



The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (2017)

Matthew 10:34–42³⁴[Jesus said:] “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

35For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. 37Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

40“Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. 41The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and the one who receives a righteous

person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. 42And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Dearly beloved:

'All authority in heaven and earth has been GIVEN TO ME!' You can't get a more GOSPEL WORD that 'GIVEN!'

'So then—let's not make a waste of it! When you've got to where you've been sent, starting here at Galilee, make eternal students and learners of mine out of all the nations—even in Baton Rouge! And HERE is how you do it! Wash them by MY authority—in FACT, the Authority of ONE NAME: The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit! And then it's nothing but turning and becoming like little ones again, who need to be instructed morning, noon and night; for THAT, you have My Word!—My Abiding Presence, until the End of this Age of the Sword!'

How much comfort will the Spirit let flow today from our Baptism into Christ and His soothing correction and raising and making with us heaven's PEACE?!

But wait! 'Do NOT FIGGER that I have come to bring

peace to the earth! I have NOT COME to bring peace, but a sword!

OK, my dear ones—HEAR the distinction! What does NOT go together are PEACE and THE EARTH! All that MEANS is that the learners of God, who abide in the Peace of Jesus, may be IN the land; they may need to BEAR WITH the land—for the briefest of moments!—but THEY are ONE THING!

The LAND, the EARTH—picture language in the Bible for all that MAN makes of religion and state and family and so on, has NOTHING TO DO with the little ones of Jesus, refreshed now and then by a cup of cold water.

Thus, the SWORD! In other words, Jesus of Nazareth, from Galilee, on His way to the nexus of religious and political showmanship—doomed to be rejected and beaten by them all!

Until the End, for the celebration of our Baptism into Christ, the Word showers down upon us the picture of the prophet Jeremiah, with an Ox-yoke upon his shoulders. Like Isaiah and Ezekiel, Jeremiah often preached by these public demonstrations. So would the final prophet, Jesus, with arms nailed to the cross beam; the beam to which he calls us, and comforts us: 'What makes you scared of My Cross, your Cross, is NOT its weight! What scares you to the core, is the EASE and LIGHTNESS of what I lay on you for your good!'

In the day of Jeremiah, there was one little corner of good living and true religion: the people of Israel and David's kingdom, put into place BY the Law of Moses and FOR the Law of Moses.

And by the time Jeremiah showed up, about 400 years after David, the Lord had had enough! For as Saint Paul tells us, the more I learn of the Law, the WORSE I become! The phrase we heard today is 'SINFUL BEYOND MEASURE!'

Again! The SWORD!

For what is BEYOND BEARING—what is TOO MUCH FOR ME TO TAKE ANY MORE!—is NOT ME, right?! NOT YOU! It ain't US, is it, dear Christians?! It's THAT OTHER GUY, those OTHER PEOPLE! Ferrenners, and strange people, and silly women and senseless men and—YOU KNOW what's wrong with the world! (Have an afternoon to waste? I could suck all the oxygen out of the room you're in and rehearse to you all the wrongs of others!)

Praise be to the Spirit of Christ! Who teaches us in the Holy Liturgy of the Church, to pull the air from the room into our lungs and confess to God and man—no matter how little we truly believe it; doesn't matter to heaven!—'Lord, ALL you can do is have mercy on this group of people we're going to point out to you today: THIS GROUP, right here; US!'

Jeremiah was the prophet of the NEW; for OLD was passing away before his eyes: living room; room, and POWER, and SWORDS APLENTY, to throw around our elbows in this world. And to SHOW this WICKED WORLD just what it means to be righteous in the eyes of God!

Imagine the face Jesus had, when they took along a couple swords on the way out to Gethsemane; two, the Word says. The Lord said: 'That's plenty.' Imagine the patience of the Lord when Peter struck the last blow CHRIST'S religion should have ever struck outside that garden. "Put you're your silly little sword. The Scripture WILL be fulfilled."

Jeremiah's Scripture; the OLD is SO old; the dawn of the NEW has broken upon the earth!

