

Kingdom Violence

by Richard E. Bieber

Kingdom violence refers to the process of dealing with sin in our lives and making decisions that bring us from the old nature to the new nature.

Scripture: Psalm 51:10, Isaiah 1:2, Isaiah 2:5, Matthew 5:27, Matthew 10:34, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 6:12, Hebrews 9:22, James 4:7

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Repentance"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the violent and disturbing decisions needed to transition from the old nature to the new nature, drawing parallels from Isaiah's warnings to Israel and the violent disturbances in their lives. He emphasizes the necessity of facing and dealing with sin in our own lives before we can possess the land for the King, urging a violent approach to sin by running to the cross for forgiveness and offering ourselves up for change. By confronting sin with courage and authority, we can experience the freedom and mercy God intended for His people.

Transcript

I'd like to begin by reading Isaiah 1 verses 2 through 3 and Isaiah 2 verse 5. And what we're talking about is making decisions that bring us from the old nature to the new nature. And for most of us, if not all of us, at some point in our life when we make decisions that bring us from the old nature to the new nature, those decisions are violent...they're disturbing...upsetting. They're not decisions that are easily made in a, "Oh, yeah, why didn't I think of that?" attitude.

It would be helpful to read all of Isaiah chapters 1 and 2 to get a clear understanding of how Israel became trapped in their sin and the sin of the people surrounding them.

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for, the Lord has spoken: "Sons have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people does not understand." - Isaiah 1:2-3

House of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord. - Isaiah 2:5

What we're talking about is decisions that bring us from the old nature to the new nature. And we're going to take a look at Isaiah and the people of Israel several hundred years before Christ. We'll take a look at Paul... and of course, what's more important...a look at our own Lord...JESUS.

Understand what Isaiah was seeing when all this was going on. There were armies from Syria, from Assyria, and various other tribes in the region, fighting, killing, jockeying for position in power, as they all waited for the armies of Babylon to come down. And when they did, not much was left standing. They were vicious, they were crude

they killed men,

women,

children,

animals,

infants.... anything that was in the way they destroyed.

Understand what God has used to bring his people to a place of obedience, to a place of submission. I'm not suggesting that God is some kind of hard ogre, but I am suggesting that people maintain a hard heart. And that often it takes a violent disturbance in our life...a shaking...before we realize

where we were,

where we are,

where we need to be... .from the old nature to the new.

We live in a war zone. These battlefields were drawn a long time ago. God has established these battle lines from the beginning....this is a war. Hopefully, when we wake up every morning we don't prepare ourselves to go out into a world that says,

"I'm O.K.....you're O.K.....and it's going to be another fine day."

This is a battle zone, And we're not just talking about the inner city...we're talking about "spiritually"this is a battle zone. Wherever you are it's a battle zone, and the battle lines have been established by God. Jesus has established his church in the middle of this battle zone. In the middle of all this violence Jesus has established his church and he has commissioned his people to go forward and take territory for the king... possess it.

Let's take a look at Paul. When Paul, in Corinthians, says,

"Behold, all things have become new... .you're a new creation....a new creature,"

Do we really believe for a minute that what Paul was saying was some sort of magic that took place when you came to know the Lord? Do we really believe for a second that this was going to happen so gradually that we would have never noticed what kind of people we were before?

Before we can go out and take the land.....

Before we can go out and speak an effective word from God...a word that has authority, not to be confused with

a word that has arrogance or self-righteousness...but

- a word that has authority,
- a word that we know God has worked out in our life..
- a word that brings life,
- a word that brings hope,
- a word that shakes the ground,
- a word that brings a sense of disturbance.

And we're not talking about going out with a haughty, high mind. Look at what God had to do to the people of Israel in Isaiah chapters 1 and 2. Look at the sin in those verses that those people were indulged in....and continued in....so much that it became so easy that they took on everybody else's sin too.

Before we can go out and possess the land for the king we have to deal first, violently, with the sin in our own life....there's no other way. Don't worry about your brother or sister (the speck in their eye) when you've got a log jam in your eye. We have got to deal with the sin violently in our own life before we can possess the land for the king.

Now, what does this mean? Does it mean that we're going to beat up on each other? We're going to beat up on ourselves because this thing...this sin...keeps coming back to me? Absolutely not! Does it mean that I'm going to get down on myself and beat myself up because God exposes in his light some hidden sin that I thought I had tucked away nice and neat? Absolutely not.

What it does mean is that I realize my sin....

I realize those things in my life God has put his finger on....I realize them as a hindrance in my walk with Jesus. I cannot deal with the sin in my own life with sugarplums and lollipops and excuses. Again, consider Paul. Paul had to change everything that was happening in his life when he was blinded for three days. His mind went through a torment, through a violent reaction about all that he thought was right....all that he held dear.....

all he thought was true.

These things were completely wiped away, torn right out of his heart....

- even the persecution of the church.....
- even to the killing of those infidels who somehow latched on to this Jesus.

He thought what he was doing was right. And to take that out from underneath him was something violent. He struggled with this...back and forth...every day.

- His heart was in turmoil.
- His mind was in turmoil.

He was saddened and confused....it was violent...it was a shaking in his life.

That's what made him aware,

that's what made him realize who Jesus was.

