

INTRO: Why isn't there more unity in the world? That question is driving much of today's political and social thought. The spirit of the age today is summed up in John Lennon's 1971 title release "Imagine." In fact, it's so representative of our times that it's being used to advertise everything from Amnesty International projects, to the One Laptop Per Child Foundation, to Cisco computer networking products.¹

Imagine there's no heaven. It's easy if you try. No hell below us; above us only sky. Imagine all the people living for today. Imagine there's no countries. It isn't hard to do. Nothing to kill or die for. And no religion too. Imagine all the people living life in peace. Imagine no possessions. I wonder if you can. No need for greed or hunger; a brotherhood of man. Imagine all the people sharing all the world. You may say that I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us and the world will be as one.

In the same Cisco commercial that used this song to sell themselves as the human network, former President Dwight Eisenhower can be heard in the background from one of his last presidential addresses praying that "in the goodness of time, all peoples will come to live together in a peace guaranteed by the binding force of mutual respect and love." That sounds like a lofty goal. This world peace, according to John Lennon and President Eisenhower and millions of others, is what we should all be aiming for. According to John Lennon, all we have to do is get rid of heaven, hell, all religion, all geo-political borders, and all possessions. [If you're a Christian, that song should not settle easily into your ears. I never want to see that song on a play list in your iPod]. Many people today have tried to co-opt Jesus Himself into his religion-less future-scape. After all, wasn't Jesus about bringing peace on earth and good will toward men? Yet as peaceful as it all sounds, a religion-less utopia is not Jesus' ideal for the world. But what might surprise us more is that world peace is not on Jesus' agenda either, at least not yet. The peace that Jesus envisioned was far different, and further in the future.

In fact, we will discover this morning from Luke 12:49-13:9 that **Jesus causes division by calling us to repent**. Jesus is not working toward a one-world culture, a religionless, classless, homogenous utopia. He is dividing all humanity in two – between those who believe in Him, and those who don't, between those who repent of their sinful self-reliance, and those who don't. Jesus makes it clear that the purveyors of a homogenized world peace will have to look elsewhere to find their spokesman. As I read the text out loud, notice how many times Jesus challenges the way we think.² Why do you think Jesus came (12:51)? What do you think Jesus ministry means for the times (12:56)? What do you think is the meaning of moral and natural disaster (13:2, 4)? In each case, we've gotten it wrong. Also, try to notice also all the time markers and how they point us to the future.³ Jesus comes to bring division from now on. We should interpret what the present means for the future (vv.54-55). Settle with your accuser now so that you don't spend the future in jail. Unless you repent now, you will all likewise perish in the future. Unless the fig tree produces fruit this year, it will be cut down next year. **Jesus causes division by calling us to repent**, and our repentance is time-sensitive and has eternal implications.

1. JESUS CAUSES DIVISION (LUKE 12:49-56)

Divisions between family members (12:49-53). These opening verses seem harsh. Why is Jesus saying these things? He says "I came," so this is a statement about Jesus' first advent, not his second coming. And everything depends on what he means by "fire." What kind of fire is this? Is it destructive, or purifying? It's a little hard to tell, but from the divisions that follow in verses 51-43, it seems like this is a judgment-making, distinction-making, division-making, separating, dross-consuming fire. It separates the faithful servants from the unfaithful ones, and it divides all humanity into those who are following Jesus and those who are not; those who are repenting of their sins and those who are not; those who are taking up their cross daily, and those who are not (Bock, *Luke* 2:1192). It's much like Isa 4:4 "*the Lord will wash away the filth of the daughters of Zion...by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning.*" This is not simply a purifying fire; it is a judging, discerning fire; purification is only a byproduct. Judgment, discernment, separation is in the foreground.⁴

¹ Accessed on 4/1/11 at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFE8Y2Wldjk>.

² Note the repetition of *doke,w / dokima,zw* all the way through: 12:51, 56 (2x); 13:2, 4.

³ in 12:52 "from now on"; in 12:56 "interpret the present time"; 12:59 "you will never get out;," in 13:8 "let it alone this year" 13:9 "next year"

⁴ So also Bock, *Luke* 2:1192; Marshall, 546-547; Cf. Mal 3:2; Luke 3:16.

