

# Violent Men

by Charles Leiter

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It is a great blessing and privilege to be here with you again. It's been a couple of years I was over here. I don't know if some of you may have been here then but I was just thinking before this time began here tonight, just the blessedness of getting to be here and speak to you and share the word of God with you. And what I want us to do tonight is to read a passage from Matthew 11. We will read several verses here. Is this good enough? Can you hear me in back? Getting any amplification? Okay. Matthew 11 and we will read verses 7 to 15. It says,

*As these were going away, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' palaces. But why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you and one who is more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it was written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face who will prepare your way before you.' Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist, yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and violent men take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. If you care to accept it, he himself is Elijah who was to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

I'd like for us to center our attention tonight on one verse and that one verse is a very glorious verse and a mysterious verse and it is verse 12. He says, *"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force."*

What does the Lord mean when he says "the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and violent men take it by force"? What is he talking about? I've read some commentators on this and some of them say that these words should be understood in a negative way. They say it's talking about persecution, violence against Christians. Others refer to John 6:15, you remember it says they tried to come and take him by force or violently come and try to make him a king but I think it's very clear that our Lord is not thinking of anything like that at all. That's not what he's talking about. He's not thinking of something negative, he's thinking of something that is very positive and commendable.

Now, how can I say that? Well, if you keep your place here, I don't know how many of you have your Bibles but if you have them, turn to Luke 16. Luke 16 and we'll see a parallel passage, Luke 16:16. Jesus says, "The law and the prophets were proclaimed until John, since then the Gospel of the kingdom of God is preached and everyone is forcing his way into it." Now, the significant thing here, this word "forcing" is the same word "violence." It has to do with violence so if we just wanted to read Matthew 11 in this way, you would say, "the kingdom of heaven," let's switch the word, the kingdom of heaven is forced. "The kingdom of heaven is being forced and forceful men seize it for themselves." Or if you wanted to switch it over in Luke, you could say that, verse 16, "The law and the prophets were proclaimed until John, since then the Gospel of the kingdom of God is preached and every one is violencing his way into it." The same words are used in both these passages. So, in other words, he's talking here in both these passages about entering the kingdom of heaven. That's a good thing, isn't it? Talking about entering the kingdom of heaven. Everyone is forcing his way into the kingdom of heaven. He's giving a description here, in other words, of the type of person that enters the kingdom of heaven.

Now, this is quite an amazing thing. What type of person enters the kingdom of heaven? The only type of people that get into the kingdom of heaven are violent people. Isn't that something? Violent people are the only ones that get into the kingdom of heaven. Do you realize that in order to enter the kingdom of heaven you're going to have to be a violent person? Now, we know right away, what does this mean? Well, we're not talking about physical violence, we know that right off the bat. In Matthew 5, Jesus says, "Resist not the one who is evil. If somebody slaps you on the right cheek, turn the other one. If somebody forces you," there is that idea again, forcing, "if he forces you to go a mile, go with him two." So he's not talking about that kind of violence. This is something more though. He's not talking about any kind of natural violence at all. Not talking about you having a forceful personality and asserting yourself and believing in yourself and being that type of person. You say, "You know, I'm not that kind of person. I'm kind of weak." Well, that's great. You have a possibility of being a violent person then in the right way because if you've still got that self-confidence and that violence in that sort of way, you know, pride, you're going to be ruled out as one of these spiritually violent people getting into the kingdom of heaven. He's talking about a different kind of violence. He's not talking about natural aggressiveness or confidence but he's talking about a violence that comes from a holy desperation. He's not talking about a violence that comes out of strength, he's talking about a violence that comes out of weakness. You get so weak that you get violent, that's what he's talking about. He's talking about a violence that is born out of humility,

not pride and out of need and not sufficiency and we'll see this, I hope, as we go along. It's the meek and those who are weak in themselves that have the kind of violence that Jesus is talking about.

