus, who says that the young ladies whom Moses helped (Ex 2:15–17) came to draw water at noon. (CSB)

antlasai denotes purpose. She came for water and had no idea what else she was going to get. People still are looking for food and support and we can use those opportunities to give them more.

While Jesus was sitting there, exhausted, hungry, and thirsty, there came a Samaritan woman out of the city to draw water from the well, the work of the Oriental women to this day. (Kretzmann)

JESUS SAID TO HER – Jesus came first and foresaw all this. It was planned.

Jesus speaks to her, breaking the social barriers between Jews and Samaritans and between men, especially a rabbi, and women. He who has been left behind by his disciples (v 8) leaves these barriers behind to tell the woman about a better “water” that she could receive. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

*Give Me a drink.* More than a simple request to satisfy thirst. By requesting water from her, Jesus ignored traditional hostility between Jews and Samaritans as well as denigrating attitudes toward women. (TLSB)

Jesus asks this woman for a drink; he initiates the action that breaks the Jewish tradition. His disciples aren't there, or they possibly would question what he is doing. Often our private acts of love are needed to break down cultural barriers, to evangelize those who are different. And “the way to gain a soul is often to ask a service of it” (Godet, quoted in L. Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971] p. 258). See Morris, p. 259, n. 25 for a discussion of what the Jewish customs were in dealing with Samaritans, and what constituted uncleanness. Jews deemed Samaritan women the worst: “The daughters of the Samaritans are [deemed unclean as] menstruants from their cradle [ i.e., from birth]” (Talmud, Mishna, *Niddah* 4:1). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Here was an opportunity to do work in the interest of saving a soul, and Jesus took good care to make use of the chance. He deliberately began a conversation with the woman, by asking her for a drink of water. (Kretzmann)

**4:8 TO BUY FOOD** – Another indication of Jesus' true humanity. Not only was he thirsty. He was also hungry.

Time and occasion were auspicious, since they were undisturbed, the disciples, as the evangelist notes, having gone to the city to buy food for the little company. (Kretzmann)

**4:9 HOW CAN YOU ASK ME FOR A DRINK** – It speaks primarily of Jewish attitudes toward the Samaritans.

The point of the NIV text note (and probably of the text) is that a Jew would become ceremonially unclean if he used a drinking vessel handled by a Samaritan, since the Jews held that all Samaritans were “unclean.”

This Samaritan woman knows that the cultural and religious barrier is falling. She questions Jesus’ simple request, for she knows Jesus may be considered unclean as a result. Jesus knows that what makes one unclean is not who one drinks with, but sin in the heart. To that subject he will turn in v 16 as he tactfully probes her to cause her to recognize and confess her sin. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The woman was surprised at the request of Jesus. In her astonishment she asks how it came about that He, of whom she could tell that He was a Jew, yet asked this favor of her who was a Samaritan. The evangelist explains this by saying that there was no communication between Jews and Samaritans, the hostility going so far as to exclude even all courtesies by the way. Cf. Luke 9, 53. (Kretzmann)

**4:10-26** “Living water” is one of many concepts on which Jesus expands as he talks with the woman. She came for water; Jesus offers her living water. She refers to our father (Jacob); he speaks of the Father. She mentions a prophet; Jesus is the Prophet (especially for Samaritans who accepted only the Pentateuch and were looking for the great prophet like Moses from Deuteronomy 18). She speaks of worship in Samaria and Judea; he speaks of worship in “spirit and truth.” She hopes for a messiah; he is (*egō eimi*) the Messiah! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

**4:10 IF YOU KNEW** – Jesus responds to her question by offering her a gift from God. Living water is fresh, flowing water, water that supports life. The connection of water and life was a very obvious one for the inhabitants of the Holy Land. The Sea of Galilee, alive with 30 species of fish, is slowly flowing water as the Jordan River runs into it on the north and out on the south. The Jordan River twists and squirms for 200 miles in its path down to the Dead Sea, which does not flow and does not support life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

But Jesus has no time for racial prejudices when there is a chance to speak of the heavenly wisdom. Instead of being surprised at the question, the woman should have turned right around and, on her own part, made a request. (Kretzmann)

*gift*. The Greek for this word is used only here in this Gospel and emphasizes God’s grace through Christ. Jesus gave life and gave it freely. (CSB)

Gk *dorea*, occurs only here in the Gospels; stresses God’s bounty. (TLSB)

The “gift” of God is the grace of God. Here it is an invitation into that grace by inviting the woman to continue the conversation. The conversation moves to the satisfaction of another kind of thirst by “living water.” This is “flowing water” that creates and sustains life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

