

**Sermon for
The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost**

Date: June 28, 2020

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Jeremiah 28:5–9

Epistle Reading: Romans 7:1–13

Gospel Reading: Matthew 10:34–42

Sermon Text: Matthew 10:34–42

Sermon Title: Peace with a Sword



Hymns:

LSB 660 – Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus

LSB 658 – Preserve Your Word, O Savior

LSB 657 – A Mighty Fortress is Our God

LSB 662 – Onward, Christian Soldiers

Liturgy:

Divine Service I, p. 151

Songs:

A Shield About Me

Our God is an Awesome God

The Battle Belongs to the Lord

Holy is the Lord

Lord Reign in Me

Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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Text: Matthew 10:34–42

[Jesus said:] “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

“Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”

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

Today we heard Jesus say:

Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.¹

This is not the kind of Jesus we tend to think about, or even the kind of Jesus we think we want. These are surprising words that might make us uncomfortable. These words challenge us. They force us to consider: What is our faith? What do we really believe? The Christian life is not always what we think it is, and certainly will not always be easy.

What comes first in faith? Family or the truth of God's Word? It would be wonderful if that choice didn't ever have to be made, but often it does. Sometimes the conduct of the people closest to us are the most unfaithful. Congregations, that should act like good families, often have to deal with profoundly un-Christian conduct. It would be wonderful if we could speak the real truth of God's Word easily with those closest to us, in our congregation and in our families. God's Word is a sword that divides. So instead of speaking the truth, we compromise it, or remain silent, to keep peace. It isn't right, but it feels easier.

Then Jesus says:

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.²

We know we are not worthy, but this only makes that more clear. The cross of Christ is hard, it is dangerous, and it scares us. We might put on a good show in Church, but words like these make us feel uncomfortable. We sing hymns like "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus" and confess our Creeds and vow to be faithful even unto death, and then we walk out those doors, and too often it all disappears, because that division between the truth in here and the lie out there suddenly

1 Matthew 10:34-36

2 Matthew 10:37

because far more apparent. Jesus brings a sword that cuts to your heart, which is good.

Doctors use scalpels to cut in order to heal. God's Word cuts in order to heal. Jesus exposes the sin to heal it with His forgiveness. He is here to make the unworthy worthy, and to give you peace with the sword of His Word. Not peace with the world, but peace with God. You find life, true life, in Christ. In His death and resurrection.

The truth is that sword that cuts you right now cut Jesus down first. It came down on Him because of all your unworthiness, all your compromise, all your silence, failing to speak the truth, to those who are doing the wrong thing. Jesus took on Himself all of that to bear your penalty in your place. To set you free and give you life. Freedom and life that are found only in Him.

You know that, but still it's hard, isn't it? It was hard for the prophet Jeremiah to faithfully speak God's Word. Other so called prophets were telling the people what they wanted to hear, so the people didn't like Jeremiah very much because his message, the truth, cut too deep. St. Paul also could not free himself from the grip of sin that plagued him everyday. Neither can you. Everyday is a battle against the sin, fear and unbelief that lives in our hearts. Sin that tell us the lie, that Jesus' Word is not enough, but listen to what St. Paul said:

You also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.³

Paul speaks of a new and different reality, that came to you in your Baptism. It is there that you were joined to Jesus in His death, and resurrection. In Holy Baptism, you died to be raised up. Through Holy Baptism you are no longer children of Satan.⁴ You belong to another.⁵ In Holy Baptism you died to the weight of the Law. You died with Christ and are raised with Him, so that set free from sin you belong to Him and live in Him.⁶ You belong to the family of God.

The world will tell you that blood is thicker than water. Jesus teaches us something different. In our new family, our new life, water is thicker than blood. The water and Word of Holy Baptism creates a bond that is greater than any other

3 Romans 7:4
4 John 8:43-44
5 Isaiah 43:1
6 John 15:3-4

on earth. It is not just a bond that we have with each other, but the bond that we have with each other in Christ. In Christ we have a family, and life, we cannot lose.

We now have an heavenly Father. Conflict can pull apart our earthly families un-Christian conduct may separate us, the sword of the Word of God may divide, but look at how richly God has rewarded those who remain in the truth of His Word!

Jesus ends these words by talking about receiving His righteous ones, you, as His children. These are those who speak His truth filled Word. These are those who belong to Jesus and the true family of faith. To receive His Word and those who bring it is to receive Jesus.⁷

That's why we put this Baptism Font front and center. That's why I want you to trip over it. It is here so that you cannot look at the altar or the cross without seeing it. It is here to remind you that no matter what happens in this world, no matter what divisions may come by other's sins, nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.⁸ He has claimed you as His own. You are His.

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are.⁹

In the Jesus' name.

Amen.

**Proclaim God's Word,
Encourage one another in faith,
Witness to God's love and
Serve all people**



7 Matthew 10:14
8 Romans 8:37-39
9 1 John 3:1