May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

From the beginning of his ministry, as told by St. Mark, Jesus has been dealing with divided houses and kingdoms. He has [cast out demons](https://interruptingthesilence.com/2012/01/29/i-have-everything-to-do-with-you-a-sermon-on-mark-121-28-epiphany-4b/), healed Peter’s mother in law, cleansed a leper, and caused a paralytic to walk. The houses and kingdoms of these people are divided. Their lives are not their own. They live with inner conflict and turmoil. They have been separated from their community and all that gave them security and identity. Their outer conditions of illness, paralysis, and possession point to the inner conflict; the battle between health and disease, not just physically but, more importantly, spiritually.

This division and inner conflict is a reality of today’s world and our lives. A marriage divided is a divorce. A nation divided results in the extreme and civil war. An economy divided yields poverty and injustice. A community divided becomes individualism, prejudice and violence. Humanity divided is all these things on a global level. Faith divided is sin.

We all know what it is like to live divided lives. You know those times when your outsides and your insides don’t match up? That’s what it means to be a house divided. You’re one person at work another at home. You act one way with certain people and a different way with other people. Life gets divided into pieces. Behavior, beliefs, and ethics become situational. There is the work life, the family life, the prayer life, the personal life, the social life. Pretty soon we’re left with a bunch of pieces.

It seems that we are forever trying to put the pieces of our lives together. That’s why the crowd has gathered around Jesus. That’s why the religious authorities oppose him. That’s why his family tries to restrain him. In their own way each is trying to put the pieces of their life together but it’s not working. They won’t fit. Their life and their world are neither what they thought they were nor what Jesus knows they could be. One reality has fallen and a new one is ready to rise.

Jesus always stands before us as the image of unity, wholeness, integration. He is the stronger one. He does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. He puts our lives and houses back in order. Jesus offers a different image of what life might look like. He does so by revealing the division in our lives, the houses that cannot stand, and the crumbling of our kingdoms.

Even when it is for our own good, with the offer of new life and intended for wholeness, that’s a hard place to be. It means that one way or another change of some sort is coming. Most of us don’t like that. It can be frightening.

“*He has gone out of his mind*,” the people say. The religious authorities accuse him of allegiance to Beelzebul, the ruler of demons. They project onto Jesus their own interior conflict and division. They have declared that which is holy, sacred, and beautiful to be unclean and dirty. Their accusations say more about themselves than Jesus. Their accusations reveal the depth of the conflict and division within them. Their accusations are a way of avoiding themselves.

It’s hard to look at the division and inner conflict within our lives. Where is our own house divided? How and to what extent have we created conflict and division within our relationships. What is it that shatters your life? Anger, lack of forgiveness, greed, insecurity, perfectionism, sorrow and loss. Fear. Envy. Guilt. Loneliness.

There are all sorts of forces, things, events, sometimes even people by which our lives are broken and through which we are separated from God, others, and our self. Christ is stronger than anything that fragments our lives. He binds the forces that divide, heals the wounds that separate, and refashions pieces into a new whole. There is nothing about your life or my life that cannot be put back together by the love God in Christ. Amen.