

Peace on Earth?

Scripture Reading — Luke 12:49-53

“Do you think I came to bring peace on earth?” — Luke 12:51

Have you heard the story about Jesus’ birth and how the angels came to celebrate it? In Luke 2:13-14 we read, “Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared . . . praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.’”

But in our reading today we find Jesus himself asking, “Do you think I came to bring peace on earth?” And he answers, “No, I tell you, but division.”

Here Jesus is prodding his followers to think; he wants them to consider carefully what it means to commit their lives to him.

As we think about this, Jesus does seem to bring division. That’s because the good news of salvation and the rule of God’s kingdom will bring resistance in this world. Sadly, there will be some people who do not want to believe in God and do not want their hearts changed. Here Jesus warns of family divisions, and many of us know how those can happen because of belief in Jesus.

Jesus warns what *will* happen, not what he *wills* to happen. As we experience the love of God in Christ, from which nothing and no one can separate us (Romans 8:38-39), all other relationships take second place. In Jesus we find that we have peace with God (Romans 5:1-8); through Christ, God’s favor rests on us. Do you know Jesus? Then you know that peace.

Prayer

Lord, help us to rest in your peace today so that we might help others find peace with you too in this troubled world. In your name we pray. Amen.

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