



The Gospel According to Luke

Wk. 66 “What the Coming of Jesus Means - Dividing, Interpreting, and Settling”

By Pastor Jody May

Luke 12:49-59 ESV

⁴⁹ “I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! ⁵⁰ I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! ⁵¹ Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. ⁵² For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. ⁵³ They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

Interpreting the Time

⁵⁴ He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, ‘A shower is coming.’ And so it happens. ⁵⁵ And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and it happens. ⁵⁶ 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?”

Settle with Your Accuser

⁵⁷ “And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? ⁵⁸ As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. ⁵⁹ I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny.”

Opening Illustrations: *All is Fair in Love and War how to “Divide and Conquer”.*

- Hart of Dixie
- CIA
- Division puts people at odds with the closest of allies BUT it opens up for new ways of living.



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Background:

⁵¹ Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.

We need to understand the *NATURE* of Jesus’ coming, dividing and conquering, to help us accept the terms of engagement and *hopefully* surrender.

All through chapter 12 you should have felt this build-up of pressure, **what His divisive acts** were causing, by what Jesus is saying. That has nothing to do with my preaching but Chapter 12 records this Evangelistic Plea by Jesus to tens of thousands of people: since the condemnation of the Pharisees: 1st, repent and fear God more than man for He controls your eternal destiny or hell awaits you (4-7); 2nd, acknowledge Jesus as Lord before men and don’t blaspheme the HS or hell awaits you (8-12); 3rd, therefore, give up your covetous ways to repent turn to Him or hell awaits you (13-21); 4th, seek first the Kingdom of God and you will receive eternal life (22-31); 5th, believe that the Father wants to give you the Kingdom which brings eternal life (32-34); 6th, and then be ready and don’t abuse your privileges like the pharisees or you will find yourself cast out, into hell, just like they were (35-48).

Everything before chapter 12, how people were living in their practice of Judaism, according to God **had to be changed!** So that by chapter 12 the **elite people** want Jesus **dead**, only a **crazy few** truly **followed** Him, and the **masses** were **entertained** by but **not affected** by His words any longer. Jesus finally lets loose with a declaration of freedom beginning in 12 with His description of the New Covenant, the treaty for surrendering to God and what happens if you don’t, **it is very divisive in nature**. This is a **hostile takeover** and today you will see that it all started with Jesus’ coming to **dividing and conquer** a blind people.

Jesus begins with explaining what was the reason for such bold declarations that He gave in 12 so let’s look at His first statement, “*I have come*” **erchomai** e’r-kho-mī – This dictates to the hearer that, this is the official reason for why I have arrived:



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- Mark 10:45 – I have come to serve by being a ransom
- John 6:38 – I have come on behalf of the Father’s will
- Luke 19:5, 9-10 – I have come to seek and save the Lost
- 1 John 3:8 – He came to destroy the works of the devil
- John 12:46 – I have come to be a light in the world
- Isaiah 61:1-3 - I have come to bring good news to the poor and broken hearted
- Eph. 2:14-18 – He came to preach peace to Jews and Gentiles

But then comes this surprising declaration today which does not sound like anything we have heard yet - ⁴⁹ “I came to **cast fire on the earth**, and would that it were already kindled! **SAY WHAT!?** We all thought Jesus came to bring Peace on Earth!?”

And the apostle Paul says in Ephesians 2:17, borrowing words from Isaiah 57, "And He came and preached peace to those who were far off" Gentiles "and peace to those who were near," Jews. Colossians 1:20 says He came to bring peace through the blood of His cross and the apostles, according to Acts 10:36, were preaching peace by Jesus Christ. Shouldn't we expect then that He came to bring peace?

The Jews remembered Isaiah 9:6, that He would be a Prince of Peace. They remembered Isaiah 55, which said He would come to bring peace, and Isaiah 66 which said He would come to bring peace, and Ezekiel 34, the promise of the New Covenant was a promise of peace, and Ezekiel 37, verses 24 to 28, another promise that with the coming of the New Covenant would come peace. Certainly, there was every reason to anticipate that the arrival of Messiah would produce a time of peace.¹

Even in the beginning of the book of Luke we see that was what his audience believed as evidenced in **Luke 1:71-74** Zechariah’s Prophecy:

- ⁷¹ that we should be saved from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us;
- ⁷² to show the mercy promised to our fathers

¹ <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/42-178/jesus-the-great-divider>



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and to remember his holy covenant,
⁷³ the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us
⁷⁴ that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
might serve him without fear,

Maybe we’re just reading this wrong (Jews believed the Gentiles would be subdued but they did not think this meant the same for them). Well let’s go to Matthews account on the same conversation here:

Mat. 10:34 – “I have not come to bring peace but to bring a sword.”

Matthew clarifies, yep, there is an air of hostility here. I have an idea that I want to throw your way this morning. **That the only way true peace can be obtained for anyone is that there must first be conflict.** No one can ever truly ever find peace without discomfort, strife, and struggle. **BUT FIRST - There can be no peace until Jesus fights for and wins that which is most important to us, our hearts...** According to Jer. 31:33 God will right his law on our hearts enable us to finally live it out, how is this going to happen?

GOSPEL QUESTION: The question we have to ask is in what way will Jesus Offensively, come against the world, to free our hearts, in order to save sinners and rescue His people from a dead religion?

⁵⁰ I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! ⁵¹ Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.

