

## Luke 12 pt 4 vs. 49-59 NIV

<sup>49</sup> "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! <sup>50</sup> But I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! <sup>51</sup> Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. <sup>52</sup> From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. <sup>53</sup> They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

<sup>54</sup> He said to the crowd: "When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, 'It's going to rain,' and it does. <sup>55</sup> And when the south wind blows, you say, 'It's going to be hot,' and it is. <sup>56</sup> Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time?"

<sup>57</sup> "Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right? <sup>58</sup> As you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, try hard to be reconciled on the way, or your adversary may drag you off to the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. <sup>59</sup> I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."

1. Jesus has been teaching us about what a disciple looks like
  - a. In Ch. 11, He taught us how to pray
  - b. On the importance of having a united heart
  - c. How understanding and obeying God' Word is more important than simply hearing & enjoying it
  - d. In Ch. 12 we were warned about the dangers of hypocrisy, greed & worry
  - e. We also learned about being a faithful servant and what that looks like
  - f. This final portion of Ch. 12 Jesus is speaking words of warning
    - i. He's about 6 months away from Calvary

- I. Fire**
- II. Feud**
- III. Forgiveness**

## I. Fire

1. **Vs. 49** Jesus is giving us one of His "Mission Statements"
  - a. He's clarifying why He came to earth
  - b. Many of us are familiar with:
  - c. **Luke 19:10** The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost
  - d. **Luke 12:49** I came to send fire on the earth
  - e. That's another way of saying He's bringing judgment on the earth
  - f. Some in the audience would be familiar with the prophecies given in the O.T.
    - i. **Isaiah 66:15** For behold, the LORD will come in fire And His chariots like the whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire.
    - ii. **Joel 2** The LORD will send fire upon Moab and Judah
  - g. But nearly all of His audience would be familiar with the prophet Elijah
    - i. A time when Israel was not doing well spiritually
      1. Ahab was the king & Jezebel was queen about (800 B.C)
      2. Many worshiped idols
      3. There was a famine in the land & no rain for 3 years
      4. Then the LORD spoke to Elijah who challenged Ahab to bring the false prophets to Mt. Carmel
      5. Elijah said, 'build an altar & the god who brings down fire, He is God'
      6. False prophets agreed and nothing happened
      7. At the time of the evening sacrifice (the appointed time), God sent a fire and consumed Elijah's sacrifice
      8. Instead of consuming all of Israel, God only judged 1 sacrifice
        - a. It's true that the false leaders were killed
        - b. But the common people (sinners) were spared
      9. **Galatians 4:4** But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the

law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons

- ii. So fire is a picture of judgment
- h. The judgment of God on the sin that created a barrier between man and God
  - i. Some people believe that God is angry with the sinner
  - j. Jesus challenged that line of thinking
    - i. He's called the friend of sinners
    - ii. He spoke kindly to those trapped in sin
    - iii. He dined with sinners in their homes
    - iv. So God doesn't have a hatred for people, His anger is against the sin that kept man from knowing & loving God
  - k. Jesus say's "I wish it were already kindled" which may seem like He's looking forward to the judgment
  - l. But when we realize that the Cross was where God's judgment was poured out, we understand that He's looking forward to taking the punishment Himself – He is THE ONE sacrifice
    - i. This is not an angry God looking to punish those rotten sinners
    - ii. All of us are rotten sinners
      - 1. This is a merciful savior who'll do anything to save us
      - 2. Including taking the full force of God's wrath on sin
    - iii. That's why He say's "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished"
      - 1. **He's referring to the Cross**
      - 2. Baptism shows He was immersed in the agony
      - 3. He anxiously anticipated that event
      - 4. One perfect sacrifice to pay the price of judgment
    - iv. If earthly fathers will run into burning buildings to save their children
    - v. If mothers who can't swim have jumped into the water to save their children

- vi. How much more our heavenly Father sacrifice to pull us out of hell's flames and bring us to safety?
- vii. But fire does more than burn the sacrifice in judgment
  - 1. Fire also purifies
  - 2. That's why on Pentecost, The Holy Spirit filled all the believers and each of them had tongues of fire on their heads
  - 3. It's the purifying work of God
  - 4. God used them to turn the world upside down
  - 5. So the fire judges but it also purifies
- viii. As a believer, if you've been asking God to fill you and use you and all you're experiencing is fiery trials... **REJOICE**
- ix. **1 Pet 1:6** In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, <sup>7</sup> so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ
- m. Peter could testify, that while God moved among them with signs and wonders, persecution was intense
  - i. Many were imprisoned
  - ii. Many lost their families
  - iii. Many were martyred for their faith

