

The Kingdom of Heaven Suffereth Violence

by Elvin Martin

We must be willing to get desperate for God and take our place in the army of God, even if it requires a forced entry, in order to receive the promises of God and to have our children in heaven.

Scripture: Job 1:5, Proverbs 22:6, Matthew 11:12, Mark 9:24, Luke 11:5

Topics: "Spiritual Revival", "Christian Discipleship"

Description

Elvin Martin preaches on the urgency and desperation needed to seek God's kingdom, emphasizing the need to actively pursue spiritual revival like the people in the Bible who were desperate for God. He challenges the congregation to choose Jesus over self daily, acknowledging past failures and the importance of putting on the mind of Christ consistently. Martin highlights the Doctrine of the Desperate, urging parents to fervently pray and seek God's intervention for the salvation of their children, emphasizing the seriousness of raising children in the ways of the Lord to avoid eternal consequences.

Transcript

"...there is a kingdom in which we should NOT be non-resistant. It is the spiritual kingdom of God. Matthew chapter eleven says that it is taken by force."

People in the Bible knew that if they didn't get a hold of God, they were going to die. They knew that if they did not touch the hem of His garment, they would be sick forevermore. How badly do we want revival? I'm not convinced that we want revival like we see in the Bible. People there were desperate for God.

We have a choice to make. Every morning we have to choose self or Jesus. How has our track record been? How often have we chosen Jesus unselfishly? How often have we put on the mind of Christ all day long? Is our over-riding burden that we must walk with God today and give no room to the flesh for even one minute? Most of us will have to admit that we've failed miserably. How desperately do we want the presence of God? How desperately do we see that to choose self is to receive curses and damnation? The Bible clearly says that if we sow to the flesh we shall reap destruction.

I thank God for the heritage of being raised in a godly home. My dad taught me very wonderfully how to be non-resistant. I thank God for the preachers that stood and did not go to war. They believed strongly in being the quiet of the land and peaceable. However, there is a kingdom in which we should NOT be non-resistant. It is the spiritual kingdom of God. Matthew chapter eleven says that it is taken by force. We cannot sit back passively, simply believing the sovereignty of God and saying, "Oh, God, You're going to

do it. You're going to take care of all my needs. Oh, God, You're going to save my children and save my neighbors. I tried, but nothing is happening."

I pray that God would come upon us and that we would say, "Lord, this is Your Word. Why aren't the neighbors being saved? Oh God, You promised that the fields would be white unto harvest. Where are the fields white unto harvest, Lord?" The Bible says that the Kingdom of God is taken by violence. The violent take it by force!

To be violent means, "to force, to crowd one's self into, or pass; to seize, to force." The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence. People are pressing into it. They are crowding into it, passing through a tight place. "And the violent take it by force", implies there is a forcer, one that is energetic, one that is not asleep. He sees that this Kingdom is taken by force. He sees that he has to put forth some energy. He sees that there are promises to be laid hold of, but they are not just going to be handed out to us on a silver platter. They are to be taken by faith and prayer. We must go out and claim the promises of God. I'm not saying, "name it and claim it." I'm talking about spiritual souls, spiritual things and spiritual promises. Are we going to believe them? Are we going to pray through? Or are we going to let the devil blind our eyes and just sit there and let it wait to happen?

It is the Doctrine of the Desperate. How desperate are we for our children? How desperate are we to have family devotions and teach our little ones? We can teach our children anything. But we will not always have the opportunity. Some people never have family devotions. Some others just go through its motions, just to get it done and then go out to make money. Oh, the time is coming when our children's eyes and hearts will no longer be turned toward us! Do we have this mentality...? "I'll be faithful. I'll give my tithes. I'll go to church every Sunday. I'll let the preacher preach to them. I'll just try and do the best I can." The "Best I Can" doctrine is from the pit of Hell. I simply do not believe this mentality is of the Lord. It can render us powerless and prevent us from taking our place and duty in the army of God. It is not right for one or two of our children to grow up and serve the devil and die and go to hell!

You say, "It can never happen." I say, "It can happen. It does happen all the time." Families sit for years, having their children in church every Sunday and all of a sudden, their children run out into the world and live the life of a devil and die that way. We say, "It cannot be!" I say, "It happens!" Are we going to get violent? Imagine for a moment that precious little bundle sitting on your lap sinking into the depths of hell. Think about it. Falling forever. Having sat in church all of his life, but somehow he saw in his parents that they were just going through the motions and didn't have a heart after God. Somehow their hearts were after something else.

God says in His book that He wants all of my children in Heaven, and not one of them in Hell. Who is going to believe God and accept that we as parents should take our responsibility to train, teach, pray, and cry over the souls of our children?

You say, "It surely won't happen with my children." Don't think about it too lightly. If you haven't wrestled with God much in prayer, if you haven't gotten serious before the Lord about the souls of your children, you had better fear and tremble before God.

You need to see that it is not within you to be a mother or a father on your own. You must get hold of the Living God and get some food from Heaven. Those publicans and sinners knew that unless they pressed through the crowd, they would die in their sickness. The lady who had an issue of blood knew that there was no other place to turn. That's where we have to come to. We must come to the place of knowing we

don't have it in ourselves to crucify self. Let's get violent before the Lord, saying, "Oh, God, I don't have what it takes to bring my children through. I need a revival. I need You to do something to the core of my being lest my children grow up and see in me half-heartedness. Lest they see in me that I care more about the natural things than about the spiritual things."

