



Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Pentecost 10 **August 17, 2025**

Prayer of the Day

O God, judge eternal, you love justice and hate oppression, and you call us to share your zeal for truth. Give us courage to take our stand with all victims of bloodshed and greed, and, following your servants and prophets, to look to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The Holy Gospel: Luke 12:49-56

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you O Lord.

"I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; 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."

He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'It is going to rain'; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. 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?"

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ.

Homily

I greet you in the name of Jesus, our risen Saviour. Amen.

When reading the gospel passage this past week, I must confess with you; I wanted to call in sick today! I too think, if any pastor had done his or her homework by reading the appointed gospel lesson ahead, they would have booked this Sunday off as holidays or invited a guest preacher for this Sunday or preached on a different text. This is a hard text. Well, I am here because I didn't do any of these planned strategies so not to preach on this passage.

Throughout Luke's gospel he has painted Jesus to be nice and friendly but Jesus is still an apocalyptic (prophesying) prophet and says things like what we just heard.

By and large, we avoid conflict and division at all cost in our life and in our congregation. We say to each other, "I didn't want to say anything. I don't want to cause a problem." Yet, Jesus is talking about just that. We want peace and call Jesus the Prince of Peace, yet just now Jesus

says that's not what he came to do. This must have been shocking and confusing for the disciples, listeners and followers of the day just as it is today for us.

In this passage, the opposite of peace in Jesus' teaching is not war but division. And this division is of a specific kind: Jesus' coming has created much conflict within families, synagogues and within the market place. Luke writes of these events about forty years after they've happened. And we can guess with some confidence that the division Jesus speaks of, Luke too has experienced or heard about within the Christian communities.

At this point in the story, Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem, where the conflicts he has been experiencing will boil over into a plot to take his life. And Jesus knows this. He knows that he will soon be baptized not by water but by the fire kindled with nails and wood. Jesus is now feeling the weight of what is to come. Jesus is stressed! Jesus has reached a breaking point.

Jesus' criticism is: "Look people. Don't you get it? Don't you see that what I teach is needed right now? Listen to his words:

"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?"

In other words, what is it that you see and don't see? Do you not see what is going on? Do you not see what stress I am under?

I have this image of Jesus saying, "Ok! Look people! I am under a lot of stress. Help me out! Tell me what you don't see. I don't have time for games. You are stressing me out." There is something really real and powerful about Jesus here. Here we find Jesus, who on this rare occasion is struggling and frustrated with his mission. Could, Jesus be living a moment of uncertainty about his mission? He certainly has not been receiving the type of reception for his mission that he had hoped for. Jesus is living in the tension of what he has been called to initiate, and having it initiated.

Stress is one of the watchwords of our time. We feel pulled by schedules not only our own but those of others such as our children; our aging parents. We feel pulled by responsibilities and pressures beyond what we can endure at times. God knows this. We confess that God became human in Jesus precisely to know our condition. Jesus is aware of his upcoming death and it seems to be getting to him.

Now, we are not facing crucifixion. But many of us are facing terminal illness, or deep loneliness, or.....the list can go on. Yes, we at times feel pulled beyond what we can bear and Jesus has been there and bought the tee shirt.

Jesus' inaugural words were,

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free," Luke 4:18

And Jesus is looking around and going..... so far, this isn't working out really well!
Jesus is naming the tension between the vision of: what is it that he wants to see, what is it that he wants us to see, what is it that God wants us to see and we are not seeing it.

If you think back through your life to the most enjoyable and fulfilling times in your family, or in your workplace or even in this church, they will probably be times when everybody was getting along and there was no tension or division.

But the problem comes when people seek harmony at the expense of principle. When our goal becomes to simply; get along, when our goal is just to not make waves, that often leads to abandoning who we are and what we stand for.

In our reading today, I believe Jesus is warning us that there will be times when following him tensions will arise in our life, our family, our church; especially when we ask questions related to the mission of this congregation.

What are we not paying enough attention too?

What is missing from our view?

Who are we not seeing?

What is God calling us to be and to do?

And, when, not if, but when, we have this discussion honestly be ready for some contention, be ready for some tension.

My friends in Christ. What does God want us to see? What is God calling us to be and to do? The truth is; the answer is not clear and can create stress and tension or safely put: lively discussions. But one thing is certain, when the God of grace and love; the God who wishes only abundant life for us; is involved..... things have to change. Amen.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit let us pray as Jesus taught us.....

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious unto you,
The Lord look upon you with favour and give you (+) peace. Amen.

STTLC Communiqué

In Our Prayers Today.....

Sheila Zadow-Purdy, Danny Schultz, Lila Martinat, Irlavere Tubbe, Bobby Keuhl, Adele Krieger, Tracy Schori, and Christa Reitlingshoefer.

Crisis in the Holy Land...the ELCIC National Office and Eastern Synod are launching an appeal to support the ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). Our goal is to raise \$50,000 to assist in supporting this vital work that embodies faith, resilience and hope of a just peace. More information can be found on the “Our World” bulletin board or at <https://elcic.ca/holy-land/>. Donations can be made through your offering envelope or virtual number by noting ELCJHL Appeal on it. Thank you for supporting our friends.



*“I came to bring fire
to the earth”*

