

Luke 12:49-56  
"Peace and Division"  
Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 18, 2019  
First Lutheran Church, Glencoe, Minn.  
Pastor Peter Adelsen

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

*[Intro]*

Jesus tells us: "***Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division***" (Luke 12:51).

Like Jesus, anyone who follows Him will face persecution from the sinful world. But, what about persecution within our own households? Or, persecution from within our own churches?

We rarely think about being persecuted by the ones we know best. I know I sure don't.

But, many Christians do face persecution from their own families for following Jesus.

This is the case especially for Muslims who convert to Christianity.

Not long after Faraidoun Fouad converted to Christianity, he received death threats.

He said, "Directly after my conversion to Christianity, I received the first threats. People who I thought were my friends, became my enemies."

At the same time, Christians can also be persecuted from within the church family.

Well, how could this be? Well, in the past few decades, many churches have begun teaching a different gospel, instead of the true Gospel. This has left many in the pews wondering what to believe.

Now, this is nothing new. It's sad, but again, this is nothing new. The Word of God cuts us to the core. God's Word is both Law and Gospel. God's Word afflicts the comfortable and comforts the afflicted.

### ***[Jeremiah]***

Our Old Testament reading this morning dealt with this. In our reading, the prophet Jeremiah lamented about what was being told to God's people from false prophets. In the reading, he warned the people that there were false prophets in their midst who were not speaking God's Word at all, but were instead speaking visions of their own minds.

He wrote: ***"[These false prophets] say continually to those who despise the word of the LORD, 'It shall be well with you'; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, 'No disaster shall come upon you'"*** (Jeremiah 23:17).

So, what was going on here? Well, these false prophets and preachers were scratching the ears of their hearers. They were telling the people what they wanted to hear, rather than what God's Word actually said. You see, God's people were sinning in obvious and open ways, but instead of preaching the Law to bring about repentance, they said: ***"It shall be well with you."***

These prophets and preachers did not want to cause division amongst the people, but by not speaking the Law, they were perverting God's Word and causing much more division between the people and God.

You see, these prophets and preachers were persecuting the church by not following God's Word. They wanted to be liked. But, God's judgment always comes upon sin.

### ***[What about Today?]***

Now, could this happen today? Well, we pray that it wouldn't happen. In fact, this prayer was included in our Collect of the Day this morning. We began this prayer saying: "Merciful Lord, cleanse and defend Your Church by the sacrifice of Christ." We also concluded our prayer saying that we would "daily follow in His way."

In this prayer, we pray to God the Father to get rid of all impurities in the Church and defend the Church from false teachings.

So, could we pervert God's Word? Yes, and very easily. As sinners, we want to be liked by the sinful world. It's always hard to say tough words from God's Word that don't bring peace to our friends, but division.

And for our church leaders, especially our pastors, when we do not say God's Word truthfully, what we are really doing is persecuting the church from within. When this happens, we are thinking of ourselves and our own self-interests, rather than ***"looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith"*** (Hebrews 12:2a).

### ***[Division and Peace]***

This is the division that Jesus is talking about in the Gospel text.

***"Do you think I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division"*** (Luke 12:51).

Now, division is nothing new to God. Ever since the Fall of Adam and Eve, there has been division between God and man.

And, now with Jesus walking amongst mankind, that division is very visible.

Some believed Jesus to be the Messiah and followed Him, while others — especially the Pharisees and Scribes — rejected Jesus.

Then, even within Jesus' own family, they all didn't believe Jesus to be the Messiah until His resurrection.

Likewise, even today, many people continually reject Jesus. He is as divisive as ever. Our own families are divided. All we can do is to keep witnessing to our loved ones and keep praying for them.

Last of all, even us. We would often rather listen to our own minds, rather than Jesus.

Even with all this division, Jesus desires to bring peace to all of mankind.

This is what Jesus came to do. He came to bring peace to this divided world. But, the peace that Jesus brings is not what the world expects. The world expected a worldly peace, not eternal peace between God and man.

***[Christ's Bloody Baptism Brings Peace to All Believers]***

Jesus tells us: ***“I came to cast fire on the earth, and would it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!”*** (Luke 12:49-50)

At this time, there was much division, but here Jesus says that His baptism to come will bring further division.

His baptism to come would bring peace between God and man, but not peace between earthly enemies. This baptism is not a water baptism, but a bloody baptism. He is yearning for this bloody baptism to provide reconciliation to everyone who acknowledges Him as the Messiah.

At His bloody baptism, Jesus would receive the fire of God's wrath against our sin. He would face the suffering we deserve and die for you and me. Three days later, He rose from the dead to show that His sacrifice for our sins was accepted by God the Father.

Because of His bloody baptism upon the cross and His resurrection from the grave, everyone who trusts in Jesus as their Lord and Savior is at peace. We are at peace, because by grace through faith in Jesus, we have received forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation.

Now, this is not worldly peace, but everlasting peace.

We will continue to face persecution for our faith in Jesus until that day when Christ returns for the final judgment. But, don't let your hearts be troubled, everyone in Christ is already at peace with God the Father. And, in the life to come, there will be no more divisions, but perfect peace and unity.

So, Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word; Curb those who by deceit or sword Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son And bring to naught all He has done. Amen. (*Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word* LSB 655, stanza 1)

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