And NO ONE—NONE OF YOU, your children, your neighbors, the checkout lady at the grocery store, TELL THEM!—NO ONE must ever be sad again, not for good! NO ONE is allowed to go to sleep this night, without laying on God as Father more dear to us than we can even imagine, EVERYTHING! The cuts and jabs we've made at the next man this days; the wounds we have received; and our certain hope that King coming again to reign, is coming to put in place something utterly unlike this earth we walk!

That blow, by Jesus' disciple, SEALED His doom. 'I cannot simply say words to these frightened men; I must draw all their harm aimed at them, and their pitiful, little counter-attacks, into Myself. I have no place in this land!'

When He died, the earth DIED! And holy men popped right out, un-hold-able by this earth! As YOU will pop out! As you already have, the day you were baptized, and the Spirit laid on you His cross, your cross, and the yoke of Jeremiah, of your dear Lord.

Jeremiah's opponent, Hannaniah, declared that the OLD would prevail! There WOULD BE a grouping of those that heaven could see are truly DIFFERENT from all them WICKED FOLK! And shortly, the first Exile of Israel to Babylon would end; and this world would have at least ONE good place to live again!

What did Jeremiah say? 'Sounds great! If it could only BE! But this yoke on my shoulder was put there by Heaven's Spirit; to tell all those who are tired of making a show in this earth to other men, or to God, that the NEW is coming to KILL US; and that we should all PRAISE...THE...LORD!'

You will annoy the earth, and those only made of Earth, by at least ACKNOWLEDGING the Law of Moses; living as creatures who were create-ured by the Creator to live a created creature life! So, bear Moses' yoke, the yoke of the Law—a GOOD THING, my dear ones!—and the earth will be annoyed with you: Senators, newspapers, network TV, popular religion.

But you will send the earthborn running to the

weaponry, when you live NOT from the certainties of this EARTH, but from the pledge and assurance of your Baptism into Christ, of His Body and His Blood. (We're going to make use of this earth's water and grain and grapes; but Jesus' Spirit is going to jazz 'em up real good!)

Plain and simple: If heaven doesn't even wanna HEAR your justifications for your behavior, your 'so-sorries' and 'I'll do better next timeses...'

Then you are FREE, raised, BEYOND the judgment—of ANY MAN. Mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, father, son; even mother! Even MOTHER, Jesus promised!

THAT, dear Christian, drives the earthborn homicidal to the salt of the earth, the light of the world, those born of heaven.

YES—BEHAVE better than your mother, for heaven's sake! That's a NO-BRAINER! Holier and more righteous before God—FORCING OURSELVES to live by the Ten Commandments, at least OUTWARDLY, if not from the heart!

We have NO EXCUSE from the cross-Bearer to shirk the Law. 'Not one bit of Moses loses authority, until heaven and earth pass away!'

But when it comes to conscience, HEAVEN'S PEACE—not THE PEACE OF THIS EARTH, being PINNED DOWN by the GLARE AND ACCUSATION OF THE EARTH, even by

MOTHER!—

The Spirit of Holiness gently coos to us, lands on us again each morning by our Baptism, and says: 'CONFIDENCE comes from sins forgiven! NEW in a way that the EARTH cannot accept! YOU...are not LONG for this place!'

The Earth and its worshipers recoil from the Will of God shown in Moses. But the Earth and its worshipers must slaughter the Will of God shown in Christ.

The hardest thing in the world to do, is to do the most right, the best job you can do, and will of heaven—and STILL others, even close others, can only point the finger and slander and wish you dead; and ALL YOU HAVE FOR THEM, is the pardon of heaven!

My dear ones: when you find it so hard to pray for, intercede for, forgive and do good to those who only seem to wish you harm, to make you cry, to break that heart from which you are TYRING TO FORGIVE, as Jesus taught:

Jeremiah with the beam on his shoulder, and Jesus with the cross on His say to you: 'This is what you've been baptized for! We never promised it would EASY! But we guarantee you that it is NEW! Meaning, HEAVEN WILL NEVER ASK YOU FOR AN EXPLANATION OF YOUR LIFE, EVER AGAIN, in the Name of Jesus! Amen!

