# Just a Thought

## A Sword

*“I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.”*
*—Matthew 10:34, ESV*

Those are words we might prefer Jesus had not spoken.

We readily receive His promises of peace. We turn to them when life becomes uncertain, relationships become strained, and circumstances move beyond our control. We want the reassurance of His presence.

Then we encounter the sword.

How can the Prince of Peace speak this way?

Luke helps us understand. In his account, Jesus speaks of division. The sword describes the separation that can arise when people respond differently to Christ. Some receive Him. Others reject Him. Sometimes they live beneath the same roof.

That brings the passage uncomfortably close.

We might expect opposition from strangers. We are less prepared for it from people we love. Yet Jesus speaks of fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, and enemies within one’s own household.

He knows what allegiance to Him may cost.

We often assume that if we love faithfully, speak gently, and do what is right, peace will follow. When it does not, we search for an explanation. Perhaps we said the wrong thing. Perhaps we failed to understand. Perhaps, if we could find the right words, the relationship would be restored.

Sometimes we do need to repent.

Christians can be harsh, proud, insensitive, and stubborn. A disagreement does not become persecution merely because a Christian is involved. We must examine ourselves honestly, acknowledge our wrongs, and seek peace wherever we can.

But even faithful love may encounter rejection.

Christ does not permit us to purchase harmony by giving someone else the place that belongs to Him. We are commanded to love our families. We are also commanded to love Him above every earthly relationship.

There may be moments when obedience to Christ displeases someone whose approval we deeply desire.

Does the resulting pain mean that God has abandoned us?

Consider where Paul places suffering in Romans 8.

He asks what can separate believers from the love of Christ. Then he names tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, and sword. He even recalls the words of Psalm 44 about God’s people being regarded as sheep for slaughter.

These sufferings appear within one of Scripture’s greatest declarations of assurance.

Their presence does not cancel it.

“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”
—Romans 8:37, ESV

In all these things.

The assurance remains while the trouble is present. The believer may grieve, endure hostility, and long for reconciliation while remaining completely held within the love of Christ.

His peace can be present in a troubled home and an aching heart.

We may not understand what our Father is accomplishing. His sovereign care does not make human cruelty innocent, nor does it make our sorrow imaginary. It assures us that neither cruelty nor sorrow can overthrow His purpose.

We continue to love. We seek reconciliation. We repent where we have sinned. We remain faithful to Christ where obedience is costly.

And we rest in the love that holds us through it all.

The sword may divide a household.

It cannot sever the believer from Christ.

Have we been measuring His faithfulness by the peace around us, or trusting His promise to hold us when that peace is gone?

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