

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

OLD TESTAMENT – 1 Kings 19:1-8

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.” 3 Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. 4 But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, “It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.” 5 And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, “Arise and eat.” 6 And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. 7 And the angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, “Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you.” 8 And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.

19:1-8 Unnerved by Jezebel’s threat, the hitherto dauntless champion of the Lord’s cause “ran for his life.” Fleeing the Northern Kingdom, he did not stop until he came to Beersheba, the southernmost city of Judah. From there, the dispirited prophet continued his journey south to Mount Horeb (Sinai) “in the strength” of food supplied by “the angel of the Lord.” Samuel had a similar lapse into fear (1 Sam 16:2). Luther: “The Holy Spirit does not always impel godly people; He lets them do some things in accordance with their own will and wish. When Elijah killed the prophets of Baal, he was impelled by the Spirit of God (1 Kg 18:40); yet later on when Jezebel’s wrath has been reported to him, he fears for himself....He is not commanded by God to withdraw. His reason kept telling him that he would safe if he hid in the desert...These facts were recorded to comfort us, who have no other thought about saints than that they were blocks and logs without feeling. Before this he was not afraid of the king; now he runs away from a woman. Accordingly, all this seems to be foolish; but it shows great understanding and is very helpful, because it is recorded for the comfort of the churches, in order that we may know how merciful God is. We may indeed be evil and weak, provided that we are not found among those who persecute, hate, and blaspheme God. God wants to have patience with our weakness. (TLSB)

19:1 *Ahab told Jezebel* – He was bound to give her a report of all that had transpired, and his heart undoubtedly had to sanction the execution which had taken place. (Kretzmann)

19:2 *May the gods do to me.* A curse formula. (CSB)

one of them. The dead prophets of Baal (v. 1). (CSB)

She did not dare to have him put to death outright, and would probably not have carried out her threat, on account of the attitude of the people, but she hoped to get rid of the prophet by this scheme. (Kretzmann)

God’s mighty miracles did not change the heart of Jezebel. This wicked woman, who had already killed many of the Lord’s prophets, now swore to avenge the death of the 450 prophets of Baal. She swore by her gods that Elijah would die within twenty-four hours. (PBC)

Eight hundred years later Jesus warned His apostles that the unbelieving would continue to hate God’s messengers. The time would come, Jesus said, “when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.” All this will happen, Jesus added, “because they have not known the Father or Me” (John 16:2-3). (PBC)

If God's people today confess that the Lord is the only God and that Jesus is the only Savior, they can expect the same kind of treatment from the unbelieving world. (PBC)

19:3 *he was afraid and rose up and ran for his life.* In spite of Elijah's great triumph in the trial on Mount Carmel and the dramatic demonstration that Elijah's God is the Lord of heaven and earth and the source of Israel's blessings, Jezebel is undaunted. Hers is no empty threat, and Ahab has shown that he is either unwilling or unable to restrain her. So Elijah knows that one of the main sources of Israel's present apostasy is still spewing out its poison and that his own life is in danger. (CSB)

When he noted the conditions in the northern kingdom and the unchanging hatred of Jezebel, which seemed to make all further attempts useless, he arose and went for his life, commending his soul to his God and Lord, that he might be secure in His protection. (Kretzmann)

Beersheba. The southernmost city in Judah (see notes on Ge 21:31; Am 5:5; see also Jdg 20:1). (CSB)

left his servant there – He did this because he intended to be entirely alone in the wilderness with his God. (Kretzmann)

Once Elijah felt safe in Judah, he would call a new servant (vv 19_221). (TLSB)

19:4 *broom tree.* A desert shrub, sometimes large enough to offer some shade. (CSB)

This was a furze-bush or broom-plant, abundant in beds of streams. (Kretzmann)

This was Desert bush that grows to 10-12 feet. Hebrew text has "one broom tress," empathizing scarcity of vegetation in that desolate area. (TLSB)

asked that he might die. Cf. Jnh 4:3, 8. Elijah concluded that his work was fruitless and consequently that life was not worth living. He had lost his confidence in the triumph of the kingdom of God and was withdrawing from the arena of conflict. (CSB)

He felt that he had lived long enough, that he had done his duty; he was tired of his prophetic office and longed for rest. (Kretzmann)

Ashamed that he ran when he should have confronted Jezebel by faith, Elijah wanted to die, sharing the fate of his fathers (cf. Nu 14:28-30). (TLSB)

19:7 *angel of the LORD.* God in his mercy provided sustenance and rest for his discouraged servant. (CSB)

Ministering angel acts in a comforting, gentle manner. Typically, the appearance of an angel evokes fear. (TLSB)

When the OT talks about "the angel of the Lord," it is not describing one of Gods' created angels. It is referring to that Messenger of God who is equal with the Father and who deserves our worship, namely, the Lord Jesus. That Lord who told His disciples, "Surely I am with you always" (Matt 28:20), was with Elijah in the wilderness. We will meet that angel again 2 Kings 1:3 and 19:35. (PBC)

the journey is too much for you. Evidently Elijah had already determined to go to Mount Horeb, where God had established his covenant with his people. There is no indication that the Lord had instructed him to do this as he had previously directed him to go to Kerith (17:2–3) and to Zarephath (17:8–9) and to meet Ahab (18:1). (CSB)

The Lord who fed Elijah miraculously at the Kerith Ravine (1 Kings 17:5) and has numbered the hairs on our heads acted once again. When Elijah opened his eyes, there was some freshly baked bread and some water. (PBC)

19:8–14 Elijah had experiences similar to those of Moses: (1) on Horeb (Ex 3:1), both men went without food for the same length of time (Ex 34:28); (2) Elijah stood “at the entrance of the cave”; Moses was in “a cleft of the rock” when the Lord’s glory passed by (v 13; Ex 33:22); (3) Elijah “wrapped his face in his cloak”; Moses “hid his face” at the burning bush (v 13; Ex 3:6). (TLSB)

19:8 *forty days and forty nights.* Sustained by the Lord as Moses had been for the same length of time on Mount Sinai (Ex 24:18; 34:28) and as Jesus would be in the desert (Mt 4:2, 11). (CSB)

for the strength. Well nourished, Elijah begins an extreme fast. (TLSB)

Horeb, the mount of God.† An alternate name for Mount Sinai (see Ex 3:1; 19:1–3), located in the desert apparently about 250 miles south of Beersheba. (CSB)

This is the place where God had given the Ten Commandments to Moses some 700 years earlier. Just imagine: the discouraged prophet had now traveled over 300 miles on foot, most of it through inhospitable desert country. (PBC)

This was the mount of God. Like Moses before him, he was miraculously preserved by God. Note: It happens time and again that faithful pastors become weary and distressed when they see that their earnest labors bring so little fruit. But God always has strength for them in His Word and in the power of His Spirit. (Kretzmann)

19:1–8 Elijah becomes a wanted man, as Queen Jezebel seeks to kill him. He flees into the wilderness to Mount Horeb, where centuries earlier, Moses had received the Ten Commandments. At times, believers may feel the need to flee from those who would destroy them because of their Christian faith and their profession of that faith. Will it come to that in our land? Even if it does, we can be sure that the Lord will always be with us, patiently blessing us with His love, mercy, and grace. • Almighty God, You are the refuge for Your people in times of trouble. We trust You with all our needs. In Jesus’ name. Amen. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – Ephesians 4:17-5:2

17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. **18** They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. **19** They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. **20** But that is not the way you learned Christ!— **21** assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, **22** to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, **23** and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, **24** and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. **25** Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the

truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil. 28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. 29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

4:17–5:20 Paul has just discussed unity and maturity as twin goals for the church, which God has brought into existence through the death of Christ. He now goes on to show that purity is also essential among those who belong to him. (CSB)

4:17-24 Paul begins the second half of his epistle by exhorting the Ephesians, “live a life worthy of the calling you have received” (4:1). This recalls 2:10, where Paul reminds them that Christians are “created in Christ Jesus to do good works” which God has “prepared in advance for us to do.” This is an arresting thought: even your preparation of this sermon (certainly a good work!) has been “prepared in advance” by God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Ephesus’ location at the juncture of important trade routes increased its exposure to paganism and its temptations. Our text spells out the Christian life, both negatively in terms of what to avoid and fight, and positively in terms of what to strive for and promote. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

4:17 now this I say and testify in the Lord – It is important to realize that the holiness Paul is advocating is not done in order to gain favor with God or improve our standing before Him. Our redemption and salvation have been completely taken care of by Christ’s work. (PBC)

walk - peripatein ... peripatei, “walk.” The final three chapters of Ephesians, including this pericope, are a strong teaching on the Christian life, particularly as it is lived with other Christians in the Church. Paul frequently describes it as a “walk” (also 2:2, 10; 4:1; 5:2, 8, 15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Through their call and conversion, however, they are morally separated from the rest of the Gentiles. Thus their walk should also be different from the walk of their fellow-countrymen. (Stoeckhardt)

futility of their minds. Life without God is intellectually frustrating, useless and meaningless (see, e.g., Ecc 1:2; Ro 1:21). (CSB)

Probably a reference to idolatry. (TLSB)

Rienecker says: “The word contains the idea of aimlessness, the leading to no object or end, vanity.” Kretzmann says: “The inner life of natural man, his thinking, willing, desiring, is vain, useless, purposeless, altogether without reality and worth before God. No unbeliever can have a conception of real moral values, for his mind is centered in nothingness.” (Buls)

Christians cannot spend their time on things that do not matter. They must not waste their minds on thoughts that go nowhere or that spin with every new idea or philosophy. (LL)

4:18-19 Paul lists characteristics of the Old Adam. Unbelievers are described as having given themselves over to their sinful practices. This corresponds to Rom 1:24–28 where God is said to have given them over to their desires. As with Pharaoh (Ex 7–11), when people harden their hearts against God, he may further that hardening. These verses can serve as a vivid portrayal of our own times. Consider the sexual excesses, ethical sins, and greed which are rampant in our society. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Unbelievers (Gentiles) stubbornly resist God’s testimony in nature and Word (Rom. 1:19-20; 2:5). (TLSB)

4:18 *darkened in their understanding.* Continues the idea of a futile thought life. (CSB)

There is a progression here. Darkened suggests a blurring of moral distinctions. Repeated doing of what we know is wrong results in ceasing to think of those things as wrong at all.

The problem with the Gentiles was that they had no proper set of values. Their thinking was all messed up. With such a wrong set of values and with such wrong thinking, it was inevitable that they would become guilty of wrong actions. (PBC)

Matthew 6:23 “But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”

John 1:5 “The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.”

John 3:19 “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.”

alienated from the life of God – Ephesians 2:12 “remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.”

Psalms 58:3 “Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies.”

