

## **Christ, The Divider of Men**

Sunday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1987

### **Luke 12:51**

*“Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division.”*

I have for you today one of those controversial subjects, but I don't mind preaching them at all if you will listen to them. I want you to carefully consider the things that I am saying and the things that I am reading from God's Word.

You know, the apostle Paul said; *“If I please men, (if that is my goal and my object is to get along with people and tickle their ears and please them), then I am not the servant of Christ.”*

That is not my objective; my object is to glorify God and to preach the Word of God as long as God will let me live and open doors for me to enter and to preach the Gospel. I want to tell you the truth about God, the truth about sin, the truth about salvation, the truth about our Lord Jesus Christ and the truth about this thing called faith.

I'm going to preach today on this subject: “CHRIST, THE DIVIDER OF MEN.” Yes, that is what I said; “Jesus Christ the Divider.” I want you to jot these Scriptures down if you don't turn to them and read them now. At least jot them down and read them later.

Be like the Bereans. They heard Paul preach and they, *“Went home and searched the Scriptures to see if these things be true.”* That is what I challenge you to do, search the Scriptures.

You might say that you have never heard it that way before. That doesn't make it wrong. There are a whole lot of things that we haven't heard before. Our Lord said, *“I've got many things to say to you,”* (He said to His disciples); *but you can't hear them now.”*

He even said to the Pharisees, *“I've got many things yet to judge of you. When the Holy Spirit is come, He will take the things of Christ and reveal them to you.”* The way the Holy Spirit teaches you is through the preaching of the Word and the reading of the Word of God.

In Luke 12:51, our Lord is speaking and says *“Do you suppose that I am come to give peace on this earth? I tell you no; I came to bring division. I've come not to bring peace to the earth but a sword, a division.”* That is what it says. If the Word means anything, Christ said in Luke 12:51,

In John 7:43, listen to this; *“So, there was a division among the Jews because of Him.”* He divided these people. In John 10:19, there was a division, there was a split and there was a separation among the Jews for His sayings. Many said, *“He has a devil; He is mad. Why do you listen to Him?”*

You see; when our Lord walked this earth in human flesh He was despised. He was a holy man, God in human flesh. *“He knew no sin, had no sin and did no sin. Yet, He was rejected and despised and hated of men.”*

Isaiah predicted that hundreds of years before He came. Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 53: verses 2 and 3, *“There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men. He is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”*

Everybody who was anybody turned thumbs-down on Jesus Christ. All the theologians, all the scholars, all the rulers and all the people turned thumbs-down on Him. He said to His disciples in John 15, *“If the world hate you, you know it hated Me before it hated you.”*

In John 15:23 our Lord said again, *“He that hateth Me hateth My Father also.”* In John 15:25, He said this; *“They hated Me without a cause.”*

Here is perfect Holiness. Here is the very righteousness of God. Here is Truth embodied, the fullness of God in Him. Here is Jesus Christ Himself standing on this earth. They cursed Him and they called Him a devil.

The Gadarenes demanded that He leave their shores and never come back. They tried to stone Him; they spat in His face; they tried to throw Him off a cliff and finally, they hired false witnesses against Him at a mock trial. They convicted Him without a cause and crucified Him between two thieves and ridiculed Him while He died.

That is what men think of Jesus Christ. Some say, *“Wouldn’t the Lord fair better today? Wouldn’t it be better today?”* In Matthew 23:30 our Lord dealt with that very subject. He was talking to the religious people when He was on this earth.

He says to them, *“Now; you say, If we had lived in the days of our father, in the days of Abraham, Moses, Elijah and Isaiah, we would not have persecuted the prophets. We would have not been partakers with them in the shedding of the blood of the prophets. We would have loved Moses. We would have loved Isaiah. We would have loved Jeremiah, the weeping prophet. We would have loved Nehemiah.”*

Don't be deceived. Our Lord told them, "You are the sons of those that killed the prophets and you and your daddies are guilty of the blood of every prophet from righteous Abel to the last one who will ever die."

Don't be deceived by monuments and recognition given to preachers of the past. It is simply one generation trying to cover up the crimes of another generation. The natural man is always the same; his mind is, "*Enmity against God.*"

You see; this is the way that man operates. This is the way men operate in the religious world. If you ask me, "Would Jesus Christ fair better today?" My answer would be, "Oh no." Sin is the same, Christ is the same and men are the same.

