

DIVISION OF THE HOUSE

(Luke 12:49-56).

Intro: In Robert's Rules of Order.

- There is a parliamentary procedure.
 - #Known as a Division of the House.
- It originated in the Roman Senate.
 - #Unlike the Oklahoma Legislature.
 - *House.
 - *Senate.
 - +Which have electronic voting.
 - =Each representative's name on the scoreboard.
 - =Each representative's vote recorded by their name.
 - #Roman Senate operated by voice vote.
 - *But if there was a vote that was:
 - +Disputed.
 - +Too close to call.
 - *One of the members might call for:
 - +Division of the House.
 - *Then those who were voting divided themselves up.
 - +Those in favor of a particular resolution.
 - =Literally went to one side of the house.
 - +Those opposed.
 - =Went to the other side of the house.
 - +Heads were counted.
 - =To determine if the resolution had:
 - Passed.
 - Failed.

In our Gospel lesson for today.

- Jesus describes a division of the house.
 - #Father against son.
 - *Son against father.
 - #Mother against daughter.
 - *Daughter against mother.
 - #Mother-in-law against daughter-in-law.
 - *Daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.
- What was the divisive issue?
 - #Jesus.

- I. It's Not Easy To Live In A House Divided.
 - A. Last Month I Visited White Haven.
 1. It's in St. Louis.
 - a. Right across the street from Grant's Farm.
 - The Busch estate.
 - #Anheuser-Busch fame.
 - b. In all the years I lived in St. Louis.
 - I had never visited White Haven.
 - #For many years it was in private hands.
 - #After the National Park Service took it over.
 - *I must have missed the announcement.
 - #Restoration was complete.
 - #It was open to the public.
 2. White Haven is now the U.S. Grant Historic Site.
 - a. U.S. Grant had originally visited White Haven.
 - While stationed at Jefferson Barracks south of St. Louis.
 - At the invitation of his West Point roommate.
 - #Fred Dent.
 - *Whose family owned White Haven.
 - b. But it was Fred's sister Julia.
 - That brought Grant back again and again.
 - c. Grant and Julia.
 - Met.
 - Fell in love.
 - Courtied.
 - Eventually married.
 - #After a four-year engagement.
 - *During which Grant was off serving.
 - + In the Mexican-American War.
 3. After Grant and Julia married.
 - a. They lived with her parents.
 - At White Haven.
 - b. But it was a house divided.
 - Grant's father-in-law.
 - #Frederick Dent.
 - Was:
 - #Southern gentleman.
 - #Slave holder.
 - Grant could not abide slavery.
 - Julia could not abide the constant dinner table:
 - #Discussions.
 - #Arguments.
 - *Over slavery.

- c. So Grant built a cabin on the White Haven property.
 - For himself and Julia to live in.
 - #To get away from his father-in-law.
 - That cabin still stands.
 - #Although it has been moved.
 - It's not part of the U.S. Grant National Historic Site.
 - #It sets on a corner of Grant's Farm.
 - If you visit St. Louis.
 - #You can tour Grant's Farm.
 - *I don't think there's any admission charge.
 - *But you do have to make a reservation.
 - #After you:
 - *Feed the baby goats.
 - *Take in the bird show.
 - *Have a complimentary beer.
 - #You can board the tram.
 - *Takes you through the exotic wild animal park.
 - *At the end of the tram ride.
 - +Grant's Cabin.
 - =Hardscrabble.
 - He and Julia called it.
 - =Built because on the issue of slavery.
 - Grant and his father-in-law.
 - #Were a house divided.

B. There Was A Time In My Life When I Lived In A House Divided.

- 1. I grew up in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
 - a. My dad was a Missouri Synod pastor.
 - b. I began my seminary education.
 - At Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.
 - #Seminary of the Missouri Synod.
- 2. Little did I know what I was getting myself into.
 - a. My first day on campus.
 - I went to my campus mailbox.
 - #First item I removed.
 - *Booklet authored by the president of the seminary.
 - +Dr. John Tietjen.
 - *Entitled "Fact Finding or Fault Finding?"
 - + "An Analysis of J.A.O. Preus' Investigation of Concordia Seminary."
 - =Preus was president of the Missouri Synod.
 - I thought to myself:
 - # "What in the world is going on here?"

