

**Thesis: If you are a child of the King, you are called to intervene!**

The tension was thick in the small recreation room at Spokane High School. Two of the young men were worse than unhappy with one another. It appeared that it would soon come to blows.

Enter a still-scrawny young teacher – me! I knew my responsibility, and I also knew that both young men were stronger and better suited to a fist fight than I. With a great deal of inner uncertainty but with outward confidence I stepped between the two combatants. As calmly as I could I asked them to step down from their confrontation and back off. One of them I sensed would be willing; the other most certainly was not. He doubled up his fists; he assumed a fighting pose; and he informed me that if I did not move he was going to hit me. I thought he might!

“I don’t think that would be wise,” I said. The fire still burned in his eyes! His threat was repeated, and again I said, “I don’t think that would be wise.” I suspect he looked past me and saw the authority of position, and he chose wisdom and I was spared what I expected would be a sore head and a fair share of humiliation.

There is a name for what I did, and it doesn’t begin with the letter “S.” What I did is properly called “intervention.” In fact, there are those who are referred to as “interventionists,” because they have been trained to step between people or even nations to seek to change the current reality. I am aware there are many who deal with addictive behavior who term themselves “interventionists.”

How would you like to have that job description? Are you as uncomfortable with that as I was standing between the fighting students? One source lists some synonyms for intervening: meddling, interfering, intruding, interrupting. Doesn’t that make you want to sign up?

Listen carefully to the following sentence: **If you are a child of the King, you are called to intervene!** In the next few minutes I want you to see the reality of that calling, feel the tension that accompanies that calling, and then encourage you with the possibility and the power inherent in that call.

In a moment I want to read from the Old Testament book of Numbers. The reading will come from Chapter 16, but I want to take a few minutes to establish where we are in the story of God's people.

The children of Israel have experienced divine deliverance from hundreds of years of slavery in Egypt. God brought them out with a strong hand, and He promised to bring them into a land of *milk and honey*. God had given them the law, speaking with Moses on the mountain of God. But then the day came when God told Moses they had stayed long enough on that mountain, that He never intended for them to settle there. Moses led the people on an 11-day journey to the border of the land God had promised to give them. Before going forward, twelve men were sent to spy out the land. They found a fertile, beautiful land – the Promised Land! But they also found giant-sized opposition, and, for ten of them, their faith failed. The spies returned, the report was given, and the majority prevailed! Ten said “No way,” and two said “Way!” And what did the people do? They *cried*, they *wept*, and they *murmured against Moses and Aaron* (Numbers 14:1-2). Out of that pity-party came a full-scale rebellion. Only Caleb and Joshua stood firm in the faith and proclaimed, *If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us* (Numbers 14:8). For their faithfulness, they almost were stoned to death by the people.

Now God is sick of His people! “After all I have done for them, these whiners have rejected me! Moses, I am going to kill them all and start over with you!” Now it's Moses' turn: “God, if you do that it will reflect on your Name. The nations will say that you were able to bring your people out but you were not able to bring them in.” Moses interceded (intervened), and God pardoned His people. However, His pardon did not remove the consequences of their rebellion. He sentenced all of Israel to live in the wilderness until all who were 20 years old or older died, and then the *little ones* would inherit the land. Only Joshua and Caleb were exempted from this judgment. Incidentally, God sent a plague and the ten spies died immediately.

After a failed attempt to enter the land, which was another act of rebellion, the people turned away from the land of promise. Not long after, another rebellion began. This time it was leading men of the tribe of Levi who rebelled against the leadership of Moses and Aaron.

Intercession is a synonym for interpose (**1 a** : to place in an intervening position **b** : to put (oneself) between (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary)

Lessons from the story:

Danger of pride and presumption by those who serve God – rebellion!

Foolishness of rebellion

Fierceness of God

Our role as interventionists

Our responsibilities as interventionists

Our resources as interventionists

Our reluctance as interventionists

We must stand between with humility and courage!

We must never shirk our responsibility or minimize the urgency!

Ex 30:37-38

37 But as for the incense which you shall make, you shall not make any for yourselves, according to its composition. It shall be to you holy for the LORD. 38 Whoever makes any like it, to smell it, he shall be cut off from his people."

NKJV

Lev 10:1-3

Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. 2 So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. 3 And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying:

'By those who come near Me

I must be regarded as holy;

And before all the people

I must be glorified.'"

So Aaron held his peace.

NKJV

2 Kings 18:4-5

4 He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.

NKJV

2 Chron 26:16-18

But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. 17 So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the LORD — valiant men. 18 And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You shall have no honor from the LORD God."

NKJV

Ps 141:1-2

LORD, I cry out to You;

Make haste to me!

Give ear to my voice when I cry out to You.

2 Let my prayer be set before You as incense,

The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

NKJV

Rev 5:8-9

Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

NKJV

Rev 8:1-5

When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them

were given seven trumpets. 3 Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. 5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

NKJV

Figuratively, incense was symbolical of ascending prayer.