If she had any idea of the fact that the gift of God in the person and work of Jesus is free for all men; if she had an inkling of the beauty and glory of that gift; if she were aware of the identity of Him that had spoken to her, she would waste no time in idle questions as to proprieties. She would have begged Him at once most urgently and eagerly, and He could and would have given her living water. Jesus here testifies of Himself, of His own person. (Kretzmann)

*living water.* In 7:38–39 the term is explained as meaning the Holy Spirit, but here it refers to eternal life (see v. 14). (CSB)

Hebrew expression for flowing water. Cf. John 7:38-39, where the expression refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit, who creates new life (3:5; 6:63). *Didache*: “Baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water” (*ANF* 7:379). (TLSB)

Living water, in the spiritual sense, from Him, the fountain of life, a water to refresh the soul, a water that gives life. Christ’s Word and His salvation, which are given freely according to the grace and mercy of God, were here offered to the woman of Samaria. Incidentally, Jesus challenged the curiosity of the woman by emphasizing living water. The pool before them was probably rainwater, gathered here from the surrounding hills. But the water which He had in mind was far from being stagnant: it had life and strength in fullness. (Kretzmann)

**4:11-12** The best wells contain water flowing from a spring. If a well had only standing water, and it became stagnant, it would take life and not give it. Her question indicates that she is thinking only of alternative sources of water. Is there a better, faster-flowing well nearby, greater than the well dug by Jacob? Notice that her concern has also shifted to the person of Jesus. Who is he? But she begins her question with *mē* (not *ouk*), and so she expects a negative answer (*BAGD* 517a, C.1.); at this point she thinks he is not greater. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

**4:11** *deep.* Christian pilgrim sources as early as the fourth century mention a well in this area that was about 100 feet deep. When the present well was cleaned out in 1935, it was found to be 138 feet deep. (CSB)

According to archaeology, it was the deepest well in Israel at that time. (TLSB)

phrear well, not spring. The best wells contain water flowing from a spring. If a well had only standing water, and it became stagnant, it would take life and not give it. Her

question indicates that she is thinking only of alternate sources of water. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 2)

The Lord had gained His first object; He had awakened the curiosity of the woman; He could now expect to draw her out. The dignity of His speech and bearing caused her to address Him as Lord, but her answer showed that she was very skeptical about His ability to perform what He had promised. He had no vessel to draw water with, and the cistern or well was too deep for Him to get water without the aid of such a vessel; how could He, then, produce water, and living water, that is, water from a spring, at that? In this way, the woman understood His words as referring to physical, earthly water only. (Kretzmann)

The invitation for the woman to drink living water still rings as something physical and part of this life. She is puzzled at how Jesus would be able to draw such water from this, Jacob's well; he has no bucket. "Where" takes on a twofold meaning; both wells (Jacob's and the flowing well of God's kingdom) are truly "deep." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

**4:12** *our father Jacob*. Respect for the past prevented her from seeing the great opportunity of the present. (CSB)

The comparative "greater" means more than it says even if offered in a contemptuous manner. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Though surprised, the woman was confident that Jesus could not greater than the patriarch. (TLSB)

She puts Jacob on a level with herself, a drinker of physical water. Actually, Jacob was a true believer who drank the water of life. (CSB)

If Jesus could give her living water at this place, that is her argument, then He must be greater and mightier than Jacob, whom the Samaritans also, having Israelitish blood in them, regarded as their forefather. Jacob had done much for them in providing this well, out of which he himself had drunk, and his children, and his cattle. If Jesus could give the Samaritans better water than that of this well, then He must be a greater, mightier man. The understanding of the woman was altogether carnal. (Kretzmann)

**4:13-15** Here Jesus extends to her the full offer of salvation. No longer is he speaking of well water. The key parallel to these verses is Jn 7:37–39, where Jesus again invites all who are thirsty to drink the living water of eternal life that he alone supplies. There John clarifies that this water relates to the Spirit, who had not yet been poured out. However, the subsequent history of the church after Pentecost shows clearly that this water is connected to the water of Baptism. Time and time again, the promise of the forgiveness



of sins, incorporation into God's people, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit occur in conjunction with Baptism (Acts 2:38–39; 8:36; 10:44–48; 16:33; 18:5–6; 22:16; etc.). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Is 55:1–2 is a similar offer of free water to the thirsty by God's grace. The theme is continued in Rev 21:6; 22:17, in the context of the new heavens and new earth— heaven. That is the destination of all who respond to Christ's invitation and drink his life-giving water. In that place there will be no unquenched thirst—physical or spiritual. Though not fully understanding Jesus' message, the woman is moved to request, "Give me this water." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

**4:13 WILL BE THIRSTY AGAIN** – How often don't have to drink water! We can live without food much longer than we can without water.

