

Luke's Gospel: Son of Man, Seeker of Men.

"Jesus—Prince of Peace or Great Divider?"

Introduction: Can you remember the last time you had major conflict with someone in your life?

French novelist and playwright Alexandre Dumas once had a heated quarrel with a rising young politician. The argument became so intense that a duel was inevitable. Since both men were superb shots they decided to draw lots, the loser agreeing to shoot himself. Dumas lost. Pistol in hand, he withdrew in silent dignity to another room, closing the door behind him. The rest of the company waited in gloomy suspense for the shot that would end his career. It rang out at last. His friends ran to the door, opened it, and found Dumas, smoking revolver in hand. "Gentlemen, a most regrettable thing has happened," he announced. "I missed."

Review last week (context): Over the last few weeks, In Luke 12 we have covered the following subjects-

- Hypocrisy-Don't be like the Pharisees who presented to be something they were not. Whatever we cover, God uncovers; but whatever we uncover, God covers.
- Fear God, not man. If you man, you will always be fearful. If you fear God, you can be fearless.
- Don't be ashamed of the name of Jesus. Be bold and allow the Holy Spirit to give you the power to live the Christian life and He will give you the words to say even when you don't know what to say.
- We talked about the parable of the Rich Fool...he was foolish not because he was rich, but because he was poor towards God. He cared only for himself in the here and now, and died one night and left this world the poorest man of all. So invest in that which lasts forever instead of that which is gone in one night.
- How many worriers out there do we have? Jesus taught us not to worry about anything instead trust God in everything. If ugly unclean ravens are taken care of...how much more will God take care of you? Look at out lovely the flowers are and how green the grass gets this time of year. If God can take care of birds and flowers, how much more will He take care of you?
→Seek God first. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also!

- During our last study, we talked about being a wise and faithful servant who is ready for His Lord's coming. Remember the lesson of stewardship: When much is given, much is required.

Preview (why should I listen?): So today we are going to talk about one of the most controversial sayings of Jesus. This passage is considering one of the hard sayings of Jesus that many churches would just skip this passage due to its difficulty. What I have found is that the hardest passages in the Bible often yield the greatest treasure for a few reasons. First, many people have often skipped these passages and so some of these truths will be brand new for many of you. Second, the hard truths of the Bible can be the most transformative.

→ So, how many of you have ever dealt with conflict with people in your family, conflict with close friends, or conflict with people in your community?

→ What if you could learn something today that would help understand why conflict exists in your life? What if understanding the WHY behind the WHAT could help you better navigate the waters of conflict; would that help you?

Parallel passages for further study: Matthew 10:34-39 & Matthew 16:1-4

Today's Paradox: Jesus the Prince of Peace is also Jesus the Great Divider!

Luke 12:49-59 (NKJV); **Christ Brings Division**

⁴⁹ "I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰ But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! ⁵¹ Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. ⁵² For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. ⁵³ Father will be divided 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 her mother-in-law."

Discern the Time

⁵⁴ Then He also said to the multitudes, "Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming'; and so it is. ⁵⁵ And when you see the south wind blow, you say, 'There will be hot weather'; and there is.

⁵⁶ Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how *is it* you do not discern this time?

Make Peace with Your Adversary

⁵⁷ "Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right? ⁵⁸ When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. ⁵⁹ I tell you, you shall not depart from there till you have paid the very last mite."

"Jesus—Prince of Peace or Great Divider?"

1. **Jesus came to turn the world right-side up** (v. 49). ⁴⁹ "I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!

- **Jesus came to send fire on the earth.**

What symbolism does fire represent in the Bible? **5 Symbols of Fire in the Bible:**

- 1) **Purification/trials**-Fire is often seen as a refining and purifying agent of God (Zachariah 13:9, Malachi 3:2-3).

I Peter 4:12-13; Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you. ¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy

- 2) **Judgment**-God's judgment can be pictures as a burning fire that burns away the presence of evil (Isaiah 66:15-16; Revelation 20:7-10).

Isaiah 66:14-15; ¹⁴ When you see *this*, your heart shall rejoice,

And your bones shall flourish like grass;

The hand of the Lord shall be known to His servants,

And *His* indignation to His enemies.

¹⁵ For behold, the Lord will come with fire

And with His chariots, like a whirlwind,

To render His anger with fury,

And His rebuke with flames of fire.

¹⁶ For by fire and by His sword

The Lord will judge all flesh;

And the slain of the Lord shall be many.

- 3) **God's presence**-God's consuming nature is often representing by a blazing fire (Exodus 3:2-6; Exodus 13:17-22; Acts 2:1-4).
- 4) **Baptism of fire is a reference to the indwelling Holy Spirit** as believers were baptized by tongues of fire (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; Acts 2:3-4).
- 5) **Jesus' Second Coming** will happen the Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with His powerful angels (2 Thessalonians 1:7).