You see; this is the way that they operate. When Moses was here on the earth; they hated him. The Israelites hated him. They did their best to take the leadership away from him while they bragged on Abraham. But see; Abraham was dead.

After Moses died and the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, they hated him and bragged on Moses. When the Lord Jesus was crucified and was ascended to heaven, they hated the apostles and bragged on Christ. When the apostles died and the reformers were here, men like Calvin and Luther, Zwingley and Huss; they loved the apostles and hated the reformers.

They made a martyr out of the apostle Peter. After he was dead, they built a church and named it for him over in Rome. It is always that way. There is Saint Jude, Saint Peter, Saint John and Saint Paul. They have these great monstrosities built in the names of these men and their daddies killed them.

What we are doing today is this; we are bragging on the reformers and we are killing preachers that preach what these men use to preach. Everybody everywhere is bragging on Spurgeon. When he lived here on this earth, they hated him. Spurgeon said one time, "Scarcely a minister of any reputation will have anything to do with me." Now, everybody brags on him. Do you know why? He is dead!

The same thing went on with John Calvin and Martin Luther in Germany. It took the divine providence of God to keep people from killing Luther. He was taken from place to place and hid here, there and yonder to keep from killing him. Now, Lutheranism is the national religion of Germany. He is dead!

I say this to you, our Lord Jesus Christ was despised and rejected of men then. In His true character and His true Gospel, true attributes and true redemption is just as despised today.

What caused this extreme hatred for Christ? What made men despise Him and reject Him? What made men so hate Him that they nailed Him to a cross? What did they hate about Him? What did he do; what did He say that caused the hatred to rise up into their nostrils and have their fists to be clenched? What made them drive nails into His hands and feet? What made them mock, jeer, spit on Him and laugh while He died on that cross? What did He say? What did He do?

Let me take several passages of Scripture and show you. Let's see what your response is to these Scriptures and to these things of which I shall read and make some brief comments.

First of all: Our Lord Jesus Christ was speaking. In John 10:31, it says; *"Then they took up stones again to stone Him."* Do you know what it means to stone a man? It means to take up huge stones, not pebbles, and throw them into His face and body until He is broken down on the ground. Then, they beat Him to death with those stones until He is dead.

Jesus Christ was standing before these deeply religious, devout, orthodox, moral people. They took up stones to stone Him. They were going to kill Him. What had He done? What had He said?

Let's go back a verse or two and see what He says. In John 10:30, He says; *"I and My Father are one. Then they took up stones to stone Him."* He said, *"I and My Father are one;* (I and the Heavenly Father; I and the living Father are one. I am equal with God. I am God in human flesh). *When you have seen Me you have seen God."*

Have you seen Him in essence, in power, in purpose, in will and in glory equal with the Father? *"I am one with the Father. Then they took up stones to stone Him."* He said to them, *"Many good works have I done among you. For which of these do you stone Me?"* They said, *"We're not stoning you for good works, we have no objections to good works. In fact, we believe in good works."* (That is the way that they hoped to go to heaven was by their good works.) *"What we object to is this; blasphemy, because you are a man and you make yourself to be God."*

Well, I ask you today; I ask you sitting right there today, is Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Jesus the Son of Mary, is He God? Is He Almighty God? What is your reaction?

I'm not talking about a Son of God; I'm not talking about a messenger of God; I'm not talking about an ambassador of God; I am asking you frankly and pointedly, Is He God Almighty? Is He? Was He the One who actually came to this earth in human flesh? This is what He is saying; *"I and My Father are one,"* Father, Son and Holy Spirit, yet one God.

The Lord our God is one God. They cannot operate, purpose or will or work apart from one another, they are one. When you have seen the Son, you have seen the Father. *"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. In the beginning was the Word Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ was with God and Jesus Christ was God. Jesus Christ was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."*

Paul said to the elders at Ephesus, *"Feed the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."* Who's blood, God's blood? *"Great is the mystery of Godliness; God was manifested in human flesh."*

What are you saying preacher? You know what I am saying. I am saying the same thing that He said; Jesus Christ of Nazareth is God. If He is not God, He is an imposter and He is a liar; He is a fraud; Jesus Christ is a fraud. Some say, "I don't believe that He is God; I believe that He was a great prophet." He was a fraud if He was not God.

