

The Violent Take the Kingdom of Heaven by Force

by Aaron Hurst

The sermon emphasizes the urgent need for Christians to actively strive and press into the kingdom of heaven with fervor and commitment.

Duration: 1:07:57

Scripture: Matthew 7:13-14, Matthew 7:21-23, Matthew 11:12, Matthew 13:41-42, Matthew 25:10-12, Luke 13:24, Luke 16:16

Topics: "Powerful Praying"

Description

In this sermon, Brother Denny emphasizes the importance of being diligent and vigilant in our pursuit of the kingdom of God. He contrasts the violent opposition faced by Christians in China with the lethargy and easy believism prevalent in our own land. He challenges both Christians and non-Christians to press in and make a forceful effort to enter into the kingdom. Brother Denny uses the example of sitting at ease in a meeting house as a symbol of indifference and urges listeners to be wholehearted in their pursuit of God.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the freewill offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Amen, what a beautiful prayer.

Hear my cry, O Lord, and lead me to the rock that is higher than I. Greetings in Jesus' name. Today, God bless you as we continue to look unto Jesus. Today, what a blessing and privilege is ours.

I thought, Brother Joe, as you were sharing about that bend in the road and increasing strength. And I thought of Paul's testimony to the Corinthians. He said, I didn't come in strength or wisdom or power, but I

came in weakness so that your faith would be anchored securely in Christ and not in man, not in ourselves.

And so, Brother Joe, thank you for that beautiful devotional. I thought also of the children's lesson on our tongue and how great a member that is in our body. And then the keen family sharing here on abiding in Christ.

If we just take all of those things and let them settle down upon our hearts, I think we could just go home right now and say we have been richly blessed. Amen. But I trust the Lord has something for us still as we open our hearts to him this morning.

And he, Jesus, went through the cities and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, strive to enter in at the straight gate. For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able.

When once the master of the house is risen up and has shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. And he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are. Then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence and thou hast taught in our streets.

But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are. Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out.

And they shall come from the east and from the west and from the north and from the south and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And behold, there are last which shall be first and there are first which shall be last. Let's kneel together for prayer.

Our Father in heaven, we bow before you, Lord. We ask you, Father, that in mercy you would look upon us here today. We ask you, Father, that you would manifest yourself unto us, Lord.

Father, we would see Jesus and Lord, only you can do that. So, Father, I submit myself to you and I ask you, Lord Jesus, wash me in your blood. Take control of this tongue, this mind, this heart.

Oh, Father, do walk in the midst of the congregation. Do not pass any of us by, Lord. Captivate our hearts.

Awaken us unto righteousness, Lord. Father, have your way, we pray. Yes, in our weakness may we see thy strength and thy beauty, Lord.

He that has ears to hear, let him hear. Father, open up our hearts, our ears, our understanding, Lord. And give grace to your servant, Lord.

This we ask for your sake. In Jesus Christ's name, amen. Turn your Bibles with me to Matthew 11.

Matthew chapter 11 and verse 12. And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence. And the violent take it by force, for all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

Then there's a parallel scripture over in Luke 16. Just keep your finger here and let's turn over to Luke 16. Luke chapter 16 and verse 16.

In Luke 16 and verse 16. And the law and the prophets were until John. Since that time, the kingdom of God is preached.

And every man presses into it. The burden on my heart this morning is to bring a warning and to sound the trumpet against lethargy and indifference and false security and a spirit of at ease or sleepiness. And I confess that I have to wrestle against those same temptations and that same spirit of the age.

Of the church age in United States of America. That would say, just settle down, just back off, don't be so radical. Just calm down, take it easy.

We're all going to heaven. Know my friend, my brother, my sister. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.

This doesn't give me a picture of sitting on my seat. Can someone bring me a chair, please? I would be so blessed. I'm sorry, I forgot.

Can someone bring me a folding chair here? You know, something from my youth that just depicts the picture of indifference and being at ease. Thank you, brother. Sitting on your bench in the meeting house.

And while the preacher is preaching, you drop your head down into your hands. And you talk to the person next to you. And every now and then you listen up a little bit again.

And then you talk again to the one beside you. Sitting under the gracious call of the gospel. Or slouching way down, you know, so that the preacher can't see you.