Alright, here's where we've come: the Lord Jesus Christ says that the only people that get into the kingdom of heaven are violent people. What is he talking about? Why would this be? Why is it necessary? Well, for a number of reasons but I think that you can sum them up, group them in two main groups as to why violence is necessary and I hope all this will start to become clear as we go along here. First of all, violence is necessary because of the nature of the gate that you've got to pass through to get into the kingdom of heaven. The Lord Jesus talks about this in Matthew 7. Do you remember what he says? "Enter by the narrow gate. The gate is wide, the way is broad that leads to destruction and many go in that." Now, you don't want to get the idea that this broad gate has to do with people like Hitler or, you know, Hindus or something like that. The broad gate is talking about professing Christians. You go right on in Matthew 7 and he says, "many." He said, "Many will go in that broad gate. Many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not cast out demons in your name? Did we not do miracles in your name?'" So the "many" that go in the broad gate are professing Christians. They have some kind of a crisis of some kind, they go through a broad, easy gate and then they walk on a broad way after they get through there. But he says, "Strive to enter in at the narrow gate. Try to get through that narrow gate because," he says, "there are few that find that." It requires violence because of the nature of the gate. The nature of the gate itself means violence. In other words, it means more than saying, "Lord, Lord," he says, "He that does the will of my Father in heaven," whatever the cost, doing the will of the Father in heaven. You have to be violent.

Another place, Luke 13:23 and 24. They are going along there one day and they say to the Lord, "Lord, are there few that are being saved?" What do you think Jesus said to those? What would you answer to it? Somebody says, "Are there few people that are being saved?" What did Jesus say? Does anybody remember? He said, the very next thing he said, "Strive to enter at the narrow gate," and the Greek word is the word "agonize," agonizomai or something to that effect, agonize to get in through the narrow gate.

Strive to enter in because he said, what did he say? "Many will seek to enter and will not be able." Now, isn't that amazing? That's amazing to me. "Many people," Jesus said, "are going to seek to get in and they're not going to be able." Why not? Because they're not violent. That's the reason why. The rich young ruler, you remember? He was seeking to get in the gate. He comes up and falls down before Jesus and says, "Good teacher, what must I do to be saved?" He didn't make

it through the gate. Why not? He wasn't violent enough to get rid of his idol, his riches. That's a big thing. That's why Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." Why? Because it's going to cost him stuff that he doesn't want to give. He doesn't want to get violent enough. Now, you may not be rich but you're going to have to be violent. I'll guarantee you, Jesus said it, you're going to have to be violent in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. That's the nature of the gate. There is no sliding in, you know, without violence. It is going to cost you everything to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. We will see this as we go along here.

The nature of the gate itself requires violence. You cannot bring your idols and your sins and your self life through that gate and the Lord Jesus brings this out in many places. I want to just look at two or three. Luke 14:25 and 26. You'll see some of this violence. Luke 14:25 and 26, "Now great multitudes were going along with him and he turned and said to them, 'If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife,'" amazing, "'and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he can't be my disciple.'" He says, "You've got to hate your own life." That's pretty violent. Hate your own father and mother and brothers and sisters and wife and children. What's that talking about? It's talking about something like Abraham taking his beloved son, Isaac, up there and being ready to kill him. That's violent. I mean, it's a holy violence. It's a fearful thing, really it is.

Right here in this passage, the next verse, "whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple." Another violent Scripture and then I've always been amazed at this one, verse 33 right here in Luke 14, "So therefore no one of you," you know, the Lord doesn't give us very many outs, does he? You would think he would at least say there would be a few or some of you are going to have to give up but he says, "no one of you can be my disciple who does not give up all his own possessions." An amazing statement. That's a violent statement.

Then again in Mark 9. Let's turn to this if you have your Bible. Mark 9:43, he says, "If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than having your two hands to go into hell into the unquenchable fire." Verse 45, "If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. Better for you to enter life lame than having your two feet to be cast into hell." Verse 47, "If your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out. Better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than having two eyes to be cast into hell where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched." In other words, what is Jesus saying? He says, "You have got to deal violently with sin and it's not an option of whether or not you'll be a carnal Christian or not. It has to do with heaven and hell."