You might say, "Well, I don't believe Jesus Christ is God but I do believe that He is a great preacher and healer like Mohammad or Buddha." He would be the biggest liar that ever walked in human flesh if He is not God. If He is not God, He can't save anybody. He couldn't even save Himself. If He is not God everybody who worships Him is an idolater.

He claimed all the attributes of God. Do you know what an attribute is? Attributes are the character of God. That is qualities that belong to God. What are the qualities that belong to God? Well, we have eternal existence. That is what Christ said, *"Before Abraham was I am."* The only one who ever used the words, *"I am"* is God Almighty. Christ used it again and again.

There is His creating power. It says, *"All things were made by Him."* What are the qualities that belong to God? He has power to give life. The only one who has power to give life is God and Christ said, *"The Son will quicken whom He will."*

There is the attribute of holiness. *“There is none holy but God.”* That is what He said. *“There is none good but God.”* Yet, Jesus Christ said; *“Which of you convinceth Me of sin? I always do those things that please the Father.”*

What about omnipotence? What is omnipotence? That means that He is Almighty, all powerful. There is nothing beyond His power. Christ said, *“All power and authority is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.”* Jesus said that!

What about omnipresence? That means that God is everywhere. Even Satan is not omnipresent. God is omnipresent and He is everywhere. *“Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? If I ascend into heaven Thou art there, if I make my bed in hell; Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea and there Thy hands shall hold me.”* Christ said, *“I am with you always, even to the end of the earth.”*

What about omniscience? What is omniscience? He knows all things. Our Lord Jesus knew their thoughts. So, when they grabbed the stones, they would have stoned Him. There was a division among the people. Why? He said, *“I am God.”*

All right, look at Luke 4: 28 and 29: This was on a Sabbath Day when these ritualistic, legalistic, so-called righteous Jews had met together to worship in the synagogue. They had turned into a lynch mob. It says in Luke 4: 28 and 29, *“All that were in (the church building), the synagogue, when they heard these things, (when they heard His message), they were filled with wrath and they led Him to the cliff on which their city was built that they might cast Him off head long.”*

What in the world had He done? Here were a bunch of folks who on the Sabbath Day had gone to the synagogue to hear the Word of God read and hear a man preach and He said just about eight or ten things and they took Him out and were going to kill Him, murder Him, cast Him off a hill down on the rocks below to dash His brains out. What on earth did He do?

These people were organized religionists. It was the Sabbath Day. I will tell you what He said, He stood before them and opened the Bible to Isaiah 61 and He read a Messianic prophecy. He said, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me. He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, to give sight to the blind, deliverance to the captive, set at liberty them that are bound, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”*

This is a Messianic prophecy and promise and word. He said to them, *“This day is this prophecy fulfilled in your ears.”*

He looked out there at that bunch of religious people. They thought that they were the chosen people of God, that they were the elect of God and that they were the Kingdom of God. They thought that they were the Jews, Abraham's seed and that God owed them something. They thought that God was obligated to them and that they were all fixed up for heaven and the Kingdom of God.

Our Lord said to them, *"There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah but none of them were fed but one who was a widow in Sidon a Gentile."* When they heard these things they were filled with wrath, God will save whom He will. God owes mercy to no man. God owes grace to no man. Grace is undeserved, unmerited favor. He is saying, just because you are Abraham's seed by nature, does not mean that you are God's child.

It doesn't mean that God is obligated to you. It is not because you have done certain works, have certain ancestry, or a certain heritage. It does not mean that God owes you anything. He said, *"In fact, there were many lepers in the land of Israel in the days of Elisha but none of them were healed, none of them but one, and he was a Gentile."*

My, my, my; He is saying to these religious Israelites who thought that they had a corner on God and that God owed them something, that salvation is not in ceremony, ancestry, customs or religion or rituals; it is by the grace of God, the sovereign grace of God.

God said, *"I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful; I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious. So then, it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth but of God that showeth mercy."* He is saying, no man deserves the mercy of God because of who he is, what he claims, what is given or what he has done. *"Salvation is of the Lord."*

Salvation is a gift of God and He will give it to whom He will. *"We know that all things work together for good to them who love God who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow; He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son. And whom He predestinated; He called and whom He called He justified and whom He justified; He glorified."*

*"What shall we say to these things, if God be for us who can be against us?"* When He said that, *"God will show mercy to whom He will"* they got so angry and filled with wrath and hatred they would have murdered Him right on the spot, although they knew what He said was so. It was right there in their Bibles.

