

Twentieth Sunday Ordinary Time – C – 2019
Jer. 38.4-6,8-10///Heb.12.1-4///Luke 12.49-53

→a “Calvin and Hobbes” cartoon pictured Calvin, the little boy sitting under a sign that read “*kick in the butt for one dollar!*” when Hobbes, a talking tiger and Calvin’s playmate, saw his friend sitting under this sign.

→he asked “*how’s business?*”

→ “*awful*” Calvin replied,... “*and I don’t know why, because so many people really do need a good kick in the butt.*”

→at times ...I don’t think Calvin was that far off the mark.....and rarely do we think of Jesus as someone with the same sentiment as Calvin...but today’s gospel proves us wrong for sure....

→we commonly think of Christ as the one who brings peace to our lives and unity to our relationships

--//→many a troubled spirit have found peace in Christ...many a broken relationship have been healed by his presence

→but, today we hear another side of the story....we find out that Christ is not all sweetness and charm....in fact....his impact on us can be, and often is, deeply disturbing and sharply divisive...and today’s Gospel reading flatly expresses that

→today Jesus declares that he has *come to light a fire on the earth*...that he has *a baptism to receive...a message to give*.....that, at times, is going to cause division...and will make people uncomfortable and uneasy

→the point being that we...as followers of Jesus should be fired up

→that the Spirit.....present in you and me...**the Spirit**..... that we received at baptism.... at confirmation

→should...like a forest fire....rage through our lives causing us, at times, anguish and anxiety as we attempt to live our faith

PAUSE

→today Jesus speaks of “**passion**”... **passion** for the Good News...**passion** for the Christian life.....saying that....if we are genuinely passionate about such things....then expect division

→think of that for just a moment....the result of Jesus’ coming...the outpouring of the Spirit...the preaching of the Word of God....is going to cause division...not peace but division.....

→now there is an aspect of Christ that we seldom ever consider ...yet how true it is...--/--when you think about it more closely!

→the principles that Christ stood for.....deeply disturbed the Jewish people...it divided friends and families

.....and ultimately it lead him to be put on the cross

→read over the gospel accounts [sometime] and you will discover that Christ seldom, if ever, touched any person’s life without bringing disturbance, disruption or change...in fact...he *really was* nothing but a big trouble maker in his own time!

→recall all the different characters that Jesus had an encounter with....Zacchaeus [the tax collector]....Martha and Mary....the apostles...Lazarus...the wedding feast at Cana...

→on the surface it looks like there was always good results...but every time Jesus opened his mouth...every time Jesus actedthere was a hint of trouble....

→Jesus never got hold of any one without disturbing ...disrupting...and rearranging their life

---/--and it is that type of spirit that needs to take hold of us today as well especially in the world we live in...the world that our children and young people are growing up in.

→it seems to me...that there is something terribly wrong with our commitment, our faith, our belief's..... if they never set us apart from the crowd, or brings us into conflict with modern values

→imagine for a moment...if Jesus was walking on this earth here and now the type of message he would deliver.....

→I believe we are fooling ourselves if we think our society and our country....as it is today..... has fallen in step with the ideas and ideals of Jesus.

→and if you think that it has

→then I challenge you to go to GM or any board room and try to convince the board of directors that people are more important than profits

→go before Congress and persuade them that housing and jobs and education should take precedence over guns and tanks and bullets

→or perhaps closer to home....try and tell someone that alcohol, drugs, sex aren't the accepted way of life

→that living together [or having babies] outside of marriage...isn't the thing to do or the norm

→that discrimination against minorities, or people of a different lifestyle isn't acceptable

→that the disregard for human life –through abortion, abuse, the violation of rights, --- is not ok

→and the list could go on and on.....

....you would get about as far as Jesus did when he told his generation to love their enemies and overcome evil with good.....PAUSE

→...the world that hated him back then and would hate him now**and** for the very same reasons...

→because to value truth over compromise and convenience, to put the will of God above the will of governments....to value humility over power...to do what is right and proper over what is my own desire and want....has never been a popular way to live....and it still isn't today!

PAUSE

→this is not a favorite part of the gospel to hear....in fact I would suppose that we would much rather hear the words of peace and reconciliation over this anytime...give us the beatitudes instead of this....because...we don't like division in our lives...we don't like conflict....we don't like being called to responsibility and accountability...and most of us will do everything possible or come up with any excuse to avoid it

→we will go out of our way to make peace and keep everybody happy...to make endless compromises in order to avoid confrontation...when it comes to co-workers, friends, and most especially family.

→how often have we sacrificed our beliefs, our ethics, our morals, our baptismal promises so that everything will be peaceful...

→how often have we sacrificed accountability and responsibility for harmony

→how often have we sacrificed values, goodwill, appropriate behavior for tranquility and calm.

→God forbid, that should upset anyone these days...or challenge them to accountability...or responsibility...

→and so, maybe the true message for us today...is to recapture the fire ...recapture the enthusiasm and energy of the gospel message

→each one of us at our baptism...were set on FIRE with the Holy Spirit...ON THAT DAY WE WERE BAPTIZED INTO DISCIPLESHIP...INTO THE MESSAGE OF JESUS CHRIST... we became HIS followers

→charged with promoting and living the gospel message...no matter how unpleasant, or inconvenient it may be at times

PAUSE

--/-- being a true follower of Christ...is not easy...but if the fire of the Holy Spirit still burns within us...then there is nothing that can stand in our way

--/--...and so, perhaps then...the real and only question we need to ask ourselves this dayis if that fire is still burning....or like so many others...have we allowed it to be extinguished.