

JESUS THE CAUSE OF DIVISION

(LUKE 12. 49-59)

In my culture communities are closely knit with strong family ties. It is still part of our lifestyle in the rural villages. When there is feast, we all contribute, even where funerals, weddings, cost of school fees, fights, helping others build houses and make garden. We take of both the young and the old and share food. But there is something else we listen to the teachings of the older and the wiser members of our communities, their teachings mainly from their experiences.

They taught often not in a good way, some of them we hard wearing men and we had to bear all the dirt that came out from them, but they did it the best they knew.

One of my grandfather's used to say, "do not have too many children, limit the number of children you have, because you could produce a snake that will come back to bite you".

Those words came from his experience, and from observation of others that often one or two children in the family come back to hurt their parents and break their hearts, even to the extent of hurting them. I have heard parents saying, "what have we done wrong? What could we have done better?"

This is the picture given in that Isa 5. 1-7, where a gardener tends his vineyard, did everything he possibly could as a good gardener but the grapes that came from all that work were sour. So, he says to the Israelites, "all you people that live in Jerusalem and Judah judge between my vineyard and me. Is there anything I have failed to do? Then why did you produce sour grapes and not the good grapes I had expected?"

Israel the lord's vineyard produces sour grapes despite all that God did. Here in the days of Isaiah the nation sank deeper into sin, and God withdrew all that he did for the vineyard and let enemies trample it down. Let it be overgrown with weeds and not pruned.

Isaiah gives us the picture of the Nation Israel but that picture could be true for families and individuals. God loves and cares for us but it is either we recognise and accept him and live according to his will or we chose to deny him and refuse his love and live our own lives. There is that choice that either leads to produces sour grapes or good grapes.

This is why Jesus makes that statement the he had come not to bring peace but division, even division in the home amongst families and relatives because one chose Jesus and the other denies Jesus.

The best picture of this of the two dying thieves on the cross. Both men were partners in crime, both convicted and imprisoned, both condemned to death and now executed with Jesus at the central cross. One turned to the dying Jesus and asked him, "remember me when you come as king" and the other join the crowd and mocked him. One listen to everyone around him and joined them the other which we know as the good thief look at Jesus and saw past a dying Jesus to something of him eternal. How he saw that is a mystery, but it is clear he saw something that made him make that prayer.

And we are here because we too have seen something that touched our heart and gave us meaning to life.

AMEN!!!!!!!!!!