Jesus tries to open her understanding by an explanation. Every person that drank of the water of that well would become thirsty again. The physical thirst of a person may be quenched for a little while by a drink of water. (Kretzmann)

The transition from water for a thirsty body to water that quenches a thirsty soul (the fourth beatitude). "Everyone," "drink," "water," and "thirst" move the conversation into the matters of the kingdom of God and of the Spirit (ch 3, Nicodemus). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

**4:14 NEVER THIRST** – In contrast to the temporary satisfaction ordinary water brings. (TLSB)

"Never thirst" and "eternal life" are now plainly connected, even if the woman is slow to comprehend the truth Jesus is speaking to her. (In Wisconsin, a water fountain is a "bubbler"—an apt term for water "welling up," "leaping.") (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

People cannot live without water. But this water (the Gospel) will quench thirst forever. Furthermore, in the person whose thirst has been satisfied there will be a spring of water which springs up into everlasting life. He is saying that the reception of God's gift of life becomes a permanent possession.

*welling up.* The expression is a vigorous one, with a meaning like "leaping up." Jesus was speaking of vigorous, abundant life (cf. 10:10). (CSB)

This is a metaphor of a bubbling spring and pictures the life of the Holy Spirit within believers, which will come to full realization in eternity. (TLSB)

The water to which He is referring is not that which is drunk with the mouth. It is of a nature that it quenches one peculiar thirst forever. In all eternity such a person will never be bothered by thirst again; for the water which He proposes to give will become in him that drinks of it a fountain of water bubbling up into eternal life. His gift is living water with the power to produce life and to keep bubbling with life and strength, and thus daily producing new power, enabling the possessor to gain eternal life. All the thirst, all desire and longing of people, is satisfied forever by this water; for that is His salvation, which He has brought and proclaimed. That alone can fully satisfy the heart. The salvation which Christ gives works a new, a spiritual life, and this life is fully realized and completed in eternity. The Lord's purpose to arouse interest, to stimulate desire for this wonderful water, was successful, though the woman did not yet understand what He was referring to. (Kretzmann)

**4:15 GIVE ME THIS WATER** – At first he awakens in her a longing for something higher and nobler than the earthly considerations which have been her focus to this point. She still doesn't understand. She wants this water for only two purposes: to quench her (physical) thirst once and for all, and so that does not constantly have to come here.

She is still stuck on a thirsty throat. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Her one concern is that she may be saved the trouble of coming out here every day to draw water and then to carry it home the long distance. The two qualities of the Lord's water have attracted her: the fact that it quenches thirst forever; the fact that it bubbles up ever anew and needs no drawing. (Kretzmann)

Cf. the misunderstanding of Nicodemus (3:4). In both cases the way was opened for further instruction.

**4:16-20** Jesus wants the living water not only for her but for her husband. In her answer, the woman avoids the stigma of her sin, but Jesus brings in the history of her life and the facts of the law, further preparing her for the Gospel. She is not, at first, ready to hear. She rationalizes away her sin by pointing to the divisions in God's people. How similar to our times! People avoid their own self-condemnation by pointing to the problems in the church. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

**4:16 CALL YOUR HUSBAND** – Jesus was leading the woman to an understanding of her sin and guilt. (TLSB)

Jesus, throughout the conversation, showed the true missionary's skill. He had properly prepared the woman's mind to listen to Him as to one that might have a message worth listening to, and not mere idle talk to dispense. The next step is to bring her to an understanding of her sin, to a realization of its guilt. To this end Jesus tells the woman to call her husband, her legal spouse. He knew her heart, mind, and circumstances as well as she did, and better. (Kretzmann)

**4:17-18** The Lord revealed His divine omniscience, as in the case of Nathanael (1:48–49). (TLSB)

**4:17** NO HUSBAND –The admission that she has no “husband” is also the opportunity to confess, although she offers no more than necessary to answer the words of Jesus. The omniscient eye of Jesus peers into the woman’s soul to tell her the truth about her words. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

The woman was struck by the question, but answered quite frankly: A husband I have not. This was a truthful answer, but did not go far enough. (Kretzmann)