Matthew 15:8 “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.”

because of the ignorance - agnoyah – Man is by nature totally blind, apathetic and insensible to all that is noble, and divine. – Man is by nature totally blind, apathetic and insensible to all that is noble, sublime and divine. (Stoekhardt)

Romans 10:3 “For they, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

hardness of heart. Moral unresponsiveness. (CSB)

Kretzmann says: “The terms used by Paul presuppose a former, more enlightened condition of man...Not a spark of fear, love, and trust in God is found in natural man. This condition is due to the inherited depravity of mankind. Stoekhardt: “Unregenerate man is by nature entirely blind, stupid, dull, and

unreceptive for all that is noble, high, and godly.” This does not deny their physical beauty and stamina, their intelligence and their cleverness. But natural man is spiritually blind, dead and an enemy of God. (Buls)

The word translated “hardened” here carries the picture of a rock harder than marble. With such a hardened heart, God cannot get through to us. Hardened hearts make for untouchable consciences, immune to the appeals of God. It’s hard to give life to a stone. The result is a daily life that will not be touched by God’s convicting law or his appeals of love. It is reminiscent of Pharaoh in Exodus 7-11. (LL)

porosis – Other words that apply are callousness, spiritual blindness or stupidity. They hate the very idea of religion. (QV)

4:19 *become callous...given themselves up to sensuality* – οἵτινες ἀπηλγηκότες—This verse continues the description of the Gentiles in their pagan walk (4:17) and is semantically parallel to 4:18. Dead flesh feels nothing. There is no “moral sensitivity” to restrain such people’s headlong plunge into depravity. (CC)

Their hard hearts do not feel the accusations of conscience. “By the fall of our first parents mankind was so corrupted that in divine things having to do with our conversion and the salvation of our souls we are by nature blind” (DC SD II 5). (TLSB)

This states how the corrupt mind of the Gentiles reveals and manifests itself in their walk. (Stoekhardt)

Being past feeling, they have lost all feeling of shame, having lost their sense of right and wrong, having lost all sensitivity, having become callous. (Buls)

This is in the active form of the verb. It is not that their sensitivity was taken from them; they abandoned it. (PBC)

have given themselves up sensuality. Just as Pharaoh’s heart was hardened reciprocally by himself and by God (see Ex 7–11), so here the Gentiles have given themselves over to a sinful kind of life, while Ro 1:24, 26, 28 says that God gave them over to that life. (CSB)

ἑαυτοὺς παρέδωκαν τῇ ἀσελείᾳ—The active verb παρέδωκαν again places full responsibility for their sorry plight on the Gentiles themselves, who “handed themselves over.” (CC)

Kretzmann: “They have become abandoned to a state of heart without conscience. They have willingly yielded themselves, by their own guilty choice, to wantonness, to shameless, outrageous sensuality, to reckless, unbridled behavior...They make it their business to indulge in every form of uncleanness, greed or covetousness, but vices are self-seeking.” (Buls)

Every kind of impurity. In their moral apathy having lost all sense of right, chastity and modesty, the Gentile have surrendered themselves to an excessive practice of every kind of impurity along with avarice (extreme desire to amass wealth) and greed. Unchastity and avarice often appear in the apostolic letters as the two main vices and heathendom. (Stoekhardt)

The Gentile did what they wanted to, but, instead of satisfying them, it simply heightened their desire for more. Paul’s point is that Gentiles in their pagan lifestyle were hopeless enmeshed in immoral ways. (PBC)

Paul writes that in his culture people lost their sensitivity to what is proper and right. They are no longer shocked by their gross desires and behaviors. The sensuality of which Paul writes is an open expression of one's worst desires with no sense of shame or disgrace. Greed and lust simply consume a person to where there are no boundaries and no accountability. Paul's words have the ring of truth about them in a culture of drive-by shootings, open illicit sex, and increasing random violence. What limits there were on indecency and violence are disappearing. Our lust and greed seem insatiable. (LL)

4:20 *You*. Emphatic. – “You” is emphatic. That was not the way they found their new life in Christ; those practices only lead to death. Cf. Joseph's words in resisting Potiphar's wife, illustrating how the believer's new self can and should resist the temptations of the old self (Gen 39:9). Kretzmann (*Popular Commentary of the Bible*) comments, “The Ephesian Christians did not study the glorious news of their salvation through Christ in such a way as to suppose that they could continue in the sins which characterized the Gentiles.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

learned Christ – Christ is the true revelation of the will of God in both his person and his life.

Kretzmann: “There is a clear-cut, irreconcilable difference between the unregenerate and the regenerate person. (Buls)

4:21 *way you learned* – They were catechized not only about Christ but also by Him (Luke 10:16). (TLSB)

“Surely you heard”—a hint of apostolic impatience? “Heard” and “were taught” imply much more than just a little casual instruction, which, also in matters theological, can be a dangerous thing. Beware of a spiritual vacuum, lest more and worse spirits move in! They probably refer to the instruction given prior to baptism, when Christians put on Christ (Gal 3:27), and to subsequent teaching about Jesus as Lord (Rom 10:9). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Paganism did nothing to bring the Ephesians to their present fortunate state. That came only when the learned of Christ, when they “were taught...in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus.” Christ's truth was totally at odds with the values of their “former way of life. (PBC)

truth that is in Jesus. The wording and the use of the name Jesus (rather than Christ) suggest that Paul is referring to the embodiment of truth in Jesus' earthly life. (CSB)

The name “Jesus” appears by itself (without “Christ” or “Lord”) only here in Ephesians. The shift from “Christ” in 4:20 to “Jesus” in this verse may not be polemical, but certainly entails the confession that the man Jesus is the Messiah/Christ. (CC)

Kretzmann says: “He that has entered into the sphere of Jesus as His disciple is thereby under obligation to conduct himself in his entire life as Jesus walked.” (Buls)

John 1:14 “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 14:6 “Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really knew me, you would know ^a my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

4:22-24 What they were taught is now amplified. The old pre-Christian lifestyle is to be put off. Again, there is nothing casual or easy here. In Rom 6:6, St. Paul talks about crucifying the flesh! The Old Adam, once in charge, continues to tempt, and now all the harder. Its lusts are characterized by *apatē*, “deceit”; they seduce with false attractiveness. See Prov 9:17–18 and 23:31–32. The task is formidable; crucifying the flesh is no picnic, nor a part-time operation. Luther says, “it will do no good to think and to say: The doctrine has been presented. . . . We must not let people go on, as if it were not necessary to admonish and urge them through the Word of God to lead a good life . . . hold that if we were to stop preaching and admonishing for a year, we would become worse than any heathen” (Ewald Plass, *What Luther Says* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1959] p. 659). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Note that *ananeousthai* is present passive, “ever being renewed.” “The agent in the passive is God . . . While the renewal may be predicated of us, since after the putting away of the old man we have new spiritual powers and cooperate with God in using them, here the passive attributes this blessed work to God” (Lenski). The goal is to “put on the new self,” a new way of life in which the Christian refuses to let sin rule. True righteousness comes only via the Gospel. Holiness is a sanctified fruit “Dressed in his righteousness alone, Redeemed to stand before the throne! On Christ the Solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand” (*LW* 368). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

“People should be able to see a difference between Christians and non-Christians because of the way Christians live. Paul tells the Ephesians to leave behind the old life of sins now that they are followers of Christ. The Christian life is a process. Although we have a new nature, we don’t automatically have all good thoughts and attitudes . . . if we keep listening to God we will be changing all the time. As you look over the past year, do you see a process of change for the better in your thoughts, attitudes, and actions?” (*Life Application Bible*, Tyndale House, 1988). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

4:22 *old self*. Probably means the kind of person the Christian used to be. The old life-style resulted from deceitful desires. (CSB)

Kretzmann remarks: “The lusts and desires of the old man are deceitful; they seem to promise happiness, joy, life, while in reality they ruin a person that follows their guidance, both in body and spirit, until his is lost forever.” (Buls)

Rienecker says: “Every trait of the Old Man’s behavior is putrid, crumbling, or inflated like rotting waste or cadavers, stinking, ripe for being disposed of and forgotten.” (Buls)

Lenski says: “Putting off this old man is violent, painful; Rom. 6:6 calls it a crucifixion.” Vf. Also Gal. 5:24. (Buls)

The expression “the old man” is significant. Man is thought of as a moral entity. By man is meant man’s whole moral habitus, his moral constitution. The various impulses and acts of the mind and will give man a definite moral character, form an entity, a *habitus* inherited from Adam, the corrupt disposition. The old man is the sum total of all conceivable human vices, which in their association, in their concurrence, present a complete picture of man – man considered as moral subject. This old man, this moral quality, is the characteristic of every man that is born into the world. Man, as he is by nature, is not only in this or that matter corrupt, but totally corrupt. All of man’s thoughts, words, desires and deeds are against God and are centered upon the vain things of this world. (Stoeckhardt)

Recall Paul's telling the Ephesian that Gentiles not only give themselves over to sensuality but also enjoy their depravity, continually lusting for more. The reason for that lies in the fact that old Adam, that is, natural unregenerate man, "is being corrupted by...deceitful desires. (PBC)

Paul here refers to the way his readers were before their conversion – their former lifestyles apart from Christ. Christians must deal every day with their old selves. For example, the sight and taste of alcohol continue to haunt a recovering alcoholic committed to sobriety. (LL)

In Baptism, the old, sinful nature was drowned (Rom. 6:3-11; Col. 2:12; 3:9-10). Through daily repentance, the Christian battles against its resurfacing. Augustine: "Lest anyone might think that the substance or essence of a person is to be laid aside, he himself explains what it is to lay aside the old man, and put on the new, when he says in the following words: 'Putting away lying, speak the truth.' Behold that is to put off the old man and to put on the new" (FC SD II 81). (TLSB)

Genesis 8:21 "The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though^j every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done."

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."

Romans 8:7 "the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so."

