

Midweek Lenten Vespers #5  
St. Matthew 10:32-42  
March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## I Came Not to Send Peace

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Sermon Text:**

“Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law: and a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.”

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

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

My dear friends, in this past Sunday’s Gospel reading the Jews accused our Lord + Jesus of being a Samaritan and having a demon. Why did they do this? Because our Lord + Jesus preached the truth. They tried to accuse Him of being a liar, but the Son of God does not lie. He preaches what His heavenly Father gave Him to preach. He preaches the truth. He always preaches the truth. The Jews in the eighth chapter of St. John’s Gospel did not like the truth, and so they accused the Lord + Jesus of being a liar. They wanted to keep their own truth. They wanted their false beliefs to be the truth. But their beliefs were only lies. They did not know the Lord God. They did not know the heavenly Father. And when the Lord + Jesus pointed out their falsehoods, He was attacked and charged with being liar.

This is what speaking the truth does. For those who refuse to believe the truth, it puts them at animosity with the truth and with those who preach the truth. This is what our Lord + Jesus is preaching to us today in the tenth chapter of the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew’s Gospel. Those who do not believe the truth, will reject it. They will be at odds with those who preach, believe, and hold fast to the truth. This is why our Lord says that He came not to send peace, but a sword. The truth is like a sword; a two-edged sword. The truth preaches both the Law in all of its harshness, and the Gospel in all of its sweetness. This is often off-putting for those who want to believe, say, and so whatever their own hearts desire.

It is not really that surprising when one considers it. For what is the purpose of a sword? It is for attack. There are two weapons often used in holy Scripture. The one is a sword, which we have presented to us by our Lord + Jesus in the Gospel reading for today. But there is also the shield. The shield represents faith. The shield of faith it is often referred to. The sword is often associated with the Word of God. We have both a sword and a shield. We have both the Word of God and faith.

The sword of the Word of God is for attacking our foes, our enemies. The Word of God is used

against the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh. It is used against all those who would speak lies about the Word of God; who would preach false doctrine, hold to false beliefs. It is used against those who cling to their sinfulness; who desire to pervert the Word of God to their own evil desires so that they can joyfully go on in their sins, laughing all the way down the path to Hell in their impenitence and their unbelief. The sword cuts them to the heart. With the Law of God, it cuts out their evil lusts and desires. Those who feel the sting of the Law can only have one of two responses. They will either dig themselves deeper into their sinfulness, or they will repent. The Jews from this past Sunday dug in their heels and refused to repent.

Our Lord in today's reading tells us that this will be a common response. For the Word of God, the truth of the Word of God, will set a "man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law: and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." For when we use the sword of the Word of God to cut out man's evil desires; when we cut out the false idols that mankind clings to, this is not always received well. It is hard for us at times to admit when we are in the wrong. The Word of God stands for us as a beacon to the truth. And sometimes that truth is harsh for our ears to hear. Especially when it points out our own wrongdoing. We have two choices when the Word of God attacks our hearts. We can either dig in our heels as the Jews did in our readings, or we can repent. We can listen to the words of admonition and confess that we have been in error.

This is the second use of the sword. For the sword is not only for the Law, but for the Gospel. It brings us out of ourselves, out of our own works. It kills our ability to work any form of salvation within ourselves, and leaves us with only a hope in the rescue and salvation through our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. This use of the sword leads us through repentance to cling in faith to our Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ. We can then be able to pick up our second weapon, our shield and use it as a defense against our foes. For faith always desires to cling to the truth. It desires to cling to the truth of the Word of God. It desires to cling to our Lord and Savior + Jesus.

The shield of faith blocks all the arrows and darts of our enemies. Their accusations of being a liar, or living in falsehood never reach their mark, because our shield of faith protects us from those accusations. The shield of faith places the Lord + Jesus, the Christ between us and our enemies. He defends us against the accusations of our enemies because He speaks the truth. That truth is that He has already fulfilled the requirements of the Law on our behalf. That truth is that He has suffered our punishment upon the tree of the holy cross. He intercedes for us, and declares to our enemies that no one is able to bring an accusation against us, for He has claimed us as His own through the waters of Holy Baptism. He has claimed us as His own through faith. He stands as a shield of faith against our enemy's attacks. He stands as the sword of truth to attack our enemies and drive them far away from us.

Therefore, we can say with Him, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" For we stand armed with Him as our sword and shield. He attacks our enemies with the truth of His works and merits, and He defends us from their attacks by revealing that we have been gifted faith through the work of the Holy Ghost in the means of grace. With the sword and the shield, He keeps us in the one, true faith, for we are fully protected from our enemies. We are fully protected from falsehood and unbelief.

He came not to send peace, but a sword. That sword of the truth of the Word of God, keeps us in the one, true faith until we are called out of this vale of tears to our eternal home in Heaven. For it attacks us when we do wrong, and it attacks our enemies when they would wrench us out of faith. It is a powerful weapon against those who would seek to destroy our faith, and lead us down the path of destruction.

There are many who balk at the sword. They do not like having a weapon wielded against them.

The sword of the truth of the Word of God often times sets at variance man and father, daughter and mother, and daughter in law and mother in law. This happens because many times people are prone to clinging to their own ways and desires, and reject the path that our Lord + Jesus would have them follow.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us not be ashamed of the sword of the Word of truth, for it is there for our protection against eternal destruction. Let us take up the shield of faith, and cling to our Lord + Jesus. For He has the Word of eternal life. We have no one else to whom we could go. In Him is life and salvation. For He loves us all very dearly. He shows this love for us in that He suffered and died for us upon the tree of the holy cross. If we ever doubt our Lord's love for us, all we need do is look at His crucifixion. There is His love on full display. There on the cross He wielded the sword to destroy our enemies and all their power once and for all.

This is why we in this parish display the Lord's suffering in death in the many crucifixes which adorn our sanctuary. For in them is depicted our Lord's battle with sin and death. In them we see the sword that He came to send. He came to send a sword into the very heart of our enemies, and destroy their power over us. We need not fear them any longer, for He has thoroughly defeated them. And because He has, we now have peace in and with Him. For in Him we have no more fear of any of our enemies. We need not fear death, the devil, the world, nor even our own sinful flesh. For our Lord and Savior, True Man and God, has soundly defeated them and given us the victory. This is the truth that if we cling to in faith, we will have everlasting life, and we will never see nor taste death. Thanks be to the Lord God Who has rescued us all from our enemies. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*