

Cherished-Chosen-Challenged – October 31, 2010

A Time of War

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘*set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law*’; and ‘*a man’s enemies will be those of his own household*.’ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.” Matthew 10:34-36

Do we have it all wrong? Did the hymn writer lead us astray? We sing at the top of our lungs a popular Christmas hymn containing those famous words: “Hail, the heav’n born Prince of Peace!” Even Jesus says, “My peace I leave with you...” Is there a conflict here? Which is it? Does Jesus bring peace or the sword? The answer is both! There is no conflict in Christ’s words and the hymn writer does not have it wrong! Christ brings heavenly peace...not peace on earth. He brings peace between God and man by the strength of His conquering work, not by the surrender to the ways of the sinful world. In the kingdom of this world it is nothing less than all out war between the Son of God—the very Prince of Peace and the Old Evil Foe—Satan himself. The eternal souls of mankind hang in the balance and the battle lines are drawn between those who believe the Gospel and those who don’t irrespective of earthly relationships.

The time of the Reformation was a time of intense turbulence. Those who heard and believed the Gospel rejoiced at the peace of heart and mind they received; a peace which could never be found in the teaching of salvation by works. The hand of God was surely upon Martin Luther as His chosen servant to advance the proclamation of the Gospel, as God had done with others so often before. The sacred record of Holy Scripture memorializes for all time the divine inroads of the Gospel in the lives of men. Some repent and believe...others war against the Christ and His

grace with every fiber of their being. The story is as old as Cain and Abel and continues unchanged as we are informed concerning the blood of the martyr's shed by those who despised the Son of God and His proclamation of grace. Why should a Gospel champion such as Luther be spared the conflict of battle with an unbelieving world or we ourselves for that matter? In every age the sword is drawn by Satan's minions against those who know the peace of Christ. How sorrowful it is that many near and dear to believers have thrust them through with the avariciousness and hate of unbelieving hearts, so much so that believers are led to weep over their erring and unbelieving family members in like manner as Christ lamented over Jerusalem. Yet, it remains true without equivocation: those who are not for Christ are not with Him.

How blessed we are to have heard the truth of the Gospel. Peace in the forgiveness of sins which Christ has won for us is ours. At the same time we remain battle ready soldiers for the Gospel as long as we draw breath upon this earth. The battle ensues far and wide. Let us pray that the Lord of the Church bring a sweeping victory through the Gospel that many more may come to know the peace that only Christ can give.

- Remember: The eternal welfare of mankind is at stake. The Word of God must be believed, proclaimed, and defended. God has granted us this privilege and promised to be with us always.

How blessed we are to be the people of God. He has chosen us to be in this place. He has prepared us for this time. He has equipped us for service to Him. **Don't wait for someone else to do it. If you wait on someone else to do it...it will never get done!** God bless you in the growth of your faith and in service to Him and His people, for your labor in the Lord is never in vain.

Pastor Jacobs

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