

## **The Peace of God**

Jesus' tells us, "Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division; for henceforth in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided." (Luke 12:51-52)

Could you give up your parents, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, and children for your faith? When Jesus spoke, He wasn't talking about some theory in a philosophy book. He was talking real life. Jesus is saying, "It isn't enough to put me ahead of what is worst in your life, or what is mediocre in your life; to be really committed to me means to place me above even that is best in your life." It's not hard to put Christ above the worst in our lives: the evil, the destructive, the unhealthy. We can be committed to God more than to drugs, alcohol, crime, or hatred. But Jesus' terrible question here is, can we put him above the best, the strongest, the healthiest, the most mature, the most positive in our lives? Do we value God more than that which is finest in life? That's the tough question! Could you put commitment to God above love for your family? Would you be able to commit yourself more to Christ than to your job, status, income, and your home? These are the kinds of questions Jesus is raising here. They are demanding, to say the least. Some of us might shout enthusiastically, like Peter, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison, and to death!" But, like Peter, before the day is over most of us would have found we denied we even knew Jesus. Others of us know better than to even make so bold a claim. The question of Jesus is a difficult one. Will we follow Him even if the best and the brightest of this world tell us we are crazy? Maybe the most crucial question is how much are we willing to sacrifice for what we believe? In the end, the answer lies more with God than it does with us. There probably aren't any of us who are capable of the degree of trust Jesus asks for. By ourselves we don't have that kind of spiritual strength. Fortunately we don't have to rely on ourselves. God walks with us and is our strength. When those demanding times come and we have

to choose, we call on God's help to get us through. Peter failed the first time he was put to the test. After his brave speech about how much he would do for Christ, he caved when times got tough. Within the same day, he denied that he even knew Jesus. But that isn't the end of the story. Peter went on to be one of the most important leaders in the church. Eventually he died a martyr for the One to whom he committed his whole life. It wasn't Peter who made the difference; it was the One he trusted who gave him the courage. So it is with us. God asks a great deal. But God also helps us fulfill the commitments we make.

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