The ignition of this discerning fire is the purpose for which Jesus came to the earth.⁵ “*I came to cast fire.*” Jesus did not come to tell us we’re not as bad as we think. He did not come to tell us that God is not really angry at us over our sin. Jesus was not a flower child who came to unite humanity in a spirit of superficial peace, love and harmony. He came to make a difference, but He did not come simply to make a difference among men. He came to make a difference between men, between those who repent, and those who don’t. Jesus’ arrival means that there is now a crisis of belief for all humanity, and Jesus is eager to see that crisis do its separating work. “*I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled!*” Jesus is eager to see the great sifting of all humanity into sheep and goat, believer and imposter. In the words of the Lord’s Prayer, He wants God’s kingdom to come, and God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. But that will not happen until He Himself undergoes what He calls a baptism. It’s unfortunate that there’s a small but important word in the text that went un-translated in the ESV. It’s the conjunction “but”.⁶ Vv.49-50 should read “*I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished.*” The effect of the word “but” is to make the fire contingent on the baptism, which raises the question, what is this baptism in v.50?⁷

Baptism is immersion in water. In the OT, being immersed in water was often a picture of being judged by God or persecuted by man. Think about the flood in Gen 6, or the exodus in Gen 14 where God drowns Pharaoh’s army under the Red Sea. Or think of Ps 69:1-2 “*Save me O God! For the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood weeps over me.*” Jesus’ ‘baptism’ is a baptism into the waters of man’s persecution and God’s judgment.⁸ The fire of v.49 will be the result of the baptism of v.50, and that baptism is the crucifixion of Jesus, where He endures both the persecution of men, and more significantly, the wrath and curse of God. The cross, the death of Jesus, is the great dividing line of all humanity, and it divides even the closest relationships – family relationships.

But before we move on, let’s notice that Jesus is eager to see this fire kindled, even though it means that He Himself must be crucified under all God’s anger against all the sins of all His people. That’s why he says in v.50 “*how great is my distress until it is accomplished.*” One writer said of this verse that Jesus’ life was a perpetual Gethsemane. The shadow of the cross dominated His horizon, yet He is eager to see it through, so that the fire can burn. He did not shrink from suffering at the command of His Father, and that suffering was in our place, for our sins. So we should not shrink from suffering for the sake of loyalty to Christ when that fire burns to separate us from others, because He suffered for us first.

Jesus confronts us with a question in v.51 “*Do you think I came to give peace on earth? No I tell you, but rather division.*”⁹ Jesus did not come for the purpose of giving peace on earth, at least not immediately. He did not come to make this world a better place. Nor did he come so that we could make this world a better place. Verse 51 is a rebuke of the social gospel, liberation theology, philosophical pluralism, **religious ecumenism**, and idolatry of the family, all wrapped into one. Jesus did not preach a this-worldly utopian unity as the result of His mission. He did not come to bring political, religious, socio-economic utopia through the achievement of an idealistic unity among families, faiths, nations, classes, and cultures. He did not come so that we would smooth over our differences about who Jesus is and what He demands of us. Unity is not the highest conceivable good in Jesus’ mind. He didn’t come simply so we call all get along, or to boil down all the world religions to the same essence. World peace is not Jesus’ immediate goal. “Some things are more important than unity” (Morris). And Jesus puts this to us in a question because He knows we think these wrong thoughts about Him. “*Do you think that I have come to give peace on the earth?*” Think again, He says. Jesus came to divide all humanity along the lines of allegiance to Himself, and He draws that line even within nuclear families.

⁵ *Balei/n* is an infinitive of purpose.

⁶ The *de*. in v.50 is contrastive, such that the casting of fire cannot happen until the baptism happens. So also Bock 2:1192-1193; Marshall, 547.

⁷ The grammatical constructions in vv.49-50 are parallel: noun + 1st person verb + infinitive + *kai*. + 1st person verb + time indicator.

⁸ Cf. Mark 10:38, Jesus compares his baptism with drinking a cup, an image associated with judgment in the OT.

