

Worship Service “*The Great Divide*”

Pentecost 10, Year C, 14th August, 2022

Hebrews 11:29-12:2 NRSV / Luke 12:49-56 NRSV

Prelude (Video)

[Annie Center](#)

Opening Music (Video)

[Fearless](#) dc Talk

written by George Cocchini, Kevin Max Smith,
Mark Heimermann, Michael Tait, Toby McKeehan,
CCLI song number 2862451 , Achtober Songs / Blind Thief
Publishing / Out of Twisted Roots Music / Popopen Music
(Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing & Moon & Musky Music),
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Welcome Guests / Announcements

Pass the Peace (Video interlude) [Annie Center](#)

Opening Hymn (lyric video)

[Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise](#) 70

written by Walter C. Smith, Congregational singing Grace
Community Church - Sun Valley, California, |
posted to YouTube by Martijn de Groot

Call to Worship

 (responsive)

One: In a world uprooted at every turn, come beloved of God for replanting.

All: Our hope and weariness are mixed together, yet we come, trusting ancient promises.

One: The Holy One who led the people out of Egypt, yearns to lead us, too.

All: God will not rest until all are rerooted, restored, and renewed for rejoicing.

One: Let us be joined to God’s song of justice, bearing beauty into the life of the world.

All: May our lives be formed for faithfulness by the One who is always faithful.

Invocation

Loving and Gracious God, form a new song of soul within us. Take every fragment of our lives and fashion a new creation. Plant us deep in the soil of Your love, that your living water might rise in us, forming a fruit of possibility unimaginable on our own. Grant us grace to trust your promised presence already meeting us here, now, and always. By this, gift us with a new strength of heart for whatever Your love demands. Amen.

Epistle Reading – Hebrews 11:29-12:2 NRSV

By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days.

By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.

And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—

who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,

quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection.

Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.

They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented—

of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised,

since God had provided something better so that they would not, without us, be made perfect.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us,

looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

A Time of Prayer

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer (ending with the Lord's Prayer)

Our God we give you thanks that some things are important

We bring before you this morning the millions of your children on this globe who are now in motion or displaced by floods, political persecution, famine, racial or religious persecution. Let the images of thousands lining the roadways seeking a safe place and space be seared upon our hearts as they are upon yours.

We give you thanks that some things are important.

Too often tension is resolved in non-respectful ways. People are bullied and bulldozed; others give away their power, "whatever," "Yes, dear,"; "Yes, sir!" Give us courage to have respectful conversations with our children, our friends, those whose are different than us, those whose language it is difficult for us to understand.

We give you thanks that some things are important.

We pray for those who do not see themselves as beloved, as welcome at this table or any other because of their history, their addictions, their struggles or our lack of hospitality.

We give you thanks that some things are important.

Continue to work your transformation within us and within this world so that we shall seek first your will, your dream and the desire of your heart will set the beat.

For we desire to be your people, who stand in a long line of those who sit among lepers and shepherds outside the gates, asking simply that Jesus teach us a prayer. So it with them and with him, we pray.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kin-dom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For think is the kin-dom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever, Amen.

Hymn (Lyric video)

[Beauty for Brokenness](#)

"Beauty for Brokenness" was written by Graham Kendrick, published in 1993. It is performed here by Graham Kendrick and posted to YouTube by Chet Valley Churches

Gospel Reading

Luke 12:49-56 NRSV

'I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!

I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed!

Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division!

From now on, five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three;

they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law

He also said to the crowds, 'When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, "It is going to rain"; and so it happens.

And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, "There will be scorching heat"; and it happens.

You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

Message – *The Great Divide*

Rev. Glenn Brumbaugh

What comes to mind when we think of the gospel? Probably something positive, considering it's another way of saying "good news." Depending on our perspective, we may see it as a path to personal salvation, an impetus to do good works and care for others, a way of living that brings the kin-dom of God closer, as well as many other wonderful things. What we often don't think of when we think of God's good news is the other side of that coin. Does the gospel always result in butterflies and rainbows, or can there be some less than ideal impacts of living into that good news? Our gospel lesson this morning certainly isn't full of the happy vibes we prefer when thinking of the teachings of Jesus.