He says, "If your hand causes you to stumble, to sin." He's not talking about literally cutting your hand off. Remember, we're not talking about physical violence, we're talking about spiritual violence. "If that thing stumbles you and causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. Your eye, tear it out and throw it away," because this is not a matter of how many gold bricks you get on Main Street or something, this is a matter of whether or not you enter the kingdom of God or you are cast into hell. Isn't that what he said? He says it right here three times. In other words, for the Christian, there is a violence toward sin and this thing is life and death. It's not something to treat lightly.

That's the words of Jesus. Now, sometimes it doesn't fit our theology very well but you're going to have to deal with what he said. This is what he said. You know, to get it down into the real world, if tv causes you to sin, take it and throw it out the window, you know, on the second floor and smash it. That's what he's saying. There came a time in my life, when I was in college, I went through a time of such lukewarmness and God began to deal with me and show me what it meant to be a Christian and, I mean, it was just like you feel this light drawing you into the light and you start to understand a little bit, you know, God is real. God is real and you're like reaching out for him and he's going away from you and you find yourself day after day, you know, dull and lifeless and every now and then you get a little glimpse of reality and you feel the call for something more, that God is really real and you realize, "Wait a minute, I can't play around with this thing over here and at the same time have God."

You know, in my life, right after I got out of college, it just began to dawn on me. It wasn't some snap deal or something like that, it was just gradually it began to settle on my soul. God was saying to me, "Look, I don't want you to go to anymore movies, period, until I show you." Now, I'm not telling you that this is for you, I'm just telling you an example of what God did. He says, "If it causes you to stumble." If it doesn't cause you to stumble, fine but it began to settle on my soul God was saying to me, not necessarily bad stuff, he was just saying, "I want you in this area because this, you know if you're honest with me, you know this is drawing you away from really knowing me." And it settled on me for weeks at a time and finally I saw this was really God. This isn't just some guilt trip or something. This is God talking to me and I said, "Okay Lord, I won't go again unless you show me that I'm supposed to do it." For 20 years or more I never went again and God used that at that time in my life when I was just out of college. He used that to save me from all kinds of stuff.

Now, I don't make it an absolute, it's something I've gone, you know, I felt that I should go back again in some cases but what I'm talking to you about is that

you've got to face this reality of whether or not you want to know God or whether you want to give your time...I mean good things. I'm not talking about bad stuff. I mean, it's possible to waste a whole night just being with your friends and nothing...you didn't spend five minutes seeking God. You didn't read your Bible. You didn't pray. You didn't do anything and you wonder why it is God is far away and unreal. I'll tell you why it is: because you're not being violent, you see? That's what we're talking about. It might be good things. For some people it's hobbies and that kind of thing. I know a pastor that collected arrowheads and he had arrowheads all through his house. One day a doctor was in there and he said, "This is fantastic. How much would you take for it?" and he put some massive price on it because he didn't want to sell them and he groaned, the doctor said, "I'll take it," and he bought all his arrowheads. He said he was so sick he was almost physically sick when those arrowheads went out of the house. What's happening there? He's got an idol, that's what it is and God broke him of it so that now he could look at arrowheads and love them. He enjoys them but he doesn't covet them, want to have them.

You see, one thing that God insists for you and me is he insists he's going to be our God and if you're a Christian you want him to be your God. You want him. I mean, there are areas, you know these areas here that are pulling you and deep down in your heart, even though you know the flesh wants to cling to that, deep down in your heart you say, "I want you to be my God. I want you to be my God and I want to be your child and all that that means."

You've got to deal violently with things. You've got to deal violently with sin. There came a time in my life back when I was, I guess it was probably about the time I got out of college, I began to realize, "Look, I can't go down that aisle that has all those magazines in it. I can't go down that aisle because I'll end up sinning." I'm even talking about even in the grocery store. I just began to realize I can't do that. That's weird, you know. Yeah, it's violent. You enter into life without members. Everybody else thinks you're a weirdo, maybe, you know, but what it means is that you enter into life.

There is a pastor out in New Jersey that is well known all over the world and my co-pastor, I think he's the one that told me this, he said that he read that that guy, that pastor, has his wife look through Newsweek and all those magazines and tear out all the garbage photos because he wants to read the magazine. You say, "That's pretty far out," and I'm using words that are 100 years old, aren't I? Anyway, I'm not doing that intentionally to try to relate to you, that's the way I talk. Anyway, you say, "That's pretty extreme." Yeah, it's extreme. It really is extreme. Question: how is your thought life? How are you doing? You see? That's when it

gets down to the reality of it. Are we being violent? Are we being violent in our desire to know God and to have eternal life?

