

Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"

Jesus was and is a radical figure. He hung out with prostitutes and other types of sinners, socialized with Samaritans, healed on the Sabbath day, and disturbed the powers that be enough that they sought a way to rid themselves of him forever.

Following Jesus was and is a radical thing to do.

In our current times, there is a movement on one side of the street that bemoans the present and longs for a return to those Father Knows Best/ Leave It to Beaver times when things were much better, they say. Sure, they were portrayed as an ideal suburban life with the model nuclear family without a care in the world, but those longing for a return to those times seem to forget that these also were times of segregation, red lining, Jim Crow, toxic chemicals dumped into our waterways, belched into our air and the communist witch hunt that ruined many lives and careers. The LGBTQ community was underground living in fear of arrest and the terrors of psychiatric medicine and experimental treatments that were said to remove these desires. It's a sad commentary on our present times that this is indeed what some folks wish to come back.

Even his own family seemed to worry that Jesus had gone off the deep end. Jesus was and is a polarizing figure.

In our present time, the world is crying out for peace. The world is crying out for something to be done about climate change. The world is crying out for equality,

fairness, food, clean water, affordable housing, peace, love, and understanding. Is all hope lost?

Hope is not lost; all we need to do is look at those lessons Jesus has taught us. We as citizens of the global community need to do something radical, and what could be more radical in these present times than loving each other, feeding the hungry, protecting the Earth from the destruction of climate change and pollution of our air, ground, and waters. Radical things like loving and caring for each other with no regard as to where we come from, what color our skin tone is, who we love, what language we speak, what gender we are. Radical things like honesty, truth, and justice. The only way we can push back against the ickiness of our present times is to follow the radical examples of Jesus.

Being a Christian is not the extremism shown by those who can quote and tell you exactly what chapter and verse of scripture is used to condemn what they think is inappropriate. Being a Christian is not preying on the vulnerable, draining their bank accounts, all so the preacher can live in a gated community and have their own private jet. Being a Christian is being radical and embracing the teachings of Jesus. Being a Christian is not about condemning what's wrong, it's about working to make things right in the eye of God. It's about caring for the Earth God has made for our home. It's about loving everyone unconditionally. It's about making sure people have food, clean water and affordable housing. It's about respecting each other even when we disagree. It's about equal rights and opportunities for everyone. It's about kindling the radical fire of love that burns in our hearts. The fire that

Jesus brought to the earth. The fire that burns and lights the way to true peace.
The fire of love that is kindled at our Baptism. The fire that makes us say that we
are followers of Jesus. Keep it burning to light our way through the present
darkness and illuminate the love and goodness God has for us. The radical fire that
leads us to the true peace.