There's another bench in front of you, you know. At ease. Not knowing that perhaps today your soul may be required of you.

Thank God some of those youth got serious, got saved. But you know, some never do. I wonder today if I may ask the question.

This message speaks to both Christians and to non-Christians. It speaks to the Christian about being diligent. About being vigilant.

About being sober. About being wholehearted. And it speaks to the non-Christian about the need to press in.

That word, every man presses in, is the same word as the one over in Matthew, the violent, take it by force. The violent and the pressing in is the same Greek word. It's only found in those two places in my studies.

And I'm not a Greek scholar. But I can use my English mis concordance and I can see where those words appear. The meaning is to crowd oneself into, to force.

It's as if a moving, acting of physical strength, urged or driven with force. Vine's Expository Dictionary says it's those who make an effort, a violent effort to enter into the kingdom in spite of violent opposition. Now the Christians in China will tell you violent opposition is actually healthy.

Because it causes people who want to enter into the kingdom to realize they have to, by violent force, enter into that kingdom against violent opposition. But we face something far more dangerous in our land.

And that is a lethargy and a sleepiness.

And we are influenced by the easy believism that says just accept Jesus and you're on your way to heaven and that's just all that's to it. But is that biblical? Just accept Jesus. I would like for you to help me this morning.

I want you to just, I know we have only one handheld microphone, so I'll just have you share it loudly from where you're at so the others can hear. What are some biblical examples of individuals who have violently pressed into the kingdom of God in order that they might obtain eternal life? There are so many. Can someone help me? Paul saw on his way, breathing out threatenings against the Christians, was struck down by a light, an encounter with Jesus Christ.

And he took it very seriously. Give me another one. Zacchaeus.

Yes, Zacchaeus. He climbed up in that tree and he didn't care what people thought about him. He wanted to see Jesus.

Others. Brother Luke. A woman with the issue of blood who forced her way through the crowd, a thronging crowd, and she forced her way in to touch the hem of Jesus' garment.

I like it. And somebody mentioned one over here. Stephen.

Yes. Stephen, faithful to God unto death. Oh, glory.

That dear sinner woman who came in where Jesus was dining with a Pharisee, and the Pharisee washed not his feet, but this woman came in, this dear sinner woman, and she pressed in there. I wonder what all she had to overcome to get to Jesus' feet. But she did it.

She pressed in there. And she found her way to the feet of Jesus, and she began to weep, and wash his feet with her tears, and dry his feet with her hair. Beautiful examples.

And there are countless many more. Shall I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fought to win the prize, and sailed through bloody seas? The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. They seize upon it.

They press in to. And no price is too high. That man that found that pearl of great price buried in a field, he went and sold all that he had and bought that field.

Warning! Warning! Not all that say, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Lord, are there few that be saved? Strive to enter in. And that word, strive, is very closely related to the violent taking it by force.

It means to struggle. It means to compete for the prize. It means to contend with difficulties and dangers.

It means to have strenuous zeal to obtain something. The gospel has been watered down so cheap that the picture is reversed. That Jesus is just so longing to throw it upon you, and you don't have to do anything.

And you're breaking the heart of Jesus if you don't just say, Yes, I welcome you into my life. I receive you. When Jesus is saying, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up the cross and

follow me.

Jesus is saying, Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Have we been influenced and affected by a false comfort and a false gospel? Another gospel where Paul said, I tell you, Weeping, they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. My dear brothers and sisters, my dear sinner friend, This question will haunt you for the rest of eternity if you don't settle it with God.

Are there few that be saved? Jesus said, Strive to enter in. For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able. When once the master of the house has risen up and shut to the door, and the day of grace and opportunity is past, and we will wish so badly that we could recall that Sunday morning's invitation while I was sitting on my knees and I was trying to ignore the message.

And we are going to wish so badly that we could roll the clock back and have one more opportunity. Because then people will seek to enter in but shall not be able. It will be a horrible day when the finality of it dawns upon the unsaved heart or that lukewarm backslidden heart that I am on the wrong side of the door and the door is shut.

I'm not talking about work salvation. I thought of that as we were singing a hymn. Do not misunderstand me.

Not what these hands have done. By the cross of Jesus alone. By his death and his resurrection and his sacrifice alone.

