# “When Peace Divides” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost 5
# June 28, 2026

I. **Matthew 10:34-42** – previously read

II. **Jesus is the Prince of Peace**, and He brought peace to our world.

a. As we read His own words today, we might be confused by what He means in saying, “[34] Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. [35]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. [36]And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household.”

i. Yes, these words seem to indicate that strife and conflict are part of our faith in Jesus – not simply peace and harmony.

ii. However, Jesus is not talking about His purpose of bringing peace into the world, He is talking about the cause or what happens when He comes.

1. The purpose of Jesus is not to divide and make conflict, but His presence in the world will certainly cause a lot of trouble.
2. Dr. Jeff Gibbs, my professor in seminary said that it could be translated, “Do not think that I have *only* come to bring peace on earth,” or perhaps, “I came not only so as to bring peace, but even more, a sword.”

iii. Jesus wants His followers to understand that trusting in Him will mean your life changes… often to the point that others cannot accept it… or will make your life miserable.

iv. Yes, Jesus is the Prince of Peace, yet His presence inevitably brings a sword – or division.

b. I suppose all of us are familiar with how Jesus can cause division and conflict in our families.

i. What should be all about love and peace in the Person of Jesus becomes a point of contention and resistance.

ii. How many of you have the family over for a Thanksgiving dinner and it causes a stir because you pray in the name of Jesus?

1. Maybe you have an atheist who scoffs at you… maybe you have an in-law from another faith tradition, and the family thinks you are being rude for leaving their god out… maybe you are told not to pray at all so that people don’t feel uncomfortable.

iii. On many occasions, Michele and I have been in awkward situations with relatives and friends who either don’t believe in Jesus… or, they are living in a way that goes against God’s commands.

1. For example, one friend wanted to come visit with her boyfriend and stay at our house… we had to tell her that we can’t support her lifestyle by sleeping in our home together…

2. I share this with my daughter's permission, but when she walked away from her faith and decided to marry an unbeliever, we had to tell her that we were not paying for the wedding.
    a. Fortunately, she understood because we told her since she was tiny that we will not condone marrying someone who is not a Christian… it is not God's will.
3. And, when God made it clear that I must go to the seminary with my family, some of our relatives and friends were very negative… to the point where some parted ways with us.

iv. All of us have sons or daughters, grandchildren or great-grandchildren, parents, siblings, or in-laws who are hostile about Jesus, or maybe they are living in a way that we cannot endorse their behaviors… and our faith in Jesus and His Word causes division.
1. It's not that we must separate ourselves from sinful people, in fact we embrace everyone just like Jesus… but we don't endorse their behavior or look past it as if we tacitly agree.
2. Here's the hard part – and perhaps the cross we must bear – we may find that a person who vehemently disagrees with Scripture or faith in Jesus decides that we are hateful… bigoted… small-minded… fanatics… and they reject us and walk away.
    a. It's common today for people to give an ultimatum: either accept and support me and my behaviors, or I will disown you or make your life a living nightmare.

c. I don't want confusion here today – we are not called to go around letting people have it with the double-barreled shotgun of the law – we are loving and caring for our families especially.
    i. Yet, sometimes, the time arises to stand up for Christ in a winsome way… and perhaps the results are a cross we must bear.
    ii. Your job is not to announce the sins of every person at the Thanksgiving dinner table in the name of Jesus… Your job is to stand for Jesus if the time and place are right… and we all pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance and direction for courage and wisdom if the time comes.
d. The bottom line is that Jesus knows He is not always welcome… His Word is not always accepted… and when a person commits to follow Him, it might mean bearing a cross.

III. **The Word that** is preached and taught by Jesus' followers is often rejected.
a. In this section of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is sending out the twelve apostles and telling them about persecution and rejection for His name's sake.

b. You see, those who preach and teach God's will and His Word are always facing trials from those who either disagree… or those who don't believe in God anyway.
    i. It is true that pastors are mostly preaching and teaching God's Word in a public way, but all disciples of Jesus are sometimes called to teach others the truth of the Word.
    ii. Jesus says, "Whoever receives you receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me." (v. 40)
        1. This means that we are in a privileged position to share the Word of God and that comes with all His power behind it.
        2. Don't think that this is your opinion – this is God's Word – and when the Law and Gospel are spoken, the Lord Himself is at work to convict and show a person their sins… and forgive and show them the love of Jesus Christ through the cross and empty tomb.

IV. **It's hard to believe that Jesus still works through us – but we are His**.

a. As followers of Jesus Christ we know the saving grace and blessings that come from His Word and His sacrifice to rescue us.
    i. Each of us has erred… has sinned against God and our neighbors… has gone our own way pridefully rejecting God's will in our lives.
    ii. And yet, we also have faith in Jesus who kept on preaching to us… kept on seeking us out with the truth… and kept on sending faithful followers into our paths so we might turn around and come back home to Him.
b. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, who suffered the greatest hostility of all so that we might first and foremost have peace with God.
    i. You see, God would place the sin… the pride… the rejection of Him by us all on Jesus… nailing these sins to a cross and burying them in the ground.
    ii. Yet, the victory came when Jesus rose from the dead to show that God was even more powerful than the consequences of sin – He even defeated death.
    iii. This Word of salvation and victory is yours – and I am called to preach this forgiveness of sins and victory to you again and again as God's own children…. And that is peace… knowing you are right with God…. That is why Jesus is the Prince of Peace.
c. However, Jesus also brings peace between people too – and that comes through walking in the ways of Christ.
    i. Yes, the way of Christ is to love your neighbor, just as much as you love yourself.
    ii. It doesn't mean you enable them to keep on sinning, but you love them and embrace them with the love of Christ… and the peace we have from a right relationship with God can be shared with others.

d. Jesus' words in our Gospel lesson still hold true today – "Whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (v. 39)
    i. When we surrender our lives to the Savior, we walk in His ways to the glory of His holy name… and that means we have life.
e. The peace of God may divide in a broken world, so don't be surprised… just remember the peace you have by Christ's sacrifice, is worth every cross we might ever bear. Amen.