

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

The week of AUGUST 25/26

The Great Dividing Line

#1 *"I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed! Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law." Luke 12: 49-53*

Have you ever had to choose sides in an argument? Have you ever been chosen to be on one team or another? I think everyone knows what it is like to be on one side as you face an opponent. Sometimes it is all in fun, as everyone enjoys a game of kickball. Other times taking sides is not fun at all, such as when people are arguing and asking you to join in. Today Jesus is talking about choosing sides in the world. This kind of choosing is the most important kind any of us will ever have to do. In fact, we can't even make the choice ourselves. Jesus knew that so He came down from heaven to be with us, show us the way, and send His Holy Spirit to help us decide. We can follow the ways of this world, which are selfish and cruel. We can care only about ourselves. This choice leads to a very lonely and empty life and an eternity away from God. The other choice is to follow Jesus who forgives our sins and has promised to take us to heaven to be with Him forever. When we choose Jesus, He promises us that even though the world is still not a peaceful place, we will have peace in our hearts. We will have Jesus' peace now and know that we will be with Him forever in heaven.

Pray: Jesus, help me always to choose to love and follow You. Thank You for the forgiveness and peace You give me and the promise of heaven too. Amen.

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#2 *"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."*
Matthew 16:19

Take a look at your key ring or your parent's key ring. Can you describe what every key opens? We have keys for all sorts of things from cars, to our homes, from lockers to a lock to put on a bike. Jesus once told His disciples about keys. You see, believing that Jesus died on the cross and rose again is our key to heaven. Jesus gives us the key to heaven so we can be with Him forever. When we tell others about Jesus, we are giving them the keys to heaven's gate as well. Remember your special key the next time you see a key. Be sure to tell others about Jesus' love for them, so they can have the key to heaven.

Pray: Lord, thank You for giving me the key to the gates of heaven. Help me to hold onto them tightly and to tell others about Your love for them. Amen.