There came a time in my life where things kind of came to a crisis and I realized, you know, "I want to know God," and I went out one night, I was at some special meetings and I went out under the moonlight and I was crying out to God, you know, and I was just dry as I could be. Then I just sat there for a while and it just kind of dawned on me, another one of those things where the Holy Spirit just kind of quietly tells you and this is the thought that came into my mind, "What would you do different if God was as real in your life as he should be, as you know he should be? What would you change about your life if he was as real as he ought to be? What would you do different?" Well, I said, "I know one thing I'd do, I'd sell my black leather jacket. I don't think it's probably the best thing and I'd sell my umpteen-teen dollar stereo that I had." I think I had already sold my motorcycle at that time. This was stuff, again, I'm not saying these are absolutes, it was something God was showing me. I know one thing I'd do, I'd go back, you know that picnic table that that other guy and I tore up back years ago. We tore up that guy's picnic table. I knew I had done it and I have never gone back to that guy and gotten it right. I know one thing I'd do if God was as real as he should be, I'd go back and get that right. I'd go and confess that and those seats that we tore up in the movie theater that time, I'd go back and tell him about that. That's one thing I would do. Then I just started writing down the stuff that I would do if God was as real as he should be and by the time it was over, I had a list and by the grace of God, every one of those things I was able to go back and get it made right.

I'm not talking about you trying to cook up some kind of guilt that you don't have, introspection and that kind of thing but a lot of times what happens is somebody just mentions something like this and wham, that thing comes up and you know in your heart and mind God is talking to you about that. You didn't think it up, he brought it to your mind and you get that thing taken care of and, I'm telling you, my life was transformed by obedience to those things that God showed me to do and it wasn't any big experience, you see, it was just being violent.

I have a friend who is a pastor now and before he became a Christian he was a pretty rough guy and he was particularly obnoxious when he'd get drunk and he came to know the Lord and one of the things that he and another guy that was a very rough character, they had gone one time and they had taken rocks and just broken out the windows in this building, one whole side of the building. After he became a Christian, God brought that to his mind and now, this is violent. It's not easy. You go back and go to that place and you tell them, you know, "I'm the guy that broke those windows out." That's not easy to do. I know a guy that had embezzled \$5,000 from 7-11. He had to go back and tell them and somebody told

him, they said, "You don't need to do that. You don't need to go back and get that made right. Just confess it." But he knew in his heart, he knew that was not right.

Anyway, my friend went back and confessed what he had done breaking out those windows. Alright, some time later he saw the guy that he had done it with and started telling the guy, he said, "Rodney, I've come to know the Lord. I've become a Christian." Do you know what the first thing he said was? "What about those windows?" Isn't that amazing? And he could say, "I've got that taken care of." You see, it's violence and, beloved, there is life there. There is life if you will be violent. If you won't be violent, I didn't say it, Jesus said it: but death. There is death.

Psalm 18:37, David says, "I pursued my enemies and overtook them. I did not turn back until they were consumed. I shattered them so that they were not able to rise." That's a violent attitude toward sin. Don't turn back until you destroy that thing. You give it any little inch and it will work its way right back in. It will. The gate is narrow and it requires violence.

Why else is violence necessary? Not only is the gate by the nature of the gate violence is necessary but there is another reason violence is necessary and that is: you've got all kinds of opposition standing against you to try to keep you from getting in. Let me give you a quote from Pilgrim's Progress. John Bunyan gives a picture of this, he says,

"I saw also, that the Interpreter took him again by the hand, and led him into a pleasant place, where was built a stately palace, beautiful to behold; at the sight of which Christian was greatly delighted. He saw also upon the top thereof certain persons walking, who were clothed all in gold.

"Then said Christian may we go in thither?