4:23 *be renewed* – Here we have an interesting verb. It is present tense because it is a constant, daily renewing. It is passive because God is the agent, though the Christian is told to do it. That is a deep mystery. In Galatians 5:16 the Christian is told to walk in the Spirit. But in verse 18 he is told that he is lead by the Spirit. Both are true. But God, and only God, gives the spiritual power. None comes from me. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: Man is renewed so that he begins to live a new life, and he is renovated so that his former being is transformed. In this passage both of these conceptions are presented side by side. (Buls)

Reborn, re-created (2 Cor. 5:17), which happened in Baptism (Titus 3:5) and continues daily (2 Cor. 4:16). (TLSB)

in the spirit of your minds – "Attitude" comes from the Greek *spirit*. Constantly be renewed in respect to the spirit of your mind. Compare in the vanity of their minds, in verse 17. The mind is the source of the thoughts which determine the actions. Renew the thoughts and the actions will also be renewed. Putting off the old man, verse 22, being renewed in the spirit of the mind, verse 23, and putting on the new man, verse 24, happen at one and the same time. They are simply different aspects of one and the same thing. (Buls)

But notice that "putting off the old man" is mentioned first. Christianity is a never-ending battle against the flesh. Romans 6:4; 7:6; Galatians 6:15. The Romans said "Resist the beginnings." Never let sin get a hold on you. (Buls)

Kretzmann: The putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new is done at the same time; the two events are simultaneous. In and by his conversion a person begins an entirely new life . . . This regeneration must be continuous and steady, lest the old sinful nature once more gain the ascendancy. It is a necessary part of Christian sanctification for a Christian always to be anew. . . The new man is the sum total of all the Christian virtues, the entire number of God's moral demands in realization. (Buls)

KJV has "in spirit of your mind." It would have been sufficient if Paul had simply written: "Be renewed in the spirit" or "be renewed in your mind." However, by using both expressions he forcefully emphasizes that he is not dealing with a mere outward, superficial change but with a renewal in man's innermost recesses. Man's spirit in connection with its mind appears as the place where man fosters and conceives the thoughts that determine his conduct, or as the organ of moral thinking and will, or as the vital principle that rules man's mind. (Stoeckhardt)

The inmost renewal should be continual, lasting, so that the old essence does not again win room. This constant renewal is a continuation of the original renewal, which the Christian experienced when he became a Christian, a continuation of the new life that was begun and established in baptism, in conversion. This daily renewal does not necessarily cease to be God's work and operation. It is an essential part of Christian sanctification that a Christian again and again begins from anew, constantly rejuvenates himself, every day from anew diverts heart, mind and thoughts from the vain things of this world wherein they so easily become entangled, withdraws himself from the world and directs himself to God, to the God of his life. (Stoeckhardt)

This takes place above all in daily prayer. When a Christian, as it were, speaks face to face with God, when he opens up unto God the innermost recesses of his soul and ever from anew resigns himself with heart, soul and body to God, he then obtains new courage and heart; then inwardly renewed, rejuvenated he again goes forth into life and in his contact with his fellowmen, in his worldly calling, business and life. (Stoeckhardt)

Psalm 51:10 "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

Isaiah 40:31 "but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

Romans 12:2 "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

4:24 *new self, created to be like God.* † Since the new self is created, it cannot refer to the indwelling Christ, but rather to the kind of person he produces in the new believer. Nor is it some kind of new essential nature the believer has, because that would have been brought into existence at his new birth. In contrast, this is a new way of life that one not only "puts on" at conversion (note the past tense in the parallel in Col 3:9–10) but is also urged to "put on" continually as a Christian. (CSB)

Stoeckhardt: The new man, by regeneration, is created in conformity to the image of God. . . . The new man is righteous, exactly as man should be, without defect, holy, pure, clean, without taint, or spot, like unto God, the righteousness and holy One. (Buls)

The renovated one means the one who was created with God as model. Regeneration means to be God-like. The fact that this *person* is created, which means to come into existence, eliminates all synergism. (Buls)

In the Early Church, candidates for Baptism stripped and were baptized naked, after which they were clothed in white. This pictured the removal of the sinful nature and the re-clothing with Christ in Baptism (Gal. 3:27; Rev. 7:13-14). John Chrysostom: “In the heart, contrition; in the mouth confession; in the work, entire humility.” (Ap XIIB 73). (TLSB)

Note that this new man has been “created.” He is not someone the Christian has brought into being. He has been brought into being by God’s almighty, creative power. (PBC)

This new creation is a return to the image of God in which man and woman were created (Genesis 1:27), but which they lost when they fell into sin. Unfortunately, this restoration will not be complete here on earth, because we Christians all too often succumb to temptation, but it is a start. (PBC)

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”

likeness of God – The idea of re-creation continues with an allusion to Genesis. God’s likeness, or image, is defined here as “righteousness” and “holiness” (Gen. 1:26-27; Luke 1:74-75; Col. 3:10). (TLSB)

true righteousness and holiness – Every day we Christians must strive to be who we are in Christ, to live in such a way that all of his imputed goodness shows itself. Paul makes it clear (as in Rom 6:11-13) that a life of righteousness (doing right by God and by others) and holiness (being distinctly set apart for the purposes of God) is a daily Spirit-driven choice continually made by Christians. (LL)

The Gospel is the righteousness of God. It must be preached constantly to give people this regeneration power. (Buls)

Lenski: Righteousness and holiness are the chief perfection of Adam in his original state, in the image of God. . . The creation of the new man places the new man in control of our life and our conduct; our imputed righteousness and holiness produce acquired righteousness and holiness.(Buls)

Righteousness denotes all that which is right and good. Holiness denotes aversion to sin. (Buls)

4:25 falsehood – There are outright untruths and subtle half-truths. There are the lies of silence and denial. Paul roots his concern for honesty in the church. Distrust can ruin a fellowship of Christians. (LL)

Paul appeals to the past fact of Baptism as the foundation for their present action. (TLSB)

Shading the truth a bit and adjusting the facts are common weaknesses among people. They should not, however, be the Christian’s way of doing things. Dishonesty is especially damaging when it occurs among believers because we are members of the same body. To deceive a fellow Christian is really to harm ourselves, because just as in the human body all the members work together for the common good,

so it is also in the church. Being dishonest with another Christian is like shooting ourselves in the foot. (PBC)

Speak the truth – In a world of subliminal advertising, half-truths, and political expediency, Paul’s challenge for truthfulness in all relationships stands as poignant as ever. (LL)

Truth is here truthfulness in the usual sense of the word. (Stoeckhardt)

neighbor. Probably means fellow Christians in this context. (CSB)

Paul quotes LXX of Zech. 8:16, where “neighbor” means fellow Israelite. Here he means fellow Christian. (TLSB)

4:26 *be angry*. Christians do not lose their emotions at conversion, but their emotions should be purified. Some anger is sinful, some is not. (CSB)

Or, “if you are angry, do not sin.” Paul combines Ps. 4:4 and Deut. 24:15. (TLSB)

Anger is not forbidden in the Scriptures. Christians are characterized often by a righteous anger at sin, sickness and injustice. What is forbidden, however, is to let anger carry us into sin or to allow anger to go unresolved, leading to bitterness and resentment. (LL)

Many things stir Christians to righteous anger. They cannot stand idly by while God’s name is taken in vain or his Holy Word is taught falsely. They rightly become angry when children are neglected or abused. They feel indignation when owners are defrauded of their property. The danger, however, is that righteous anger can turn into hatred and vengeful reprisal. (PBC)

Do not let the sun go down. No anger is to outlast the day. (CSB)

4:27 *the devil*. Personal sin is usually due to our evil desires (see Jas 1:14) rather than to direct tempting by the devil. However, Satan can use our sins—especially those, like anger, that are against others—to bring about greater evil, such as divisions among Christians. (CSB)

Satan uses anger to lead people to other sins (v. 31; 1 Peter 5:8). (TLSB)

no opportunity – Sometimes we make it easy for the devil. We put ourselves into situations where sin is more likely. Give the devil an inch, and he will take a mile. (LL)

Christians should well consider that they, by giving way to anger, make room for the devil, who in this manner, by arousing one brother against another, seeks to cause hatred and discord and all manner of mischief in the Church. (Stoeckhardt)

4:28 *no longer steal ... work ... have something to share*. It is not enough to cease from sin; one must do good. The former thief must now help those in need. (CSB)

In the ancient world theft was a constant evil. For some it was their only source of income. Professional thieves made a living off the ports of the city, where ships brought in treasures, and in public baths and marketplaces. Christianity is never just a call to give up something but rather a call to replace evil with good. (LL)

Bringing home a few “supplies” from work in a lunch bucket is not a new problem. (PBC)

The point here is to replace the bad conduct not only by honest labor but with a view to helping others as a result.

An example of a sinful life that must be abandoned (1 Peter 4:15) and replaced by generosity. (TLSB)

Among the Ephesians, thieving was probably the result of idle habits and of dislike to hard work. (PC)

They should conquer the aversion for work, which in most instances leads to stealing. They are to work with all energy, take honest pains, and so with his hands gain the good, gain a honest profit, his honest due. Through strenuous and persevering work he will also have something left to share with the needy, about whom he as a Christian must be concerned. (Stoeckhardt)

4:29 *no corrupting talk* – The Greek here means “rotten.” We would say “foul talk.” This implies much more than filthy language. The idea is any kind of talk which lowers the moral tone of the community.

Controlling the tongue is not an easy task. James acknowledges that when he writes, “No man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison” (James 3:8). Natural man can’t tame the tongue, but the Holy Spirit can. And he does so in the new man, who is active in the Christian. Paul is appealing to that new man. (PBC)

A good tree cannot produce rotten fruit (Mt. 7:17-18; cf. Mt. 15:18. (TLSB)

only such as is good for building up. An exhortation parallel to the previous one. The Christian not only stops saying unwholesome things; he also begins to say things that will help build others up. (CSB)

If there is any talking at all, that is good and useful for edification – let that proceed out of your mouth. Wherever it is necessary, we should instruct, admonish, comfort, encourage, strengthen our brethren, so that they become edified and furthered in faith and in all that is good. (Stoeckhardt)

Paul believed that the only thing worth saying about someone was that which built them up. Gossip, lies, and slander clearly did not qualify. In popular psychology books, especially those on conflict resolution and negotiation, Paul’s counsel comes through strongly. (LL)

give grace to those who hear – God is gracious through our speaking His Word, particularly when we forgive (v. 32). (TLSB)

We should never forget the purpose and goal of our speaking, namely, that it may minister grace unto the hearers, that is may be beneficial to those who hear. (Stoeckahdt)

4:30-5:2 Recall that following the doctrinal Gospel exposition of the first three chapters, the second half of Ephesians is practical, containing an abundance of guidelines for the sanctified life, with an extensive list of Christian do’s and don’ts. Our text stresses the motive from which resisting the wrong and fostering the right must come if it is to please God—God’s own *agapē* love for us, exemplified in Christ’s offering of himself for us. It is this love that we reflect as we strive to “be imitators of God” and “live a life of love, just as Christ loved us” (5:1–2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

We know that we are the children of God. It follows, then, that we are responsible to him—to emulate him, follow him—to soar within his orbit for our lives. It is only as we participate in what God has done for us through Jesus Christ that we are enabled and expected to imitate him as well. As God, through

Christ, demonstrated his love for us, so our lives, controlled by his love, are to demonstrate such love toward people about us. It is this that ought to determine our daily conduct . . . The fact is, we are under new management, new orders. Our primary task is now to reflect, administer, communicate God's infinite love to a distorted and disjointed world . . . It is this that constitutes the ethics of a Christian" (Leslie Brandt, *Meditations on a Loving God* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1983] 231–32). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

4:30 *grieve*. By sin, such as “unwholesome talk” (v. 29) and the sins mentioned in v. 31. The verb also demonstrates that the Holy Spirit is a person, not just an influence, for only a person can be grieved. (CSB)

