

"Water that Starts a Fire"

Pentecost 13

1)

Luke 12:49-53

2)

September 8, 2019

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory now and forever. Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

How many of you like campfires? I personally enjoy relaxing by the fire—visiting with family or friends, eating schmores or pudgy pies. But, at some point in time, the campfire has to come to an end and has to be put out. We have a lid for our campfire, but usually I also take the hose on the back of the house and douse the fire with plenty of water. What kind of sound does that make? When the water hits the flames, it makes a hssssssing sound. And you can see smoke billow up. And the part that I don't like is when it sometimes gets in your eyes and all over you if you don't get out of the way quick enough. But have you ever seen water that starts a fire? What if I pour that water on the fire, and it ignites the flame even more? It's impossible b/c God gave water the characteristic to stop fires. That's why you see fire hydrants all over the world.

This morning we hear Jesus talking to his disciples about water that starts a fire. We want to learn what that means and how it how it is a comfort for us in our lives. **Water That Starts A Fire!**

Think about this water that starts a fire. Jesus said in our first verses – Jesus said, **"I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed! Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division."**

Think of that first thought – **I have come to bring fire on earth...** In the OT God used the word picture of fire to describe judgment. Here Jesus is doing a similar thing.

The baptism he had to undergo wasn't a water and word baptism – he was already baptized by John in the Jordan River.

Do you remember the time when James and John asked Jesus for spots of glory in Christ's kingdom—to sit at his right and

left hand? They wanted a kingdom of glory, but didn't give much thought to the suffering that Jesus then patiently explained to them would happen. He said to them, **“Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”** It's a baptism of suffering. Today, we might say that someone received a “baptism under fire.” (Urban dictionary – ESPN, etc)

Jesus then said, **“How distressed I am until it is completed!”** **“Distressed”** has the thought behind it of Jesus' love – how something is pressed together to keep it going in different directions. Kind of like the pudgy pie (sandwich maker) closes together and keeps all the ingredients on the inside. Jesus was distressed and pressed in every direction. But nothing kept him from going to the cross. He knew the suffering that he was about to endure. It wasn't b/c of anything he did wrong. Aren't we the ones who, when placed under distress, walk a different direction than God and try to fill the spiritual void and emptiness with things other than God? Jesus never failed. He died on the cross and endured the baptism of suffering.

It had to happen this way. He had to endure the baptism of suffering before a fire could come on the earth. Jesus was compelled into the action of saving us from our sins.

What does Jesus **“wish were already kindled?”** The fire he's come to bring to the earth. We can think about the fire of Pentecost – the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Those who heard the good news of the gospel had the fire of faith lit in their heart. 3000 came to faith in one day. God tells us his desire – **“that all be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.”** God wants you and me and all people to not only hear, but believe this good news. And he wants us to tell others about it.

Think about how Paul said to the Corinthian Christians – **“Christ's love compels us...”** **Compel** is the same word as “distressed” in our verse today. **b/c we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all that those who live should not live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again.”**

We aren't compelled to action b/c of how good we are. We're compelled to action b/c of what Christ did for us. Christ

endured the baptism of suffering and death on the cross. That's the water that starts a fire in our lives – that compels us to action. We serve the Lord in every aspect of our lives – in every way and in every relationship.

When you feel the cold from a crisp autumn air, think about the warmth that a nice fire brings. It attracts us to it, but for those away from the fire, they remain in the cold.

Jesus said in v 51 – **“Do you think I have come to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division.”** Then he adds the practical examples of family members sometimes being part of that division. I would guess most of us can relate to this difficult truth very well. Why is that?

Well, God tells us in the Bible that there is only one way to heaven – **Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”** This is like that campfire – in that it brings us spiritual warmth to be connected to God through faith in Jesus.

The sad thing is that not everyone believes this. They are like the one away from the campfire – they do not feel it's warmth. And in a spiritual way – they do not have Jesus as their Savior. It brings us peace, but for the unbeliever – it brings division. This may be some of the division that you've experienced in your family. Perhaps you've had a family member who has attacked you for your faith.

Where do we find comfort? Throughout the Bible we can look at many examples of the suffering and attacks Christians have faced – even from those closest to them – b/c of their faith. Think about our lesson from Hebrews this morning. The suffering induced discipline that they underwent. They faced many difficulties and division amongst family members – as they believed that Jesus was their Savior from sin; and those family members that clung to the Jewish faith and did not believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Or the apostle Peter who described the suffering we face as like being gold refined by a refiners fire. (1 Peter 1) He would later on write – **“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice**

that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed in you. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”

Do you ever think of think of your faith in this way – that you will indeed **“participate in the sufferings of Christ.”** It’s not a matter of “if” we’ll be attacked for our faith, but when. When we’re attacked, we find real peace and comfort in Jesus and the promises he gives us in the Bible. Promises that he will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 12); and the he will work out everything for our good (Rom 8:28). And isn’t it comforting to know not only that your every sins is forgiven now, but your eternal peace has been secured by Jesus rising from the grave. When Jesus returned to heaven, he went there to prepare a place for you. And will return to take you back with him. (John 14)

Where does the Water that starts a fire come from? I want to take you back for a moment to your baptism – that water and the Word baptism. When the water was sprinkled on you and the Word spoken over you – your identity changed forever. God marked you as his own – a dearly loved and redeemed child of God. You are forever connected to Jesus – his death and resurrection are now your own. And because he lives, you too will live forever.

Do you see how the Water that Starts a Fire is burning in your life? This is what brings us comfort when attacked. This is what gives us peace. This is what compels us to action. What action will it compel you to today? May it compel you to love your family and all those around you who cause you suffering and bring you grief. And may it compel you to love and serve everyone, in the same way Jesus loved and served you. Amen.

The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. (Phil.4:7)

⁴⁹ “I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰ But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed! ⁵¹ Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. ⁵² From now on there will be five in one family divided against

each other, three against two and two against three. ⁵³They 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.”