"Then the Interpreter took him, and led him up towards the door of the palace; and behold, at the door stood a great company of men, as desirous to go in, but durst not. There also sat a man at a little distance from the door, at a table-side, with a book and his inkhorn before him, to take the names of them that should enter therein; he saw also that in the doorway stood many men in armor to keep it, being resolved to do to the men that would enter, what hurt and mischief they could. Now was Christian somewhat in amaze. At last, when every man started back for fear of the armed men, Christian saw a man of a very stout countenance come up to the man that sat there to write, saying, 'Set down my name, sir'; the which when he had done, he saw the man draw his sword, and put a helmet on his head, and rush towards the door upon the armed men, who laid upon him with deadly force; but the man, not at all discouraged, fell to cutting and hacking most fiercely."

That's the way you've got to approach the Christian life.

"So after he had received and given many wounds to those that [get this] attempted to keep him out; he cut his way through them all, and pressed forward into the palace; at which there was a pleasant voice heard from those that were within, even of those that walked upon the top of the palace, saying, 'Come in, come in, Eternal glory thou shalt win.'

"So he went in, and was clothed with such garments as they. Then Christian smiled, and said, I think verily I know the meaning of this."

Did you know that's the way it is or did somebody lie to you? That's the way the Christian life is. Sometimes, not all the time, but sometimes that's the way it is. One of the men in our church liked this passage and a friend of mine painted him a picture. It's got the castle there; it's got the men standing in front to keep him out; and you can just see part of the hand and the pen that is writing this fellow's name in there; and the guy's got his sword drawn and he is heading in. That's the attitude that we're to have because there is great opposition to entering the kingdom.

Now, listen, I want to give you some Scripture. I'm not just saying this. Acts 14:22, "Through many tribulations, we must enter the kingdom of heaven." Through many tribulations we must. There is no question about it. Paul says we are destined for this. Now, you may not get beat up physically but you're going to suffer if you follow God. There is suffering involved. I'll tell you one area of suffering: you're going to get suffering from the devil. You see, do you realize this? You have an objective enemy outside of you that does not want you to live the Christian life. Even if you didn't have any sin in yourself at all, let's suppose you were perfect, you don't have any sin inside, you've got an enemy on the outside of you that does not want you to have victory. When you get up tomorrow morning, you're in enemy territory. You've got an enemy that does not want you to succeed in the Christian life. I'm not talking about what sin you've got inside you, I'm talking about even if you were perfect. Look at the Lord Jesus Christ, he didn't have one sin within, he had all kinds of satanic opposition. The devil hates you. If you're a true Christian, he hates you. He does not want you to make it. He does not want you to walk with God, he wants to see you defeated.

Not only the devil, men will oppose you, persecute you. I just read today in my daily readings, Jesus said, "Beware of men." He said, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." The picture there is a room full of sheep in here and outside there is a bunch of hungry wolves and you send them out, you know, one at a time, sending those sheep out there. They're going to get eaten alive. He said, "Beware of men. You've got to be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves." You

cannot afford to have sin in your life and you cannot afford to be stupid. You've got to be awake about this thing. Beware.

Not only men but false teachers. False teachers will try to mislead you and keep you from getting through the door. Now, this is amazing. Let me just read it to you, this is from Matthew 23:13, Jesus says, "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men, for you do not enter in yourselves nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." Now, here's opposition. Why does it require violence to get in? The nature of the gate itself but not only that, you've got opposition. You've got guys that ought to be telling you how to get in and they are standing in the way hindering you from getting in by telling you a bunch of lies that are not in the Bible. Now, that is rampant in America today.

How do they block the narrow way? How do they keep people from going in the narrow way? Well, one way Jesus said is that they have taken away the key. Do you remember that? Luke 11:32, let me read that one to you, that's the wrong passage. Luke 11:52, "Woe to you lawyers for you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves," he's talking about entering in. "You did not enter in yourselves and those who were entering you hindered." You have taken away the key of knowledge. You've got to be violent about that. The men who should have been giving the way of knowledge of salvation, they had actually lost the key and buried it under a mountain of false teaching and you've got to be violent to get that key. You've got to be violent in your desire to know the truth and your desire to know God no matter what it costs.