This is not a work to be saved. As somehow by all my tears, all my cryings, all my strivings, I somehow appease God and that equals salvation. No.

That is not salvation. But the fight is and the battle is to come to Christ Jesus and to deny self and die to this old man and crucify the old man with all of his deeds and to enter into faith in Christ Jesus. That's what we're talking about.

To striving and to pressing in. And the people came by the multitudes to hear John the Baptist. They put forth effort.

They came to hear Jesus. I think of striving to enter in. I think of those men who bore up that man who was on his sickbed.

Those four men and they took him up on the roof and they tore up the roof to bring their friend to Jesus. This violence is a picture of vigor and earnest desire. It shows us what a fervency and a zeal are required.

Those who enter into the kingdom of heaven must strive to enter in. They must press in past the obstacles, past the hindrances. Self must be denied.

We must run. We must wrestle. We must fight to overcome the opposition from without and from within.

And the opposition from within is probably the greater here in our circumstance of society. And without but within. The violent take it by force.

Think of Jacob. Left alone, he wrestled with a man until the breaking of day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him.

And he said, let me go for the day breaketh. And he said, Jacob said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. If we had more of these kind of earnest pursuits after God, I think we'd see greater results.

And we'd see more thorough, clear conversions. No, not just a little prayer and signing a name on a card. How about we bring it closer home? No, not just a little trip to the altar, a charity Christian fellowship and then go back again.

How about getting alone with God in prayer and holding fast to the altar, holding fast to the Lord and say, Lord, I will not let you go until this matter is settled. I will not let you go, Lord, till you bless me. And he said, what is thy name? And he said, Jacob.

And he said, thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel. For as a prince hast thou power with God and with men and hast prevailed. Yes, a whole change of life.

Jacob, the supplanter, is now the Israel, the prince, the son of God. May I say it that way? It's a little strong, maybe. But you know, now he has prevailed with God and he has received the blessing.

Speaking a little bit to the Christian here today, Christian professing. Woe to them that are at ease in Zion and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations to whom the house of Israel came. Woe to them that are at ease in Zion and trust in Samaria.

A trusting in something of the past experience with God or a trusting in something my forefathers have done or something else, something that I put a security in rather than my own walk and relationship with God, brother Jeff Keen, abiding in Christ myself. But trusting in charity Christian fellowship. I mean, it's a big church and there's a lot of strong preaching and there's a lot of good people there who love the Lord and so I'll join myself with them and I'm a member at charity.

If that's all you have this morning, my dear friend, you don't have what it takes. If you are at ease because I am a member of charity Christian fellowship, you will sadly be mistaken someday and awakened, you know, sitting there twiddling your thumb. I think of the testimony of the Lord Jesus.

The zeal of thine house has eaten me up. I mean, it is consuming me. How about me? How about my life? Has the zeal of the Lord's house consumed me, my passions? Oh, Jesus, seeing the multitude was moved with compassion.

It was His burning vision and heart to preach the gospel to the lost. How about me? Oh, how I need Him, Christ. How I need the anointing and power of the Spirit in my life.

So many other distractions. So many other infringements and encroachments upon my heart. You know, it's just like a knife that is losing its edge.

Just getting a little duller, a little duller, a little duller. And soon that becomes a norm. And I become contented to dwell in that sickly, sleepy state.

And I become satisfied and accustomed to a lukewarm expression and testimony. Oh yeah, we go to church, you know, we sing, we give an offering. But it's that love for Jesus, fervently burning in my soul.

Or have I left something? Have I left that first love? Listen to the word of the Lord from Job 16.11. God has delivered me to the ungodly and turned me over into the hands of the wicked. I was at ease, but He has broken me a thunder. He has also taken me by my neck and shaken me to pieces.

What a picture! You know, I believe sometimes God would just, He would just, He would just somehow love and somehow wish He could be able to reach down and take me by the scruff of the neck and shake me and say, Aaron, wake up! I was at ease, but He has broken me a thunder. He has taken me by the neck and shaken me to pieces. Ah, but He doesn't stop there.