God feels the grief of loss when we turn away from Him or deny Him in word and deed. “When the baptized act against their conscience, allowing sin to rule in them, they grieve the Holy Spirit in them and lose Him” (FC SD II 69). (TLSB)

Lenski: 'And' connects the new statement with the preceding admonition. Paul is not speaking of grieving the Holy Spirit in general, but of doing this with worthless speech. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: Paul adds force to his warning . . . That is exactly what Christians do - grieve - if they permit their tongue to utter shameful and foul speech. (Buls)

We are living in time similar to those of the Apostle Paul. The movies, television and bookstands are filled with filthy language. Many people no longer blush when using the most disgusting language. This text ought to be driven home hard. America has become callous to foul speech. Christians dare not join in. This kind of language pains the Holy Spirit. (Buls)

Kretzmann: With great solemnity he gives the full name of the third person of the Godhead, for the sin which he is discussing is a very serious matter.(Buls)

Stoekhardt: The Apostle chose here to use the euphonious 'The Holy Spirit of the Living God.' (Buls)

He is the Spirit of Truth, John 15:26, Who testifies of Jesus. He is the great cause of my repentance and faith and my perseverance in the faith. How incongruous to have a mouth which stinks like manure rather than smells like roses! All of us are guilty, more or less, of grieving the Holy Spirit. (Buls)

The Holy Spirit is grieved not only when people choose to deny Jesus Christ but also when Christians choose to disregard or disobey the Spirit's counsel in the Word. Most of us can recall a time from our childhood or teenage years when we did something very wrong. With the memory of the offense comes the recollection of our parents' faces as we looked at them with out guilt. They were grieved, terribly disappointed in us. One does not forget that look. Paul describes the Holy Spirit as grieved by our sin. (LL)

This happens when His work is obstructed, when sin is trifled with, when Deity is treated carelessly, when place is given to the devil, when the spirit of the world is cherished. (PC)

The Holy Spirit is grieved when we sin. Barnes (*Notes on the New Testament*, p. 92) comments, “Do not act towards the Holy Spirit in a manner which would produce pain in the bosom of a friend who loves you.” Note that the concern here is not with the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit (lifelong rejection of the Spirit's work) but with willful disregard of the Spirit's guidance in sanctified living. However,

persistent and flagrant grieving of the Spirit eventually may lead to a loss of faith, which is created by the Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Psalm 78:40 “How often they rebelled against him in the desert and grieved him in the wasteland!”

Isaiah 63:10 “Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit.”

Acts 5:3 “Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?”

1 Thessalonians 5:19 “Do not put out the Spirit’s fire”

sealed. "By whom." The verb is aorist passive. The Holy Spirit is the agent. On the thought of sealing look at Ephesians 1:13. When I was baptized, when I was converted, the Holy Spirit claimed me as God's child and marked me for everlasting life.

"For the day." When I was baptized the Holy Spirit had the end of my life and beginning of eternal life in mind. I am safe in Him. (Buls)

"The day." It is the day of deliverance which deliverance was caused by the ransoming of Christ. It is, of course, the Last Day, Judgment Day, a welcome day, not a dreadful day. This thought should make me leap for joy. The blood on the door posts in Egypt made the people safe from destruction. The sealing by the Holy Spirit makes me safe for eternity. I need nothing more. With Joseph I must say: "How then could I do this great evil, and sin against God?" That's what I say but how easy to break my promise by speaking filthy words which no one criticizes. Lord have mercy! (Buls)

Stoekhardt: The Holy Spirit is a seal which has been impressed upon us, to reassure us that we belong to God, and preserves us for our destination, unto the day of redemption, when we shall be delivered from all evil, from all corruption, also from our old man. (Buls)

Esphragisthēte, “you were sealed.” Baptism was called *sphragis* from the earliest New Testament times (cf 1:13). Under the old covenant, circumcision had been the “seal” (Rom 4:11). Notice in both contexts the connotation of becoming God’s children. Baptism sealed us “for the day of redemption,” almost certainly referring to the day of Christ’s return. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Worn on rings or in the form of small cylinders, seals were used to imprint “signatures” of ownership. Eph 1:14 says that the Holy Spirit “is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance in the redemption of those who are God’s possession”—a pregnant sentence worthy of a sermon all by itself. It is in Baptism that Christians are sealed with the Spirit and thereby marked as belonging to God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

day of redemption. The Bible speaks of salvation as (1) past—when a person first believes (see, e.g., Tit 3:5), (2) present—as eternal life now, that is, a living relationship with Christ by faith (see v. 9; 1Co 1:18), and (3) future—when Christ returns and salvation, or sanctification, is completed through glorification (here; see also Ro 8:23, 30; 13:11). (CSB)

4:31-32 This summary statement of the Law culminates in the Christ-like act of forgiveness. “The origin and establishment of private Confession lies in the fact that Christ Himself placed His Absolution into the

hands of His Christian people with the command that they should absolve one another of their sins' (BEC 14). (TLSB)

4:31 *let all* – This verse states the negative while verse 32 states the positive. ALL modifies all five following nouns. "Malice" has its own form of "all." It means "Every kind and every vestige of." (Buls)

bitterness ... malice. Such things grieve the Holy Spirit. This continues the instruction concerning one's speech (v. 29). (CSB)

"Bitterness" is bitter feelings. "Rage" means losing one's cool, bursting forth. "Anger" is the slow burn that can so easily become a grudge. Thus far we have the inner sins. (Buls)

Now follow two which express themselves in voice and words. "Brawling" is angry shouting. "Slander" is the vile, destructive, scolding language which goes with brawling. (Buls)

"Get rid of" is a periphrastic translation. Better is "Be put away from you," which renders the Greek passive with a passive in English. This reminds us that unless God is gracious we won't do this. (Buls)

Of course, it is painful to put these things away. It feels so good to vent one's spleen on a person of whom we are convinced that he deserves utterly what we are giving him. But we must crucify our flesh. Think of the slander and scorn heaped on Christ. But He did not answer in kind, see Hebrews 12:3. (Buls)

"Malice" in the Greek is a generic term for any and all kinds of inferior thought and actions. AAT: "And every way of hurting one another." That is quite correct in this context. (Buls)

Paul lists some of the sins which cause a Christian to grieve the Comforter. Twice in the verse he uses "all," preventing Christians from claiming that their specific type of offence is not included in the list. First on the list is "bitterness" which, especially if harbored long-term, is self-punishing, inviting depression, with potential to affect physical well-being, and the cause of many damaging words and actions. Reinecker (*A Linguistic Key to the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980] p. 188) says it denotes "that fretted and irritable state of mind that keeps a man in perpetual animosity." Note that not all anger is sin (cf. v 26, "In your anger do not sin") but even righteous wrath can be misdirected or expressed improperly. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Christ lists evil desires and emotions in Mark 7:21–23 and cautions that "all these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'" "They that are Christ's," says St. Paul, "have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires" (Gal 5:24), a reminder that the not-so-unusual sins listed in this verse are serious and dare not be taken for granted because they are "just ordinary." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

4:32 *kind...tenderhearted.* The opposite of the negative qualities of v. 31. (CSB)

Instead of being bitter and angry with our neighbor, or using loud and insulting speech, Paul urges God's people to be kind, compassionate, and forgiving. That's not easy! After all, we're talking here about a fellow Christian who has committed real sins against us. She has lied about us and spoiled our reputation; he has defrauded us in a business deal. Her abuse of alcohol has deprived our family of the support it needs. Don't we have some rights? Doesn't he or she deserve some of the anger and bitterness we feel? (PBC)

Verse 31 states the negative. This verse states the positive. That is indicated by the Greek word "but," which the NIV ignores. (Buls)

Here our standard is none other than God, the Saving God. (Buls)

"Be" has the force of "be constantly." The goal is stated - kind and compassionate. The word is associated in Greek with the idea of "to use." We must be handleable. We should always be of such a spirit that people can deal with us. (Buls)

"Having healthy bowels" is the literal meaning of "compassionate." That is a metaphor. Stoeckhardt says the word means "Merciful if you see any misery." There is so much misery in the world. We should meet it with pity and understanding. (Buls)

Having laid out for his readers their responsibility to rid themselves of evil, the apostle now pictures the positive aspect of our Christian walk on our God-blessed road to glory. If transgressions grieve the Spirit, it is equally and wondrously true that when we exercise our faith in daily living, we thereby gladden God's heart! The sinner's repentance brings joy to the angels before God's throne in heaven. God himself is glad when we, his grateful and forgiven servants, show our appreciation for his love by expressing that same love in our relationships with one another. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

The Christian imitates Christ's thoughts, words, and deeds of kindness, all flowing from a heart made tender because of the Savior's tenderness toward us. Thus there develops a beautiful forgiven-forgiving syndrome. The phrase "to one another" makes sure the believer starts where he is—within the family circle, and then, as the circle grows, the family of close friends, and especially the congregational family. Far too many churches have given the enemies of Christ ammunition by demonstrating a spirit devoid of kindness, tenderness, and forgiveness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

This text offers the opportunity to speak a word about members' relationships—but it must be spoken in kindness, from a tender heart, and with forgiveness (ours from God and ours toward others) emphasized. Use caution! Avoid wielding this beautiful passage as a legalistic club. Your writer used this verse routinely to admonish his children, but I'm afraid that too often they were enlisted as law, rather than to take the child to the Savior's throne of grace for the proper motive. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

The word for kindness in the original Greek denotes a softness that makes one approachable by others and able to minister to their needs. The same word is used in the Greek for a wine that has had all its harshness removed so that it goes down smoothly. Kind people have their rough edges smoothed out and are easy to be with. (LL)

forgiving. This basic Christian attitude, which is a result of being forgiven in Christ, along with being kind and compassionate, brings to others what we have received from God. (CSB)

"To be gracious, to forgive." Stoeckhardt translates: "Do not insist on retaliation." (Buls)

Lenski: Here Paul shows what Christian forgiveness is: it insists on nothing when we are wronged, freely lets the wrong pass, and thus for its part ends it at once.(Buls)

Note that we have two reciprocal pronouns meaning "each other" in this verse. These are used here as synonyms.(Buls)

"For Christ's sake" is the high standard which we are to keep before us. That explains itself and we need add nothing here. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: The unique, incomparable love of Christ in that He sacrificed Himself for us is the motive and power of our love.(Buls)

Kretzmann: Just as God in Christ showed us such immeasurable love, so we should show love toward our neighbor. (Buls)

