

Sermon Summary
13th after Pentecost
18th August 2013

- The three stories which make up this morning's gospel (Luke 12:49-59) have little for our comfort.
- Jesus' listeners are taught that there will be division, that they cannot read the signs of the time (spiritually), and that they are failing to act as judges.
- Let us concentrate on the first of these. All three would be more reality than we might be able to bear.
- Although it looks confronting- the passage about division can actually give us more confidence.
- It promises divisions within the family: in fact it seems to suggest that this will always happen; there is no "maybe" about it.
- We often look on this as something that is GOING to happen (as Jesus' first hearers might have thought) rather than seeing that what they are warned about is actually our reality.
- Many sitting in this church are aware of the divisions caused by matters of faith- within their own families.
- Many feel, and I know this from conversations with you, that they have failed. How is it that their children have failed to embrace the faith which is so dear to them. I sometimes wonder whether this is something that will come along for me as my boys grow up.
- However, this is stated simply as a matter of fact.
- The reality is that we cannot force people to share our faith.
- Our job is to lay out the reality of our faith in all its glory before them and encourage them to accept it. We cannot, however, force this: that would destroy the damage of love by turning it into coercion.
- So we should not feel that we are failures because others have failed to share our faith: their choice or acceptance is beyond our control.
- The only question we must ask of ourselves is: did I give them the stuff to enable them to choose for themselves.
- That, pure and simple, is the scope of our evangelical task.

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