And He has set me up for His mark. Hallelujah! It would be a gracious thing and a merciful thing of God to do to me or to thee if I am at ease and asleep and the devil, while men sleep, is encroaching in and making inroads farther and farther into my life and sapping and pulling the spirit of the life of Christ out of me. When I am asleep, I don't see it.

Oh, it would be a lovely thing. It would be a merciful thing for God to do to me like He did to Job and take me by the scruff of the neck and shake me up. And it would be a merciful thing for you, young person here this morning, if you're slouching in your seat in the back and wishing you could get away from this message.

It would be a wonderful thing if God would get you by the scruff of the neck and shake you up real good and say, Son, Daughter, it's time to get serious. We're not going to coast into heaven. Ten thousand foes arise to draw thee from the skies, the author of that hymn said.

And it is true. Strive to enter in. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter in but shall not be able when once the master of the house has risen up and shut to the door.

Isaiah 32.9 Rise up, ye women that are at ease, and hear my voice, ye careless daughters, and give ear unto my speech. Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women, ye that are at ease, and ye that are careless. You know, I think that word today, in the modern word today could be described as casual.

Could it be, maybe? You know, just casual. Casual means that I just take it with sort of a nonchalant and sort of a careless attitude. Life is really not that serious.

And I just take it casually. I don't want to be marked like Job. Marked for God.

That's too strong. I want to just sort of blend in casually, you know. Casual.

Christianity? I don't think the two go together. According to the scripture, there is a vehement desire and a pressing into the kingdom of God. And it's not just a casual, automatic floating into it.

On cruise control. No, no. So, along with myself, my dear brothers and sisters, let us exhort one another to be fervent in spirit and to be about the king's business.

And I need it. Please call me. A brother called me this week and said, you look a little sad.

How can I pray for you? How can I encourage you? That meant so much to me. Because I need that. Let us exhort one another.

Let us recognize the war. And let us not be ashamed to admit it. That yes, I am struggling.

I am facing some things in my life that are difficult. I need your prayers. And I open up and we confess and we share one with another.

And thereby we are healed from that besetting sin. How long do I want to continue living in that besetting sin? When there is grace from our Lord Jesus and power to deliver. And my testimony is marred.

I think we'll go back to our text again here in Matthew 11, if you're still there. Matthew 11 and verse 12. And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.

For all the prophets in the law prophesied until John and if he will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come. He that has ears to hear, let him hear. But where unto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets and calling unto their fellows saying, we have piped unto you and ye have not danced.

We have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking and they say, he hath a devil. So the man came eating and drinking and they say, behold a man gluttonous, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.

But wisdom is justified of her children. You know, it seems to me, Jesus now goes into this example and he says, What shall I liken this generation to? This generation that heard John and they heard Christ, but they're still nonchalant, indifferent, sitting there, if I may again illustrate, slouched down, careless. What shall I liken a people like that? How can you find something descriptive that would take the veil off and show what this is like to Almighty God? Where unto shall I liken this generation? I'll tell you what it's like.

It's like unto children sitting in the markets. You know, children playing, imitating what they see in real life. And they say, We have piped.

You have not danced. We have mourned. And you have not lamented.

For John came neither eating nor drinking and they say, he hath a devil. So the man came eating and drinking and they say, behold a man gluttonous, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

We have piped unto you. You didn't dance. You could care less.

We have mourned unto you and you have not lamented. Be like child's play, you know. At funerals, they mourned and had a procession of mourners following or leading the casket and mourning.

And at weddings, oh, beautiful, lively, joyful music, piping and people are happy and dancing. And John, he came with a powerful message of repentance, warning the people to repent. And the people mourned and repented in sackcloth and ashes.

And Jesus comes with a gracious message, full of grace and truth, bringing the glorious gospel unto them. And you say it's a message of joy. The angels proclaim it from heaven.

Joy to the world. Peace, goodwill toward men. Christ the Messiah is come.

The people heard the message. They didn't rejoice. They didn't dance.

So what? Careless attitude. John preaching? Ha! He has a devil. But not all said that.

Some pressed in and violently made their way through and parted the crowd and pressed into the kingdom. And so it is yet today. We must enter into the kingdom through tribulation and through persecution.

And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution in 2008 in United States of America. A different form. Perhaps.

Yes. Not quite the same as China. Or Vietnam.