⁹ *Dou/nai* is an infinitive of purpose, just like *balei/n* in v.49. Is this purpose of bringing division the point of the rider on the red horse in Rev 6:4?

When Jesus says in v.51 “*From now on...*” what he means is from the “now” of His own first advent – His life, death, and resurrection.¹⁰ From Jesus until the end, households will be divided along the lines allegiance to Him. The list of family relationships in verse 53 is an allusion to Micah 7:6 “*The son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against the mother, the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law; a man’s enemies are the men of his own house.*” But in Micah 7, the hostility only ran one way – younger to older. Here in Luke 12, the hostility runs both ways, younger to older and older to younger. There’s actually a heightening of hostility once Jesus comes. The clearer the revelation is, the darker the line is between those who believe it and those who don’t. Jesus came in order to divide human society, even down to its most basic unit, the nuclear family; and that division happens along the line of allegiance to Him.¹¹ The great question that divides cultures right down to their families is, “What do you make of the cross of Christ?” Religious fanatic, or Son of God?

This is why following James Dobson’s idea to just “Focus on the Family” cannot be the solution to the church’s woes, or to society’s ills. Jesus actually intends the gospel to break down the solidarity of society in its rebellion against God, and He is breaking that solidarity at the most fundamental level, the nuclear family. Strong families are good. But strong families are not the reason Jesus died on the cross. We are not redeeming society for Jesus. Jesus is not redeeming society for Jesus. Jesus is dividing society at its most fundamental level, and that division will remain until He returns. This is also one way that the covenant of God’s grace differs in its mode of transmission from generation to generation. In the OT, the covenant of grace was passed down through Jewish bloodline, which is really to say that it was passed down through the nuclear family. Now let me be clear, the nuclear family is still a great gift from God, and Christians are still called to disciple our children in obedience to Dt 6:4; but family bloodline no longer functions as the line of transmitting God’s grace from generation to generation, as it did among national Israel. This is one reason we don’t baptize our babies in this church. The covenant of grace is no longer passed down through bloodline, and the **covenant community** is no longer defined by the believing nuclear family, but by new birth by the Holy Spirit in the resurrection of Jesus, regardless of nuclear family. This is not to say that we should be anti-family. We’re pro-family. But the gospel is not about building better families. It’s often about dividing them along the lines of allegiance to Jesus.

Even Jesus Himself was not immune to the dividing effects of His message for His own family. His own brothers did not believe in Him, at least at first. And even one of just a dozen disciples ended up betraying Him for 30 pieces of silver. Just listen to how the Psalmist anticipates the betrayal of Jesus by those closest to Him. “*Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me*” (Ps 41:9; cf. 55:12). If it happened to Him, why should we be so surprised if it happens to us? And yet He promises His disciples in Luke 18:29 “*There is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.*” There is something more important than family unity. It’s repenting of our sin and believing in Jesus as the son of God, sent by God to endure God’s holy anger at our sin on the cross.

Divisions between genuine Christians and hypocrites (12:54-56). Since Jesus came to throw a fire on the earth that will judge and divide, it is imperative that we know what His arrival means for human history.¹² Jesus, The Son of God, has arrived as the ultimate sign that God will judge all the earth. Here is the one who is greater than Solomon, greater than Jonah (Lk 11:31-32), greater than the temple (Mt 12:6). yet no one knows what His arrival means (cf. 19:44). No one knows how to categorize Jesus’ miracles or interpret their meaning for the fulfillment of the Old Testament types and prophecies.¹³ Jesus is like the cloud that signals the rain. He

¹⁰ The nu/n is eschatological.

¹¹ CNTUOT, 333.

¹² Geldenhuys, 368.