Regarding forgiveness, Lenski says, "Let us put this plainly, since even pastors misunderstand it. The moment a man wrongs me, in that moment I must forgive him—then my soul is free. If I hold the wrong against him, I sin against God and against him, and jeopardize my forgiveness with God. With the wrong he has done he must face God; but that is his affair and God's, not mine, save that in the case of a brother I should help him according to Matt 18:15, etc. But whether this succeeds or not, and before this even begins, I must forgive him. . . . That God forgave your sins and mine 'in connection with Christ' is the compelling motive for our forgiving every man who ever or in any way sins against us." In the words of a greater authority, "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us"! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

As God has forgiven us, Christians are to forgive others. Echoes of the Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer sound through these words. When God forgives, as he forgave us in Christ, our sin is put away from us "as far as the east is from the west" (Ps 103:12). We are to approach the sins of others with this same total and no-more-to-be-done kind of forgiveness. In others words, we bury the hatchet, not leaving the handle up for future use. (LL)

4:17–32 Paul describes the new life that results from the Gospel. Yet, the Law also continues to apply because of our sinful nature. As Luther explains the Ten Commandments in the Catechism, the Law both forbids sinful behavior ("shall not") and urges good works ("shall"). As we inevitably fail to live up to such demands, forgiveness preserves and restores the harmony of the Church. • Father, forgive us our sins, that we may forgive those who sin against us. Amen. (TLSB)

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

5:1 *Be imitators.* One way of imitating God is to have a forgiving spirit (4:32). The way we imitate our Lord is to act "just as" (v. 2; 4:32) he did. The sacrificial way Jesus expressed his love for us is not only the means of salvation (as seen in ch. 2) but also an example of the way we are to live for the sake of others. (CSB)

The traditional chapter division is unfortunate. The chief way to imitate God is to forgive and to love in a sacrificial way (v. 2). These acts flow from being re-created in God's image (4:24). (TLSB)

Kretzmann: The first verses of this chapter really conclude the thought at the close of the previous chapter. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: Now Paul gathers, as it were, all these virtues which he has mentioned and others of a similar nature together and calls the sum of them love, 5:1-2. (Buls)

This is the conclusion and summary of 4:17-31. As in Galatians 5:14, Paul summarizes all Christian virtues in one, love. Again the word "be" means "constantly be." (Buls)

Stoekhardt: God is the archetype and model of love. God loved us and made us unworthy ones His own children; that should urge us, yes, that obliges us to imitate God, to love our fellow Christians as our brethren, to walk in love so that all that we do and all that we leave undone is motivated by love.(Buls)

Luther: The outward life of the Christians shall be nothing but love. (Buls)

We've all been intrigued by the sight of a toddler trying to imitate his father – pounding a hammer, throwing a ball, raking leaves. Paul is suggesting something similar when he advocates kindness and compassion, love and forgiveness. (PBC)

mimētai, “imitators,” from which comes our word “mimic.” Children (including children of God) learn by mimicking their parents. God’s loving his children teaches them to love. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

The believer is not breaking new ground in all this. We follow someone who has been this way before, and who was in all respects tempted as we are. And so St. Paul connects the preceding to what follows with *oun*, “therefore.” The model is God himself! Our goal is to imitate him as “beloved children.” Note well: we are not just God’s children—that is gracious and grand indeed—we are “dearly loved children.” “We know and rely on the love God has for us” (1 John 4:16). Lenski (p. 591) says the word *mimētai* refers to likeness and similarity, not to complete duplication. It means dependence on God in all our actions, not independent sameness.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Paul uses the Greek word *mimesis* which people understood to be a word associated with teaching and training. One learned by watching the one who knew how. What’s more, Paul in emphasizing the imitation of God, affirms again the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27; that is, we were created to reflect God’s nature and works. We were made to be an image of the one who made us. That image has been flawed and blurred by sin. By the Spirit, though, when we seek to imitate God, we are reclaiming God’s original intent for us. (LL)

We ought to forgive men because God has forgiven us; but moreover, we ought to imitate our Father in his forgiveness and in his loving spirit because beloved children should always imitate, and will always strive to imitate, what is good in a beloved father. Forgiving love is one the great glories of our Father. (PC)

John 8:12 ‘When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”’

John 10:27 “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”

beloved children - tekna agapēta, “beloved children.” When the New Testament speaks of children of God, it nearly always uses *tekna*. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

“Children” are those who are begotten. The word reminds us of the fact that God was the cause of our spiritual birth. (Buls)

"Beloved" reminds us of the truth that we love because He first loved us. Children both consciously and subconsciously imitate their parents. Every time the Christian says "Our Father who art in heaven," he is reminded of the attributes of his heavenly Father. (Buls)

5:2 *walk in love* (AGAPE) – Let your ordinary life be spent in an atmosphere of love. Drink it in from heaven, as plants drink in the sunshine, radiate it forth from eyes and face, let hands and feet be active in the service of God and fellowman. (PC)

Not simply following Christ's example of love, but enabled to love because of what He did for us (1 John 4:7-19). (TLSB)

Verse two explains verse one. How do we imitate our heavenly Father? By doing what we are told in verse 2. (Buls)

The Greek word for "live a life" is something like "walk the walk," a metaphor for the Christian's way of life. This reminds us of the words of a hymn: "Let us ever walk with Jesus, Follow His example pure." *Lutheran Worship* #381.(Buls)

In 4:32 we had "God in Christ." In 5:1 we had God as model. And here in verse 2 we have Christ as standard. We should love as Christ loved us. What does this mean? We were miserable, wretched, helpless, hopeless and even resisted His help because we thought we could help ourselves. The words "Christ loved us" are explained in the sentence which follows. (Buls)

"Gave Himself up" is the very verb which is used of the betrayal of Judas. Judas turned Christ over to the Jewish authorities. But in actuality it was Christ who "gave Himself up." In the Garden of Gethsemane He willingly gave Himself up. He willingly laid down His own life. John 10:17; Hebrews 10:7. (Buls)

"For us" means "in stead of us." It denotes the vicarious atonement. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: The joining of the two nouns serves to increase the emphasis upon the idea of sacrifice. (Buls)

Once more the emphasis is on *agapē* love, and if the requirement might seem too hard, the apostle simply points to Christ's greater love and asks for his readers to reflect that same kind of love to one another. Paul pictures our Savior's selfless sacrifice as "a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." *Prosfora* and *thusia* both are sacrificial terms. The phrase *osmēn euōdias*, "fragrant offering," reflects the Hebrew *rē'ach nēcho'ach* in Gen 8:21; Exod 29:18, 25, 41; and often in Leviticus and Numbers. Sacrifices offered in faith are said to be pleasant to the nostrils of the Creator. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

peripateite en agapēi, kathōs kai ho Christos ēgapēsen ēmas, "walk in love, as Christ loved us." The initial reference is to imitating Christ *en agapēi*, "in love," meaning that we walk through life loving others as Christ did. However, Christ is not simply example. We also walk *en agapēi*, that is, in *his* love. As we are constantly being loved by him, our hearts are moved, enabled, empowered (not just shown how) to love others. Here is the Gospel motivation for our loving one another. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

fragrant offering. In the OT the offering of a sacrifice pleased the Lord so much that it was described as a "pleasing aroma" (Ge 8:21; Ex 29:18, 25, 41; Lev 1:9, 13, 17). (CSB)

Christ fulfills the temple sacrifices (Ex. 29:41; Lev. 1), making forgiveness possible. (TLSB)

NKJV: "For a sweet smelling aroma." The point is that Christ's sacrifice pleased God. Christ gave Himself willingly for the undeserving. In doing so He pleased God. That is the way we should love,

especially our fellow Christians. Look at Galatians 6:10. Instead of being angry at them we should love them. Instead of shouting at them we should speak kind words. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: The unique, incomparable love of Christ in that He sacrificed Himself for us is the motive and power of our love. (Buls)

Lenski: It is not accidental that Paul writes about the supreme sweetness of the odor of Christ's sacrifice when he purposes to warn against filthiness on our part. (Buls)

The Bible constantly warns Christians against living in deliberate sin. The Bible also constantly nudges the new man in us to live as God wants us to live. All of this is a somber reminder that we are sinful people who can so easily be misled or can so easily fall away from the faith. (Buls)

And the Gospel is made explicit, even sensory: Christ “gave himself up for us, a fragrant (*osmēn euōdias*) offering and sacrifice to God.” Paul recalls the smoke of the Old Testament sacrifices (Ex 29:18, 25) rising to heaven. Jesus’ death on the cross is the sacrifice that pleases God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Not just the offering merely but the spirit in which it was offered (Cain & Abel). (PC)

The point here is the sacrificial giving of himself by Jesus was a “sweet smell” to God. In pagan worship it was believed that the god actually enjoyed the smell of the burnt offerings.

GOSPEL – John 6:35-51

35 Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. 36 But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. 37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” 41 So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” 42 They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?” 43 Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. 44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— 46 not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. 47 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

6:35-51 The bread of life discourse occurs in a Passover context (6:4), bringing to mind the sacrifice this Incarnate One will offer to atone for sin. By giving his flesh for the life of the world, Jesus declares this atonement is universal and not particular. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

Jesus’ teaching here will soon divide those who believe in him (his disciples) from those who do not; those offended by his words about eating his flesh will withdraw from him (6:66). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

6:35 *I am*. The first of seven self-descriptions of Jesus introduced by “I am” (see 8:12; 9:5; 10:7, 9; 10:11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5). In the Greek the words are solemnly emphatic and echo Ex 3:14. (CSB)

Jesus clearly identified Himself as the source of real life, which lasts forever. (TLSB)

Bengel: 'I am' -- To those who seek Him, He offers Himself immediately. (Buls)

Westcott: This form of expression (I am) is not found in the Synoptists. It occurs not infrequently in John's Gospel, and the figures with which it is connected furnish a complete study of the Lord's work. (Buls)

This is the first of the seven "I am" passages in this Gospel. It is repeated in verses 41, 48, and 51 in this chapter. The others are found at 8:12; 10:7-9; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; and 15:1-5. The combination "I am" with reference to Christ also appears in 4:26; 6:20; 8:18; 13:19; 14:3 and 18:5. In each case it means: "I (and no one else) am, etc." (Buls)

John makes extensive use of the “I am” statements of Jesus. This phrase harkens back to Ex 3:14–15, where God reveals himself to Moses in the theophany of the burning bush that is not consumed. Moses asks God for his name and God responds: “I AM WHO I AM.” This Johannine phenomenon is discussed in many reference books and commentaries (*The Lutheran Study Bible* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009], 1784–85; Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*; Green, McKnight, and Marshall, eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*; and the last Appendix in the Anchor Bible, vol. 29, Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII*, to name a few). The significance of this designation as a claim to be God can probably be seen best in Jn 8:58–59, where the reaction to Jesus’ use of this term was a hostile crowd seeking to stone (cf. Lev 24:16) Jesus for what their hard hearts supposed to be blasphemy on his part. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

This “I AM” comes from Exodus 3:14. . It also means “He is” or “He will be.” Basically it is an assertion of authority.

the bread of life. † May mean “the bread that is living” and/or “the bread that gives life.” What is implied in v. 33 is now made explicit and repeated with minor variations in vv. 41, 48, 51. It is possible that both meanings are implied.. (CSB)

"Of life" means both "living" in verse 51 and "life-giving" in verse 54. Manna was neither of these. (Buls)

Luther: To come to Christ is the same as to believe in Christ . . . He is speaking of bread in the sense of coming to Christ, that is, believing in Christ. For to eat, to come to Christ, and to believe in Christ are all one and the same thing . . . It is obvious, therefore, that in this chapter the Lord is speaking of spiritual eating. (Buls)

Lenski: 'The bread of life' like 'the water of life' in chapter four is Biblical allegory which unites the figure 'bread' with the reality 'life' and thus always interprets itself. (Buls)

Here Jesus introduces the idea of drinking as well as eating. Later in the chapter he will speak of eating his body and drinking his blood (vv 53–56). Luther comments (Luther’s Works, vol. 23, *Sermons on the Gospel of John, Chapters 6–8*):

It is faith which eats him. . . . To “eat” here refers to a spiritual eating and consuming (p. 116).

