

# Why Believers Should Boldly Decree Psalm 51:10 Right Now

Like many Americans, I was appalled by and ashamed of what transpired in Washington, D.C., as protesters stormed the capitol. It was an ugly and sad day for America and a bad look to the rest of the world.

I love our country deeply and it grieves me to see the hatred and division on both sides. I have no issue with peaceful protesting, but I believe the media is often biased and distorts the truth. Plus, in politics, people often play dirty (all is fair in love and war ... and in politics).

Some sources say the peaceful protest was hijacked by extremists. Even so, when people cross the line and resort to violence, we condemn it on both sides. While we can't control what's going on in Washington, we can control what goes on in our own heart. We should constantly pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10). In other words, when the world goes wrong, don't go wrong with it!

Like millions of conservatives, I have questions about the fairness and accuracy of the 2020 election. If there was fraud or corruption, I pray it is exposed. But two wrongs never make a right. Besides, our hope is not in a man (Trump or Biden) or in a political party—our hope is in Jesus! Our future and salvation do not depend on who is in the White House but on who is on the throne! "On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand!"

Violence is not the solution because it only breeds more violence in a vicious cycle of revenge. Paul provided the answer—"Repay no one evil for evil. ... If it is possible, as much as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to God's wrath; for it is written: 'Vengeance is Mine. I will repay,' says the Lord. ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:17a,18, 21).

We are in a spiritual war for the soul of our nation. Our nation is in turmoil (racially, politically, medically with Covid-19 and, most of all, spiritually). There is a constant clash between good and evil, God and Satan, truth and error, light and darkness, the spirit and the flesh.

People are not the enemy but the spirits that work through people. Paul provided insight into this unseen realm, "For our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12).

A major difference between the Old and New Testaments is Israel fought mostly natural battles against natural enemies using natural weapons while we are fighting spiritual battles with spiritual enemies and weapons. We can't win spiritual battles with natural weapons—they tried to in the district, and it backfired. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Cor. 10:4). We can't defeat the devil or evil with swords, knives, guns or bombs; we defeat the enemy with the Word of God, faith, prayer and the name and blood of Jesus.

Jesus dealt with violent tendencies among His own disciples. One of His hand-picked recruits was Simon "the Zealot," telling us about his political affiliation. The Zealots were a radical, Jewish sect of outlaws who hated Roman occupation and often resorted to violence to incite riots and tried to overthrow Roman rule. Other infamous Zealots were Judas of Galilee who was crucified in a revolt around A.D. 6 (Acts 5:37), Barabbas (Mark 15:7) and probably the two thieves

crucified with Christ. So, think about it, Jesus chose Matthew (a tax collector) and Simon (who hated tax collectors) to be on His ministry team. Imagine the arguments they had at the dinner table. There were serious clashes of opinions and, who knows, maybe a few fights.

So, why did Jesus choose a zealot to be His disciple? Jesus probably had to take him aside a few times and tone him down: "Simon, I know you don't like these people and want to hurt them, but I love them and came to save them! So, mind your manners!" Jesus redirected Simon's political fervor to a greater cause—spreading the Gospel. Jesus replaced his racism and hatred with a genuine love for people. Church tradition says that Simon later preached in Africa, Egypt and Britain, and he was either crucified or sawn asunder for his faith and testimony. Ironically, the disciple who was the most likely to take lives ended up giving his life as a martyr. Christ changed his heart, and a potential murderer turned into a powerful minister. That's what God's grace can do!

James and John, whom Jesus nicknamed "sons of thunder," also had a violent streak. When a Samaritan village rejected them, they asked for permission to pray fire down from heaven like Elijah did to burn them up. Jesus rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them" (Luke 9:55-56). They had the wrong spirit like many today. People we might hate or wish to harm are the same people Jesus loves and seeks to help.

When Peter drew his sword to defend Jesus in Gethsemane, Jesus scolded him and healed the man Peter injured—"Put your sword back in its place. For all those who take up the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will at once give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26:52-53). Jesus could have summoned an angelic army to route the Romans and deliver the Jews. Later, He stood before Pilate who demanded, "'Are You the King of the

Jews?’ ... Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would fight” (John 18:33, 36a). Jesus didn’t rally His followers to fight. Instead, He inspired them to change the world with love.

Are there times when violence is justified? Certainly. If someone is being attacked, you have the right to protect them. If someone breaks into your home, you have a right to defend yourself. If you are a soldier in combat for a just cause, not all killing is murder. Somebody had to stop Hitler’s Nazism. Somebody had to defeat fascism and communism. Somebody must stop dictators who are hell-bent on genocide. Someone must stop violent criminals determined to commit mass murder. Often the only way to stop violent people is with force.

As Christians, we must balance this with the fact that Jesus called us to be peacemakers. When Jesus said, “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matt. 11:12, NKJV), He wasn’t talking about violence against other people. He was talking about being forceful in a spiritual sense and resisting sin, Satan, self and the world to press into and promote the kingdom of God (Luke 16:16).

Yes, we oppose abortion, but we don’t harm doctors who perform them, nor do we bomb abortion clinics. We disagree with communism, socialism, atheism and racism, but we don’t threaten or harm those who embrace these. We disagree with adultery, homosexuality, drugs, drunkenness and gambling, but we don’t hurt people who practice them.

Like Jesus, we love the sinner and hate the sin. Christ calls us to be peacemakers not troublemakers. Violence is never the solution. In an increasingly violent world, Paul’s message is more relevant than ever, “Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good!” {eoa}

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