¹³ The word translated “interpret” is *dokima, zw*, put to the test, examine, prove by testing, accept as proven, approved (BAGD, s.v., 202). It’s usually applied to God testing men through trials or inspection or examination (Ps 17:3; 26:2; 80:8; 139:23; 1Cor 3:13; 1Pet 1:7). It’s used of the testing of metals (Ps 66:10; Prov 17:3; 27:21), or people testing the words of others (Job 34:3; 1Thess 5:21; 1John 4:1), or testing the mettle of animals (Luke 14:19), discern God’s will (Rom 12:2; Eph 5:10; Phil 1:10), self-examination (1Cor 11:28; 2Cor 13:5; Gal 6:4), testing the genuineness of love (2Cor 8:8) or the faithfulness of one’s service (2Cor 8:22; 1Tim 3:10); approved for ministry (1Thess 2:4).

is the south wind that warns of a scorching heat. He is the warning that final judgment is approaching, it's near. Yet no one pays attention. No one knows what to do with Him. No one knows that He is the key, the great sign and signal, for interpreting the times. Or, maybe it's not that no one knows. Maybe it's that everyone chooses not to know. Jesus doesn't call them fools, or ignorant people. He calls them *hypocrites*. Hypocrites are those who knowingly make themselves appear to be something they're not. They speak from under a mask.

We predict the weather, we understand and even predict changes in the financial markets, we predict winners and losers in sporting events, we analyze and understand shifts in domestic policy and international politics. We understand why the winds of political uprising and change are blowing in Egypt, Libya and Syria. We understand and apply the rapidly changing trends in technology and fashion. We can think and talk about all these things with great accuracy and finesse. But when it comes to Jesus, what do we know? What can we talk about with others? How do we understand Him? Or maybe we've chosen not to understand.

Don't let this be you, friend. Don't be one who Jesus would call a hypocrite. Don't be one who can predict the weather and who can understand all the ins and outs of our cultural environment, yet chooses a recalcitrant agnosticism when it comes to understanding the significance of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Don't be one who understands the little things but refuses to acknowledge the most important thing. To do that is to leave yourself in the rain and flood of God's judgment, and to expose yourself to the scorching heat of his wrath. Don't leave yourself willingly unprepared. Jesus' death is the great announcement, the advertisement, that God will once more judge sin. And Jesus' resurrection is the advertisement that God will raise us all from the dead, some to everlasting torment in hell, and some to everlasting life in heaven, based on whether or not we believe in Jesus now and repent of our sins as a result.

You ignore the cross of Christ to your own peril, and when the judgment comes, neither Jesus nor anyone else will be impressed with your sophisticated skepticism. It will be laid bare for what it is, which is willing ignorance and damnable unbelief. **Jesus will discern you regardless of whether or not you discern Him.** He will discern whether your Christianity is genuine or not. He will discern how culpable your ignorance really is, and how deeply you've suppressed His truth in unrighteousness. Jesus' first advent means that the downpour of God's judgment is coming, and it will soak you in His wrath if you are not clothed in Christ. It means that the scorching wind of God's anger is closer than it was yesterday, and it will burn all those who are not bathed in the blood and righteousness of Jesus. Make sure you discern the importance of Jesus life and death for what it is. He is nothing less than the Son of God. His death is salvation from God's holy anger against us over our sin. And His resurrection is our only way to have true life and forgiveness with God.

2. JESUS CALLS US TO REPENT (LUKE 12: 57-13:9)

Jesus' Call to Repent is a Call to Wisdom (12:57-59). Repent Now, Before it's Too Late. Vv.57-59 Judging with a right judgment is related not to the prosecution or the judge, but to the defendant. This is not about unjust persecution of the strong against the weak. This is about a guilty defendant doing the right thing so that litigation and imprisonment are not necessary. It's about the defendant pleading guilty before the arraignment and entering a plea bargain with the prosecution before they get to the judge. The point is, right your wrongs out of court, or else the prosecution will haul you into court, hand you over to the bailiff, and throw you to jail until you've paid the debt. The illustration is a debtor's prison. In the first century, if you owed someone a lot of money and couldn't pay, they could throw you into debtor's prison until you paid your debt. Of course, it's pretty hard to work off a debt when you're sitting in prison. So either the family and friends of the indebted person had to pay the debt, which rarely happened, or the person would never get out of prison, which is what almost always happened.