The beginning of Luke's Gospel proclaims that Jesus will "guide our feet in the way of peace." Near the end of the Luke, the resurrected Jesus appears among his followers and offers a benediction of peace. Yet here, as he has turned his sight towards his final journey towards Jerusalem, we have his statement that he brings "fire to the earth," division and not peace. How can this man who has healed over and over again and sent those affected on their way in peace, now indicate that he comes to bring fire, disunity, and strife among people, even among families? Wasn't he the same one who told the parable of reconciliation between the prodigal son and his father? Didn't he instruct his followers to bring greetings of peace as they traveled the country to share his good news? All of these previous events certainly make this week's reading a bit problematic to say the least. What is the fire that Jesus brings? Is it the baptism of fire of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost? Or is it the refiner's fire, burning away the chaff of sin? Or is it the fire of judgment raining down from heaven upon the heads of God's enemies? These are very valid questions that have

been raised by theologians over the centuries and well worth pondering. And while I do my best to reflect and discern theologically and exegetically, I certainly can't claim to have the answers to those questions either. Perhaps this is one of those occasions where we need to live in the mystery, and continue to discern the meaning of the passage.

One thought I can share is, maybe the passage is meant to be descriptive rather than prescriptive. In other words, maybe it's meant to highlight the impact and potential conflict a life devoted to the gospel can create. That is, it is not Jesus' purpose to set children against their parents, or parents against their children, but this sort of rupture can be the result of the change engendered by Christ's work. I mentioned earlier the story of reconciliation between the prodigal son and his father. Yet if we think the story through, even their reconciliation bears the seeds of rupture, as their renewed relationship results in division between the elder son and the father. Jesus' teaching in today's lesson reflects that same reality. A ministry that reconciles long-standing enemies will inevitably rend relationships that depended on the old status quo. This teaching highlights the humanity we all must deal with. Like the elder son in the previous story, don't we all want to see some get their "just rewards?" It can feel unfair to see those we deem undeserving to receive the abundant grace that the gospel promises. We want to see consequences for perceived sin, while we expect the rewards we feel we deserve for our steadfastness and righteousness. Jealousy, anger, desire for revenge, resistance to change: these can consume us in the face of the gospel, to the point that sometimes we can find ourselves being the antagonists against those whom Jesus welcomes.

Jesus' teaching also speaks to the reality of a kinship based not on family blood ties, but on a covenantal relationship with Jesus. Even among his own people, where he is known as "Joseph's son," Jesus becomes an outsider when he announces his mission from God. And when his own mother and brothers try to get close to him, he redefines the family ties that bind his true family to him. In Luke 8 he says, "my mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." What ties believers together is not the covenant of blood lineage but the covenant of blood, poured out for those who find fellowship in the family of God.

Our passage today suggests that – at the opportune time and under the impulse of God – when division begins, the gospel has begun to break in among us. So what about us? Do we see conflict as a positive or negative? Do we embrace division, or do we avoid it at all cost? I would wager to guess that none of us is entirely comfortable with conflict and division.

At the bigger level, our denomination has been going through a split in recent years, with many churches choosing to leave because they don't see the punishment and retribution they feel is warranted on those who have sinned from their perspective. This despite literal decades of avoiding conflict and trying to appease one side to hold things together. Which brings the bigger question. Can we avoid the rupture and division that sometimes happens in our walk of faith?

In our cultural context, we often put on a brave face and pretend all is okay for the perceived good of the whole. But is the whole really good in that situation? What it all boils down to in the end is living out the gospel to the best of our abilities, sharing the grace that we have been given, and accepting that we may find conflict and division as a result of living that life. It's one of those tough choices we face in a life of faith, counting the cost of our discipleship. Will we make the difficult decisions, or just pretend that everything is okay. I hope and pray we find ways to be authentic, and work together to embrace the conflict, and find the kin-dom that conflict brings near. Amen.

A Call to Serve

We live in a more than enough world, created by a God who lavishes abundance. Today, we are privileged to join God's motion of generosity. When we add our gifts, God multiplies them for good, and joy mysteriously rises. This is God's will and way. May we be joined to it.

A Time for Reflection – (Video interlude) [Let There Be Light](#)

Music by Hubert Parry; Arr. by Mike Carson, played by Annie Center

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

We thank you, Loving God, that sourness gives way to sweetness when we answer Your call to be generous. Multiply these gifts and Your spirit in us, that the world may know your life-giving will and way.

Hymn (Lyric video)

[Guide My Feet](#)

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Lyric video for the African American spiritual "Guide My Feet," produced and published to YouTube by Shine Curriculum, Brethren Press

BENEDICTION

Brothers and sisters, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses, each of whom lived a life of faith in God, let us lay aside every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. and let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus Christ, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. And may the peace of God, the love of Jesus Christ, and the presence of the Holy Spirit, be among us and within us as we go.

Postlude (Video)

[Annie Center](#)