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Luke 12:49-56
First Presbyterian Church

Asleep at the Wheel?

I had been driving all day. It was the longest leg of the trip. After a quick stop for a bite to eat I was on the road again but a bit sleepy after the nutritious Dairy Queen chicken finger basket with extra gravy and a Heath bar blizzard. It didn't take long for my eyes to start rolling.

All I could think about was sleep...putting my head on a pillow and taking a long afternoon nap. Resting in a hammock under a shady tree, snoozing under an umbrella on the beach...all I wanted was a nap.

So I did what you do when driving alone and you get sleepy. I turned up the radio and blasted the music.

I rolled down the windows and let the cold air in.

I popped my cheeks with my hands.

I sang and screamed.

But my eyes betrayed me.

When my thinking about closing my eyes turned into *actually closing* my eyes and the right front wheel of my car fell off the side of the highway into a deep pot hole....deep enough to make the car stop....that's when I realized I needed to do something different.

Please pray with me: Lord of Life, you came into our midst that we might wake up. Give us the wisdom and courage to just that....to move into your direction even when it costs us our comfort. Amen.

Luke's gospel tells the story of the time. The people of God had long been waiting for that moment when God's Messiah would come and save the day. They waited with specific expectations.

Like them...we too have expectations of God.
We expect God to make things right.

To comfort and heal....to live up to the promises spoken through the ages.

Through the years, we Christians have become quite skilled at reciting the mistakes of the Old Testament people of God. We flippantly explain how the Jews sorely missed the mark.

"They waited for a Savior to come like a knight in shining armor to snub their enemies and turn the tables of power.

They expected God's Savior to act in such a way that people would have no doubt that God was present and at work. "

And yet, God did not do what they expected.

We inherit the New Testament which presents a Savior of another kind....a savior who comes with gentle compassion, and teaches the way of suffering and servant hood.

"The meek shall inherit the earth. Those who mourn will be comforted. The hungry will be fed."

Jesus was not the powerhouse the people had anticipated.

If we were honest we have to admit our expectations for God are often turned upside down.

**Every generation creates a "to do" list for God....
and then we sit back and wait for God to do what we expect.
And when God does not...we are left doubting or pouting.**

This is not what we expected Lord when I said I would trust you and follow you.

**We waited for peace. Calm, non-anxious, comforting peace....no hard feelings,
everyone and everything on the same page kind of peace...**

And then we run into this sneaky little passage that latterly stops us in our tracks like a deep pot hole in the road.... Jesus stands before us and asks,

"Do you think that I have come to bring peace to earth?" **(Pause)**

Well, yes. That's what we think Lord. I mean, isn't that what the Angels sang at your birth:

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

You said peace.....and now you're saying you didn't come to bring peace but division?

Oh - this faith stuff can be quite confusing.

We proclaim peace and bump into division.

Listen to these words from Martin Luther as he addresses his father in the opening words of a book...

"In dedicating this book to you, dearest father...I am taking the opportunity, which this interchange between us conveniently provides....It is nearly 16 years since I became a monk, against your wishes, and without your knowledge.

Your plan for my future was to tie me down with an honorable and wealthy marriage....

(When you learned of my decision to become a monk) you said - 'May it not prove an illusion and a deception.'

That word penetrated and lodged in the depths of my soul....and I hardened my heart against you and your word as much as I could."

If Martin Luther had been driving a car....then *this moment, when God calls him*, is the deep pot hole that jars his life awake and

gives him the wisdom to do something different...even when it means going against the wishes of his father.

The peace Jesus ushers in has nothing to do with complacency, convenience, status quo, or living according to our own plans or expectations.....but rather it is a wake up call!

Jesus goes on to say in Luke....

You are so alert to the weather conditions. You see a cloud in the west and you know it is going to rain.

You see a south wind blowing and you know that scorching heat is on the way.

You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, so why are you not able to interpret the present time?

Can't you see what is happening to people right around you?

Are your eyes closed to the ways of those with power?

Are you asleep to the troubles of this world?

Christ's peace is about knowing what is going on around you and doing what others will not do...

Listen to the way 4th century Roman Emperor Julian the Apostate, who rejected his Christian upbringing, describes the early Christians.

"These impious Galileans not only feed their own poor, but ours also welcoming them to their tables, they attract them, as children are attracted, with cakes. While the pagan priests neglect the poor, the hated Galileans devote themselves to works of charity.... See their love-feasts, and their tables spread for the poor. Such practice is common among them, and causes a contempt for our gods."

When we extend our hand to offer the peace of Christ we invite others to live and do what others will not.

The peace of Christ be with you. *And also with you.*

The gift of Christ's peace is not an invitation to sit comfortably in this sanctuary but to open our eyes to the hurts of this world.

The peace of Christ be with you. *And also with you.*

The gift of Christ's peace is not about God living up to our expectations but rather our calling to live up to God's expectations.

The peace of Christ be with you. *And also with you.*

The gift of Christ's peace is God's calling to have the wisdom and the courage to do something different....to live beyond prejudice and monotony and dysfunction....

Christ's peace will open new doors and lead us down new paths into new life.

The peace of Christ be with us.