

“We’re Going to Have to Break Some Eggs!”

10th Sunday After Pentecost

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This sermon is based on Luke 12:49-56

Today’s Gospel lesson is hard! Jesus asks, “Did you think I came to bring peace to the earth?” Well, yes, Jesus, yes I did. You are the Prince of Peace. I don’t like this idea that Jesus came to cause fighting. And not just fighting, but the worst kind of fighting—fighting between members of the same family. Mother against daughter, father against son. Mother-in-law against daughter-in-law

I remember a time when my family was fighting over something important. It was right after my twin nieces were born. They were tiny and beautiful—like little dolls. Their names are Kassie and Anna. They’re grown women now, but back then Anna weighed almost 5 pounds and Kassie weighed only four pounds. They were sooo small. Their little heads were only as big as oranges. They were perfectly healthy except for Kassie’s left eye. She was born with a congenital cataract. It means the lens of her eye was cloudy. Her doctors said that if she didn’t have surgery, she would probably not ever be able to see out it. Surgery can be dangerous, especially for little babies. My parents didn’t want her to have it. They couldn’t bear to think of their precious tiny granddaughter going through something risky and painful. Kassie’s parents wanted her to have the surgery. They didn’t want her to grow up with vision in only one eye. Our family fought. My sister and her husband made the decision to go through with the surgery. Kassie made it through with no problems and she can see out of both eyes.

Sometimes, you have to do something hard if you want to have a better life.

This happens all the time, sometimes you have to go through something painful to get to something better. At my first church, there was a dear woman who broke her hip. It healed badly and it hurt all the time. She finally went to a specialist. He told her good news; he could help her. He could fix her hip! It was good news, but it was not pleasant news. He could fix her hip and it would heal, but first he would have to break it.

Jesus comes to us today with the Gospel, with the good news, but it is not necessarily pleasant or welcome news. Do you know the old expression, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it?” It isn’t always good advice. There are things in this world that need to be broken.

There are systems of injustice. There are tired old traditions that are not working for us anymore. There are unhealthy patterns of living and cycles of despair. Plenty of things need to be broken in this world! Change is hard and it won’t be easy, but we are called to change what needs to be changed in our world, in our church, and in our own hearts.

It’s a more different message than we’re used to hearing, but it is an important one. You can’t change the world, or even your own family, without causing some discomfort and strife. Jesus came to us as a messenger of God’s love for all people. Love is holy and true and lifegiving, but it’s not easy.

Sometimes loving means fighting. Remember fighting with your parents over whether you could do something dangerous or whether or not you really needed to go to school, do homework, come home on time or any of a hundred other things that would be good for you?

People who love you don’t give up on you. They fight with you when you are going down a bad road. The opposite of love is not hate or anger. The opposite of love is apathy. The opposite of love is not caring, not being involved; which can seem peaceful and pleasant. Apathy doesn’t lead to fighting, but it can lead to pain and death.

Love, on the other hand, is very involved. Love will get up in your face and in your business and will not let you slip away into sin and darkness.

Love will confront you with unpleasant facts about yourself. God's love will sometimes break you in order to heal you.

Jesus had a message of love, a message of love that disturbed communities and families because it refused to allow people to coast along in a pleasantly unhealthy and unhappy slide into death. The world was broken, and Jesus meant to fix it, whether it wanted to be fixed or not.

The sometimes unpleasant but ultimately good truth is that Jesus' kind of love is disruptive, it breaks what isn't really working in order to create a new family, a new community of truth and love – to bring into the world the realm of God. If we bother to look, we can see places where we are falling short, and it hurts. Jesus came so that the poor would be fed, the captives would be set free, and everyone would know about God's love. We claim to be his followers, but are we doing enough to further his agenda?

We have developed comfortable patterns of living that don't include very much time spent in service to others. I know I have some selfish habits that are hard to break. So many of us have ridged and busy schedules that don't leave much time for worship and prayer. If you insist that your family change some of these well-worn patterns, it will cause conflict, but it's necessary conflict. We don't want to be people who just talk the talk and don't walk the walk of faith.

I am going to tell you a story that you may have heard before. I don't remember where I first heard it, but it still rings true today.

A man was being tailgated by a woman who was in a hurry. He comes to an intersection, and when the light turns yellow, he hits the brakes. The woman behind him goes ballistic. She honks her horn at him; she yells her frustration in no uncertain terms; she rants and makes crude gestures.

While she is in mid-rant, someone taps on her window. She looks up and sees a policeman. He invites her out of her car and takes her to the station where she is searched and fingerprinted and put in a cell. After a short time, she's released, and the arresting officer returns her personal effects, saying "I'm very sorry for the mistake, ma'am. I pulled up behind your

car while you were blowing your horn, using obscene gestures and bad language. I noticed the WHAT WOULD JESUS DO bumper sticker, the FOLLOW ME TO SUNDAY SCHOOL window sign, and the FISH EMBLEM on your trunk. Naturally, I assumed you had stolen the car.

As Christians we don't always live up to our calling to be the ones who value others, the ones who are patient, and the ones who make loving sacrifices. It is easier to be angry at all the things other people do wrong. When we look inward and see our faults it breaks our hearts a little, but maybe they need to be broken.

We can't be perfect, only Christ is perfect, but we can do better. We can fight to make the world better.

I'm sure you've heard the expression, if you want to make an omelet, you have to break some eggs. Well, what do you see in the world that needs to be broken? How about in your church? Or your town? Or maybe even in your own heart? What's holding you back? What's keeping you from really following Jesus on his mission to love and heal the world?

There's a Lenard Cohen song called "Anthem" that goes, "Ring the bells that still can ring/ Forget your perfect offering /There is a crack, a crack in everything /That's how the light gets in."

Sometimes we harden our hearts to the hurts of the world, and we refuse to fight for what's right. We refuse to fight because we have this illusion of peace that we don't want to disturb. There can be no peace until everyone is fed and safe. Jesus came to destroy that fake peace and incite us to fight hunger, poverty, prejudice and all the other evils of this world.

Jesus came to break our hard hearts and let his light shine through the cracks. Jesus is no stranger to the fight for a Godlier world. He laid down his life to bridge the gap between what we are and what we should be. He didn't come to bring fake peace.

He came to fight. He came to fight because he believed humanity is worth fighting for.