Where are you? What are you desperate for? "The kingdom of God suffers violence." Are you coming before God and saying, "Oh, God, I will not let You go until you bless me; until You give me back my wayward son! Oh, God, show me where I was wrong. Show me where I have failed you. I don't want to see him go to hell. God, are You not a prayer-answering God? Give me back my wayward daughter. I might have failed and fumbled. I am nothing. Have mercy on me. Watch over my little children. The devil wants to sift them like wheat. Help me to be serious tomorrow morning when I have my family devotions."

We never deserve salvation, but after we are saved we must hold on to the promises. We must say, "This is what Your Word says. It says, 'If I should train my children in the way they should go, they will not depart from it.'" It comes down to believing God and taking Him at His Word. We cannot give into unbelief and say, "Hundreds and thousands have gone before us. That's just the way it goes. Some are lost and some are saved. Every now and then, you have one from a nice family that is lost." God forbid! Do you want one of yours lost? Hell is real. Hell is hot. The fires are not quenched. The worms never die. It is dark. It is out of the presence of God forever!

I want my children in the ark. The ark is Jesus Christ, not some system. Blessed old Job would go out and offer sacrifices for his children, just in case some would sin. Let's catch a vision like that. Job was a righteous and radical man. Sometimes we have to go out on the limb a little bit. Zacchaeus went out on the limb to see Jesus. How radical have we gotten, or have we just accepted the way things are? Am I willing to get a little more radical in my private life, getting hold of God, and earnestly seeking all the lost souls? They are lost. They are going to hell. Who am I, that I don't have a burden for them? We need a shaking.

We need to get motivating power through seeing reality clearly. I need to see that unless I am vitally connected with Jesus, I will die and the children will suffer the consequences. If I walk half-heartedly through life, having other things more important than a vital relationship with Jesus, I will suffer and they will suffer. Honestly reckoning with this grim reality will motivate us to press into Jesus, to believe His scriptures and to pray through.

How desperate am I? Are we really for revival? I am not sure. People in the Bible got desperate. Remember the parable about the pearl of great price. A man was walking down the road, and he saw in a field something shiny and bright. He looked at it there, wonderfully glistening in the sun. He made his way to the field. There in the field he found a pearl of great price. He thought, "This thing is worth billions and trillions of dollars!" He decided to hide it. He went to the farmer and said, "I want to buy your field."

I can imagine the owner sitting there reading his newspaper which happened to be turned to the real estate section. The man said, "I want to buy your two-acre field for 5,000 dollars." The farmer isn't interested. He knew that he could get 40,000 for it. The man said again, "I want to buy that field. I'll give you 50,000 dollars." The farmer looked up this time, but still wasn't interested. He started playing a game with him then. How much money would that man agree upon? Finally, the man said, "I'll give you a million dollars for it." He was desperate. The farmer said, "Nah, don't want to sell it."

The man said, "I'll give you five million for it." The farmer finally consented, "Five million for two acres? It's yours!" The lesson here is that the man saw the worth of the pearl. He believed that what was in that field was worth so much more than five million dollars.

The pearl is like Christ. We must get as desperate as this man did. He sold all he had to buy the field. However, it cost so little in comparison to what he received. Now, think about your children. Yes, it might cost turning our plates upside down and missing a meal because of the burden God has laid on our hearts to pray for them. But, is that such a big cost compared to the riches of having them with us forever in heaven? We may have to put aside some sleep and get up early. We may have to study the scriptures. We may have to fast and pray until we have a headache. Maybe it is for a week. But we must get a hold of God for our children. Do we believe that?

In Luke 11:5 Jesus taught His disciples what kind of persistence He intended them to have. "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?' And he from within shall answer and say, 'Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.'" I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth."

Importunity indicates shamelessness. The Vine's Dictionary says, "It is used in the Lord's illustration concerning the need of earnest and perseverant prayer. If shameless persistence can obtain bread from a neighbor, certainly earnest prayer will receive our Father's answers."

Imagine it, the slumbering man awoke to his friend and said, "Go away. I'm in bed." But the man keeps beating on the door; finally the man realizes that he must give his friend what he wants or he will not go away! Who is willing to get desperate?

And now a word to all of you who are the oldest child in your family, you have a special responsibility. You have little siblings following you. They look up to you. Don't you doubt it! They want to be like you. I pray that the burden will fall upon you, that you will be a good example to your little siblings. In a sense, you are going to give an account about how you live your life in your home; your reactions, your blessings to your mom and dad, how you handle yourself. God can use you in your home. Get a vision. Get a burden to pray, to be a good brother or sister, to be a good example. Get a vision of taking them off in a room somewhere and praying with them for mama or papa.

Can we be willing to say, "God, I cannot do it? I cannot raise my children. I don't have the burden. I'm putting on my wife what I should be doing. I cannot do it, God. Open my eyes. Stamp eternity on my heart." Let us prove to God that we do want revival; that we can get violent!

Get violent with God. It might require a forced entry. The devil and the flesh may make it a tight passage for us to get through sometimes. But let us break through. Break through. Break through in prayer!

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