

Luke 12
“Perfect Peace”
10th Sunday af. Pentecost

August 18, 2019
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

[Introduction]

Jesus is dreading what lies ahead — Not looking behind but looking ahead!
He wishes the fire was already kindled.
He’s distressed until his bloody baptism is completed.

This passage reminds us of Jesus’ words,

“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour” (Jn 12:27).

It reminds us of Gethsemane, when Jesus’ soul was overwhelmed with sorrow and he prayed that the cup be taken from him.

He was full of dread, and yet determined, ***“your will be done”*** (Mt 26:42).

In today’s text, Jesus dreads the fire and the bloody baptism —his suffering, crucifixion, and death—

not only because of the physical torments, and
not only because he would endure the wrath of God,
but also because of one of the side effects of the Gospel: division.

It’s not the fault of the Gospel, for the Gospel is peace, but it’s the fault of sin...

It’s the fault of sin that Jesus’ death causes painful divisions.

Ironic, but true: the Gospel of peace brings division.

[Jesus is the Prince of Peace]

Oh, it’s true what Isaiah says—Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

On the night of his birth, the angels sang,

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace” (Lk 2:14).

The night when he was betrayed, he said to his disciples,

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.

Not as the world gives do I give to you” (Jn 14:27).

On night of Easter, Jesus really meant it when he said to his disciples, ***“Peace be with you”*** (Jn 20:19, 21).

Jesus gives us a peace that the world cannot give,
a peace that surpasses all understanding (Phil 4:7).
This is the peace between God and man.
It's a peace in believers' hearts.
It's the peace of knowing that our sins are forgiven.

Some would like the Gospel to give world peace, a utopia on earth.
Some expect a millennial kingdom on earth.
But that will never happen.
Because of sin, Jesus divides like nothing else—even more than politics!
Some will believe, and some will refuse.

[*But Jesus Divides*]

Ever since the fall into sin, there has been division in this world.
The great theologian Billy Joel had it right — *"We didn't start the fire
It was always burning
Since the world's been turning..."*

Adam and Eve were divided from God and each other.
Cain and Abel were divided.
Think of the division between believers and unbelievers in the days of Noah.
Think of Sodom and Gomorrah.
Think of the children of Israel and Pharaoh.
Think of all the prophets: they spoke God's Word and people were divided.
Some believed; some refused.

The same was true throughout the New Testament.
Whenever Jesus was preached, people were divided.
Some believed, and some rejected the Good News.

Even the thieves on the crosses on each side of Jesus were divided:
one repented and was saved; the other refused.

Jesus' entire ministry brought division—

especially between the scribes and Pharisees, who rejected his teaching,	and the tax collectors, prostitutes, and sinners, who received him in faith.
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So that's why Jesus says,
"I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled" (v 49).

That fire — it was fueled when Jesus died on the cross.

And it has been burning ever since.

It goes “*on, and on, and on, and on...*”

Jesus didn’t *want* division and strife.

He said, “***How I wish it were already kindled!***” “***I wish it were already over!***”

Jesus wished the fire was already burnt and the baptism was already finished.

Jesus had a baptism to be baptized with—his crucifixion and death—
and he couldn’t wait for the words, “***It is finished***” (Jn 19:30).

He began his ministry with a water Baptism in the Jordan, where he placed himself under God’s wrath for all the world;	and now he completes his ministry with a bloody baptism on the cross—the full wrath of God is placed upon him as he atones for the world.
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He dreads the cross and the divisions that will come,
but he doesn’t shrink from the cross. He’s determined.

One of the most painful effects of the Gospel is division in the family.

Jesus gave an example of a family of five

—a father, mother, daughter, married son, and his wife.

There were two against three and three against two.

Some believed in Jesus; some didn’t; no one was neutral.

Nothing divides a family like the Gospel.

You know, few families have the blessing of all being together, united in Christ.

[*Jesus Knows the Pain of Division*]

All of us have felt this pain.

All of us has loved ones — a mother, father, sister, brother, aunt, uncle, cousin —

All of us has a loved one who is by all appearances outside the faith.

Take comfort, you who struggle and doubt because of the divisions.

Jesus knows your pain.

He knew all about divisions in the family.

You don’t stand alone.

Once, Jesus’ mother and brothers came to where he was teaching
to take charge of him.

They were saying that he was out of his mind.

It seems that much of his own family rejected him
until after the resurrection.

But that didn’t stop him from going to the cross.

Jesus knows all about division.

Our lesson says, ***“They will be divided, father against son and son against father”*** (v 53).

Well, that’s what happened at the cross, isn’t it?

The Father was divided against Son.

The Father forsook Jesus.

Not because the Son did any wrongs himself.

But he bore our wrongs.

Our sins divided the Father from the Son.

The Son was cut off from the Father

that we might be forever reconciled to God.

So how do you deal with division?

Remember that Jesus knows your sadness.

He was tempted in every way you are, yet was without sin.

He was persecuted within his own family and hometown.

He comforts you: ***“In the world you will have tribulation.***

But take heart; I have overcome the world” (Jn 16:33).

Keep on witnessing to your loved ones—not in an obnoxious way, but gently.

Keep praying for them.

Keep hearing the Word.

Keep receiving the Sacrament.

God will strengthen your faith through all these trials.

If you find no support in your earthly family,

there is support in your church family.

[Conclusion]

The time is coming soon when that last great division

will take place publicly on Judgment Day.

Jesus will divide the sheep from the goats:

believers on his right; unbelievers on the left.

Then those who have courageously confessed the faith

even to their unbelieving families

will be confessed by Jesus to his Father:

“Everyone who acknowledges me before men,

I also will acknowledge before my Father

who is in heaven” (Mt 10:32).

And take heart: in heaven there will be no more divisions, but perfect peace. Amen.

REJOICE always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. AMEN! (1 Thess. 5:16–18)