“I will be the Donor, the Baker, the Brewer, and the Farmer. Yes, I Myself will be the Food; I Myself will be the Bread. It must be your concern to eat” (p. 14).

We cannot give ourselves this food; we must obtain it from the Son of Man. Therefore all that is necessary is that Christ affix His seal, and I am assured that my God is gracious to me (p. 15).

When I have this food, I will reject not only physical food but also the spiritual food served by the fanatics and schismatic spirits (p. 19).

“What must we do . . . ?” [v 28]. The Lord replies [v 29]: “[B]elieve on the Son. . . .” With this one statement the Lord directs our attention to the subject of faith, overthrowing all their external worship of the Law and of works (p. 22). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

At this point Jesus becomes clear and emphatic. “Do you understand? I am the bread of life. If you receive Me by faith, you will have eternal life. You will be in a loving, saving relationship with Me and with My Father. And that relationship will never end. Even death will not end it. (LL)

Jesus now makes a plain, frank statement. He had not said that He would give the wonderful bread that came down from heaven, but He had asserted that this miraculous Bread which came down from heaven had the power to give eternal life. He Himself is that Bread of Life. No matter who it is that comes to Him, he will no more suffer with hunger, just as he that drinks of the living water of His salvation will never again be bothered with thirst. To come to Jesus means to believe in Him as the Savior of the world. All the desires and longings of the soul find their complete gratification in Him and His mercy. (Kretzmann)

will come to me – “Comes” can be interchanged with “believe” and “hungry” with “thirsty.” In Jesus all spiritual hunger and thirst is satisfied. WE have that blessing from Jesus as long as we believe in Him. (PBC)

shall never thirst – This alludes to Jesus as the living water that quenches thirst forever. Notes – Acts 2:42.

“Thirst” alludes again to Jesus as the living water that quenches thirst forever (Jn 4:14). In light of “born of water and the Spirit” in Jn 3:5 and the identification of the flowing water with the gift of the Spirit in Jn 7:37–39, Jesus’ promise here is fulfilled in Holy Baptism; that is the occasion when one “comes to me [Jesus]” and by the Spirit’s power “believes in me.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

John 3:5 “Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.”

John 4:14 “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.”

John 7:37-39 “On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living

water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

The following OT references that tell about God’s wisdom and revelation helping with hunger and thirst and giving life. Notes – Acts 2:42..

Psalms 119:103 “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”

Proverbs 3:18 “She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed.”

Proverbs 4:4 “he taught me and said, “Lay hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and you will live.”

Proverbs 8:35 “or whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the LORD.”

There are further parallels in OT wisdom literature where God’s wisdom or revelation satisfies hunger and thirst, and gives life (Ps 119:103, 131; Prov 3:18; 4:4; 8:35; 9:1–12). Compare also Sirach 24:20, where wisdom personified says of herself, “Those who eat me will hunger for more, and those who drink me will thirst for more.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 3)

6:36 Contrast 20:29. (CSB)

But although the Son of God and such perfect satisfaction was brought so near to the Jews, yet they did not believe. They have seen Him in His ministry of miracles, and they have heard the words of life which issued from His mouth at such times, but they have refused to believe. They should know, therefore, that everything which the Father gives to the Son will come to Him. To come to Jesus is to believe; faith is a spiritual coming. The heart and the will of a person goes to Christ, is joined to Christ. (Kretzmann)

6:37 God’s action (see v. 44; 10:29; 17:6; 18:9), not man’s (v. 28), is primary in salvation, and Christ’s mercy is unfailing (see vv. 31–40; 10:28; 17:9, 12, 15, 19; 18:9). (CSB)

All those people actually come to Jesus whom the Father has given to Him as His own. Faith is the result of God’s merciful selection. It is a call and selection of grace, and therefore none of those that come to Him in faith will the Lord cast out. God’s thoughts are thoughts of peace and mercy only; He has no desire for the death of any sinner. To fulfill this merciful kind purpose of His heavenly Father Jesus has come into the world. (Kretzmann)

No one has the willpower to choose to believe in Jesus or come to God. Faith comes to the believer as a gift from God, just as physical life comes as a gift. (TLSB)

6:38-40 *to thelēma*, “will,” used eleven times in John’s Gospel. In 1:13, John contrasts God’s will with both the will of flesh and of man; God’s will causes belief and rebirth; neither the will of flesh nor of man can. Obedience to God’s will serves as Jesus’ food (4:34) and enables others to know Jesus’ teaching is from God (7:17). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

6:38 *I have come down from heaven*. Repeated six times in this context (vv. 33, 38, 41, 50–51, 58), emphasizing Jesus’ divine origin. (CSB)

6:39 *I should lose nothing.* The true believer will persevere because of Christ's firm hold on him (see Php 1:6). (CSB)

Salvation of the believers is secure in Christ, who let's none of His own slip through His fingers (cf. 1 Peter 1:3-5). (TLSB)

It is the will of the Father that Jesus will lose none of those whom the Father has given Him. They are all equally precious in His sight, far too dearly bought to be lost. Those, therefore, whom the Father has given to the Son as His own, the Son should raise from the dead on the last day to give them the full enjoyment of the blessings and the glory which are their heritage. (Kretzmann)

the last day. An expression found only in John in the NT (see vv. 40, 44, 54). (CSB)

6:40 *looks* – This is seeing Jesus with eyes of faith. The chief worship of the Gospel is to desire to receive the forgiveness of sins, grace, and righteousness. (TLSB)

raise him up at the last day. Death cannot destroy the life that Christ gives. (CSB)

For the sake of clearness and emphasis, Jesus repeats the same thought. It is the will of the Father who sent the Son into the world that everyone that looks upon the Son in faith, that accepts Him as the Son of God and the Savior of the world, shall, without fail, have eternal life, shall become partaker of the glories of heaven by and in the resurrection. In Christ we have been chosen unto eternal life. (Kretzmann)

6:41-51 The preceding context is vital for understanding today's Gospel. Jn 6:41–51 serves as divine commentary on the feeding of the 5,000 in Jn 6:1–15, the one miracle presented in all four gospels. But only John tells us the following: the miraculous sign took place near the Passover (Jn 6:4); Jesus conversed with Philip and Andrew (6:6–8); a child's food was involved (6:9); Jesus himself distributed the food (6:11); and afterward the people wanted forcibly to crown Jesus their king (6:15). Use a synopsis to understand better the high Christology of the Johannine version. In the sermon, an introductory review of the feeding will help people better understand Jesus' claim to be the bread of life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

Unlike the synoptic gospels, John contains Jesus' interpretation of the feeding (Jn 6:25–29). The context immediately preceding our text provides several helpful and important keys to understanding. First, Jesus admonishes his listeners for low expectations. They seek food of limited, even spoiling, value while he offers something approved by God and of eternal worth (Jn 6:26–27). Second, people who do not understand the gracious offer first ask what they must do, and then ask Jesus to do something spectacular before they will trust him (Jn 6:28–31). The succinct Christology of Jn 6:32–40 provides the basis not only for the grumbling of unbelievers (6:41), but also for Jesus' review and reinforcement of the truth in our text. In brief, Jesus teaches that he is and offers something better than the trusted paradigm of Moses. Jesus is the bread of life, who does the will of the Father, and he will raise up on the last day all who believe, giving to them eternal life. Christology and the gift of eternal life provide two promising pillars for today's Gospel message. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

The verses following our text form next Sunday's Gospel, which personalizes Christology. Using terms that remind many of the Eucharist, Jesus stresses the reality of the divine food that we receive in him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

John 6:41–51 is highly Christological. It begins and ends with the dramatic “I AM” claims that are impossible to translate with equivalent force. Jesus, as the divine “I AM,” is the “(living) bread that came down from heaven” (Jn 6:41, 51). The grumbling of v 41 stands in reaction to Jesus’ initial claim in v 35. To understand the metaphor, it may help to meditate on it also as a simile: “I am just like food that causes life” (Barclay M. Newman and Eugene A. Nida, *Translator’s Handbook on the Gospel of John* [United Bible Societies: London, 1980] 198). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

The text has two unequal parts: vv 41–42 express unbelief, and vv 43–51 explain the gift of God in Jesus Christ and call people to faith in him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

Like the Gospels for the preceding Sunday and the succeeding Sunday, the Gospel for this Sunday presents Jesus as “the bread that came down from heaven” (v 41), which “gives life to the world” (v 33). Informing all of these Gospel selections, of course, is the account of Jesus’ miraculous feeding of the five thousand, with which John 6 begins. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

But the Gospel for this Sunday does not simply mirror the Gospels for the preceding Sunday and the subsequent Sunday. A new feature in today’s Gospel is the mystery of Christ’s person. V 42 explores the mystery of how Jesus can be simultaneously human and divine. How can the son of Joseph and Mary, people whom Jesus’ audience knows, claim to have come down from heaven? Given that puzzle, it is no wonder Jesus insists in v 44 that no person can come to faith “unless the Father . . . draws him” and in v 45 that such a person must “be taught by God.” That is another new feature in this Gospel selection: the accent on God the Father’s activity in our salvation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

6:41-42 Jesus’ opponents thought they knew His background and parentage (cf. Mt 13:53-58). Thus, any implication that He was more than of human origin was grounds for complaint on their part. (TLSB)

The people in our text seem to be more disturbed by Jesus’ claim of coming down from heaven than they are by his claim that he is the bread of life. How can a person whose father and mother they know claim to be the Son of the heavenly Father? How can a person whose birthplace they know to be Bethlehem claim to have originated in heaven? To be sure, the question of Jesus’ origin is germane to the question of Jesus’ “breadship.” The people correctly reason that if Jesus didn’t really come down from heaven, then his claim of being the bread “that endures to eternal life” (v 27) is not true either. What Jesus claims to do for us can never be divorced from who Jesus is. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