## **II. Feud / conflict**

- 1. **When a person puts their faith in Jesus, they receive a new heart**
  - a. Their new life brings tension within their family
  - b. Especially as the Jewish culture was being introduced to Christ
  - c. The Eastern culture is very intertwined
    - i. It's very hard to keep things private and isolated

- d. It's still this way in much of the world
  - i. Family, faith & culture are all connected
- e. That's why much of the church in Jerusalem were poor and in need of financial help
  - i. Many were employed in the temple and lost their jobs because they confessed Jesus as Lord
  - ii. So imagine a father responsible for a family tells his wife & kids that because of his faith in Jesus, their income is gone
  - iii. Or possibly a son who's taking care of elderly parents receives Jesus and loses his job
  - iv. Or a child hears the good news of salvation and the pride of the culture rejects that salvation is by faith alone – **problems will happen**

## 2. **There's a flame of fire now on the inside of a new believer**

- a. There's a new heart – a flame is kindled
- b. This fire is a source of light, guidance and protection for believers
- c. As much as it serves as light to the believer, it is also darkness for the unbeliever
  - i. As it was for Israel when they left Egypt
  - ii. Before leaving, the 9<sup>th</sup> plague was darkness for the Egyptians...
  - iii. **Exodus 14:19-20** And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. <sup>20</sup> So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness *to the one*, and it gave light by night *to the other*, so that the one did not come near the other all that night.
  - iv. To unbelievers, faith in Christ is darkness
  - v. To believers, it is a bright light of guidance, protection, cleansing & passion

- d. There must be a separation and distinction from unbelievers
  - i. Not in the combative sense where we make enemies within our families
- e. But the course of life has changed
- f. Unbelievers in your family are going down one path and you, another
- g. Like dead fish all go downstream, a living fish will swim against the flow because that is it's nature
- h. When a person gets born again by the Spirit of God, they receive a new nature
  - i. Before knowing Jesus, they would head down stream and think nothing of it
    1. sexual immorality, impurity and sensuality; <sup>20</sup> idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions<sup>21</sup> and envy; drunkenness
    2. It's normal for those who don't have Christ to have these things dominate their lives
    3. If you are a new creation in Christ, your new nature cannot drift away from God, but gravitates toward Him
    4. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...
    5. These are 2 complete opposite directions in life
    6. And if some in the family are saved & others not, there will be clashes
    7. Not that you clash with them, but they'll clash with you

8. Because darkness doesn't like to be exposed
9. Many have paid the ultimate price with their life
10. Or at the very least, having been disowned by their families for the sake of Christ
11. This passage must have brought much comfort to them
  - a. God knows and understands
  - b. He'll carry us through it

### **III. Forgiveness**

1. To everyone who's listening who is still unsure of their eternal salvation, there is forgiveness
  - a. But before forgiveness can happen, we need to see a need
  - b. And the message that Jesus is telling is sending a huge message
  - c. Just as it's easy to discern weather patterns, Jesus has been teaching on the kingdom of God and who'll be there
  - d. Just as we recognize that God is in control of our natural weather
    - i. He withholds the rain
    - ii. He sends the clouds and the rain
    - iii. When we see clouds and weather patterns we predict what kind of day it'll be
  - e. Discern the times means to look around
    - i. Has anyone opened blind eyes before?
    - ii. Has anyone touched a leper and healed him before?
    - iii. Has anyone fed thousands in the wilderness before?
    - iv. If these are attributes of God, then be discerning and realize that Immanuel dwells with us
  - f. Just as a guilty party makes peace before going to trial, make peace with your adversary quickly
  - g. Everyone knows the highest authority in this universe is God who'll judge everyone

- h. Jesus is saying that we're to make peace with God while there is still time
- i. We are the guilty party that needs to make peace with God
- j. those who fail to settle accounts and are found guilty will be "dragged away" to prison (**Bock**)
- k. But because God has mercy in mind, He's telling us the problem & solution
- l. **Psalm 145:8** The LORD is gracious and merciful; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness