The verses from Luke this morning are troubling and hard.

All along, we thought a peaceful Jesus united people

***49****“I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled!*

Jesus first encounters fire – ironically - in the water of his baptism

* Jesus is no moderate.
* He does not shun the extreme of Law and Gospel
* The cross is the balancing beam of history

Jesus is immersed in the Lake of Fire of Revelation 20 on the cross

In verse 50 Jesus says: *I have a baptism to be baptized with* meaning a ministry of water and blood

* Jesus begins his ministry in the Jordan River with a baptism meant for sinners
* He completes his ministry in a bloody baptism on the cross

Jesus propitiates or appeases the fiery wrath of God by perfect obedience in water and blood

There are many OT witnesses to the NT water and the blood of Jesus

* The red heifer in Numbers 19 especially points to the fiery baptism and washing of Jesus blood

Spiritual peace is no simple matter – Jesus remarks: *And how great is my distress until it is accomplished!*

* Jesus is torn between two emotions
  + He dreads the impending suffering and death on the cross
  + Yet he eagerly yearns for our glory beyond the grave

How do we reconcile Jesus – author of peace to the Jesus of Luke 12 - *I have come to bring division*

* The cross – instrument of death for Jesus - is our tree of life
* There is no middle ground or compromise
* Jesus words about division seem unsettling at first - but end up a comfort – *I am the way, the truth, and the life.* [John 14:6]
* Jesus is our perfect Savior