



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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August 18, 2013

Pentecost 13

Sermon Text: [2 Kings 11:1-3, 12-18](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [2 Kings 11:1-3, 12-18](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 139a](#)

Second Lesson: [Ephesians 6:10-20](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 12:49-53](#)

The Believer Hears Jesus' Warnings The Word Doesn't Bring Peace, But Division

In Christ Jesus, dear fellow redeemed:

In your mind's eye, for just a minute picture all your extended family...all your extended family. Maybe you have family reunions every year, or however often, and you're there. Picture all those people. Picture the people that are there. Picture the people that don't come. Think of all those people in all your extended family and think if they were all in the room right now, which one would you want to kind of keep the whole room between you and them...the person you don't like to be around that much, the person that kind of gives you the willies. In my family, it's one aunt who when we get home to Michigan you'd know which kid had seen this aunt because they'd have big red lipstick all over the side of their face. The kids would always kind of not want to have that.

Maybe you have someone in your family, a relative, the black sheep, the oddball, the one you don't talk about, the one you do talk about. Whichever one you are thinking of right now, I'm going to bet the family of Jehoram had it a lot worse. He was king. He had married Athaliah. Their son became king after Jehoram died. Then, when their son died, he was killed by a Jehu, we hear what Athaliah did to her family. Her son, Ahaziah, was killed. And now she decided the best thing she could do was kill all the grandkids so that none of them could rule on the throne and so that she would rule over the land. Red lipstick doesn't seem too bad right about now, does it? It's an incredible story that we hear from the pages of Scripture this morning, isn't it?

It really shows us the truth of what Jesus said in our Gospel. He came to bring peace between us and God. That doesn't mean that there is always going to be peace between us and those who don't believe that Jesus is the Savior of the world. In fact, he tells us there is going to be division between that group at times. And it's going to make life hard.

How it makes life hard for you and for me is probably a little different than how it made life hard for the family of Athaliah. I can't even begin to imagine that, can you? I'm going to kill all my grandchildren so I can rule? It makes you wonder, who is this Athaliah? She didn't come from the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Although, she did marry the king of Judah. Her parents were king and queen. Maybe you've heard of them...Ahab and Jezebel. King of the Northern Kingdom. Do you remember what God

said about Ahab? He became the standard by which all evilness was evaluated. Jezebel to this day is a name that means an evil woman, right?

Athaliah is their daughter. She married King Jehoram, king of Judah, for political reasons. Political reasons sure caused problems for Jehoram's family, didn't it? When their son, Ahaziah was killed by Jehu, she didn't seem to mourn her son. She saw it as an opportunity. She saw it as an opportunity to seize that political alliance they had made and probably bring everyone together under the rule of the Northern Kingdom. One of the ways she was going to unite the two kingdoms was by the worship of Baal.

We are told that as she was going on this murderous spree. And the one daughter, Jehosheba, the daughter of Jehoram, took Joash and hid him with the priest. Joash lived there for six years and when he turned seven, he was proclaimed king. That's what happened in the second part of our text in verse 12 and following. That tells you how often Athaliah got to the temple, right? Not very often because there is the one grandson that she missed being raised by the priest and living there until the priest proclaims him king and sets everything up. Then that's when we see all the problems that come for Athaliah. She gets upset, calls it treason. It's kind of interesting, someone that kills their own grandkids getting upset by treason?

The priest sees to it that she is killed, but not in the temple of the Lord. Then the people go and destroy the temple of Baal (she had set up a temple of Baal) and killed the priests there on the altars by the temple of Baal. They devote themselves to make this covenant now to serve the Lord.

You can see the division that came about when someone that came from outside of God's people came into God's people and didn't want anything to do with God, didn't want anything to do with the promises of the Lord but wanted to go with what they knew and what they thought was best. It led to all kinds of bloodshed. It led to horrible things. But then again, it's not all that surprising when you think of what she had been doing as a form of worship. To sacrifice people to Baal wasn't that big of a deal. So to sacrifice her own grandkids for her gain, she thought that's a good thing.

Division...division between those who love the Lord and those who don't doesn't always go to this extreme. Thankfully today it doesn't go to this extreme. Conceal Carry would take on a whole different meaning if this is what we were worried about happening every day of our lives. But it's not the case. We live in a country where we aren't being threatened with our lives. But can you still feel some of this division in your own life within your own friends or within your own family?