Baptism, that word in the Greek along with its’ obvious meaning of being put under water is, **of calamities and afflictions with which one is quite overwhelmed.** Jesus is looking forward to an event by which is causing this incredible man distress. This event that He sees in His future will **not bring peace**, but it is going to **bring DIVISION!**



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I think at this point most of you are now agreeing with what most theologians say Jesus is looking at, the Cross. The Cross is the wedge that the Father uses to finally break through enemy lines, it is the final divisive action:

- At the cross death was delivered its’ deathblow.
- At the cross God’s righteous justice was displayed.
- At the cross the severity of our sin was magnified.
- At the cross the cruelty of man revealed.
- At the cross God’s intervening love broke through and even time itself witnesses it.

It is at the Cross that we see that Jesus, as the Messiah, dies for us, and **it grips our hearts**, and the kindling of the gospel (v49) is ignited and the old is burned up and a new heart takes its’ place. The fire of the HS, opens our eyes so we may see His glory.

Luke 24:32 ESV

They said to each other, “Did not our **hearts burn within us** while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”

I think what makes this a **hard passage for some is the fact that our sin causes such a nasty and hateful act like the CROSS**, but according to the scripture it is not until **one sees the ugliness of the cross first, can someone truly see the glory of Jesus**. This is war guys, and to come to Christ, it is going **to bring you the tears of realization** that we did this and it took the death of the only person that never deserved it to burn up our old hearts and give us a new one.

So, to help us understand this **DIVISION** that Jesus brings, there **are three natural consequences of this act**, **THE CROSS**, that we can see in the text: They serve us by **helping us recognize**, have we come to the **terms of surrendering to Jesus yet**.



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1. Division recognizes no boundaries and it affects everyone; even the closest allies.

⁵² For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. ⁵³ They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

The first that we have got to understand is that when we follow Jesus it will make people chose sides and it will do it even in your own homes. Parents, it is a good thing to keep in mind while you can teach your child about God it is God’s hand that does the saving. All I can say to this is to remember how you are to handle disagreements in your homes, amongst your earthly family and especially among your family here at Highlands.

1 Peter 3:15 ESV

“but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being **prepared** to make a **defense** to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with **gentleness** and **respect**,”

Perhaps today you may need to read up on how you present the gospel, are you ready to give a defense to a family member if so called upon by the HS. Then, to do it in a such a way with gentleness and respect. I have seen lots of people give a defense for the gospel, at least what they believe about it, and throw the attitude of love out the window. Being an effective apologist and or evangelist comes from the security that you are sure in your own salvation, that steers you away from becoming defensive or angered by those that disagree with you.

If we are going to follow Jesus and surrender to his terms, then we need to study more on exactly how the cross free us and frees those He’s calling from lives imprisoned to sin.

2. Seek to understand the times we live in and discover what blinds you.



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⁵⁴ He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, ‘A shower is coming.’ And so it happens. ⁵⁵And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and it happens. ⁵⁶You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

As the cloud moves in from the west – from a hot zone to a higher cool zone the people would have known automatically that type of cloud would produce rain. Then that south wind is that same wind that blows down onto the sea of Galilee that produces those windstorms. People from that area knew how to interpret the signs of nature predicting what was coming – it was their **ENTERTAINMENT**.

But he calls them hypocrites, strong accusatory language towards a people who have already witnessed the cursing of the pharisees for their hypocrisy. Jesus’ accusation though is **not necessarily about the intent of their heart but the condition of their heart**. Perhaps they thought that because Jesus had not outrightly condemned them they were safe, but Jesus **condemns them for the witnessing of the condemnations and the hearing of the gospel and by lack of their repentance they condemn themselves**.

It shows us that salvation is not when you can see the sin and others and say, “well at least I don’t do that, or I do more than that person, or I am more giving, more loving, more knowledgeable, etc.” The issue is **don’t let your religion make you comfortable** but realize that your sin is deep, Jesus will continually confront you through the cross, and you are called to respond by following Him continually. **That means as Christians being in Christ’s presence continually produces a repentant attitude. Loved ones let’s be cautious if there is a point in our lives when we think we don’t need the gospel anymore...**

3. Make your peace with Christ before it’s too late.

⁵⁷ “And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? ⁵⁸ As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest



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he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. ⁵⁹I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny.”

This last section is a warning, a warning to adhere to what you are learning today, before you get pulled in front of the magistrate, that is God. Jesus is explaining to us that he’s the one walking with us to this final judgment, He understands the terms already, and He knows what’s waiting for you and I.

Jesus wants us to settle on the way, before we get to that point of meeting our maker. The thing that we must realize is that we can’t pay for our sins, you can’t even make bail, all our works we are told in the scriptures are worthless. **The only shot we have is to let Jesus pay this debt for us.** Again, in this moment it is the Cross. The offer for all of us, to pay and heal our blindness to our sin, to cure our lack of ability to understand God, to deal with our hypocrisy; **is for Him to die on the cross in your stead.** You and I have got to accept that and then live in a way that shows we are debt free.

Is that how you are living this morning? Are you living life in such a way that you make much of Jesus to people because you understand how he has freed you from the wages of sin, that is death? Are you comfortable with speaking to your family about what God has done for you and what he can do for them? I encourage you, if not, then make peace with Jesus today, tell Him you want Him to make the offer and you want the peace that only He can bring through His sacrifice. Brothers and sisters let us pray for those that need it and pray for the strength to share it.

PRAY

COMMUNION

BENEDICTION



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Go in the name of the Father, our good and gracious judge that will take the Son’s payment for our sins and bestow on us His Son’s righteousness.

Go in the name of the Son, who offers a good rebuke this morning and desires the opportunity, through the CROSS, to make all right between you and the Father.

Go in the name and the power of the HS, that will burn your old heart up giving you a new heart so you can see the wonderful acts of the Son that you will want to share with others.