What's more important...consider our Lord who, all through his ministry, from the beginning when God came into this world in human frame, did he come in a quiet calm, peaceful manner? Absolutely not! From day one there was turmoil in the government, in the land. There was disturbance and violence. Every male child two years old and younger was put to death...that's violence...that's disturbing. But it was done...it was necessary.

All the way up to the cross Jesus is moved around as a child...from place to place...to be hidden...right up to the time of the cross when Jesus finally breathes his last breath, after being beaten violently...his beard pulled from his face... they finally thrust a sword into his side to make it final, and the ground shakes beneath them. The curtain of the temple of the holy of holies is torn in two ...is that God walking in on egg shells? Absolutely not. That's God making a violent proclamation to the kingdom of darkness that things will change. That's God dealing a violent blow to the power of darkness. There's no other way for the forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood...that's how it had to be.

We cannot afford sacrifices that offer our conscience an excuse. We can't afford sacrifices that don't deal with the very depth of our heart and our mind and our soul... that bring about change. When God puts his finger on something in our life...and it's different for all of us, only we know what that is...that's disturbing... especially if I've kept it well hidden for a while. This is what God's light does. When God's light comes on, when it transcends the darkness in our hearts, it's not like walking into the cupboard and turning on the light so we can find a can of soup.....it has a blinding effect....it has a revealing effect...that's disturbance. That's the kind of violence we're talking about....that's kingdom violence. That's us coming to a point where we have to make a decision that brings us from the old nature to the new nature. God doesn't do that for us...not unless we allow him.

We will know that we have dealt violently with the sin in our life when we face it, when we realize it as sin and a hindrance to my walk with Jesus. We will deal with it violently when we continue to bring it before the cross of Calvary no matter how long it takes or how many times we have to go back there...and at whatever the cost. And we will have dealt violently with the sin in our life when we surrender to God....a willingness to be changed...

"I want to see something happen...I want you to change my life." It can be frightening when God really begins to expose what we're like and what our attitudes are. We will know that we have dealt violently with our sin when we do these three things:

1. Deal violently with the sin in our life....
2. Run to the cross as often as it takes.....
3. Offer ourselves up to Jesus to bring change in our life.

Scripture is very clear about running away from sin and running to God...about hiding in his mercy and his grace. God reveals his grace and his forgiveness when we're able to see our need for it. If we can't see our need for his mercy and forgiveness, we don't realize the sin is in our life and there is no grace from

God... no mercy. There's no forgiveness because we don't think we need it, God has been putting the light on, but we haven't been seeing anything.

Run to the cross. We know we've dealt with it violently when we run to the cross. And, we continue to stay at the foot of the cross...what ever the cost. Regardless of how many times it takes... we stay at the cross of Calvary. That's where forgiveness is...it's in the blood of Jesus. Things haven't changed...it's been the same for 2000 years...it's the blood of Jesus.

When we run to that cross we deal a violent blow to the sin in our life. We deal a violent blow to the kingdom of evil. Darkness is exposed...something's taking place. We're shaking the ground that the kingdom of evil tries to establish.

We'll know for certain that we've dealt with the sin in our life violently when we offer ourselves up for change.

"Lord, here I am. It's not much, but I need to make some changes. I see this thing in my life. I finally caught a glimpse of that light and I see what you've revealed." What do I need to do with this?...I run to the cross, and I keep running back to the cross as often as it takes to make that change in my life. And, God will make that change.

- God will lead you in the direction you need to go....

- God will speak to you what you need to hear....

- God will bring brothers and sisters in your life that you need to see, to talk with....

- God will reveal it to you in his word...

and you will be able to have the courage to make a change. Then, when you go out into the world to possess the territory for the king, you will speak with freedom and authority from God. Not a freedom of self-righteousness or a freedom that's arrogant, that tells people where they ought to be and what they should be doing and what they need to be hearing and what church they need to be in, but a word that has mercy, life, his goodness, his faithfulness. A word that speaks with authority... the word that Jesus speaks through you. You will know the freedom to take the territory and possess it for the king.

Let's look at Matthew chapter 5 and what perception Jesus had of sin...how he dealt with the temptation in his own life...truly God and truly man...he didn't play around with this.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart...."

That's sin...and you have to deal with it now. You can't just brush it off as, 'everybody looks...as long as I don't touch' ... is the mentality of the world. It's wrong. It's going to boil up into something you can't deal with.

"If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it's better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away....."

I'm not talking about hammering yourself into the ground... that's a sin in itself. If you beat up on yourself pretty soon self-pity is going to convince you that you're hopeless. That's a lie and it's not from God. I'm talking about facing the reality of our own sin...about decisions that are going to bring us from the old nature to the new nature. God does not work magic...he doesn't do things with illusion. That's not how it happens. Paul worked out his salvation every day...decisions were made that shook the ground he stood on so that the ground would become a little firmer...so he could stand on the rock...JESUS.

"Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it. --Matthew 10:34-39

Tell me that's not disturbing...that it doesn't shake the ground you stand on...to
love the Lord whom you have not seen more than your mother and father, more
than your son and daughter....that's violent...that calls for action. But, I guarantee
you that if you deal with sin in your life in this fashion, God will bring about change.
The peace that God intended all along....
The comfort that God has intended all along....
The freedom that God has intended all along for his people will become a reality.

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