So sometimes you hear messages from this pulpit of gracious invitation. Holding forth the many invitations of our Lord Jesus to come. The Spirit and the Bride say, come! If you're thirsty, come! If you're weary and heavy laden, come! And yet, you sit there at ease, nonchalant.

The gracious piping and invitation doesn't move you. And then you hear messages of warning like God laid on my heart to share today. With a call to awaken out of your sleep! To move to action! And just, oh! Press in like Jacob.

I will not let you go till you bless me. But likewise, slouch down in your seat. Leaning down on the bench.

Talking to your fellow. When's this preacher ever going to get done? Who won the ball game? You coming to the gathering next Wednesday night? Talking about the Gospel. The gracious Gospel.

The life-changing Gospel is falling on deaf ears. Because you have stopped your ears and closed them up. After Jesus gives this, He begins to do something that is very sobering.

Then, verse 20 of chapter 11 of Matthew. Then, began He to upbraid the cities. Wherein most of His mighty works were done because they repented not.

Don't miss that. Doesn't say because they believe not. Yeah, people.

Truly, this is a prophet like we've never seen before. How can you do such miracles? But I'll just stay secure in my own little religious circle. Which is what it was, a lot of this.

This was Jewish cities. I won't repent. I don't want my life to be upset.

And Jesus begins to upbraid the cities. Wherein most of His mighty works were done because they repented not. And then He says, Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Now, that I find staggering if I may use that word. Because in doing a little study, in doing a little study, Chorazin and Bethsaida were two nice little cities upon the Sea of Galilee. Mostly occupied by good people.

And, Tyre and Sidon on the other hand, they were noted for their idolatry and their wickedness. And the Jews wouldn't set foot in there because they wouldn't want to contaminate themselves. And now Jesus says, If the mighty works which were done in Bethsaida and Chorazin had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Those are sobering words this morning. It could be said maybe for us, you know, Langister County is a very plain religious community. Charity Christian Fellowship has three churches in Langister County.

Many, many Mennonite churches. You know, and maybe we could, for us to get our mind wrapped around this, say that if all the messages preached in all the Mennonite churches and all the Charity Christian Fellowship churches would be preached in Las Vegas, the idolatry capital, the gambling capital of the United States, they would have repented. I mean, I don't know if I can, I don't know if that's a fair analogy or not.

And I don't know that Las Vegas would repent. But Jesus, knowing all things, never speaking a lie, spoke the truth when He said that. That is staggering.

That wicked city and those idolatrous people that the Jewish people would not set foot in their city because they don't want to contaminate themselves with their wickedness. Jesus wrought many miracles in these Jewish cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida. And they saw Him do many mighty works.

But they believed not. Now He turns that thing around and He turns the tables and He says, You! It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you on the Day of Judgment. That is, that is just staggering.

Now if you'll connect it, connect it with us here this morning, me and you, who have heard how many sermons in our lifetime, who have had how many opportunities to be in church Sunday after Sunday after Sunday, and yet if we still refuse the gentle, loving words of Jesus or refuse the prophet crying aloud, would it not be rightly interpreted to say that it will be more tolerable for the people who never heard the gospel than for those who heard and just took their ease. This is really, really a sobering message for me and for all of us. If Christ had lived and walked among those idolatrous cities and done the miracles that He did there, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

And we hear sermon after sermon after sermon and are so slow to repent and so shallow. He says their repentance would have been deep in sackcloth and ashes. And He gives us another one.

He says, Thou Capernaum which art exalted to heaven shall be brought down to hell. For if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. Sodom.

Sodom. Christ, Jesus, are you sure? Sodom. Sodom.

Jude says, Sodom. They are set forth as an example of suffering the vengeance of eternal fire and judgment of God. And Jesus says, If Sodom would have had Christ in their midst, Sodom, the capital of homosexuality, Sodom.

Wicked Sodom. Capernaum? Oh, highly favored. Christian Sodom.

Tolerance. We love everybody. It's just a beautiful place.

Wonderful place to raise your family. No wicked homosexuals here. But yet, the manifestation of the very God of heaven in their midst.

And they repent not. Oh, he's a good man. Really secretly down deep in my heart, I have questions.

He may be the Messiah. Oh, we don't confess him openly. If we do that, we'll get put out of the synagogue.