- **So what is Jesus referring to here by saying, "I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled?"** I think in the context of Jesus talking about his upcoming baptism, sending fire to the earth is referring to the purifying work of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptize believers with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Matthew 3:11). In Acts 2, we see the Holy Spirit coming down in an appearance of tongues of fire.

2. **Jesus came to earth with a laser focused mission: To give His life so that we could have life** (v. 50). But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!

- **His baptism was a baptism of death.** Jesus took the fire of God's wrath upon Himself when He suffered the agonies of the Cross.

Psalm 18:4; The pangs of death surrounded me,
And the floods of ungodliness made me afraid.

Psalm 42:7; Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls;
All Your waves and billows have gone over me.

Psalm 69:1; Save me, O God!
For the waters have come up to my neck.

Application: Christian baptism symbolizes identification with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection. *If you have never been baptized, you are missing out on this very special experience that is also your public testimony that you are a follower of Christ.

Story: A father was talking to his oldest son about the boy's upcoming baptism. Wanting him to understand the significance of the event, he took great care to communicate with him. While they were talking, the boy's younger brother, a little

four-year-old, left the room. He seemed visibly upset so the father followed him to see what was wrong. Tearfully, the little guy confessed, "I want to be alphabetized with my brother."

- **He was determined and focused to accomplish this mission-** "and how distressed I am till it is accomplished."

WOW: Until Jesus said, "It is finished," He was laser focused and determined to accomplish His purpose which was to die for the world so that we could be redeemed. He shed His royal red blood so that we could be washed white as snow.

3. **Jesus brings division on earth before He ushers in lasting peace throughout eternity** (v. 51-53).⁵¹ Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division.⁵² For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three.⁵³ Father will be divided 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 her mother-in-law."

→Wait a minute, preacher, I thought that Jesus came to bring peace on earth, God will towards men as the angels declared in Luke 2:14?

This verse is best translated: "Glory to God in the highest, And on **earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.**"

→Jesus divided the Jews of His day—some loved Him, and many hated him...hated him enough to kill him. Jesus divided the Roman Empire. He claimed to be the only way to God in a pluralistic culture that taught that you could worship many gods.

Acts 17:6—These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.

- **Jesus brings division to this fallen world, how?**

- 1) **His claims bring division.**

- Jesus claimed to be God in the flesh.

John 5:16-18;¹⁶ For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."¹⁸ Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

John 5:58; ⁵Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

- Jesus claimed to be the only way to God the Father.

John 14:6; Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

2) His teachings bring division.

- Jesus taught the biblical model of marriage: One man and one woman for one lifetime.

Matthew 19:4-6; ⁴ And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made *them* at the beginning 'made them male and female,' ⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? ⁶ So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

- Jesus not only taught that physical intimacy was reserved only for marriage, but He also took it to a new level-having a pure thought life.

Matthew 5:27-28; ²⁷ "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ²⁸ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

3) His Kingdom brings division.

- There are just two kingdoms in this world: The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan.

Colossians 1:12-14; ¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Ephesians 5:8; ⁸ For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

→ Jesus is going to divine the sheep from the goats when He comes again to judge the world (Matthew 25:31-46).

Scripture Insight: John MacArthur: **not...peace but a sword**. Though the ultimate end of the gospel is peace with God ([John 14:27](#); [Rom. 8:6](#)), the immediate result of the gospel is frequently conflict. Conversion to Christ can result in strained family relationships ([vv. 35, 36](#)), persecution, and even martyrdom. Following Christ presupposes a willingness to endure such hardships ([vv. 32, 33, 37-39](#)). Though He is called "Prince of Peace" ([Is. 9:6](#)), Christ will have no one deluded into thinking that He calls believers to a life devoid of all conflict.¹

- Light and darkness are constantly in opposition.

2 Corinthians 6:14; ¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

- 4) **Jesus' grace was divisive**. Jesus was constantly being rebuked by the religious leaders of his day for showing love and grace to the scum of society. According to the religious leaders, Jesus was showing a scandalous grace towards those who did not deserve it.

- Matthew the tax collector
- Zacchaeus
- The woman caught in adultery

Scripture Insight: [12:51](#) Part of Jesus' mission was to create a **division** within humankind. Other texts of Luke speak of Jesus bringing peace (see [2:14](#); [7:50](#); [8:48](#); [10:5](#), [6](#); [Acts 10:36](#); [Eph. 2:13-17](#)). He offers peace to those who respond to Him.²

- ***Jesus wants us to experience real and lasting peace instead of the false and temporary peace that the world offers (Luke 7:50; 8:48; 10:5).***

John 14:27; Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Application Points: *So, how should I respond to the decisive message of Jesus and the Gospel?*

¹ Quote from John MacArthur

² Quote from Thomas Nelson NKJV Study Bible.