Now what does this have to do with anything? Is this just a little snippet of prudential advice for those of Jesus' hearers who are in debt? Is Jesus taking a break from his teaching on readiness for the final judgment by giving the masses a little random topical advice on how to avoid bankruptcy court? No. This is an illustration of

readiness for the final judgment. Jesus causes division by calling us to repent, and this call to repent is a call to wisdom. No matter how much division it may cause in your family or among your friends, repenting is worth it, because only those who repent in this life will be spared death in the next. But if this is an illustration, then who is your accuser? Your accuser is God Himself, who is also your Judge. He has a rock-solid case against you. He has caught you red-handed time and again, and he has thousands of exhibits to prove it. Friend, you cannot go to the heavenly court with your pitiful defense. You have no defense, and there is not defense lawyer in the world who could defend your guilty soul before an all-knowing judge. There is no mercy in Hell, and the debt you owe for sinning against an infinite glorious God is itself infinite. You would never be able to work yourself out of Hell, and neither would anyone else, because it doesn't work that way. Once you are in the eternal debtors prison, you stay there. *"It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment"* (Heb 9:27). So what should you do? Jesus says you had better settle with God before you get to court. Admit your debt. But you might ask, who can I ask to pay my debt? I cannot pay it myself. Jesus will pay your debt, friend. His blood atones for all your sins, and the riches of his righteousness are for all those who believe in Him and repent of their sinfulness. Don't be obstinate. Plead guilty and settle with God out of court. Jesus will not just loan you His righteousness. He will give it to you for free. Be wise. Repent of your sins and believe in Jesus.

Jesus' Call to Repent is Universal (13:1-5). In 13:1 the phrase "their sacrifices" probably refers to Jewish ceremonial sacrifices, temple sacrifices. It could be the Passover sacrifice, but we can't be sure. Whatever the occasion, this was a moral disaster, a human tragedy caused by human evil and sin. The assumption was, and still is, that disasters like these only happen to people who are guilty of some especially great sin, as a kind of punishment. But this was the mistake that Job's counselors made, Job 4:7;. Eliphaz said in Job 4:7 "Who *that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off?*" Bildad said of the death of Job's children, *"If your children have sinned against God, He has delivered them into the hand of their transgression."* (Job 8:4; cf. 8:20; 22:5). Yet God had said twice, once in Job 1:8 and once in Job 2:3, that Job was *"a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil."* Eliphaz and Bildad are wrong. God was not striking Job with tragedy because of some sin in Job's life. The moral tragedy had a different purpose.

People in Jesus' day also thought that natural evils, like the tower of Siloam falling on 18 people, only happened to people who deserved that tragedy because of some great sin. Think of John 9:1-2 where Jesus' disciples see a blind man and ask Jesus *"Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, 'It was not that this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of god might be displayed in him.'*" Moral and natural tragedy can strike anyone at any time, without it being any indication of the particular sinfulness of the victim. We still make this mistake today. That's why Jesus starts both questions in v.2 and v.4 with *"Do you think...?"* Do you think they were worse sinners than any others? Do you think they were worse sinners than yourselves? Jesus is again addressing the wrongness of our thinking here. Katrina in New Orleans, the Hurricane in Haiti, the Tsunami and nuclear fallout in Japan were not indicators of God's special judgment on the extreme wickedness of New Orleans or Haiti or Fukushima. Jesus does not allow us to think of crimes against humanity perpetrated by leaders like Pol Pot or the Taliban or Mommar Qaddafi as special judgments on someone else's sin. The Christian attitude to tragedy should never be "they're getting what they deserve." Still less are we to find satisfaction in those kinds of moral disasters that we're more righteous than they are because moral or natural tragedy has never struck us. That's not true. That's self-righteous. Besides, God makes his rain to fall on the crops of both the righteous and the wicked. You can't tell whether God is pleased with your soul simply by the fact that you have a nice house, a nice car, and a nice family. God gives those things to wicked people just like He gives them to the righteous. We shouldn't flatter ourselves like that.