- b. What no one had bothered to tell me.
 - Not my dad.
 - Not my campus pastor.
 - Not the seminary recruiter.
 - c. Seminary faculty was under attack.
 - By the president of the church body.
 - #Accusing them of false doctrine.
 - Underlying all of that was the issue:
 - #How we interpret Scripture.
 - *Still an issue in the church.
 - +Which is the reason for our adult Bible class topic.
 - =Book of Faith:
 - =How We Read and Interpret Holy Scripture.
3. Following summer.
- a. Missouri Synod convention.
 - Meeting in New Orleans.
 - b. Passed a resolution.
 - Declaring the teaching of the faculty majority.
 - #At Concordia Seminary.
 - To be false doctrine.
 - #“Not to be tolerated in the church of God.”
 - c. Another resolution.
 - Suspended Dr. Tietjen.
 - #From his office as president of the seminary.
 - d. I didn’t know what to do.
 - These were my teachers.
 - #People I knew.
 - #People I respected.
 - #People from whom I had learned so much.
 - *In my first year at seminary.
 - I seriously considered not going back.
 - #So I wrote to some people.
 - *Whose opinions I respected.
 - #I was persuaded to return.
4. That fall.
- a. Dr. Tietjen was reinstated.
 - When it was determined that his accusers.
 - #Had not followed the synod by-laws.
 - *Not to mention Godly and Biblical principles.
 - b. But we knew that it was only a matter of time.
 - Before the “i”s would be dotted and the “t”s crossed.
 - #Dr. Tietjen would again be suspended.
 - *From his office as president of Concordia Seminary.

- c. Classmates would ask me.
 - What I thought we should do.
 - #When Dr. Tietjen was again suspended.
 - d. I would say in all seriousness:
 - “We ought to shut this place down.”
 - e. They would laugh at me.
 - Like I was some wild-eyed radical from the University of Wisconsin.
 - 5. In December.
 - a. We had a day of theological reflection.
 - b. Out of that day grew a consensus within the student body.
 - When Dr. Tietjen was suspended.
 - #We would declare a moratorium on classes.
 - 6. It happened in January.
 - a. Aptly-named Board of Control of Concordia Seminary.
 - “Honorably retired” several older faculty members.
 - #By slipping notes under their office doors.
 - Suspended Dr. Tietjen from his office.
 - #Late on a Sunday evening.
 - b. First thing Monday morning.
 - Student body gathered in the chapel.
 - Quickly adopted a resolution.
 - #Declaring a moratorium on classes.
 - *Until such time as the Board of Control:
 - +Would tell us which of our teachers.
 - =If any.
 - =We should consider to be false teachers.
 - +Which of their teachings.
 - =If any.
 - =We should consider to be false doctrine.
 - *They never did respond to us.
 - #It was an easy decision to make.
 - *It was the right decision to make.
 - +Living with the consequences was another matter.
 - c. That night.
 - I called home.
 - #I told my dad what we had done.
 - My dad said:
 - #“You have no right to do that.”
 - We were a house divided.
7. It’s not easy to live in a house divided.