Let me just read another one to you in Proverbs. This is one that has meant so much to me over the years. This is what the Lord says, "My son, if you will receive my sayings and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding for if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding. If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God." It just doesn't just fall on you, you've got to cry for discernment. I mean, as students, I hope you know something about this: get away from everybody else and you go out and walk the streets and you cry to God, "I want to know you! I want to know the truth! Teach me! Open my eyes that I could behold these wonderful things! I want to know you!" If you seek her as silver, you do not find silver, you know, just laying around on top of the ground. God doesn't do that, he hides it. "It's the glory of God to hide a matter, it's the glory of kings, princes to search out a matter." If you seek her as silver.

Proverbs 23:23, "Buy the truth and sell it not." Do you know what? It's possible for you to have the truth. It's possible for you to know what is true unshakably. It doesn't matter whether everybody around disagrees with you, you know absolutely that it's true. It's possible to have the truth. I'll tell you what else: it's going to cost you something. Why does he say, "Buy the truth"? It's going to cost. There is a cost to having truth. I mean, some people that have truth pay a terrific cost for it and it is much cheaper and easier to believe lies. It costs to have the truth.

What else about that verse? "Buy the truth and sell it not." It's going to cost to have the truth, what else is he saying? No matter how much it costs, it's worth it. That's what he's saying. It's worth it.

Well, the Bible is full of illustrations of violent men and violent women. I just want to close here by giving you a few examples of this. Jesus said and this was in an historical setting, he says, "The law and the prophets were preached up until John." Now he says, "Now the kingdom of heaven is being preached and everybody is forcing their way in." Violent men are violencing their way in. "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence." Who was he talking about? He had some people in mind. You can read about them in the Gospels, some of them. Let me just give you a few examples. Luke 8:42, "This man Jairus had an only daughter who was about 12 years old and she was dying. As he went, the multitude were pressing against him and a woman who had a hemorrhage for 12 years and could not be healed by anyone came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak and immediately her hemorrhage stopped and Jesus said, 'Who is the one who touched me?' And while they were all denying it, Peter said, 'Master, the multitudes are crowding and pressing upon you.' Jesus said, 'Somebody did touch me for I was aware that power had gone out of me.' And when the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before him and," now get this, "declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched him." That was embarrassing. She had a flow of blood that made her ceremonially unclean and had for years. She blurted all that out right in front of everybody. The reason why she told him in the presence of all the people, "and how she had been immediately healed. He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace.'"

You know the picture here. There is a massive group of people pushing and shoving all around Jesus and it is not going to be easy for a little frail woman who has been bleeding to death for 12 years to make her way through that on her hands and knees but she touched the fringe of his cloak, she was crawling. What kind of person would do that? I'll tell you: a violent person who is weak and helpless and has got to get to the Lord and get help. Our problem is not that we are too weak, our problem is we're too strong. We're not desperate. She didn't have

anywhere else. She had nowhere else to go and sometimes you've got to push past other Christians. She had to get past the disciples even to get to him and all the discouragements that other people will heap on you to try to stop you from doing what God is calling you to do and seeking him. She pushed past all the opposition and when she got there, she touches his garment and she is healed and then what does she do? She blurts out everything in front of everybody.

That's violence. I've seen people that are violent before. I mean, right in the midst of a big group. People are sharing their testimony or something and one person just comes out and says, "For ten years I have been lying. I am lost." Or they come out with something else, things you don't want to get out there. It's violent but do you know what? Anybody that is violent will make it into the kingdom of heaven. You cover all this stuff over, you know, smooth it over and protect yourself and go to hell. That's what it amounts to.

Mark 20:29-34, we don't have too many more here. I'm sorry, did I say Mark? There isn't a Mark 20. Matthew 20, all you Bible students should have caught me on that right away. I'm sure you did. Matthew 20:29, "And as they were going out from Jericho a great multitude followed him and behold two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out saying, 'Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!' and the multitude told them to be quiet." No, they sternly told them to be quiet. They got ugly about it. They said, "Shut up!" "They sternly told them to be quiet and they said, 'Oh, excuse me, I'm sorry about it. I won't do that anymore.'" No, it says, "They cried out all the more." They were violent. These men were violent, an example of a violent person. "They cried out all the more saying, 'Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!' Jesus stopped and called them and said, 'What do you wish me to do for you?'" and so on.