6:41 *the Jews*. At this point the Jews started to grumble, to murmur among themselves, to express their disapproval. The idea that this man should Himself be that wonderful Bread which had come down from heaven seemed preposterous to them. (Kretzmann)

Literally, “were grumbling.” This is an allusion to the Israelites’ grumbling in the wilderness (cf. Ex 15:24). (TLSB)

Some commentators feel that a different audience is introduced at this point. But there is no proof for this. (Buls)

The Gospel of John uses the term “the Jews” in pejorative sense, meaning Jesus’ enemies, those who hated Him. (Buls)

Though they grumble at Him, He does not abandon them but keeps on offering Himself to them. The cause of their grumbling is stated at the end of verse 41 and explained further in verse 42. Verses 41-51 center in the person of Christ. (Buls)

The text begins with the same Greek verb, *gonguzō*, used in the Septuagint to describe the “grumbling” of God’s people following the Exodus (Ex 16:2–11). The word invites us to compare the rejection of Jesus to a lack of faith in the God of the Exodus, and encourages us to examine our own unfaithful grumbling. Now, as in the past, people grumble when their problems are not immediately solved, or they do not understand what is happening. Grumbling exposes dissatisfaction, selfishness, and lack of trust in God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

6:42 *son of Joseph* – They could not merely not understand how this could be true, but they believed themselves to be in possession of evidence to the contrary. They were sure that they knew His antecedents, they were acquainted with His mother, they knew the name of His father. Note: It has always been an offense to the reason of man that God and man are united in the person of Jesus. (Kretzmann)

The question in the first part of the verse expects an affirmative answer. The second question amounts to doubting what Jesus said of Himself. They are plainly denying His divinity. (Buls)

Lenski: 'Out of heaven have I come down.' That, indeed, is the vital point in all that Jesus said to them. It has ever been the stumbling block and rock of offense for unbelief. (Buls)

In preaching, instead of constantly referring to “the Jews” (6:41), try using a descriptive term like “unbelievers.” Listeners who think only of others could miss the text’s warning about faithlessness, and its invitation to all to trust Jesus as God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

The unbelievers in the text do not accept Jesus’ claim to be the I AM who came down from heaven because they see the human side of life. They connect Jesus with Joseph and Jesus’ human mother, rather than heaven. Since this element of unbelief is the foil of Jesus’ self identity, it is important to provide contemporary analogies to prepare the listeners to appreciate Jesus’ saving message. Like unbelievers of old, we grumble when we do not get immediate gratification. God seems too human for us unless miracles constantly help us. We want divine intervention that gives us what we want, when we want it. For ancient unbelievers, Jesus could not have a human family and still be the incarnate Lord from heaven. When Christians today claim to know God through the revelation of Christ in Word and Sacrament, unbelievers scoff. The human side of divine revelation continues to provoke opposition. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

6:43 *do not grumble* – But the Lord here advises against all murmuring, against all attempts to make the matter plausible to reason. (Kretzmann)

Jesus’ command to stop grumbling (present imperative) also means stop doubting. The sermon may explore how God’s command to stop negative behavior challenges latent unbelief and is a prolog of faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

Lenski: In external and worldly matters let reason be the judge. But in heavenly matters and in matter of faith, when a question of salvation is involved, bid reason observe silence and hold still. 'No one' is applied here to the entire human race, to the whole world, with no one excepted, inclusive of the mightiest, the holiest, the wisest, and the most learned . . . But you come to Him when the Father shows you His great mercy, when He assures you that He will reveal Himself as having sent His Son into the world out of paternal love, as is written John 3:16. (Buls)

6:44-47 The declaration that no one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him can be understood as an invitation to stop resisting God. Jesus quickly gives two reasons to stop pulling away from God: he promises resurrection on the last day and the fulfillment of the prophetic promise of learning from God.

The OT reference invites people to learn of God in Jesus Christ. The text emphasizes the resurrection on the last day because of the repeated terminology in vv 39, 40, 45, 54. Set the goal that every listener may know more certainly the gift of eternal life in Jesus. It may be helpful to contrast the Christian promise with New Age false promises of divine knowledge through introspection or the teachings of mere humans (L. Ron Hubbard, etc.). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

Repeatedly, Jesus clarifies that coming to Jesus, believing in him, and seeing God are not the outcome of human effort. “No one can come to me unless the Father . . . draws him. . . . ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.” No one can see the Father unless he sees the Son, who alone “has seen the Father.” How well Luther put it: “I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ . . . or come to Him” (*Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation*, p. 17). As St. Paul reminds us, “No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 12:3). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

6:44 *draws*.† People do not come to Christ on their own initiative; the Father draws them. (CSB)

This verse begins with a present general condition to which there are no exceptions. Implicit in this verse is the thought that natural man is spiritually blind, dead and an enemy of God. Lenski notes that Luther based the explanation of the third article on this verse. (Buls)

The verb "draws" denotes the drawing of a dead weight, as for example in the beaching of a ship. God alone can draw. This verse excludes every vestige of synergism, also that of a Christian who is tempted often to think that he has spiritual powers of his own. (Buls)

In John 12:32 Jesus uses the verb "draw" with reference to His crucifixion. There is no drawing, apart from the crucified Christ. (Buls)

For the third time Jesus says: "And I will raise him on the last day." Look at verses 39 and 40. In verse 39 it is contrasted with losing a Christian: "I will not lose anyone but I will raise him." In verse 40 Jesus makes clear that where there is faith in life eternal, there the individual has the assurance of resurrection. And in verse 44 we are told that through the monergistic drawing of the Father, Jesus will raise the individual on the last day. Faith does not grumble but rejoices in the Father and the Son. (Buls)

For no man can come to Christ by His own reason and strength. All brooding and disputing will not work faith in the heart. There must be a drawing on the part of the Father, by whose strength faith is worked in the heart. Without this work on the part of the Father there can be no faith nor any rising to eternal life. (Kretzmann)

God alone has the power to make the spiritually alive (cf. 5:25-26). “To have God, you can easily see, it not to take hold of Him with our hands or put Him in a bag (like money) or lock Him in a chest (like silver vessels). Instead to have Him means that the heart takes hold of Him and clings to Him. To cling to Him with the heart is nothing else than to trust in Him entirely. For this reason God wishes to turn us away from everything else that exists outside of Him and to draw us to Himself” (LC I 13-15). (TLSB)

6:45 *the Prophets*. The section of the OT from which the quotation is taken. (CSB)

Everyone who ...heard and learned from the Father. Only those who learn from God come to salvation, and all who learn from him are saved. (CSB)

This is from a section in Isaiah, where the prophet foretells Zion's future glory when the Messiah will rule His people. (TLSB)

Jesus correctly quotes Isaiah 54:12 which foretold justification through faith in Christ. His hearers had misquoted Scripture in verse 31 in the interest of work-righteousness. (Buls)

God is the great teacher. The Father draws the individual by causing the individual to hear and learn of Jesus. That person comes to Christ which is synonymous with believing in Him. Isaiah 54 describes the blessed condition of those who believe in the Savior described in Isaiah 53. (Buls)

Lenski: The fact that some, like these Galileans, hear with deaf hearts and ears and refuse to learn is here not considered by Jesus. (Buls)

Kretzmann: Those that are taught of God, that have learned the lesson of their own inability and lack of strength, and therefore both hear the Father and in all things learn of Him, only they can come to faith in Christ. The Father uses no compulsion, but makes use of teaching only. (Buls)

True. God uses His ordained servants of the Word so that people may hear and learn what God, the great Teacher, says. (Buls)

That is the origin, the reason of belief in Jesus: the Father draws to the Son; He influences heart and will in such a way that a person accepts Jesus as His Savior and disregards entirely all difficulties which his reason may experience in the understanding of the person of the Savior. God not only gives the power to come to faith and to choose the good, but He works, creates all good in man and makes him willing. Faith is altogether a work of God. "What does 'no man' mean? Do you think it refers only to a cow or ass, or some other animal? Rather 'no man' here refers to the entire human race, the whole world, no man excepted, the most powerful, the most holy, the most prudent, the wisest. It is spoken briefly, but it is a powerful phrase, which thrusts down and throws to the ground all that is called human wisdom, reason, judgment, righteousness, and holiness, also religion and worship. For to come to this article and salvation in Christ no wisdom helps, no prudence, no shedding of blood and giving of alms, nor what the entire human generation is able to do with wisdom, with piety and sanctity. For it says: No man can come to Me, except the Father draw him. This should be taught" 34) This fact Jesus substantiates by a passage from the prophets: They will all be taught by God, Is. 54, 13. Those that are taught of God, that have learned the lesson of their own inability and lack of strength, and therefore both hear the Father and in all things learn of Him, only they can come to faith in Christ. The Father uses no compulsion, but makes use of teaching only. He appeals to the reason and understanding, to the heart and the will of men, teaches and persuades and makes them willing. And this is possible only because God incidentally illumines the heart. In that way the Father works the willingness, in that way man becomes eager to come to Jesus by faith in His atonement. This is not to be understood as though there were any physical contact between God and man; the knowledge of God was not communicated directly, by immediate vision of God. (Kretzmann)

6:46 There is only one Man who has received His Being directly from God and who is also in immediate communication with God; He it is that has seen the Father. For that reason it is essential that a Christian believe the Word of Jesus without the slightest doubt, since His deity demands as much. (Kretzmann)

In John 6:2, 14, 30, 36, and in the first in 46 forms of "to see" are used. In all instances it is mere physical seeing, apart from faith. (In verse 40 Jesus speaks of spiritual seeing, faith, a work of God in man.) In 46b it is said of Jesus that He has seen the Father. But He is the God-Man. Jesus is making reference to both His divinity and to His humanity. (Buls)

Luther: Do not stray into the belief that one can come to the Father without the Person of Christ. Therefore He binds our ears and our hearts to the Word of this Man . . . Stick to the external Word, and listen to it. (Buls)

6:47 Jesus changes neither text nor contents of His sermon in one particle. He repeats the main thoughts again to impress them upon His hearers. It is faith in Him which gives eternal life; that is the only way in which salvation may be obtained, by believing in Him. (Kretzmann)

"I tell you the truth" for the third time in this sermon. (Buls)

In verse 26 He revealed their true character (law). In verse 32 He offers them Himself (Gospel). Here in verse 47 He makes a summary statement: The believer has eternal life already now. Some versions insert the words "in Me" based on textual evidence. No problem, in view of what precedes and follows this verse, "in Me" is implicit here. (Buls)

Note that everlasting life is not merely a future blessing. This blessing begins in this life already: "He who believes has everlasting life." Note the present tense of *has*. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

