Consequences of Discipleship

Luke 12: 49-53 can be a bit challenging for those who believe that Jesus was uncompromisingly kind to those who understood His message (of redemption-through-repentance/forgiveness). This passage (read in isolation) presents a picture of someone who might be somewhat less than forgiving to those who don't see things the same way! But we have to remember that Jesus wasn't the type of Messiah that the people were expecting (then) - and quite possibly what many think a Messiah should be like in the here-and-now.

Far from someone who would lead a revolution against the Romans and the status quo (then), or would do the opposite by keeping the peace, by watering down the Gospel message - He was prepared to **make the peace** by telling the truth about the insidious nature of sinfulness. In this respect, in spite of potential division. He wasn't a peace-keeper - he was a peace-maker. Uncompromisingly so…

But then the debate starts "what's meant by the word peace"?!

On the one hand, it could mean 'an end to violence' and oppression. But recent history tells us that violence can so easily erupt again, because hearts are hardened by an 'enforced peace', when the root cause of the situation has not been addressed.

On the other hand, Jesus was clearly trying to get people to understand the need for peace of mind, and peace of heart, through 'righteous living' - by turning away from sinful and self-centered behaviour (JOY = Jesus first, others second, yourself last), and doing things God's way.

Thought for the Week: In essence, in this passage, Jesus is making people make a difficult choice - between living His way (the way of the Gospel), or not. The warning is that there are, inevitably, consequences, even when following Jesus, that can divide families, communities and nations! Causing division isn't a goal, but it **is** a potential consequence.

It depends how we chose to make peace within ourselves (knowing that following Jesus' lead is the right way for us). If necessary, then making peace within the family, within the community, within the nation, and between nations - HIS WAY (that's important!).

The peace that Jesus preached then, and promotes to us today, is an absolute commitment to following His lead, no matter what…

Pease-of-heart starts here and now, with us and by us - and that is often a difficult choice!

Luke 12: 49-53 - Not Peace but Division

49 "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! **50** But I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! **51** Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. **52** From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. **53** They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."