

Read: Luke 12:49-53

A Hard Truth

Luke 12:51-52

Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It was a very busy night in this very small town long ago, as many families gathered for an important event. We know this event not only as the counting of people, a census, but as the night of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. We who believe in Jesus would think the reason many people would gather is because the Savior of the world was to be born. But they didn't know. In fact, Jesus' first visitors didn't even know he was born until angels announced his birth to them. "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests," the angels proclaimed to the shepherds.

Jesus was born, and now we have peace with God. Jesus came to save us. He lived the perfect life we could not live and died in our place. He was our perfect substitute. Jesus made us right with God. Then why does Jesus say he *didn't* come to bring peace?

When Christians stay true to God's Word and stand up against those who reject God, there is no peace. In its place are arguments, hard feelings, and sadness. Jesus gives an example of how personally dividing faith in him can be. It can split a family right down the middle—a husband from a wife. A parent from a child. It happens when someone lives life for Jesus but others don't. It creates differences in how you live your life, how you view things, and what you believe is your purpose here on earth. Jesus says living God's truth can be extremely hard. How tempting to just blend in! Or, in order to keep the peace, say nothing! Issues that need to be talked about get buried under smiles. Family members may not be arguing, but they aren't discussing their faith either.

How blest we are to have a Savior who calls us to repentance and faith in *his* peace established on the cross and given to us through our baptism.

A Christmas song says, "Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be." Yet, as we learn from this portion of Scripture, complete peace will not be found on earth. Peace will, however, be found when believers reach perfect unity in heaven. That peace *is* meant to be!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- How does arguing make you feel?
- Describe what it looks like when everyone is at peace in your home.

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Jesus said faith in him brings division. Explain what that means.
- What did Jesus do as our perfect substitute to restore peace on earth and peace with God?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Discuss how you will respond to anyone, even a family member, who causes division because they don't believe in Jesus.
- God wants us to live at peace. How can you contribute to peaceful living in your home?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, you teach an important lesson today. We want there to be peace, especially in our family, but when others oppose and reject you it splits and divides. Thank you for forgiving our sins and bringing peace between us and our heavenly Father. Give us courage to speak your name. Amen.