**4:18** *five husbands*. The Jews held that a woman might be divorced twice or at the most three times. If the Samaritans had the same standard, the woman’s life had been exceedingly immoral. Apparently she had not married her present partner. (CSB)

The emphasis falls on the “five,” the number of husbands this woman has had. This is far beyond the number allowed by rabbinical teaching (two or three tops). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Jesus disposes of her doubtful meaning by emphasizing: Well hast thou said, A husband I have not. She had had five husbands, and had left them all in quick succession. The matter of divorces in Palestine at the time of the Lord was fast approaching the condition in which momentary likes or dislikes decided a woman's choice. This woman was now living with a man without the formality of a marriage ceremony, or at best in a common-law marriage. The Lord told her all this, by His omniscience, for the purpose of making her realize her sinfulness, of making her see the depth to which she had fallen. She must become fully conscious of her guilt against the Sixth Commandment and the entire Law before she would have the proper desire and longing for the riches of Christ's salvation. Note: It is always thus when the Lord converts a sinner. At first there are only a few faint sparks of penitence, which would be extinguished without the aid of the Holy Ghost. But then He deepens the consciousness of transgression and guilt, in order that the longing for salvation may be instilled by the sweet message of salvation, by the Gospel. Very often the real battle in the heart of a person begins only after the desire for salvation has been felt. Then Satan tries to drive the sinner into despair. It is then that grace must much more abound. (Kretzmann)

**4:19** *a prophet*. Because of his special insight. (CSB)

With the recognition that Jesus must be a prophet (cf 7:39), the woman took a step closer to identifying Him as Messiah. (TLSB)

While the emphasis falls on the word “prophet,” there seems to be more to the substance of her comment and its relation to her present spiritual condition: this

“prophet” has exposed her conscience, but this “Sir” did not fiercely judge her relational mess. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

The revelation which Jesus had just made astonished and disconcerted the woman. She had probably never given the matter of her loose living a serious thought, since the marriage-tie at that time was considered anything but binding. Yet Christ's way of putting it in such a naked, unvarnished way struck her conscience with peculiar force. Her words were therefore a confession of guilt, though veiled to some extent. She states, first of all, that she now understood and had the conviction; I see that a prophet Thou art. His knowledge of her sins compelled this admission; But she is sensitive upon the subject and would rather not go into details. Not that she was not conscious of guilt, for she had already shown some degree of longing for salvation. Her question rather showed how deeply she was moved. (Kreztmann)

**4:20** *this mountain*. Perhaps the woman did not like the way the conversation was going and so began to argue. The proper place of worship had long been a source of debate between Jews and Samaritans. Samaritans held that “this mountain” (Mount Gerizim) was especially sacred. Abraham and Jacob had built altars in the general vicinity (Ge 12:7; 33:20), and the people had been blessed from this mountain (Dt 11:29; 27:12). In the Samaritan Scriptures, Mount Gerizim (rather than Mount Ebal) was the mountain on which Moses had commanded an altar to be built (Dt 27:4–6). The Samaritans had built a temple on Mount Gerizim c. 400 B.C., which the Jews destroyed c. 128. Both actions, of course, increased hostility between the two groups. (CSB)

Nearby Mount Gerizim, where, according to Josephus, the Samaritans built a temple in the fourth century BC. Remains on Gerizim include ruins of a large building (66 ft by 66 ft) and courtyard. (TLSB)

The shift is to the practice of religion (“worship”) by human choice. Many would say everyone may choose his god and that all religions or denominations ultimately offer the same god. “Jerusalem” or this “mountain”: one is your Jewish opinion; ours comes from our “fathers.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

She is coming clean because her thoughts now turn to worship. Her soul now thirsts for the living God, and desires to become clean with the God whom she has greatly offended.

Since this man was a prophet with the Spirit of omniscience, he would surely be able to give the solution of the standing problem of Samaritan religion, one which had now been bothering them for almost six centuries. She wanted to know where the living God was to be found and which was the true worship. She knew that forgiveness was to be found only with the living God. It was the question of a serious seeker after truth. The Samaritans had for centuries worshiped their god, whom they also called Jehovah, on Mount Gerizim, which was situated near Shechem and Sychar. There had formerly

been a fine temple on this mountain, which, however, the Jewish ruler Hyrcanus had destroyed in the year 125 B.C. Since that time the temple had not been completely restored, the Samaritans being satisfied to worship in the ruins. But, on the other hand, as the woman correctly states, the Jews claimed that Jerusalem was the only place where people should worship, Ex. 20, 24; Deut. 12, 5; Num. 9, 5; Deut. 16, 3. 6. Now she wanted to know who was right, the Samaritans or the Jews. (Kretzmann)

