

## 185. What Jim Knew, What Jim Did By Arland Steen

I want to read four scriptures to you and then I'm going to quickly tie them together and hopefully leave you with something that you can put in your spiritual pantry, so it's there when you need it.

### Four Scriptures

Matthew 11:12 (New King James): <sup>12</sup> *And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.*

Mark 11:24 (New King James): <sup>24</sup> *Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.*

1 Timothy 6:12 (New King James): <sup>12</sup> *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life,*

Jude 3,4 (New King James): <sup>3</sup> *While I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith, which was once for all delivered to the saints, <sup>4</sup> for certain men have crept in unnoticed who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness,*

### Contend For Faith, Beware Of A Perversion Of Grace

Why would the Holy Spirit tell us many, many years ago that we needed to contend with determination for the faith?

Because something is going to come against it and try to rend it out of our hands. We're told what that replacement is going to be – a perversion of the grace of God.

He didn't say to contend earnestly for grace. He said contend earnestly for faith. Let me capsule this quickly. Have you ever heard in your family, like I did:

- If God heals, He heals for good
- Brother, sister, just let go and let God
- What will be, will be

Those statements reveal a perversion of grace.

Understand, without faith, you will not enjoy what grace has provided.

This is not a message against grace. It's a message revealing there can be a perversion of grace. So, without faith you won't enjoy what grace has provided.

Did Paul say in 1 Timothy 6:12, Fight the good fight of faith and let go and let God?

Fight the good fight of faith and what will be will be? They're the same thing, right? If you're holding on to something and then let go, it's all the same, right?

No, they're completely the opposite.

I don't think the use of the word "violence" in Matthew 11:12 does us much good as translated in the New King James Version because it has a negative connotation. You think of somebody sucker-punching somebody or robbing somebody or tripped somebody up, or pulled a knife out or pulled a gun out. What the word actually means is "forceful." "Take it."

Matthew 11:12 (NIV): <sup>12</sup>*from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing and forceful men take hold on it.* Does that make sense?

How does God's kingdom advance anyway?

What is the Old Testament picture of the kingdom of God advancing? What is the Old Testament picture of the children of Israel going into the *promised* land?

They had to forcefully take it. They had a part to play. That doesn't change. Even though we're born again and we have all the promises of God and we're living in the promised land once we get saved, we still have to forcefully take things.

The first generation didn't *take* it and *conquer* it.

Why? Was it because God didn't want them to have it?

God didn't have that for them, did He? Isn't that the reason they didn't get it?

What do we say today, "I guess if God wanted me to have it, I would have it."

No, that's not the reason at all and it wasn't because He hadn't given it to them yet.

Actually, He did say, "I have given you."

Ever had somebody say, "I'm thinking about taking you out to dinner."

God didn't tell them that. It was theirs but they didn't get it but the second generation enjoyed it and the reason they did is because they forcefully laid hold of it. They took it.

God has already done it for you but He's not going to receive it for you.

You have to receive what He has given.

### **Two Things Jim Knew**

- God doesn't receive for us
- God doesn't resist the devil for us

Many good-hearted believers are begging God to make the devil stop and leave them alone and trying to get Him to receive for them.

### **What Jim Did**

We've been favored to know Mark 11:24, and to act on it.

- Jim knew he had to act on God's Word

How did he do that?

They talked about it – fear. When you come up against something, it doesn't matter if it's a report of cancer, we thank God for the doctor, the doctor cut that thing right out. I was there the next day and he was trying to get some work. He does the slides. I got my computer here. I'm ready. I'm on half the pain medication. They told me to walk by 11:30, by 8:30 I've already been around. I'm ready to go. It was the next day this undoing of the repair work took place. We thank God for that but Jim knew he had to act on God's Word. We've heard him say this, Fear is the thing the Bible says over 365 times, don't do that. Do not fear.

