

Bible Study for Sunday August 18, 2019

Our texts for this Sunday are:

- Luke 12:49-56
- Hebrews 11:29-12:2

Opening Discussion: What do you think of this cartoon?



Read Hebrews 11:29-12:2

Who has impacted your faith...meaning who are the people that are part of your "cloud of witness?"

Do you know anyone (in your past or present) that has stood up for something controversial?

How did that impact your faith?

What might we do to become part of someone else's "cloud of witnesses?"

Read Luke 12:49-56

Fire does not always imply destruction, but might also be an instrument of refinement – purifying, strengthening, and catalyzing us into a new being. Jesus's Baptism of fire and crisis of decision can mean His own impending trial and execution, or it can mean the turning point in our own lives when we are called to choose a path of discipleship that will bring with it some form of pain as well.

Ultimately, like all of Jesus' teachings, this lesson points us toward the full fruition of God's Kingdom – that redemption and salvation Jesus came to accomplish — and calls us to live in hope and preparation for that time.

On a scale of 1-10 (1=least favorite and 10=best time ever) where would you rank yourself on the "this is how I feel about conflict" scale?

With that information, how do you feel about this week's Gospel text?

How do these lectionary readings, taken together, bring a Gospel message that encompasses both judgment and hope, retribution and mercy?

How might this reading ask us to broaden our understanding of faith and what is at stake with our faith (or what it's supposed to *cost* us)?

What might it mean for us to take a stand for justice even if it means controversy among us?

What do you think it means to “speak the truth in love”? When is that kind of speaking important? How difficult (or easy) is this for you to do?

Hebrews 11:29-12:2

²⁹ By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. ³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. ³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, ^[a] because she had received the spies in peace.

³² And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— ³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, ^[b] they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented— ³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. ³⁹ Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect. **12** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, ^[c] and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of ^[d] the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

Luke 12:49-56

⁴⁹ “I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰ I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! ⁵¹ Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! ⁵² From now on five in one household will be divided, 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 her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” ⁵⁴ He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, ‘It is going to rain’; and so it happens. ⁵⁵ And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat’; and it happens. ⁵⁶ You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”