

**Unity Sunday September 29 2024 @ Unity College**

**Divide and conquer – divide and rule – *divide et impera.***

The greatest war mongers have used this strategy over the years.

It's actually a mathematical term.

When you have a difficult mathematical problem and you solve it by breaking it down into smaller bitesized pieces.

Can you imagine Adelaide city Postoffice?

A massive pile of letters and parcels.

What a mess.

They are sorted one by one and put into different geographical piles – SA, NSW, WA, UK, USA, whatever.

Then they are sorted into regions 5253, 5254....

Then they are sorted into house numbers or PO boxes.

My new mailing address is D J Kuss, PO box 320, Monarto South, SA, 5254.

We often get mail from the mother in law: 5 Bruckenstrasse, Freidrichstadt, 25840, Schleswig-Holstein, Deutschland.

Somehow from a massive big pile of letters in Germany they are divided and 1 of them makes it to PO box 320 Monarto South 5254

Divide and conquer.

I pity my mother-in-law's postie because she has this vicious dog.

Her dog can do nothing wrong.

One day the dog grabbed hold of the posties leg and bit in really hard.

The postie yelled out to her, hey your dog is biting me.

She said don't worry his bark is worse than his bite.

He yelled back – well don't let him bark because this bite is really bad.

---

Divide and conquer.

Does Jesus divide and conquer?

Does the devil divide and conquer?

---

We like Jesus. We love Jesus.

Even non-Christians like Jesus.

He's loving and caring.

He's a good teacher.

He heals. He feeds.

"His name shall be called ... Prince of Peace".

---

One day (Luke 12:51) Jesus asked the disciples, "Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth?"

What do you think?

You might be surprised. Jesus said, "No, I tell you, I came to bring division."

Does Jesus divide and conquer?

I'm sure we would rather talk about the Jesus who brings unity.

Somehow, on this unity Sunday, we have to wrestle with God's word which clearly says Jesus came to divide.

We did hear:

*...I have come to divide people against each other! <sup>52</sup> From now on families will be split apart,*

*'Father will be divided against son  
and son against father;  
mother against daughter  
and daughter against mother;  
and mother-in-law against daughter-in-law  
and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'*"

We did hear that didn't we?

### **The Most Loved Man to have ever Lived**

There is no person who has walked this earth that is more loved than Jesus. He has been worshipped by millions and millions of people for over 2,000 years. He is the number one focus of the best-selling book of all time. More books have been written about Him, more art created of Him, more songs written about him, more buildings built to honour him, and more meetings have been held to talk about him, than any other person who has ever lived. They reset the calendars around his birth and death.

No one has ever been more popular than Jesus – even the Beatles.

### **The Most Hated Man to have ever Lived**

You know there is no other person who has been and still is hated more than Jesus – you might say what about Hitler, Pol Pot?

Jesus was hated as a baby. Herod killed thousands of baby boys in the hope of killing Jesus.

Some of you dislike Donald Trump – he has had 2 attempts on his life.

Jesus had 6 attempts on his life.

Finally, they tortured and killed him after they found him innocent – that's hate!

In the day people hated Jesus so much that if you identified as a Christian you too would be tortured and killed.

To save their lives they had to communicate that they were Christian secretly – the fish symbol.

The hate for those who love Jesus has continued right through.

"The Voice of the Martyrs" organisation will tell you that more than a million Christians have been killed in the last 10 years for simply loving Jesus.

No one more loved – no one more hated.

How would you be?

---

*"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (**John 15:18-19**).*

That is Jesus' promise to all Christians.

Jesus is a divider.

I chose you out of the world – out of your family – out of your community – out of your comfort zone.

---

The days are here.

We live in a post-Christian world – especially here in Australia.

We cry and despair that the church is declining. Remember we are a minority – even here in our own country.

The divide between Christians and non-Christians is becoming more and more obvious - and maybe even in our own country – more and more dangerous.

We will be exposed.