Jesus said he had come to bring not peace between people but division between people. I think we can all relate to that on one level or another. Lord willing, Tuesday morning I'll head to South Dakota and I'll go sit at Meyer's Rec, the bar my brother-in-law owns. I'll have no problem talking about Jesus with people I don't know. But some of the people I do know, some of my family members, when I see them and I know I should be talking about Jesus because I know they've drifted away from him, that's a

little harder. Have you ever experienced it? Do you know what I'm talking about? I know I should. I don't want to see them in hell. I don't want to see them drift so far away that they lose their faith. Is this what you've experienced? Talking about it is going to lead to division. It's going to lead to hard feelings between people. It's going to lead to someone being mad at you and not talking to you anymore. Sometimes it's easier to talk about other stuff, right?

We know what Jesus was saying when he said, "I've come not to bring peace but division." We know that division exists. That's what makes it hard for us to do this at times.

As a congregation, in our Priority of Ministry listening meetings, one of the things people said is they want to see us do more to reach the inactive members of our congregation. I think that's probably true because of what I'm just talking about. We are hoping someone else will do it because we don't want to have to put ourselves on the line at times to talk to our brother, our sister, our mother, our father, our grandmother, our grandfather, our brother-in-law, our sister-in-law, our cousin about what their relationship with the Savior is like because we are afraid it might lead to that division.

Jesus tells us it's going to happen. He tells us it's going to happen because he wants us to know ahead of time, first of all so we aren't surprised by it and fall prey to that lie of Satan that says, if you talk about God and that created problems there once, whatever you do, don't ever talk about someone's relationship with Jesus again. That's what Satan is going to tell us, right? He also tells us this is going to happen because he really wants us to evaluate, what is our priority? What is the greatest treasure that you and I have? Is it our relationship with our relatives? Or is it our relationship with our Savior?

I don't think there is one of us here that is going to say it's my relationship with my relatives. We know what our Savior has done for us. We know that we don't deserve heaven but he's given us heaven because he lived in our place and died in our place. He died for all the sins that we have committed. He died for all the times that we've hidden behind the safety of not causing division and kept our mouth shut when we could have, in love, talked about Jesus. We know what he has done for us. We know how he washes our sins away. He does it fully and freely, not dependent upon what you and I do. It's all about him and that's what he's done. We know that truth tells us he is the most important thing we have in this world and this closeness to our Savior. He tells us there can be this division so that we say "My Savior is that important to me that I'm willing to risk it. I'm willing to endure division because I love my Savior that much because of what he has done for me."

I'm not telling you this is easy. It's not. If it was easy, we'd all be doing it already, right? It's hard. It takes a constant reevaluation of what is my relationship with my Savior and do I love him more than I love my own discomfort of talking about something that's hard to talk about? Do I love him enough that I'm willing to risk hurt feelings, lost friendships,

lost closeness for a time? That's what he wants me to always focus on. As Christians, that's what we want to do. There's a part of us that really wants to do it, but there's that sinful part of us that just doesn't want to, doesn't want to risk it. So the only way that the part of us that loves the Savior is going to win out is if we stay focused on who Jesus is and what he has done for us and we realize just how important it is not only that we have this close relationship with Jesus, but others have it as well.

Let's say today you hear this and you say, "Pastor, you're right. I have to go talk to that person. As soon as I get out, I'm going to run and find them and tackle them and tell them they have to be in church next Sunday." That's not what I'm telling you to do. That's not going to solve anything, right? What I think our Lord would have us do is simply love everyone patiently and lovingly. And as the opportunity presents itself, talk about what our God means to us and how he changes us and how he comforts us and how he helps us endure things that otherwise we could never endure. And how because he loves me, I love you and I want you to have that too.

The Lord brings those opportunities, and there are times we will seize them. I guarantee you, when you do seize them, you are still going to have sweaty palms and weak knees. You're still going to have that terrible feeling in your stomach, and it's not just because the Packers lost. It's going to be because you are going to be talking about those things. That's how it is. It doesn't mean it's going to be easy. He said that. Not peace, but division. Not ease, but discomfort. He could have said the same thing, right?

But as we deepen in our love for the Lord who loved us so much, we'll find the ways to do it. And we'll find the ways to do it lovingly. We won't just go and tell people they should do this or they should do that. Instead, we'll show them what the love of Jesus looks like by our patience with them, by our love for them, and by how we are willing to endure division because we love them and we love our Savior that much.

I wish it were easy. But I think that's the point Jesus is making today. It's not easy, but it's worth it. And the God who loved us enough to forgive us for all the times we have failed to do it in the past will certainly love us enough to be with us as we seek to do it in the future. Amen.