It was right there in the Book that none of the widows of Israel were fed but there was a widow of Sidon that the prophet Elijah went to. God sent him down there. Elisha was sent to none of the lepers in Israel in those days but to Naaman the Gentile. It was right

there in the Word. Yet, when our Lord preached it, they tried to murder Him. There was a division over what He said.

I face the same thing in this day. I preach God as absolute, immutable and infinitely sovereign. I have religious people gnash their teeth. I say, there it is in the Word. I preach God's elective grace and say, there it is. I say it dozens of times in the Word but we don't believe it and we won't have it.

One man read Romans 9 unto a friend and he said, "Do you believe that?" He said, "Not like you read it." There's only one way to read it. Men hate a Sovereign God.

They don't hate grace; they hate Sovereign grace. Everybody talks about grace but they hate Sovereign grace. They hate grace in the hands of a Sovereign God. Grace that is not sovereign is not grace. Grace that is earned or bought is not grace and is reward.

Men don't hate mercy; they hate Sovereign mercy. Mercy that is not sovereign is not mercy, but is debt. If I owe you mercy it is not mercy. Mercy is giving you what you don't deserve and not giving you what you do deserve.

All right, John 8:59 says; "*Then, they took up stones to cast at Him again.*" Shall I go on? They were forever trying to kill Him. This is Jesus Christ. It wasn't because He was trying to heal blind people.

I hear folks today and all of the television preachers getting all excited and saying, "He can still heal." Why sure He can. He can still do all He ever did. Sure He can but what did He say? That is where the issue is.

They are paying attention to His miracles and not paying attention to His Gospel. The issue is not what He did; the issue is what He said. That is the way it was with these people. They didn't care about how many good works He did or how many people He fed or how many dead people He raised. They didn't care about how many crippled people He healed. That wasn't the issue; it is what He said.

They took up stones to stone Him. What in the world had He done? Here are these religious people again trying to stone the Lord Jesus right here in the synagogue. In John 8:59, this was in the temple. They were going to murder Him right in the temple. Well, He had rejected their doctrine and the Fatherhood of God. They said, "*God is our Father.*" Christ said, "*He's not, the devil is your father.*" That is what they got mad about.

He called them “sinners.” He called them, “*children of wrath.*” They said, “*God is the Father of all men.*” We are ecumenical people and God is the Father of all men. They said that they were all children of God. Christ said, “No you are not.”

They said, “*We be not born of fornication. We have one Father even God.*” Jesus said to them and this is why they got mad; “*If God were your Father you would love Me but you are of your father the devil and the lust of your father you will do. He is a liar from the beginning and he is a murderer.*”

“*He that heareth God’s Word is of God. You hear them not because you are not of God.*” That sounds like some backwoods, some fanatical, and radical preacher to me. This is Christ the Lord talking. He said, “*As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God.*” My friends, men and women who live in unbelief and rebellion are not children of God. God is not their Father. They do not enjoy the love and favor of God.

I know that there are people sitting right there listening to me who are cringing and are angry. That is what these people were too. It wasn’t a preacher talking to them; it was the Son of God talking to them. He said, “*You are of your father the devil. He that believeth not on the Son of God the wrath of God abideth on him.*”

Preachers are going around telling everybody, “Good news America, God loves you.” That is like going to Sodom and saying, “Good news Sodom, God loves you.” There’s not a word of truth in it. God’s love is in Christ. “*Outside of Christ God is a consuming fire.*” He calls them, “*Children of wrath.*”

He said in Psalm 7:11, “*God is angry with the wicked every day.*” God’s love is in Christ. I’m telling you the truth, it is in Christ. This is the Lord speaking. You measure these things by what I am saying. I’m reading you Scriptures from the Word of God. This is why these people were divided.

Christ said, “*I didn’t come to send peace on this earth, no; I came to bring division,*” division over what? It was division over His Gospel, division over His truth and division over His Word.

Everybody can get together around a healing. Everybody can get together around an emotional, sentimental meeting. Everybody can get together around some wildfire. The only place to meet is at the tabernacle of Christ Jesus and His truth.

The word says, *“From that time many of His disciples walked no more with Him.”* He said, *“I am the bread of life; I am the water of life; I am the truth. He that cometh to Me, cometh to God and He that knoweth not the Son knoweth not the Father.”*

Oh, that you would hear Him and His words!