Like dirt poured into the refiner's fire to expose the pure Gold. You can't miss pure gold.

Jesus is the divider – he divides with his sword – swords are good for dividing.

*Hebrews 4:12 (NLT) – For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.*

When people believe in Jesus, they are no longer “like the rest of Humanity” (Eph. 2:3).

All of a sudden there are 2 camps – believers and non-believers.

Jesus is the divider.

When a person trusts Jesus, warms to Jesus, believes in Jesus, their life is changed.

There are new thoughts, new values, new dreams.

Faith draws us to Jesus and also draws us to others with faith.

Our personal relationships change from those we know toward those we don't really know, but love and trust, because we share faith in Jesus.

All of a sudden, we are in the world of those who know and trust Jesus and those who don't know Jesus.

All of a sudden, we find our-selves wanting those on that side to be on our side – Jesus side.

Jesus is the divider.

Make no mistake there are 2 sides.

Inevitably, there will be Fathers and sons divided, mothers and daughters divided.

All of a sudden, things which don't really matter to you become vital to you.

Can we abort a full-term baby? Someone has to say no for God.

Can we allow this Christian school to have people of Islam faith teach our kids – they have to – government rule. Someone has to be God's voice.

Can we tolerate this Christian school teaching our kids abnormal things about sex, things which God doesn't want them to do – they have to – government law.

Someone has to be God's voice.

All of a sudden, we are on the side that has to make a stand.

There is no middle ground, and it will get worse.

“whoever is not with me is against me” (**Luke 11:23**).

Jesus is the divider.

The call to follow Jesus is not easy, and it requires total loyalty.

Not everyone is prepared to pay the price.

Not everyone is prepared to accept those who pay the price.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can risk this division.

And here it is, in this division, and all that goes with it, against all odds, against all reason, we will find peace with God, and we will look forward to the peace He will bring on earth, as it is in heaven.

You see it is Unity Sunday and we are talking about division.

That's just it, there is a great divide – but on the side of Jesus there is an eternal, unbreakable unity.

We did hear that Jesus has brought unity – he has destroyed the dividing wall.

The dividing wall was our sin – he destroyed our sin – he took our sin away – he paid for our sin with his blood.

You see unity and division are one and the same thing.

We were separated from God by sin.

Jesus took on the sin of the world – he became our sin and united us as free and pure people of God.

He separated us from the world of Satan – as we hear in our baptism.

There are still 2 camps – but we are united as one in the Jesus camp.

Unity is trust and faith in Jesus.

---

Here is a praying man – praying to Jesus – trusting, hoping in Jesus alone.

Is he a Lutheran, a Catholic, is he Pentecostal?

Who taught him. What is his stand on women's ordination?

He looks like a Baptist to me

He is one of us.

There is not a single doctrine dividing him from us.

We are in the same boat as him – the same camp – trusting Jesus – looking to Jesus for our every need - thanking Jesus.

We heard that Jesus reconciled us – made us right to be in his camp.

And now we hear also that he privileges us with the ministry of reconciliation – sound like a pastor thing, but it's a privilege for all of us.

This man is the answer to Jesus' prayer we heard it in John 17: Jesus prayed that we be united into the very heart of the father and the son by the Holy Spirit.

**John 17:20-23:** Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

By our faith in Jesus – by our trust in Jesus – we pray that the other camp, those divided off, often our own families, may know and believe in Jesus.

We are united because Jesus has divided us away from the power of Satan into the kingdom of God.

Jesus is the divider – the sheep from the goats, the tares from the wheat.

This man is a symbol of what unites us perfectly – that is trust and faith in Jesus.

Of course, If he's a Baptist – I suspect he is, he has that look, we have massive differences – on the side of Jesus there are many, many differences – but we are united.

That's the synod theme – “it is grace that unites us”.

*Father let us join with all Christians – praying for rain and provision, for blessing and peace so we can be your hands and feet in this part of your world. Amen.*