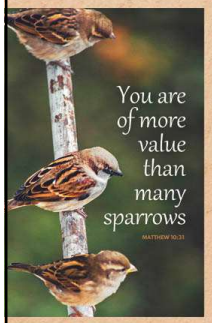
Reflection – Pastor Paul Nuechterlein
Proper 7A – June 25, 2023

1

"Not Peace but a Sword" – Say What??



- Tomorrow: LCR begins five weeks of Neighborhood Camp on the theme of "Seeds of Peace"
- Pray for the fifty kids and the staff (Erika, Alyssa, Thea, Kierra, Izzy, Nico, Brian, and Israel)
- I'll begin tomorrow with, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God" – and other verses from the Sermon on the Mount
- So how do we get several chapters later, "I have not come to bring peace, but a sword"? What's changed?
- Answer: Jesus' ministry has already begun to experience resistance – opposition – and Jesus is warning his disciples about the danger of the "sword" – violence

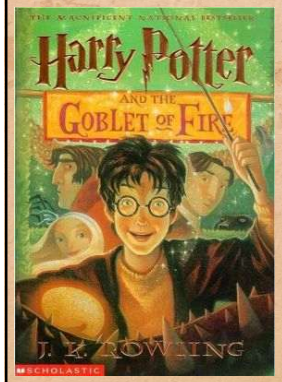
2

The Riddle of "Satan Casting Out Satan"

- Jesus specifically warns them that opponents will accuse them of being of being in league with Beelzebul
- Two chapters later that's what the Pharisees do to Jesus when he is casting out demons from mentally ill people:
  - But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, that this fellow casts out the demons." [25]Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. [26]If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? [28]But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. (Matt 12:24-26, 28)

3

Jesus's "Sword" → Dumbledore's "Parting of the Ways"



- Scene: Harry tells the story of witnessing Lord Voldemort's full return to his body, attaining his full powers once again. Cornelius Fudge refuses to believe, to which Dumbledore says:
- "If your determination to shut your eyes will carry you as far as this, Cornelius, we have reached a parting of the ways. You must act as you see fit. And I — I shall act as I see fit."
- When Fudge perceives this as Dumbledore working against him, Dumbledore seeks to correct him:
- "The only one against whom I intend to work," said Dumbledore, "is Lord Voldemort. If you are against him, then we remain, Cornelius, on the same side."

4