Capernaum. Beautiful Lancaster County. Charity Christian Fellowship is there.

Many conservative Mennonite churches are there. But have we given Jesus Christ the throne of our hearts? And is he Lord of all? Or, he's a good, he's a good man. Yeah, I believe in him enough to get saved, so I don't have to go to hell when I die.

But, you know, I'm not really that radical. Well, according to the Scripture, the violent, the earnest, the sincere, the diligent, the wholehearted who press in and deny themselves and take up the cross, yeah, they take the kingdom. They seize upon it and take it unto themselves.

But those who sit back and are at ease in Lancaster County and are leaning to the Samaria, leaning to the good foundation of our heritage, I'm afraid, will someday be sorely terrified to realize I had not the Son of God. I was deluded and deceived in thinking that if I do the right religious actions, attend the right church, I can sort of be swept along with the current. But the word of the Lord Jesus says, strive to enter in.

Make your calling and election sure. A few promises. In closing, it would be awful to leave us hanging here, wouldn't it? Ask, and it shall be given you.

Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened. For everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

Ah, draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn and weep, and let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness, and humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.

So this morning, I would just, oh, just so long to urge you, take a step. Enter in. Press in.

Is there none that will stir up himself to take a hold of God and shake himself and awaken out of his sleep? Maybe you've been waiting on God, like we read there of Job, to get a hold of the scruff of the neck and shake you up and drag you to himself. And maybe God is waiting on you to, by faith, take a step toward God and come to Him. He that cometh unto Him, He will in no wise cast out.

So I urge you this morning, if there's any confusion in your heart as to trying to find your way, is God drawing me? Is He speaking to me? Can I come to God? Take a step toward God this morning. Draw nigh to God. And He will draw nigh to you.

I like the way I've seen one illustration or shared one time. You take one step toward God, and it might be just a little peepy step, and God takes a leap towards you. He will draw near to you.

Passivity and indifference, it won't bring us to God. So I urge you today, you take a step toward God. You seek God.

Because God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Yes, sinner friend. He says ye sinners, draw nigh to God, and He'll draw nigh to you.

The beautiful promises of God. Seek, ye shall find. Ask, it shall be given you.

Knock, and it shall be opened. I leave you with those promises. My brothers and sisters, my sinner friend this morning, we would have no greater joy than to see you get up off of that seat of slumber and indifference and say enough! I can do something about my condition.

I can get up, and I can by faith move toward God. And when I do that in sincerity of my heart, God is going to move toward me. Oh, thank you Jesus.

Father, Oh, Spirit of the living God, have your way in each of our hearts today. Father, I confess my need of you. Without you I am nothing.

Without you I fail, and I falter and stumble, and I grow cold and lukewarm and indifferent. But, oh Jesus, with my faith anchored in you, and abiding in Christ Jesus, there is beautiful place of fulfillment and pleasures at thy right hand. Father, this morning, would you speak courage and faith and conviction to our hearts here today.

Whatever is needed, Lord. Oh God, whatever is needed. We just commit the rest of this service to you in the name of Jesus.

Amen. Brother Nell. I guess I have to ponder, you know, what is God saying? Two weeks ago I had a message on full surrender and pretty much a message of warning.

Today we hear, again, a message of warning and a message of taking the Kingdom of God by violence and the violence taken by force. You know, pressing in to the Kingdom. I'd just like to hear from some of you brethren, you know, what is God saying? What is God saying to us? He's giving us two very clear messages of warning.

Can we have a few brothers who care to share in the back there? Yeah, I was really blessed by the message. I guess my heart's just kind of overflowing from all the different things that were said this morning. But the one thing that was standing out to me the most is faith.

And in each situation, you know, Brother Jill there, as he walked out his situation, he took one step at a time in faith that God was going to answer those unknowns that he didn't know what was going to happen with that baby. And then the family verses and song just about abiding in Jesus Christ, but yet continually stepping forward. And then, you know, this message about lethargy.

And it's so easy, even though we might be taking steps in faith to go there, it's so easy for that Spirit to enter into our own hearts and to be distracted or distract ourselves in that. Thank you, Brother. Brother Timothy, up here's another hand.

