

## ***Luke 12:49-56***

“I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on, five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided.

Father against son

And son against father.

Mother against daughter,

And daughter against mother,

Mother-in-law against daughter-in-law

Daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, “It is going to rain”; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, “There will be scorching heat”; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”

***The Gospel of the Lord***

## **Reflection Questions**

### **Luke 12:49-56 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday OT**

- 1) **The Context:** This passage appears in the midst of a larger section that emphasizes the preparation and faithfulness required of a good disciple. For example, Luke 12:25-40, warns the servants to be watchful, Luke, 12:41-58 tells disciples to work faithfully and diligently as they anticipate the master's return, Luke 12:57-59 tells us to be prepared and faithful by not allowing a dispute between believers to reach the secular courts, Luke 13:1-5 Jesus warns everyone that unless they repent, they will perish.
  
- 2) "I have come to bring fire to the earth....." (v. 49a). Fire, in scripture can be a metaphor for judgment (Gen. 19:24, Luke 3:9, 17:17-29) or for purification (Leviticus 13:52, Numbers 31:23, Malachi 3:2). How have we experienced God's love as a purifying refining fire?
  
- 3) "How I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized and what stress I am under until it is completed!" In this verse there is a reference to both fire and baptism; water and fire; two elements that represent the Holy Spirit. Luke's intends to remind the reader of John the Baptist who said "Jesus will baptize us with the Spirit and with Fire." Part of Jesus mission on the earth was to spread Fire and the Spirit through offering this in the baptism of His disciples. But now Jesus speaks of His own 'baptism', which is a reference to His impending suffering and crucifixion.(seems to be a direct reference to Mark 10:38). And what 'distress' He faces until it is completed/accomplished. This great distress will be physically manifested in the garden when Jesus sweats blood. (22:44). How are we to read this? Jesus knows the great salvation that will be attained for all humanity through His death and yet He dreads it. Jesus is forced to face human suffering and the limitations of human suffering the way we do. It is normal to dread suffering and pain, but when we place it in the context of the crucifixion, it becomes a source of grace for others. When has your pain and suffering been a means of grace for yourself or for others?
  
- 4) Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division!" (vs. 51). These are not the comforting

words that we are used to hearing come forth from Jesus' mouth. It is hard for us to attribute these words to our 'Prince of Peace' the one who brings the Peace that passes all understanding. This is not 'cocktail party peace' but an otherworldly Peace that passes all understanding. But if we look more closely at the gospels, the promise of peace is usually offered only to His disciples who will be sharing in His cross as well. How has Jesus brought you Peace in the midst of the cross?

5) Even families will experience division because of Jesus. We are saddened by this reality and yet we know it is true. Is Jesus the source of division? No. Jesus does not create division but division is often the result of a person's choosing to side with Jesus instead of choosing the ways of the world. Jesus shines the light on where the 'rubber hits the road'; the dividing line between good and evil and asks us to choose... (e.g. if you step over that line, you may find yourself an instrument of the evil one.). For example, the one who struggles with a drug addiction may be moving towards having to deal drugs in order to support their habit (stepping over the line). Jesus also highlights divisions that are already there based upon where people's hearts are (serving idols or serving God). People who are working more for satan in this life (only concerned about worldly goods, their personal advancement, personal gratification, serving the 'god' of the belly) than for God, will not appreciate being reminded that they are on the wrong side of the dividing line and they are not in solidarity with Jesus. When has this happened in your own life? What was the outcome?

6) There is an uneven number that is spoken of here (2 against 3 and 3 against 2). The numbers may suggest that one side is winning. But God's score does not depend upon numbers. God can win a huge battle with just a handful of faithful servants. When have you seen this to be true?

Pray with John chp. 16:33.

7) “You hypocrites...you can predict the weather, but you do not know how to interpret the present time.” We have very sophisticated weather prediction devices today that can warn us up the half hour in which a storm will arrive. How is it that we still have difficulty reading the signs of our own lives? What might it mean for us to better interpret the signs of our own times?