

Pressing into the Kingdom

Luke 16:16

From the days of John the Baptist until now

- First let's establish that after John the Baptist a new type of Kingdom began to be preached and established in the earth that was not here during the time of the prophets. In their day it was only prophesied about.
 - o So prior to John the Baptist, we have one type of kingdom of God and then after John the Baptist we have another type of kingdom of God that Jesus ushered in.
- For instance:
 - o In the days of the prophets (prior to John the Baptist) the kingdom was a physical kingdom. This new kingdom is a spiritual one.
 - o You had to biologically be born into the physical kingdom but in this kingdom, you are spiritually born by a new birth. (This is what Jesus was explaining to Nicodemus in John 3)
 - o The prior kingdom dealt with actions, but the new kingdom deals with the mind and the heart of a person.
 - This is seen in Mathew 5:21-22
 - So, the prior kingdom dealt with the action of murder, but this new kingdom focuses more on the intent of the heart and anger that results in the action of murder.
 - The prior kingdom forced you to change the action, but this new kingdom brings a change of heart. It literally is the creation of a new heart.
- So, then a religious person is really just someone that is in this new kingdom but operating with an old kingdom mindset.
 - o Because a religious person cares more about their actions in front of people and how they look instead of where their heart is at.
 - o So, you could look holy on the outside and act holy in front of people but be mean and hateful in your heart.
 - o So in the prior kingdom, man would have to bring the right sacrifice and the sacrifice would be inspected. But in the new kingdom, Jesus said in Mathew 5:23-24 (remember they were still sacrificing animals in Jesus' Ministry) leave your gift at the altar and go make things right with your brother. Jesus cared more about their relationship with their brother than they did about their gift.
- This is why God said in Isaiah that he was full of their sacrifices and no longer delighted in their feasts. What he wanted was for them to quit doing evil.
 - o Understand that God was ready to usher in this new kingdom, because in this new kingdom, he was going to be able to deal with the heart. He was going to be able to change the heart.

- See in the old kingdom, circumcision of the flesh got you into the kingdom. But in this new kingdom, circumcision of the heart or the cutting away of the sinful nature of the flesh was going to get you into the kingdom.
- Jer 31:33 this is God prophesying about the kingdom that was coming and he said it was going to write the law in their hearts.
 - In the old kingdom it was written on stone tablets and scrolls and had to be followed externally out of the flesh.
 - But in the new kingdom he was going to put it in their heart meaning he was going to give them a heart that desired His will and was able to connect with his voice and be led by him.
 - He was going to be able to have a one-on-one relationship with the believer.
 - Prior to John the Baptist God had to deal with everyone externally through prophets and scary manifestations and swords, sickness, famine and so on.
 - But in the new kingdom he was just going to be able to change their heart and speak to them in their heart.

Pressing into this kingdom

- We initially come into the kingdom through a new spiritual birth.
- But after that we are continuously coming more and more into the kingdom by lining our thoughts and hearts up with its laws and principles.
 - So really when we are talking about pressing into the kingdom, we are talking about lining our lives up with the kingdom way of living and doing things.
 - And our kingdom way is this Bible.
- The Greek word translated presseth can also be translated "to press violently" or "force one's way into," or "entereth violently."
 - We are not just coming into the kingdom, getting saved and changing the way we think and live. We are violently forcing our way into the kingdom.
- This reveals to us that coming into the kingdom must not happen without opposition.
 - So, what we must understand is that there is going to be opposition to people getting saved and there is going to be opposition to you coming more and more into the kingdom and having the things God wants you to have.
 - You have to violently press or force your way into this kingdom because the devil knows in this kingdom there is a heart change and there is intimate relationship.
 - In the prior kingdom the devil could tempt Israel easily and get God to turn on them in judgment because he knew their heart was evil.
 - But in this kingdom, he knows that sin no longer has dominion over us because the evil heart, the body of sin died with Jesus at the cross. He knows it's hard to tempt a heart that is changed and submitted to the Lord. It's hard to tempt a heart

that is in personal relationship with God. He also knows that in this kingdom he's not going to get God to turn on us in judgment because He already judged Jesus.

- So, Satan doesn't want you to get saved and find out who you are and learn God's voice, so you are going to have to press or force your way into the kingdom.
 - o He's not going to make it easy for you to have a relationship, or go to church, or study, or get your miracle or walk in your calling. He is going to fight on every hand to discourage you, stop you, cause you to fail and so on.

Let's talk about pressing our way.

- Jesus says we are violently forcing our way into the kingdom. Remember the Greek word translated presseth can also be translated "to press violently" or "force one's way into," or "entereth violently,"
 - o So, what this deals with is a certain attitude and mindset.
 - o If you are going to come into the kingdom, you are going to have to do it violently and forcefully.
 - o This is an attitude and mindset that you are going to have to take on.
 - o You are not going to passively come into this way of thinking and living. You are going to have to do it with a violent resolve.
- Violent – one of the definitions of violent that we can apply here is to be intense in force.
 - o Example with pornography and destroying the computer.
 - o Example with believing for miracle and getting intense and saying I'm going to be faithful in my words and actions.
 - o Mathew 5:27-30
 - Jesus wasn't saying literally do this to yourself, but He was making a point that you are going to have to get extreme in your attitude in order to walk in the kingdom.
 - If you can't stop looking, get intense enough to pluck out your eyeball. You do what it takes.
 - You never set back and say well that didn't work. If you get intense enough, you will come pass all the opposition and come into the kingdom.
- Mathew 11:12
 - o Notice it says that the kingdom suffereth violence.
 - You have to understand that your opposition is violent.
 - Unless you become violent like your opposition you will not enter into the kingdom and have what the kingdom says you can have.
 - o Sometimes in sports you will hear the announcers say that this is going to come down to who wants it more.
 - In the kingdom your opposition is defeated so what it really comes down to is do you want it more than they want you to not have it.

- Can you respond to the opposition with faith and obedience as much as they respond to you with attacks of doubt and deception?
- You have to become more violent and intense than your opposition.
- Acts 20:24 none of these things move me.
 - This is a violent attitude.
 - Paul said there is the certainty of persecution if I obey the Lord, but it doesn't move me out of my obedience.
 - So, a violent attitude is when you get to a place where nothing can move you out of what you are doing in the kingdom and for the kingdom.
 - As much as offense comes, I come right back with love, and nothing moves me out of love. I get intense and determine that I'm going to press pass the hurt and get in line with the kingdom.
 - As much as financial problems come, I determine that I'm going to keep on giving.
 - As much as chaos hits my life, I'm going to keep on staying in the Word and renewing my mind.