**4:21-24** Jesus answers her question by pointing to the time which is to come and has now come—the time in which salvation comes from him. All people will worship in spirit and truth, regardless of where they might be, but all such worshipers finally will be brought together in heaven. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Jesus takes the conversation to the reason he has come from the “Father” (the true God of all everywhere). “Believe me” bears double meaning since Jesus standing right before her is the “Truth” from the Father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Outside of the Jews, who were God’s vessels for conveying the Word of God, there is no “salvation.” For from the chosen (not favored) race would come the Christ, the promised Messiah, the “salvation” God has promised. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

**4:21 THE FATHER** – The Father is only one worthy of worship. It doesn’t matter where the “fathers” worship. The place doesn’t matter but the true sources is.

The Lord answers with one of the greatest and most far-reaching announcements of all times, earnestly inviting the woman, at the same time, to give full credence to His weighty words. The time was coming, was even now dawning, when the old earthly, outwardly visible forms of worship would no longer be reckoned as essential. Both places of the Old Testament cultus, that of Mount Gerizim and that of Jerusalem, would then be forsaken. This took place shortly after Christ's ascension. Then the apostles went out and founded a great many congregations, not only in Judea, but also in Samaria. Then the Samaritans that came to faith deserted Mount Gerizim and worshiped the true God in Jesus Christ the Savior. Incidentally, however, Jesus states that there is a difference, even now, though this difference lay not in the place, but in the object of worship. (Kretzmann)

**4:22** *worship what you do not know.* The Samaritan Bible contained only the Pentateuch. They worshiped the true God, but their failure to accept much of his revelation meant that they knew little of him. (CSB)

*salvation is from the Jews.* The Messiah would be a Jew. (CSB)

Gk has a definite article, “the salvation,” a subtle reference to the salvation Jesus alone brings. (TLSB)

The Messiah Himself had to be from the tribe of Judah, according to the OT Scriptures. (TLSB)

The Samaritan religion had received so many additions through the influence of the heathen religions that the, God whom they still designated as Jehovah was in reality a figment of their imagination, just as the gods are which are worshiped by the lodges of the present day. He that rejects any part of the revelation of God will very shortly lose all light, all understanding. With the Jews it was different. They knew the true, living God. To the Jews God had revealed Himself not only in the Law, in the five Books of Moses, but also in the prophecies. All the books of the Old Testament were read and explained in the synagogues, and the true Israelites, accordingly, worshiped the true God. The services in Jerusalem were still the right services, as commanded by God. And the reason for this mercy of God, the reason why He had permitted them to keep the right form of worship in Jerusalem, was because by His will and intention salvation was to come from the Jews. The Messiah Himself was a Jew according to the flesh. When salvation had come, when Christ had fully earned the salvation through suffering, death, and resurrection, then the special time of grace for Israel alone was at an end, then salvation was preached throughout the world. (Kretzmann)

**4:23 TIME IS COMING** – The hour was simultaneously coming and present, since Christ was in the midst of accomplishing everything the Father had sent Him to do. Cf Lk 4:18–19. (TLSB)

The promised “hour” of that Messiah is “now” here (right in front of her). “Worship,” “the Father,” “spirit and truth” all come together. This is the character of worship in “spirit and truth.” The Father seeking such worshipers echoes Jesus coming to “seek and to save” the lost. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

With the coming of Christ the hour of God had come in which the external worship of God at Jerusalem must give way to the true service of God. Then those that worship and pray in truth would pray to the Father in spirit and in truth. Jesus purposely calls the true God Father, for He is now the Father of all believers through the merits of the Savior, His Son. All true believers call upon that God whom they know as their merciful Father, who is reconciled to them through the blood of Christ. The New Testament worship is not dependent upon external forms, sacrifices of animals, prescribed forms of altars and appointments, etc., but is done in the spirit; it depends upon the condition of heart and mind. And it is done in truth, it is the only true, stable, sound method of worshipping. (Kretzmann)

**SPIRIT AND TRUTH** – Because God is spirit, proper worship is not a matter of geographical location. True worship receives its genuine character from the Holy Spirit’s activity. (TLSB)

WORSHIPERS THE FATHER SEEKS – God actively seeks people out to save them (cf. Lk. 18:10; 1 Tim. 2:4). (TLSB)