- 1) **Learn to discern the present times** (v. 54-56).⁵⁴ Then He also said to the multitudes, "Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming'; and so it is.⁵⁵ And when you see the south wind blow, you say, 'There will be hot weather'; and there is.⁵⁶ Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time?"
- **We should interpret culture through the lens of Scripture.** Don't try to interpret Scripture through the lens of culture.

Scripture Insight: [12:54](#), [55](#) a cloud rising out of the west: In Palestine a western breeze meant moisture coming from the Mediterranean Sea. A south wind meant hot air coming from the desert.³

"How tragic that men today can predict the movements of the heavenly bodies, split atoms, and even put men on the moon; but they are blind to what God is doing in the world. They know how to get to the stars, but they do not know how to get to heaven! Our educated world possesses a great deal of scientific knowledge but not much spiritual wisdom."⁴

- **Live every day like today could be your last day.** Live in view of eternity.

Story: The devil and his cohorts were devising plans to get people to reject the Gospel. "Let's go to them and say there is no God," proposed one. Silence prevailed. Every devil knew that most people believe in a supreme being. "Let's tell them there is no hell, no future punishment for the wicked," offered another. That was turned down, because men obviously have consciences which tell them that sin must be punished. The concave was going to end in failure when there came a voice from the rear: "Tell them there is a God, there is a hell and that the Bible is the Word of God. But tell them there is plenty of time to decide the question. Let them 'neglect' the Gospel, until it is too late." All hell erupted with ghoulish glee, for they knew that if a person procrastinates on Christ, they usually never accept Him.

³ Quote from Thomas Nelson NKJV Study Bible.

⁴ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 1, p. 223). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

→Don't delay, today is the day of salvation! Now is the moment to receive Christ as your Lord and Savior.

- **Make Jesus central to your daily life.** Don't be a hypocrite...don't live your life like a stage actor wearing different masks for different people.
- 2) **Make every effort to make peace with God** (v. 57-59).⁷ "Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right?"⁵⁸ When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison.⁵⁹ I tell you, you shall not depart from there till you have paid the very last mite."
 - **We are to make every effort to make peace with God while there is still time.**
 - The big picture of this illustration: **Be reconciled to God before the Judgment comes.** "In legal matters, anyone with a bad case does well to secure an out-of-court settlement before the case comes to trial. Sinners should be reconciled to God now; they will perish if they wait until Judgment Day" (King James Study Bible).

Think about it: "Anyone will do whatever is necessary to stay out of prison, but how many people will apply that same concern and diligence to stay out of hell? If lawyers and judges would examine God's Word as diligently as they examine their law books, they will gain a wisdom that the law cannot give."⁵

12:58, 59 make every effort...to settle with him: The picture here is of a magistrate who functions like a bailiff bringing a debtor into prison. Since the context of this passage is Jesus' mission, the **judge** likely represents God. The message of this parable is to become reconciled to God before judgment comes (Thomas Nelson).

Story: Jill Morgan, the daughter-in-law of G. Campbell Morgan, wrote in her book, *A MAN OF THE WORD*, "In 1888 my father-in-law was rejected for the ministry. He wired to his father the one word,

⁵ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 223). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

“Rejected,” and sat down to write in his diary: “Very dark everything seems. Still, He knoweth best.” Quickly came the reply: “*Rejected* on earth. Accepted in heaven. Dad.”

→If you have ever felt reject by man...If you have ever experienced division from people you can about because of your faith...I’ve got Good News for you—*You may be rejected on earth, but you are accepted in heaven! And one glorious day*...heaven will come to reign on earth where we will be with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Review: “Jesus—Prince of Peace or Great Divider?”

1. **Jesus came to turn the world right-side up**
2. **Jesus came to earth with a laser focused mission: To give His life so that we could have life**
3. **Jesus brings division on earth before He ushers in lasting peace throughout eternity**

Application Points: *So, how should I respond to the decisive message of Jesus and the Gospel?*

- 1) **Learn to discern the present times**
- 2) **Make every effort to make peace with God.**

Visualize: What would your life look like if you were right with God...you had peace with God...and you didn't fear man...so that you simply told each person the truth in love without worrying about their reaction towards you?

Christ Connection: Jesus is the only one who can give you lasting peace. If you want lasting peace, you must surrender the totality of your life to Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

Today's Big Idea (A short summary): “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2).

Action Steps:

1. Check my **commitment** to Jesus Christ. Have I surrendered my life to Him?
2. Instead of trying to be PC (politically correct), **strive to be BC** (Biblically correct).
3. Don't expect the **absence of conflict** in this world. Be prepared to navigate through conflict because you are a follower of Jesus Christ.