But then how should a Christian respond to moral and natural disasters in the world? Jesus says we should take them as calls to personal repentance. Look at verses 3 and 5. Twice Jesus says *"unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."* Every moral or natural tragedy is a warning for all people, universally, for me and for you, to repent. When I watch the evening news or read the newspaper and see some tragedy, I'm not simply to thank God that it didn't happen to me, or think a sympathetic thought toward the people who endured it, much less am

I to think that those people deserved to die, or if it's a war torn area, to think "Just let them kill each other." I'm to take these things as warnings of the coming crisis of Jesus' return, and I'm to repent of my own sinfulness so that my own soul doesn't perish in a greater disaster of eternal and infinite proportion. Natural and moral disasters are universal warnings to all humanity of the greater disaster, the final judgment that is coming.

Jesus' Call to Repent is Urgent (13:6-9). There is little time left to repent, Jesus says. Now originally, this parable of the fig tree in vv.6-9 applied to national Israel. In the OT, Israel was compared to a fruitless vineyard or fig tree on more than one occasion. Luke might have Micah 7 in mind, since Micah 7 was just alluded to in 12:53. In the same chapter that Micah talks about hostility between family members, he also says in Micah 7:1 *"I have become as when the summer fruit has been gathered, as when the grapes have been gleaned: there is no cluster to eat, no first-ripe fig that my soul desires. The godly hath perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among mankind."* Or we might remember **Isa 5** *"My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.... And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. I will make it a waste.... For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry."*

The parable of the fig tree illustrates the disaster from vv.1-5 that is coming for those in Israel who do not repent by bearing good fruit. Israel's time was almost up, and you can hear in the voice of the vinedresser the intercession of Jesus. Three years was plenty of time for a fig tree to bear fruit. It's supposed to bear fruit annually. The owner is not being unreasonable to cut it down. After all, it's taking nutrients from the soil that could be going to fruit-bearing trees. But the vinedresser wants just one more year to dig and spread fertilizer, one more opportunity for the tree to bear fruit. Israel was about to be cut down. The axe was laid at the root of the tree, and Jesus was calling them to repent before it's too late. But this is true for all of us, not just for Israel.

It's especially true of those of us who call ourselves Christians. Unless you repent, you will be cut down like a fruitless fig tree. There is a God who expects you to bear good fruit. He is coming to inspect your fruit; and if you do not bear good fruit, you will not be able to hide your fruitlessness under all your leaves. God planted you so that you would bear good fruit. *"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, that we should walk in them"* (Eph 2:10). *"Jesus gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works"* (Titus 2:14). **John 15:1-5** *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit."* Fruit-bearing is not optional. Beware of procrastinating your productivity in the Lord's Vineyard. One commentator put it this way. "The fig tree is a symbol of the [person] whose life is marked by unproductivity.... The Galileans may have died by the malice of some human being; the eighteen Jerusalemites by chance.... But the fig tree will die expressly because of inactivity and unproductiveness" (Fitzmyer, *Luke 2:1005*).

J.C. Ryle said of such people, "They have lived for years in the best part of the vineyard, and yet borne no fruit. They have heard the gospel preached faithfully for hundreds of Sundays, and yet have never embraced it, and taken up the cross, and followed Christ. They do not perhaps run into open sin. But they do nothing for God's glory. There is nothing positive about their religion.... To be content with sitting in the congregation and hearing sermons, while we bear no fruit in our lives, is conduct which is most offensive to God" (Ryle, *Luke 2:115*). Ryle goes on to warn us not to be unfruitful members of the church who suck all the nutrients out of the soil and leave the fruitful members hungry. He says "The unfruitful members of God's church are not merely injuring themselves and periling their own souls. They are an injury to the church generally, and do public harm. The common idea that an unconverted person 'does no harm,' – is 'no man's enemy but his own' – and the like, is a miserable man-made delusion, based on no warrant of Scripture." (Ryle, *Luke 2:117*).

But if Jesus calls us to repentance, and repentance is urgent, and it is characterized by bearing good fruit, then how do I bear good fruit? Stick to the vine. Jesus is the vine, you are the branch. Remain in Him. Listen to His voice in His word. Talk to Him in prayer. Be spurred on to love and good deeds in the church. And the fruit you are to bear is listed in **Gal 5:22-23**, the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, all the rest. Or we might think of **2Pet 1:5-11**, *Add to your faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love....If these qualities are in you and increasing, they keep you from being...unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” **Jesus causes division by calling us to repent.** Are you repenting?