

# Ascension Lutheran Church

Pastor Godkin's Sermon for the week of August 15, 2010

## Comforted but Not Comfortable (Luke 12:49-53)

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Our text is from the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke:

Jesussaid, "Icametocastfireontheearth, and wouldthatitwerealreadykindled!!  
andhaveaBaptismtobeBaptizedwith, andhowgreati smydistressuntillitis  
accomplished!"

Thisisthetext.

DearbrothersandsistersinChrist,Wholovesyou? Whenwewerelittle,perhapsmany  
ofusthoughtthatthosewhogaveusthings,orwho didn'tmakeusworktoohardwere  
verykindpeople.Perhapswethoughttheyespecial lovedusbecausetheymadeit  
easyforus.Butthenaswematured,likelywebega ntorealizethattherewasoftenno  
gainwithout somepain.Thepainofexerciseandat hleticconditioningoftenleadsto  
victory.Likewise,thepainofspiritualdiscipline leadstoacloserrelationshipwithGod.

Today'sGospelreadinghassomepowerful,almostsh ockingwordsfromourLord  
JesusChrist.Hesays, "Icametocastfireonthe earth,andwouldthatitwerealready  
kindled!ItsaysHecamenottobringpeacebutdiv ision.AndintheOldTestament  
readingtodayinJeremiahtheLordsays, "Isnotmy wordlikefire,andlikeahammer  
thatbreakstherockinpieces?"Andyet,inIsaiah 53theMessiahisdescribedasthe  
PrinceofPeaceandHetoldHisdisciplesattheLa stSupper, "MypeaceIgiveyou."

Well,let'sconsidertheworkofadoctor,forexam ple.Doeshebringpainorrelief?  
Oftentimespeopleputoffseeingadoctorforfear ofgettingadiagnosis thatmayrequire  
surgeryandalongwithacertainamountofpainand discomfortafterthesurgery.But  
thegoalofthedoctorisnottocausepainbut,in theend,tobringreliefandhealingto  
thepatient.

Andso,doesthedoctorhurtorheal?DoesChristb ringdivisionorpeace?Ofcourse,  
theanswerisboth!Christsays thatHeisthepoin tofdivision.Howpeopledecideabout  
Himdividesfamiliesand,in fact,itdividesthe holeChurch,intotrueandfalse,  
committedanduncommitted,truebelieversandhypoc rites.Itcancauseanguishand  
sufferingifoneiscommitted.Itcancauseembarra ssmenifoneisahanger-on,sinceit  
canexposeourhypocrisies.

Itcanevencausedivisionandstrifebetweenourc ommittedselfandouruncommitted  
self,sothat,eveninsideyouandme,thereisdiv ision."IsnotmyWordlikefire,  
declarestheLORD"(Jer23:29).Inourtext,Christ said, "Icametocastfireontheearth"  
(Lk12:49).Itisarefiningfire,afirethatsepa ratesandpurifies,afirethatdividesthe  
goldfromthejunkthatsurroundsit.OurLordsays thatheisthepointwherethingsget  
hot.Heisthepointofdivision.Nothingismorei mportant(anditkeepsonbeing  
important,momentbymoment,daybyday)thanonwh ichsideofthisdivisionyou

stand: on the side with Jesus Christ or on the side against—Jesus Christ.

apart from—and that means

The Word of God causes people to take a stand about is none neutral ground. Jesus said, “For from now on divided, three against two and two against three. T and son against father, mother against daughter and in-law against the daughter-in-law and daughter-in-53).

Him, either for or against. There in one house there will be five they will be divided, father against son daughter against mother, mother-law against mother-in-law” (vv52–53).

Jeremiah described how the division would be within God were to be divided. Our Lord made the same point Church members and non-members. It’s within the Church. When things get hot within the Church, it’s God’s refining fire, separating gold from dross, true Church from visible Church.

the house of Israel. The people of t: the division isn’t just between rch itself that the division comes! refining, purifying fire, separating gold

The prophet Amos wrote, “Wo to those who are at ease in our walk, Amos sought to cause church member may experience temporary ease, but it There is a kind of peace that isn’t peace at all. I may be that we are too much at ease in Zion. It may Christ’s call for obedience and commitment and opti sloth.

sein Zion” (Amos 6:1). If we find us some ease. The uncommitted ’s deceptive and destructive. f we are complacent without our faith, it bethat we are copping out on ng for ignoble ease and peaceful

We are so very thankful for the great wonderful com Saviour who has atoned for sin and brought us peace this comfort we can so easily abuse and use as a li indifference to our growth as disciples.

for we have in Christ, our loving with God and life with Him. But cense for self-indulgence and

A certain amount of permanent dissatisfaction with thing. Those who are totally satisfied with their w great pianist, Paderewski, achieved tremendous popu Paderewski, “There have been a few moments when I satisfaction, but only a few. I have rarely been fr my playing might have been better.” The world consi perfection, but he remained unsatisfied and kept co talent.

one’s talents is probably a healthy ork will never reach their potential. The larity in America. Yet, said ave known complete eefrom the disturbing realization that dered Paderewski’s playing near nstantly at the job of improving his

A person who’s comfortable is not motivated to chan us at ease in Zion. He wants us comforted, but not There’s too much about us that still needs changing to be done.

ge. That’s why God doesn’t want comfortable and not complacent. , too much refining and purifying still

Christ calls for a division of the house. Day by da to take a stand, to declare and live out our commit

and moment by moment, He calls us ment to Him. And that can be costly.

Today’s Epistle from Hebrews describes the hostility tells us that we can expect hostility too: “Consider hostility against himself, so that you may not grow Themore committed you are, the more hostility you unbelieving world, but also from the uncommitted Ch

your Lord himself experienced and him who endured from sinners such weary or faint hearted” (Heb 12:3). can expect, not only from the urch, from those who want to beat

