

## 20<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

*Jeremiah 38: 4-6, 8-10, Hebrews 12: 1-4, Luke 12, 49-53*

When a young man enters the Army he is basically trained to do “**one main thing**” – (**follow orders.**) This is his mission.

- If he is told to destroy and kill - that’s what he does.
- ❖ A soldier’s main duty is not to think about “**the why**” - but to only to follow orders and **stay focused on the mission.**

Like soldiers - God wants us to have a **mission in life.**

**NB:** If I were to ask - ***what is your “mission” in life*** – what would you answer?

Perhaps a few would give (**very simple answers**) like –

- My Mission is to survive - to get by - to take life day by day.

Maybe some would be a little (**more specific**) like –

- to get married - buy a house - or retire by the time I’m 60.

Other optimists may have (**loftier missions**) such as

- world peace or to end hunger or war or poverty.

A **more spiritual** answer might be

- to get to heaven, to spread the gospel, or to grow in faith.

But what if someone told you, “***my mission in life to make people angry at each other.***”

**NB:** Such words would be expected out of a “**crazed maniac**” or an “**evil mind.**”

- ❖ Ironically, however, these are the words we hear today from the **Prince of Peace** - who at His birth was declared by angels ***to bring “peace on earth.”***

***“Do not suppose that I have come here to bring peace on earth? No I tell you, but rather division.”***

**Q:** What did Jesus mean with these words - telling us that He didn’t come to bring peace, but division?

Today, let us examine these strange words from the Prince of Peace.

**NB:** Yes, Jesus is primarily the Prince of Peace - **his main mission** was to bring peace.

- ❖ But that doesn’t mean that Jesus was just a “**peaceable**” person –

- ❖ It does not mean that Christians ought to be “**peaceable**” people come what may.

### FACT – BACKGROUND

On His way to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51 – 19:44), our Lord Jesus was shouted out by His fellow Jews that He was driving out demons with the help of Beelzebub, “the prince of demons” (11:15).

- This was a direct attack and a rejection of his Mission.

If Jesus was a peaceable person he would have returned their insults with a smile.

He didn’t: instead he hit back in very certain terms with His most intense preaching of the law in **Six Woes** (11:37-54) against the Pharisees and the experts in the law who dared to side against the Truth.

From then on the pharisees and teachers of the law began to look for an opportunity to oppose him fiercely and to get rid of him.

- ❖ It is against this background that Jesus came and said, ***I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! . . . Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division.***

Jesus chose to differ. Christians must also be people who choose to differ in certain terms.

We live in an age of what one might call “**peaceable correctness.**”

Trying to live in “peace” with each other by ignoring insults injustices is no peace at all!

- ❖ Christianity isn’t just a theology - it’s about taking a stand.
- ❖ When we take a stand it causes division.
- ❖ Our Gospel Mission a risky thing - it is bound to cause divisions in families.

**Q:** Are we focused and ready to take that risk?

- ❖ Let us not forget that Simeon referred to the infant Jesus as someone destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel.
- ❖ We are called just to do that.