QUESTION: Is there any contribution we can make to obtain our salvation? And if not, why then does Scripture say, *“The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force”* (Matthew 11:12)?

ANSWER: Regarding our contribution to the grace of salvation, Scripture is clear there is none.

Ephesians 2:8–9

> “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

But then the question arises if that’s the case, why does Scripture say:

Matthew 11:12

> “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of

> heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.”

The answer is that we have an enemy Satan who makes the path to salvation seem like it requires only little effort. That’s why it takes extra strength to see the path clearly and to walk in it, because it is narrow and difficult.

Matthew 7:13–14

> “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

For example, today Satan can hinder you from worshiping Christ simply because your parents disapprove, your job overwhelms you, or your environment is unfriendly and no one understands you. Do you think if you yield to those obstacles, you will inherit

eternal life? Impossible. It requires determination, effort, the willingness to be disliked, or even at times losing what you have all so that you do not lose your salvation.

That is where the saying

> “the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force” *applies.*

For instance, Christ told us to *“watch and pray”* (Matthew 26:41) so we do not fall into temptation, because our enemy the devil is always on the prowl. If you do not pray to protect the salvation Christ freely gave you, and you are lazy about it, know that Satan will stay awake for your downfall. When the time comes, he will bring heavy temptations your way, just like he did to Peter and the others that night Peter ended up denying the Lord and others fled naked. Do you think they wanted to do that? No, it happened because they ignored the command Jesus gave them shortly before to watch and pray and instead, they slept.

Likewise, if you do not pray, fast from time to time, or serve

Christ actively, it will be very difficult to maintain your salvation or worse, you might lose it entirely.

So, we do not just believe in Jesus and then remain idle no. That is only the first step. The next step is to fight, struggle, and endure pain in order to guard our salvation, because our enemy, the devil, is constantly hunting for it day and night.

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May the Lord bless you

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