The thing you're facing whether it be cancer or a headache, a financial situation or whatever it is, that issue is not the biggest issue in your life. You say, but cancer can kill me. Not if you don't fear it. It's the fear of things, the fear of life, if the devil can get in there, then you will not act on God's Word because you are afraid.

Jim, through the confession of his mouth, and Linda through the confession of their mouth refused to fear and began to proclaim God's blessing over their life. Many people fight against this and ask, "Who do you think you are confessing who you are in Christ and what you have in Christ?" They are so misinformed.

God told them about the good of the land and the fruit and the goodness but He didn't mention the giants.

Why not? Because to Him they weren't an issue because He said I gave it to you already. Why do I say it's not cancer that's your biggest issue, it's not the diabetes that is your biggest issue, it's not the loss of a job that's your biggest issue? Because God took care of it. It's the fear and the same thing that was true back then is true with us today.

Why would Brother Hagin say it's not going to fall on you like ripe cherries off a tree? Because he knew you had to lay hold.

What are we to believe in Mark 11:24? That's it's all up to God? What will be will be? No, believe that you "receive" (the same word translated "take"). You believe that you can take it.

Do you see the similarity?

- Lay hold in 1 Timothy 6
- Take it by force in Matthew 11
- Believe you receive in Mark 11

Why do you need to be forceful about this? You're not trying to rend something from God. If He hadn't given it to you, you would never have received it anyway. He's not the issue. There's an enemy that is. He tries to wear you down. You have to cast down those imaginations. This is what Jim and Linda did. You may have to do this five-hundred-times a day.

### **Every Mind Needs A Bouncer**

A friend of mine said a man came up to him and said, "This means that every mind needs a bouncer at the door." You go to a club or you see a club scene in a movie and there's this big old guy, a bouncer. They always have a list. They have a list of the names of the invited guests. And if you're not on the list, you're not getting in. You know you have a list in your Bible and it tells you what to let into your thought life? And what to bounce out and keep out?

This is the bouncing scripture:

*Philippians 4:8 (New King James):<sup>8</sup> Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things.*

You've got a list:

- Are you true? No, I can see you aren't. You're not getting in.
- Are you noble? No, I can see you aren't. You're not getting in.
- Are you pure? No, I can see you aren't. You're not getting in.
- Are you of good report? No, I can see you aren't. You're not getting in.

But it won't happen automatically. You'll have to resist it. You may have to cast it down five-hundred times but you hold fast to what you believe you have taken and received.

Jim knew that God doesn't receive for him and that He doesn't resist the devil for him and he knew that he had to take what rightfully belonged to him. This helped him and Linda *walk through* the valley of the shadow of death.

I'm thanking God Jim and Linda didn't get lost in the valley of the shadow of death!

When life is going great, you're in the sunshine. Then, all of a sudden, something happens. You get that bad report. Somebody passes away. Something hits you. The first thing that will try to come in is confusion and doubt and anxiety and perplexity. If you don't know how to bounce thoughts, if you don't know what God is the author of and what the devil is the author of, you don't know how to resist and act on God's Word. What happens to people in the woods hiking or the desert and they get de-hydrated and they get turned around? What happens? Those people usually don't make it.

We all go through the valley of the shadow of death at certain points in our life but this Word is a light unto our path and it is a lamp unto our feet. We can hold on to God's Word. We can confess God's Word. We can praise God with His Word. We can say in the midst of bad circumstances I choose to believe my God. I choose to believe His Word. I choose to believe He's working in me. I choose to believe He's working for me. I choose to believe I'm coming out of this!

Jim, I'm so glad that you knew differently. I'm so glad that you acted differently, that you knew these things and you acted on these things. And God is no respecter of persons. Maybe today you're just putting this in your pantry for future use. That's why it's so important to come to church. That's why it's so important to listen to what's being said about the Word of God. It's important to take notes. It's important to meditate that Word, to study that Word, to make sure that you know it so that when your time of need comes, you can pull out of your own heart, I love the way you put that (speaking earlier of Linda Johnson's testimony) when the doctor gave the bad report. The faith was just there.