**4:24** *God is spirit ... worship in spirit and in truth.* The place of worship is irrelevant, because true worship must be in keeping with God's nature, which is spirit. In John's Gospel truth is associated with Christ (14:6; see note on 1:14), a fact that has great importance for the proper understanding of Christian worship. (CSB)

“Must worship” brings us to the nature of the words “spirit and truth.” God must give what God expects since we are never perfect. The “gift” offered is salvation. The God-given gift to receive the offered gift is faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

That God's essential nature is spiritual, not material, reinforces the teaching that people should worship “with the inclinations of the heart and by faith (Ap. XXIV 27). Augustine: “Both the Father is a spirit and the Son is a spirit, and the Father is holy and the Son is holy... (The Holy Spirit) is referred both to the Father and to the Son” (NPNF1 3:93). (TLSB)

The Father is anxious to have such people as worship and serve Him in this manner, as give Him evidence of the religion of Christ in their hearts, for He Himself is a spirit. God is an invisible being, with reason and will, with self-consciousness and power; He is a personal God. And in accordance with His person He wants to be worshiped in spirit and in truth. He that will worship God properly must direct his spirit, heart, mind, thoughts to Him, must deal with Him and speak with Him as one person with another. That intimate personal intercourse, without any intervening priesthood, that direct dealing of the believer with his heavenly Father, is a characteristic of the New Testament worship. Only believers can therefore truly pray. Such as have no knowledge of, and no belief in, the reconciliation of mankind through the blood of Jesus have no communication with God. Note: We have in these words of Jesus a glorious revelation concerning the true God as the Father of the believers through the reconciliation made by His Son. Through such messages the Lord intends to awaken and strengthen faith in the hearts of all men and trust in God as their true Father. (Kretzmann)

**4:25-26** The woman speaks in the future tense of the Messiah's coming. Jesus breaks into this future mindset—so understandable in one who may have been an outcast, discriminated against—with his present-tense declaration: “I who speak to you am he.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

**4:25** *Messiah ... will explain everything.* The woman's last attempt to evade the issue. The matter was too important, she reasoned, for people like Jesus and herself to work out. Understanding would have to await the coming of the Messiah (see note on 1:25). The Samaritans expected a Messiah, but their rejection of all the inspired writings after the Pentateuch meant that they knew little about him. They thought of him mainly as a teacher. (CSB)

Samaritans believed a prophet like Moses would restore an era of divine favor. (TLSB)

*tell us all things.* Perhaps reflects Samaritan views of the Messiah as teacher. Similar expectations appear in the Dead Sea Scrolls. (TLSB)

The Messiah this woman expected was Moses on a larger scale, an entertaining, informative teacher of “all things”—not bringing salvation, hope, or future with God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

The woman had listened to Jesus with increasing understanding, not unmixed, however, with some measure of bewilderment over the depth of wisdom which lay in the words of Jesus. But the drift of the Lord's speech seemed to be that the time of Messianic glory was about to be revealed. Now the Samaritans had some dim and uncertain idea of the promised Messiah out of the Pentateuch. And the woman now voices her hope in this Messiah, who is called the Christ; with His coming, she knows, all type, symbol, and prophecy would be at an end, for He would bring them a full and complete message, clear and unmistakable to their understanding, without type and external worship. (Kretzmann)

**4:26** / ... *am he*. The only occasion before his trial on which Jesus specifically said that he was the Messiah (but see Mk 9:41). The term did not have the political overtones in Samaria that it had in Judea, which may be part of the reason Jesus used the designation here. (CSB)

Christ acknowledged that He was the Messiah, also using the enigmatic words “I am” (Gk *ego eimi*). (TLSB)

The “I AM” who was Jacob’s God, “greater than Jacob,” is standing in front of her, not as teacher but as Savior. (Sychar would come to give Jesus the rightful acclaim as “Savior of the world,” v 42.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Jesus opens wide the floodgates of living water. With these words Jesus tightly fastened the bond with which he drew this soul to himself. Now Jesus helps her with her confession of faith.

Jesus now revealed Himself to the woman in a few simple words: I am He, the man that is speaking with thee. Jesus is the one Savior that can and will give to all men the full Gospel of salvation; He is the Savior of the world. There was no danger in this announcement of the Lord in Samaria; for, unlike the Jews, the Samaritans did not regard the promised Messiah as a king who was to inaugurate political changes, but as a prophet and teacher who would give them the full revelation of God's Word and will.



But the plain words of Jesus had taught the woman the true meaning of the Messiah, and she, the sinner, believed Him to be the Savior of sinners. (Kretzmann)