Robert? I am very blessed to hear these messages coming forth from our pulpits here. I believe it very much is what God is speaking to my heart is we have a desperate need of this. This coming out of lethargy, rising up, going forth in faith, pressing in.

Yes, God is telling us here, this is our need for this day that we live in. I think of the verse in James that says that whosoever will be a friend of this world is the enemy of God. That is so strong.

It doesn't say those that are swallowed up by this world or are indulging in everything of this world, but whosoever desireth to be a friend of this world. We need to take that warning very seriously. This is what God is telling us.

Let's wake up for the end of the age is here where deception is creeping in. We are in grave danger. I feel sometimes, well, I could be deceived.

I need to be alert and aware at all times because deception is around us. Let us go forward and take this warning very seriously. God bless you.

Could you pass that one to Solomon there? Go ahead, Luke. One of the things I believe God is speaking to us about is another way to ask the same question is how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? Have you ever wondered what are those ways that we can neglect our salvation? I think Aaron clearly gave many examples this morning how we can neglect our salvation. He gave two classes of people, those that don't have salvation and those that do but are neglecting it.

And I think he described it pretty well this morning. Solomon? Yeah, it was a very serious message this morning. And I've been thinking about this the whole week.

Kind of the spirit of this world and the spirit of God, how they are conflict with one another and what brought it to my realization. I've always been aware of it, but when we're closer home, when we realize that we can't, when we have things that we don't know what's going on and we try to fix them and it doesn't work out and finally come to the point where we have to see that our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked and who can know it? And just facing that and realizing that we can't change ourselves, but we have to commit ourselves to Christ to change by faith. And it's a beautiful thing to come to that point of honesty and realizing that's the only way it's going to happen.

And we battle in this world against the spirit of the world that we cannot overcome without the spirit of God. I was just taught this week about the spirit of Agape love and Eros love and how they're always in conflict. The world draws us with excitement and all that's in it to feel good, to look good, and be right, and all those things that we want to have, but it's not in that that we find Christ.

So, let us continue to strive. Thanks for the message. God bless.

Okay, let's rise in prayer. Father, we do rejoice in You, O God. Lord, our heart's desire is to hold firm the rejoicing of hope firm unto the end.

O God, Father, continue to speak to our hearts. Lord, You're speaking very clearly. Messages of warning.

And we pray, Father, that O God, that You would speak, Lord, very clearly in this coming week, Lord, of the message that You're trying to get across to us as a church or to individuals or whoever these messages are meant for. Father, we just call upon Your name. Please, Father, continue to probe by Your Spirit deep into the heart of our souls and lives.

Lord, we want to be at a place of fervency in our Christian life when You return. We know that You will return for those who love Your appearing. So, Father, we pray.

Lord, we do pray now for the country of Ghana. You know, Lord, the elections are taking place there today for a new president. We just call upon Your name, Father, that Your hand would be upon those elections.

O God, we know that You sovereignly hold the governments of this world in Your hand. And so, Father, we just intercede in prayer that by Your Spirit, Lord, You would watch over all of that. We pray that our missionaries and all the people that we love so dearly in Ghana can continue to live a quiet and peaceful

life.

In all godliness and honesty. Lord, we pray, Father, for peace during these elections. We pray that You would bring to naught the plots and schemes of the enemy to somehow bring turmoil and strife and contention and rigging of votes and all of that.

Father, we just call upon Your name. Please be jealous over that country and its elections today, Lord, for their new president. Thank You, Lord, we trust You.

And we pray, Father, that You would now watch over us as a congregation in the coming week, Lord. We pray that You would enable us, Lord, to hear Your voice and move forward, walking in the Spirit and going from glory to glory according to Your revealed truth in our lives. Oh, Father, we worship You.

Be with us this afternoon as we go into Water Street Rescue Mission. Bless that time. Let it be a means, Lord, of drawing those homeless men and women to Yourself, those who are without Christ and are destitute in the physical world also.

Lord, we pray that they could come to Jesus. Thank You that You came to preach the Gospel to the poor. So, Lord, dismiss us with Your grace and with Your blessing.

Give us grace to walk before You in grace and truth. Yea, all of our days in Jesus' name, Amen. God bless you.

You're dismissed.

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