**The Hard and Misunderstood Sayings of Jesus (II) + Weekly Devotion + 4.10.2024**

***“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword” (Matthew 10:34).***

This is another one of the hard sayings of Jesus. It likely surprised His disciples just as it surprises us. In Isaiah 9:6, Jesus is called the “Prince of *Peace*.” When Jesus was born, the angels proclaimed, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth *peace* among those with whom he is pleased!” (Luke 2:14) More references could be given, but you get the idea. It sounds like Jesus came to bring peace, not a sword! So, why then does He say that He didn’t come to bring peace, but a sword?

First, we have to understand what kind of “sword” Jesus brings. He isn’t talking about a literal sword here (although there are references to a sword coming from Jesus’ mouth in Revelation 1:16 and 19:15; see also Hebrews 4:12). When Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter drew his sword and cut off Malchus’ right ear, to which He responded, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Matthew 26:52).

Jesus doesn’t bring that kind of sword. The sword that He brings is that of division; His coming sometimes results in the division of families. After Matthew 10:34, Jesus says, “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” (Matthew 10:35-36).

Christ didn’t come to intentionally divide families, but that’s the natural result of His coming. Some believe and others don’t. Some are for Him; others are against Him. Jesus’ own relatives were divided because of Him, and we see the same thing take place in our families too. It’s an unfortunate reality, but it’s a reality, nonetheless.

The peace that Jesus brings isn’t necessarily ‘peace on earth’ or peace within families. That’s obvious because there’re still wars and violence, and families don’t always get along (especially when it comes to Jesus and politics!). The peace that Jesus brings is peace with God (Romans 5:1). His nail-pierced hands and spear-pierced side are the things which make for peace with God.

Sin separates us from God, but Christ died to reconcile us to Him. Jesus removes the separation that once existed between us. There’re lots of ways in which we don’t have or experience peace in this word, but Christ came to give us the greatest peace and the peace which matters most – peace with God by His blood which was shed for the forgiveness of sins.

Following Jesus will naturally lead to division within our families, like a sword which splits us in two. It’s a tragic reality, but the cost of following Him is worth it. The end is eternal life.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, we give You thanks for making peace with God by the blood of Your cross. We pray for peace within our families, but we recognize that following You sometimes brings division. Strengthen us to endure whatever crosses we bear as we follow You through death and into eternal life. Amen.