



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

September 4, 2022

Pastor Randy Ott

13th Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [2 Kings 11:1-3, 12-18](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 139a

Second Lesson: [Ephesians 6:10-20](#)

Gospel Lesson/Sermon Text: [Luke 12:49-53](#)

The Believer Hears Jesus' Warnings The Word Doesn't Bring Peace, But Division

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father, through our Lord and Savior Jesus: Amen.

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

Were any of you ever in a Children's Christmas program reciting passages together with the rest of your class? Maybe you had to do it alone? Maybe you've been to a Children's Christmas program recently? If so, don't you hear every year from Isaiah that the coming Savior is going to be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace? ([Isaiah 9:6](#)) Don't you hear the little kids every year say what the angels sang? ***"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests."*** ([Luke 2:14](#)) So didn't Jesus ever listen to one of your Children's programs? How come He comes today and says the exact opposite? ***"Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division."*** So are all those people that attack your faith and say: "The Bible contradicts itself. The Bible just says a whole bunch of different stuff and you're only picking and choosing stuff. You don't really know what it says. You just don't see the contradictions." Are they right?

If I say yes, we should just all go home. But I'll tell you no, they're not right. Jesus is the Prince of Peace but the peace He came to bring us was not just in this lifetime. He came to bring peace between us and God because ever since Adam and Eve sinned, everyone else has been born, not in the image of God (which is holiness and righteousness); everyone else has been born in the image of Adam (which is sinful). The Holy Spirit has told us the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to His will, nor can it do so. ([Romans 8:7](#))

Hostile: by our nature, as sinful human beings, we view God as the enemy. We are at war with Him. There isn't peace between us and God until Jesus comes, and the promise that He would come or looking back to see how He fulfilled that promise—that He came and was perfect in our place because God demands that you be holy, and then He died as the punishment your sins deserved, and now He has declared you holy—then when the Spirit gives you faith, now there is peace between you and God. When the Spirit gives you faith that Jesus lived and died in your place, you are now at peace with God. But Jesus is reminding you today; don't mistake that with peace with everyone else in the world around you.

Where was Paul writing this when he was writing this letter to the Ephesians? Did you catch that at the end of what I read to you? ***Pray that I may declare it (the Gospel) fearlessly (in the Second Lesson), as I should. I am an ambassador in chains.*** Paul wrote from prison. Why was he in prison? He was in prison because he was talking about Jesus. He was proclaiming the peace between God and man that Jesus had won for us, but those that didn't believe it were kind of hostile to him. They were a little divided at his message.

So this morning we hear Jesus' warning, this reminder, that just because now there is peace between you and God and you have the greatest gift in your life that you treasure above anything else—this peace between you and God and it's the most amazing thing that you've ever heard, that you've ever experienced, that you have as a treasure—it doesn't mean that everyone else views it that way. So He says "I have not come to bring peace, worldly peace between people, but division."

We have to understand that because if we don't understand that, we'll be tempted to do what Paul (in the Second Lesson) prayed that he wouldn't do. Not proclaim the Gospel fearlessly; keep our mouth shut for the sake of not rocking the boat so we're not causing troubles. But as His ambassadors today, we want to fearlessly proclaim the Gospel, but we want to do it in a way that loves like Christ loved. That means we have to recognize that sometimes when we are loving and kind and gentle with people, they are still going to respond with division or hatred, sometimes even violence.

Take a look at what Jesus says in here. He says, "Don't think that I've come to bring peace, but division." But look at what else He says. He says, ***"But I have a baptism to undergo, and how I wish it was already here. I've come to bring fire, and I wish it was already kindled!"*** The fire He has come to bring I think He is talking about that division between believer and unbeliever. Once His life is fulfilled, His mission is completed, and He sends His people out to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria and to the ends of the earth, [\(Acts 1:8\)](#) people are going to respond. Those that don't believe the message and reject it are going to respond violently at times. There is going to be this purifying fire, literally, is what He talks about. That's what His people are going to have to forego. He says ***"I wish it were already kindled!"*** but He still had a baptism to

undergo and He was constraint to do it. The baptism He had to undergo was not the baptism of John that had already happened years earlier. The baptism He had to undergo is a metaphor for His death on the cross. He wished it was already there, but He was constraint. He couldn't go in any other direction except the one that led Him to the cross to pay for the sins of the world.

Sometimes I think we think that was kind of easy for Jesus. When you watch some movies nowadays about Jesus, He always has this faraway look in His eyes. He's never focused on anything He's looking at because I guess He's trying to convey that He is divine and it doesn't seem to be that terrible until you see a movie like The Passion of the Christ. Then I think you begin to picture some of the things He went through. The physical suffering He went through on the cross was horrendous. The shame He felt on the cross as He was stripped naked and nailed to a cross right outside the city gate so everyone could walk by and mock and ridicule Him. People spit on Him that day. They struck Him. They did all they could to humiliate Him. ***Hail, King of the Jews!*** That physical suffering and the shame doesn't even begin to compare to God forsaking God.

Remember when He was in the Garden the night before how He said, "[Father, if it is your will, take this cup, the cup of God's wrath from me,](#)" so that He wouldn't have to drink it to the last drop? Yet He still was constraint to go through all of that so that you would be forgiven. This is the love He has that endures God forsaking God, and endures the very agony of hell so that you never have to. He was constraint by the love He feels for every person that ever has lived. Those who would believe in Him and those who would never believe in Him, he loved them and died for them all. For those who reject Him, they never get the benefits that you and I now know and treasure; that we are God's forgiven children wholly and dearly loved by our God. Just as He was rejected, He warns us ahead of time that there will be times when we will be rejected. He says it will even come within a family relationship.

Family relationships at times are kind of interesting. Sometimes things that we say to family we'd never say to a stranger. Did you ever notice that when you've had a bad day? If you stopped at the gas station, the person across from you at the pump there, you wouldn't let them have it about your bad day. But you get home and your spouse, the one you love, you let have it because you assume they're going to keep on loving you, I suppose.

But there is another dynamic in families at times that I've noticed. When we know that this division exists over matters of eternal importance, our relationship to Jesus Christ, that it determines where we spend eternity, while we aren't afraid to rock the boat at times with our spouse when we're having a bad day, at times we're really scared to rock the boat with family members who don't love Jesus and don't want to hear about Jesus. Did you ever have a family member tell you you're an idiot because you believe in some pie in the sky invisible guy who rules everything? "What an idiot you are!" They didn't

say idiot but I really can't use the words they used. When they said that to me, the family member, I had to stand there, and I kept my hands behind my back because I was afraid I was going to raise them because my sinful nature wants to defend Jesus even though He doesn't need defending. I took it all and then just quietly and patiently tried to share Jesus but unfortunately, the person was not in the right frame of mind to hear me. But the next time I talk with that person, is there a reticent in myself to not talk about it again because I know what I went through the last time? Yes. Did you ever experience that where you don't want to rock the boat? Family reunions at times can be ugly enough without bringing that up. But there is that division within families, like Jesus talked about.

And yet, when you or I do that, don't we really become Satan's enablers? We're enabling Satan to keep that person for all eternity if we are afraid to talk about this love that our God has for us.

Now, you and I are called to always be ready to give an answer for the hope that you have but to do so with gentleness and respect. ([1 Peter 3:15](#)) That means as much as sometimes I wish God would enable me to convert people by tackling them, that's not how He has told me to do it. I think that would be wonderful if we could just tackle people and force them to believe, but we can't do that. Also, I'm not just called to be right as I proclaim Christ. I'm also called to be loving, gentle and kind. That means if division comes about because I'm an arrogant jerk as I say Jesus is the only way to heaven, that's a "me" problem. That's not a "them" problem. That's a "me" problem. That's something I have to fix.

I'm called to be Christ's ambassador but to do so in love. That means I have to be patient. That means I have to watch for when the right opportunity is and not just force the issue every single time I see it so that they no longer listen to me after I say "Hello." My goal is to be heard so that the Gospel of Christ may be proclaimed so that the Spirit can work faith in their hearts. That's the other thing you have to remember. You and I will never argue anyone into faith. We shouldn't even try. All we do is lovingly proclaim who Jesus is and what He did for the world and what He did for the person that we're talking to. It's out of our control whether they believe it or not.

Jesus did everything perfectly and yet He ended up nailed to a cross. At times you and I will be rejected. Jesus warns us of that ahead of time so that we don't abandon the task He has given us. And as sinners, we're going to want to abandon it at times, but the love that constrained Christ to keep going to the cross is the love that constrains us to lovingly, patiently and at appropriate times share Jesus in a way that will be heard. That's what we're called to do.

He opens our eyes to the division that is going to be there at times with the unbelieving world. Sometimes it's in our family. Sometimes it's outside our families. But there will

always be division. It goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden when God is talking to the snake. ***"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers..."*** [\(Genesis 3:15\)](#) There is always going to be enmity between believers and unbelievers, between the offspring of the woman and the offspring (the seed) of Satan. That's the way it's always going to be.

But the victory for us has already been won. The victory is certain that Jesus lived and died in our place. Now we just are called to faithfully proclaim it even if at times it is going to be difficult and we are rejected. Christ kept on the path to the cross so that you are forgiven. You and I keep on loving Christ and sharing Christ so that others may know the joy that we now have. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7.\)](#) Amen.