

Sunrise Foursquare Church – September 2017

“From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it.” Matthew 11:12

Wars and threats of war between nations and powers have gone on throughout human history without sufficient recognition of a more significant and yet subliminal war being waged within every person, including rulers, dictators, and presidents who are in today’s news. Our country can choose whether or not to engage in a war militarily, but we have no choice in the matter regarding a spiritual war that vies for the souls of people. As long as we are in the flesh and know it or not, we *are* in this heavenly war.

The war to secure membership into the Kingdom of Heaven is being waged against forces in spiritual places that hold the souls of people with great force. Most of them are held in the grip of its arch ruler, God’s nemesis, since the beginning. The phrase, “subject to violence,” is a rendering of the Greek word, briazo, that means to “overpower or take by force.” What is our human dilemma? Most people do not have a natural inclination toward God in which they are thinking about Him and how to please Him with His desires and morality in mind and heart as evident in their placement of priorities. The *attractiveness* of the world as concisely expressed by the apostle John, “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life,” is too deceptive, powerful and pervasive (I John 2:16). It can capture our allegiance. We are called to the noble and glorious task of wrenching souls, our own included, out of the power of the world and Satan until loyalties at the core, change, and priorities shift from self to God and others, until they are placed safely and soundly in God’s Kingdom for now and all eternity. To accomplish this, the most effective weapons at our disposal are fasting, prayer, and the Word.

Matthew 11:12 has been the theme verse for 2017 that appears every week in the Japanese worship program of Sunrise Church. Pastor Spring has applied this verse to the mission of Sunrise Church by an aggressiveness in praying, fasting, and acting to get new members, bring back former ones, and foster the maturity of those regularly attending, knowing that if people are vitally connected to the visible Church, they will be mostly likely connected to Jesus Christ. Also, we have been eager to find every opportunity of ministry—the best investment of our “fire and fury,” so to speak, as coined by the President during the heat of a North Korean threat. Where are you in this spiritual war? The first question should be, “Which side am I?” The second question if on God’s side, “Front line, supporting line, or back seat?” This newsletter is extended to you who have supported our work, now spanning over forty years since we moved to Los Angeles. Thank you for standing with us and believing in all that we do for the Lord!

~Pastor Paul Iwata

***Needed:** a tax-deductible donation of/ or toward the purchase of a reliable, compact car for our Assistant Pastor.

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***2018 Springwater Calendars** are available for a donation of \$10 each plus postage (\$3/calendar). They contain Pastor Spring’s colorful artwork with selected scriptures in English and Japanese. Use the order form below to get your calendar(s).

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