II. It's Not Easy To See Jesus As The Source Of The Division.

A. We Much Prefer To See Jesus As A Unifier.

1. One who brings us together.
 - a. In spite of our differences.
 - b. In spite of our sin.
 - Unites us under the cross.
 - Unites us around the table.
 - #Jesus does that.
 - *Make no mistake.
2. But that's not all Jesus does.
 - a. "Do you think that I came to bring peace on earth?"
 - Well, yes, we did think that.
 - That's what the angels told the shepherds, right?
 - #When Jesus was born.
 - *"Glory to God in the highest heaven,"
 - *"And on earth peace among those whom he favors."
 - +Luke 2: 14.
 - b. "No, I tell you, but rather division!"
 - Luke 12: 51.
 - c. How can both be true?
 - Jesus unites all of us who believe.
 - #Under the peaceful rule of God.
 - But he also divides.
 - #Between those who believe.
 - #And those who don't believe.
3. Division.
 - a. Not Jesus' primary purpose.
 - In coming into the world.
 - b. But it certainly is a:
 - Consequence.
 - Side effect.
 - c. We all know John 3: 16.
 - "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."
 - d. If you've been in my adult Bible class, you also know John 3: 17-18.
 - "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him! Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe have been condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God!"
 - e. Jesus is the source of that division.
 - Between those who believe and those who do not.

B. Jesus Came To Set The World On Fire.

1. Is that good news or bad?

a. Fire can destroy.

-As Bill Burgess could have told us.

#From his 30 years on the Tulsa Fire Department.

b. But fire can also refine.

-How are precious metals?

#Separated from the dross in which they are found in nature.

-It's by fire.

c. Fire can also harden.

-Several years ago I visited Nauvoo, Illinois.

#Where the Mormons lived before moving to Salt Lake City.

*Or what became Salt Lake City.

-One of the missionaries gave me this brick.

#Made by W.J. Whitney.

*On 8-21-83.

#When I got it.

*It had only been sun dried.

+It would have crumbled.

=If subjected to pressure.

-Or water.

-Or both.

#But St. Louis County Hospital.

*Where I was chaplain.

*Had an occupational therapist.

+She had a kiln.

=For firing the ceramics.

-That some of the patients made.

*She fired my brick.

+Made it:

=Strong enough.

=Sturdy enough.

-To serve as a bookend.

#In my study.

#For the last 24 years.

-Fire can do that.

2. Fire can also create new life.

a. My first visit to Yellowstone National Park.

-Was in 1990.

#Don't begrudge me my vacations.

*You never know inspirations I may acquire.

-1988 was a year of fire in Yellowstone.

#13 major fires.

*In the park.

*In the surrounding national forests.

- b. "Let It Burn" fire policy had been adopted in 1972.
 - Lightning-caused fires would be allowed to burn.
 - #As long as they did not threaten:
 - *Human life.
 - *Park structures.
 - *Natural features.
 - +Like the geysers.
 - *Endangered species.
 - c. Fire serves a purpose in old-growth forests.
 - Clearing out the detritus.
 - #That keeps new seeds from sprouting.
 - Clearing out the forest canopy.
 - #So that sunlight can reach the forest floor.
 - Germinating seeds.
 - #That need heat to open.
 - d. Already in 1990.
 - Fireweed had begun to grow.
 - #First sign of new life after a fire.
 - e. When we were in Yellowstone in 2005.
 - Whole new forests of lodge pole pines had begun to grow.
 - #Where the earth had previously been blackened.
3. Jesus underwent a baptism of fire.
- a. John the Baptizer had announced as much.
 - “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming. . . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”
 - #Luke 3: 16.
 - b. Jesus' baptism of fire.
 - Involved a tree.
 - #In the shape of a cross.
 - *It was on fire.
 - Fire was destructive.
 - #Destroying Jesus' life.
 - Fire was also refining.
 - #Removing the eternal consequences of sin.
 - Fire also brought new life.
 - #Risen life.
 - #Forgiven life.
 - #Eternal life.
 - *To all who believe.

Concl: It is Jesus' death and resurrection.
-That divides the house.
#Between those who believe.
*And those who do not.

By faith.
-No matter what trials by fire we undergo.
-We will always be on the side of the house.
#Where Jesus stands.

By the grace of God.
-That side of the house is big enough.
#For Ulysses Grant.
*And his father-in-law.
#For me.
*And my dad.