

Sermon 7.12.20 Pastor Jordan Gades, Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Grace and Peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I bet almost every single one of you has a story of siblings fighting. I know I could say more than my share about my own kids but there is one from my own youth that I have to share. Can't remember when exactly but I think it was junior or senior year I was leaving the house to go to a choir concert. We had a dress code for choir concerts, like most schools. Black shoes, black pants, nice shirt. So, I'm heading out the door and I see my brother and my dad playing catch in the yard with a football. So, I do what any brother does and I run up behind my brother, then jump around him and intercept the ball. I run a few steps and then stop to throw the ball and then I get tackled to the ground by my brother from behind. We get up and I look down and see grass stains on my pants and shirt and immediately, let's say furious at my brother because I don't have time to change or I will miss the concert. So, I do what has to be the only logical thing at that moment and I go and tackle him to the ground and we start fighting. Think that might be the only time my dad had to pull the 2 of us apart in our lives. Now it was a stupid fight, and Adam if you ever watch this I do sincerely apologize for my parts in that fight, but seriously what were you thinking?

In our first reading for today we got to hear about another stupid fight between brothers. What's really funny is that God Tells their mother while they are still in the womb. Of course, this isn't some startling prophesy is it/ your sons are going to fight each other...yup wow all this brand-new information is just shocking. And maybe you're a little familiar with the story of Jacob and Esau. We are near the beginning of the story of God's people. We had Abraham and Isaac, and now its Esau and Jacob, fights and disagreements are a rich part of humanity's story.

And maybe this is an aside but do you ever stop and wonder why God is so ok with the differences that that these brothers or even the fights we have with each other? He didn't send a message to Rebecca saying "Watch out! Your sons are going to fight so much and so bitterly that their descendants will form 2 different nations who will be fighting for the next two thousand years!" Why not? These are the types of questions that we get to lament about and dwell with and try and wrestle with only with the knowledge that God is watching, is guiding and is working for the good in every situation we face.

But in all these situations that we face in our daily struggles we see the 2 parts of humanity, of every human, the good and the bad fighting over and over again. And then we see how we as humanity keep fighting not only with each other but we fight with God. Jesus talks about that very fact in his parable of the sower. He speaks about all those things that stop us from getting along with each other and our Creator. Whether they are the things that choke us, the things that carry us away, or our own stone hearts. We fail over and over and choose to fight, rather than to listen and try to hear what plans our God has for us. WE are supposed to be the planters and the growers. We are supposed to be the builders of nations of peace and prosperity. WE are supposed to be the people of God. WE are supposed to be united in the Spirit of our Lord, We are supposed to be prospering in the fruits of that Spirit.

And instead we fight. Instead we ignore pain and suffering. Instead we build walls around ourselves and our own opinions rather than opening up and listening compassionately. We fight against the safety and security of our neighbors and friends. We fight against God and what God wants in our lives.

The words of our God, the words of the Gospel, the words that say you are loved, you are safe and secure in the arms of Christ, these saving, life giving, hopeful, joyful words; are not supposed to be heard with deaf ears and not listened to. They are to be taken in and dwelt upon; not looked at, given lip service and cast aside.

And from the words of our God come a bounty we cannot imagine. This bounty that springs up inside of us, rushes out of us into the world. This saving grace that we know so sweetly, renews us and renews this world. It is not for us to hold onto, it is for us to relish and share.

And it is so hard to share when we are fighting. There is so much that unites us. Every single one of us. Every single person on this planet. Paul speaks to this fact when he is writing to the church in Rome, We heard it in our 2nd reading. The first thing that binds us all.

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

This is what unites humanity. This is what's shown in the story of Jacob and Esau. This is the story that is being played out right outside our doors and on every screen in our possession. We have minds for ourselves only. We are selfish and we are weak.

But there is hope because there is always, always, always hope in our God.

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

We are the people of God, We are the family of God, We live in the Spirit. We have been adopted in our baptism to an eternity together. We are bound by unbreakable bonds. So, let's be the people of God. God loves us no matter how much we keep up this stupid fighting, but we are not here for stupid fights. We are here because we are beloved creations of the Father. We are here because Christ loved us so much he died for us. We are here because we breathe in that life-giving breath of the Spirit with every breathe we draw in. We are not here to fight, we are here to bring peace and show the love of God. Amen.