



## Grain

“The purpose of Jesus’ ministry and death and resurrection is to re-create the community of God’s people, and the peace that he makes between God and us is a peace that is also made with other human beings and with the creation of which we’re part.” –Rowan Williams, *Tokens of Trust*

### Field

49 "I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! 50 I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! 51 Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! 52 From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; 53 they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law." 54 He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, "It is going to rain"; and so it happens. 55 And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, "There will be scorching heat"; and it happens. 56 You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time? Luke 12:49-56

### Thoughts by Judy Mills, Madison

In these days of deep political divide, it’s difficult to hear Jesus tell us he came not to bring peace on earth but division. We prefer to see Jesus as the Prince of Peace and a great unifier, as Rowan Williams describes him. But Jesus was a radical figure in his day, challenging powerful religious and political leaders with his teachings. This ultimately resulted in the baptism he referenced, his death on the cross.

It is not uncommon for family members to be divided against one another for religious or political reasons. In my family, we instituted a rule many years ago that there would be no political discussions at family gatherings. This resulted in much more enjoyable holidays, but it didn’t resolve the divisions; they are just not addressed. The divisions among families in the time shortly after Jesus’ death were much more damaging than those today. Early Christians were persecuted and many perished. Despite the rhetoric of some current fundamentalists, Christians in America enjoy privilege and favored treatment compared to other religions.

When addressing the crowd, Jesus calls them hypocrites, a word he also used when speaking to religious leaders. He noted that they recognized changes in the weather but failed to interpret the importance of his ministry. How much time and energy do we expend interpreting earthly things while ignoring spiritual issues? Even on the issue Jesus mentioned, we spend more time discussing the weather forecast for the next several days than we do figuring out ways to prevent the extinction of thousands of plant and animal species due to the climate crisis.

Jesus came to bring fire and division to the earth. But through his death and resurrection he makes peace between us and God and gives us the capability to make peace with one another and with God’s creation. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Judy