Matthew 9:27-28. We looked at some of these last time I was here in the messages on persistence in prayer and actually in persistence in prayer you see the same thing, this violence. Matthew 9:27-28, "As Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him crying out and saying, 'Have mercy on us, Son of David!' And after he had come into the house, the blind men came up to him and Jesus said to them, 'Do you believe that I am able to do this?' And they said to him, 'Yes, Lord.'" Now we read right over that. It says after he came into the house. He just kept on walking. They are crying out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" He just ignored them. He went on into the house and they had the audacity to follow him into the house and they got healed.

Luke 9:37-38, "And it came about on the next day when they had come down from the mountain, a great multitude met him and behold a man from the multitude shouted out saying, 'Teacher, I beg you to look at my son for he is my only boy and behold a spirit seizes him and suddenly he screams and it throws him

into convulsions!" Can you imagine that? That's a little bit embarrassing, isn't it? To shout out in front of the whole multitude, "I've got a son that's full of demons." You know, most parents, do you know why a lot of parents or kids don't get any help? They're so afraid of anybody thinking that they're not the perfect parent they won't admit and cry out and say, "Lord, help me!" or share it with the people of God and say, "This is a problem. I've got a problem here. I can't handle it. There is a need here," and you expose yourself. You see, that's violence.

I love that one in Mark 2:4, we don't need to read it, but you remember Jesus is preaching and those four guys are bringing their friend and they can't get in and they open a hole. Do you realize those are tile roofs? Can you imagine if I'm standing here right now trying to teach and somebody is tearing the roof out over my head? I mean, there is junk falling down and everything. It was ridiculous what they were doing. They tore a hole out of the roof with all these people underneath them and they lower this man down in front of everybody. Those guys were violent. The thing is, their friend got healed. Those guys who chicken out out there at the edge, they're still out there. They were still out there.

The violent take it by force. Why are they violent? Again, why are they violent? I'm not talking about you being some big shot, I'm talking about you giving up, getting desperate. You see, it has to do with weakness. It doesn't have to do with, "I'm not strong enough," it has to do with, "I'm too strong. I've got too much sufficiency of my own."

We won't look at this but it's really worth a message all its own, Matthew 15, that Syro-Phoenician woman. She was a violent person. Jesus didn't answer a word. She kept on coming. When he did answer, he answered her negatively and said, "I wasn't sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. What are you doing here?" Then he finally said, "It's not right to take the children's bread and give it to dogs." She kept on. She was violent. "Woman, great is your faith. Be it done to you. Whatever you want, you can have it." What a blessed thing it is when God works a holy desperation in our hearts and we get so needy and so desperate and helpless that we can't take no for an answer. That's what it amounts to.

That's what happened to Jacob. I've heard these sermons about Jacob wrestling with the angel, "Oh, what a great prayer warrior Jacob was. You know, he wrestled with God," and all that. That misses it totally. The angel attacked him. A man came and started wrestling with him and they wrestled for a time and then finally the angel touched, it wasn't a matter that the angel couldn't overpower him, just playing with him to weaken him. Then finally he touched the hollow of his thigh and his hip was out of joint. That's the end for a wrestler. If any of you have done anything about wrestling, you know if your hip was out of joint you don't do anymore wrestling. Now, what was Jacob doing? He was hanging on for dear life, "I

will not let you go except you bless me." He was desperate. He got to the state of dependence upon God and he was crying out to him. He was violent.

One last note: Luke 16:16 says, he says, "Now the kingdom of heaven is preached and everybody is forcing his way in." We're not talking about somebody else, we're talking about you and me. It's for everybody. It doesn't matter who you are. You can be a violent person and you must be a violent person. The kingdom of heaven suffers violence. The violent take it by force, they force their way in. It's a blessed thing because it's a violence of weak people that need God and can't stand to live the way they are living. That's the kind of violence that it is.

Amen. It's been good to be here. The Lord bless you and may all of us have these things worked out in our lives. Amen.