6:48-51 Jesus' claim to be the bread of life come down from heaven is the central thought repeated in vv 48, 51, and the other comments build on it. There are two key elements in the claim. First, "bread of life" must be understood as a metaphor illustrating necessity, and "down from heaven" means "of divine origin." The bread of life is not one optional food among many. For ancients, to have bread was to live, while to lack bread was to die. The metaphor may be compared to relief efforts in a war-torn area where people are dying of starvation. Patristic writings suggest contrasting the "bread of life" to the "food of death" (Genesis 3). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

6:48 For He is that Bread of Life in which they must trust. (Kretzmann)

This sentence occurs three times in this sermon, here and in verses 35 and 51. Note the "I" is emphatic -- "I and none other." The word is used this way eleven times in verses 25-71. (Buls)

Incidentally, Jesus is referred to by various pronouns no less than sixty times in verses 25-71. He is attempting to draw His hearers to Himself because He wants to save them. (Buls)

What is the point of comparison between "bread" and Jesus? Bread covers all food necessary for man in this life lest he die. Jesus covers all that is necessary for man for the life to come, lest he perish. He differs, of course, from ordinary food. The latter merely sustain life. Jesus gives life, spiritual life, everlasting life. "Bread" is used figuratively here. Jesus is not speaking about the Lord's Supper. (Buls)

6:49-50 These verses explain v 48. Manna was a blessing of limited value: it did not destroy the power of death. The blessings given Moses' generation were not the ultimate gift of God. The pastor may review blessings that a church has experienced, such as rapid growth, building a new sanctuary, or peace during a crisis, and note how such blessings must not draw attention or faith away from the ultimate blessing of eternal life in Christ. As another example, some people continually review the "good old days" but overlook God's present and future blessings. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

6:49 *they died*. Jesus' opponents had set their hearts (cf. v. 31) on that which could neither give nor sustain spiritual life. (CSB)

The Jews themselves had referred to the manna in the wilderness and had called it bread from heaven. But what lasting value could be in food which did not sustain life beyond the few years of this earthly existence? Their fathers had died. (Kretzmann)

6:50 *eat of it and not die.* Jesus' gift is in contrast; the life he gives is eternal. (CSB)

Jesus is not only telling them that manna could not save their ancestors but also that the kind of food which they were seeking (look at verses 26 and 34) cannot save them eternally. It cannot keep death away. They are not believing. They are not hearing and learning. They are not taught of God. They will not permit the Father to draw them. They can reason only on the unregenerate level. Therefore, they are unhappy and grumble. (Buls)

But he that receives the Bread of Life by faith would have sustenance to carry him beyond this life into life eternal. (Kretzmann)

6:51-58 Not an obvious reference to the Lord's Supper: the words of institution are not recorded, no wine is present, Jesus speaks of flesh" and not "body," and the crowd is generally hostile and unbelieving. However, John records many veiled references to Jesus' future service, such as His work on the cross (1:50; 2:4, 19-22; 4:32; 6:62; 12:32). Whereas the other Gospel writers collected Jesus' parables, John collected Jesus' enigmatic, or riddle-like sayings. (TLSB)

6:51 *the bread I give* - Life-giving bread; synonymous with "bread of life." Cf. 1:4; 5:26. (TLSB)

For the third time Jesus says: "I am the life-giving bread." Here we have a repetition of the thought in verse 50, except that this time He speaks of eternal life. (Buls)

The last five words denotes the vicarious atonement "in behalf of the life of the world." (Buls)

Ylvisaker: It is the true human nature of Jesus, the Bearer of eternal life, which faith must appropriate in order to partake of the life . . . His human nature, or, in other words, Himself, as the One made man, is food, indeed which satisfies the inmost needs of humanity and apart from Him, this food may not be found . . . It is ever correct to say that Jesus uses the term 'flesh' and 'blood' because He would choose a clear and adequate expression to designate His human nature, as of flesh and blood. . . . To eat is, then, in this passage, to believe. He that believes also eats and drinks Christ . . . If He were merely 'flesh', a human being only, then the eating and drinking of Him would not avail unto eternal life, it would have no beneficial effect whatsoever. But He is also 'spirit', that is, God in essence and in truth, and it is this 'spirit' which permeates and animates His true humanity which makes Him the true Bread from heaven. (Buls)

come down from heaven – Katabas "having come down" Jesus draws upon the imagery of the manna to explain what we confess in the creed, "who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man." (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

Martin Luther uses an excellent and time-honored illustration to explain this "coming down," this incarnation of the Son of God as true man: When iron is without fire, it is surely still iron. But when it is made to glow, and fire or heat enter into it, then I can say, "This iron no longer acts like iron; rather it acts like fire." It is iron, to be sure, but it is so full of fire that when you see or touch it, you cannot say, "This is iron." But rather you feel sheer fire, to the extent that you have fire before your eyes. Now if you want to burn a hole through a barrel with it, or burn a brand on something, it is not the iron that does it, but the fire. For if I took cold iron which was not glowing, I could not burn a brand onto anything with it; I must

take iron which has fire in it. On the other hand, the fire does its work nowhere except in the iron; [in that very place it burns and bores]. Thus here the divine power is present bodily in the humanity of Christ and acts as God should act, or acts as the fire acts in the iron. One indeed sees only flesh and blood, which are like a fiery iron, for they have been entirely deified – God through and through. (WA 33:191) Therefore, to partake of this living bread from heaven, which is Christ’s flesh, is to receive the very life of God and the salvation its brings. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

This verse is like a benediction. Observe how the claim expands upon the claim of v 40. Of interest are the three tenses in which *katabainō*, “come down,” appears: present (vv 33, 50), perfect (vv 38, 42), and aorist (vv 41, 51, 58). The three tenses emphasize the mysterious reality of the divine incarnation: Christ came (aorist), has come (and remains—perfect), and continues to come (present). In all these the theological truth is that salvation is God’s initiative and God’s act. God comes down: human beings do not reach up. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

The phrase “eats this bread” metaphorically means “believes that Jesus is God incarnate.” Grammatically, the whole sentence is a future more vivid condition which, in Greek, raises the certitude of the claim. The word *sarx*, “flesh,” brings to mind Jn 1:14 and would challenge and correct any reader with docetic tendencies. The word will be used four more times in the verses immediately after our text, emphasizing the humanity of Jesus and the reality of his saving life, death, and resurrection. Jesus is not just a good idea, a lovely attitude, or an inspiring ideal. In his humanity he brought God into our world, and now he invites us to “eat” that truth, i.e., to make it our own. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 3)

Although the everlasting life Jesus promises is free to the believer, it is costly for the donor, Jesus. This truth is suggested first by Jesus calling “this bread” that he gives also “[his] flesh,” and second, by the word *give*, which has levels of meaning. *Give* not only means “distribute” or “hand out” (as in Jn 6:27, 31–32) but also means “give unto death” (a reference to Christ’s imminent crucifixion). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

Whether or not the Gospel selections from John 6 are talking about the Lord’s Supper (before it was instituted by Jesus) is debated by exegetes. Certainly, the average reader or listener can hardly avoid associating the passages with the Eucharist. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

To legitimize and facilitate that association, I suggest a Gospel handle approach, that is, simply suggesting a connection between these passages from John 6 and those Scripture passages elsewhere that record the institution of the Lord’s Supper—without getting bogged down in the exegetical question whether the imagery of bread, flesh, and blood in John 6 are generic in intent or specifically applicable to the bread/body and wine/blood of the Lord’s Supper. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

The Gospel handle could be the question of Jesus’ audience in the verse right after our text (v 52): “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” The answer they expected was a negative one: “He can’t. It’s impossible.” Surprise, surprise! Lk 22:19–20 and 1 Cor 11:20–29, with their descriptions of the institution of the Lord’s Supper, give an unexpected, positive answer to the question in Jn 6:52. In the Lord’s Supper, Jesus does give us his flesh to eat! In the Lord’s Supper, Jesus’ “flesh is real food and [his] blood is real drink” (Jn 6:55)! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

The use of this Gospel handle approach is not intended to solve the exegetical question. Its selection is intended only to make sure the listener is enriched spiritually by thinking of the Lord’s Supper in connection with the fabulous truths of the texts from John 6. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 3)

In the early Christian Community the heresy of Docetism arose. That is the teaching that Jesus did not truly have a human nature, but only apparently so. To counter Docetism the Christian Community insisted that the Words of Institution in Matthew, Mark, Luke and St. Paul be taken literally. Therefore, in order to correct both errors, Docetism and the literal interpretation of the Words of Institution are to be taken figuratively. (Buls)

eats of this bread. Appropriates Jesus as the sustenance of one's life. (CSB)

phagēi, “devour, eat.” FC SD VII 61–62 explains that eating is believing and believing is eating. *hē sarx*, “flesh.” John uses this term differently than does Paul, who often uses flesh for man's corrupted nature (Rom 8:6; 2 Cor 1:17; Gal 6:8; Eph 2:3; but notice also the neutral sense simply referring to the human body: 2 Cor 10:4; Eph 5:31; 6:12). John favors the term as emphasizing man's most physical sense, most crucially when he says the Word became flesh (1:14). The Father has given Jesus authority over all flesh (17:2). Outside Jesus, the flesh resists God, but Jesus obeys God and his flesh strengthens the obedience of others. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

I will give...the world...my flesh. Looking forward to Calvary. Providing eternal life would be costly to the Giver. (CSB)

Note from 1:14... God's Word was embodied. John elsewhere refers to Jesus' humanity (4:6; 11:35; 19:28). “The Word, that is the Son of God (John 1:14), assumed the human nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. So there are two natures – the divine and the human – inseparably joined in one person. There is one Christ, true God and true man” (AC III 1-2). “The divine essence is not changed into the human nature. But the two natures, unchanged, are personally united” (FC SD VII 36). (TLSB)

The incarnate Word offered Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world (1:29). “The Sacrament was instituted to comfort terrified minds. This happens when they believe that Christ's flesh is given as food for the life of the world” (Ap XXII 10). (TLSB)

Jesus then expanded the thought to show for whom He is the bread and at what cost. He came to give the bread, His human flesh, for the life of the world. God's own Son came as a human being to give up His perfect life for the life of all in this world. Jesus' words pointed to the cross and His sacrifice for us there. (PBC)

Anyone partaking of Him by faith will live forever. Jesus here gave a powerful testimony of His own person. By repeating the great facts which are the substance of His sermon, Jesus wants to work faith in the hearts of His hearers. The teaching concerning Jesus, His person and His office, the great facts of His salvation, is the means by which God draws hearts to the Savior, works willingness to believe And in one short statement Jesus also tells the manner in which He will earn salvation. He will give Himself, His body, His flesh, into death, for the sake of the life of the world. The human nature of Christ was sacrificed, was given for the salvation of the whole world, for all men without exception. In this way Jesus becomes the Bread of Life, the Bread from Heaven. (Kretzmann)