

# Remaining safe during violence

A shortwave radio program given by Beverly Goldsmith, a Christian Science practitioner and teacher, on May 30, and June 14, 2000

## Event Introduction:

Hello I'm Beverly Goldsmith. The program today is about finding hope in the midst of chaos. It's about being protected when faced with conflict and hate. And it's also about how God helps us to overcome danger and remain safe during violence.

Sometimes our very existence is threatened. When this happens it can make us feel quite helpless. There just doesn't seem to be anything we can do. Yet I've learned that there is a way out of desperate situations.

*From my own personal experience I know that no matter what we're facing, we're not helpless. There is a way out.*

We can turn to God for help. God's loving presence is right there with us. God is all-powerful. His goodness defeats violence and hate. It doesn't matter where we live in the world. God is with us. He's guiding. He's protecting us. He's keeping us safe at all times and under all circumstances.

Even when things are so very difficult we don't have to fear for our lives or for our future well being. God is in control, not evil. We're not helpless in the face of conflict. We can overcome hardship and have control of our lives. I know because of what's happened in my own life.

*I've proved that God helps us to overcome danger and remain safe during violence.*

- That's why in this program I'll tell you my experience in being unexpectedly involved in a violent confrontation and how with God's help I overcame the danger and remained safe during the violence.
- Then, I'll share ideas from Mary Baker Eddy's book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* that help and protect us in violent situations.
- And lastly you'll hear about Mary Baker Eddy's life. How she was threatened by hardship, how she searched for practical, permanent solutions and how she discovered and recorded a spiritual system for overcoming hardship in her book *Science and Health*.

## My experience:

So let me tell you how I was unexpectedly involved in a violent confrontation.

At one time I was part of a small group of professional people making a presentation to a large gathering of men. During the presentation a female co-worker said something that unexpectedly triggered a violent outburst. Some of the men became openly hostile and began shouting abuse and moving towards us.

We ran for our lives and took refuge in a nearby storeroom. The organizers locked us in there hoping this would keep us safe. To our dismay we found that the walls were partitions that didn't reach the ceiling. The men began to climb up the walls and to subject us to physical intimidation. We were verbally abused and our lives were repeatedly threatened. It was a very frightening experience.

At first I just stood in the storeroom with the three other women not knowing what to do. I felt totally paralyzed by the suddenness and ferocity of the attack. Then one of the women said to me, "Do something". For a moment I was stunned. What did she expect *me* to do? I told her that the only thing I could do was to pray. "Well", she said, "Do it!" This really jolted me into action.

***I realized that I wasn't helpless or powerless.  
There was something I could do. I could pray.  
So I sat down on one of the boxes in the room,  
closed my eyes, and prayed silently to God.***

My prayers went along these lines. I said, "Dear Father, I know that You're loving and protecting us all. You're keeping us safe. Hatred and violence can't take control of my life. You're in control. I know with all my heart that You govern us women in here and You govern the men outside this room."

I then thought of people that I'd read about in the Bible. These were people who'd been saved during life-threatening situations. For example, Daniel saved in the lion's den, Moses saved at the Red Sea with an army of pursuers behind him, and Jesus walking safely through an angry mob intent on harming him. These were examples of God's complete control. These people had been saved in desperate situations. They weren't harmed.

As I prayed like this I felt at peace. I felt comforted. When I opened my eyes I found that the other women were sitting quietly on boxes. I also found that the threats and abuse from the men outside the storeroom had almost stopped. So I kept on praying. Finally, there was nothing but silence.

At first we thought that the men had left, that the nightmare was finally over. Then the storeroom door was unlocked and we were told that transportation was coming for us. At this point we started to feel safe again. But our relief was short lived. As we gathered our things together we learned that the men hadn't left. They'd been persuaded to leave the building. But they were still there, waiting for us outside in the dark.

For a moment I felt really frightened again. We now had to leave the storeroom and walk right past the men to our transport. And we had to do this without any physical protection whatsoever.

***It was a terrifying walk to the vehicle. But the whole time  
I clung to the thought that God's love was keeping us safe.***

As we passed through the men they verbally abused and jostled us. But they didn't make any attempt to harm us. And I'm glad to say that we made it safely to our transport. But the danger still wasn't over. The vehicle we were being herded onto was a truck – an open-sided truck! For a moment I was panic-stricken. Some of the men were moving towards us, bending down and picking things up off the ground.

As we climbed onto the truck they began hurling rocks and other objects at us. While this was happening, I kept my thought steadfastly on God's powerful, loving presence. I kept thinking, "Father, I know that we're safe. Hatred and violence can't harm us. You're protecting us. We're in Your care."

And you know we were protected. Amazing as it seems, no one was hit. No one was injured. Some of the men chased after us, trying to get on the truck as we were driving away. But they didn't succeed. Nothing bad happened to us. We left the area safely and completely unharmed.

This experience taught me something important. And it was this.

***It doesn't matter how desperate the situation is. God's protecting power helps us. We can overcome danger and remain safe during violence.***

### **Ideas in *Science and Health*:**



I found in Mary Baker Eddy's book *Science and Health*, ideas that help us and protect us in violent situations. These ideas helped me during that violent confrontation. These same ideas can help you.

**Idea 1.** Let me read to you what Mary Baker Eddy writes in *Science and Health*, on page 571. She says,

**“At all times and under all circumstances, overcome evil with good.”**

What is the author telling us here? She's telling us what to do when confronted by hatred or violence. She's pointing out to us that we're not powerless. There **is** an answer. She's explaining the method involved, the how, when, where, and why, for overcoming violence and having control of our lives.

#### • **How do we overcome “evil with good”?**

**One way to do this:** is by not hating people or thinking of them as enemies. This is what I had to do while we were locked in that storeroom. And I did this by saying to myself, “I refuse to hate these men or to see them as my enemies. Their true nature is wholly spiritual and good. They express God's mercy, peace and compassion. We all do.” That's how I was thinking during the violence.

**Another way of overcoming evil with good is:** don't focus your thought on the danger and violence. Don't think about being attacked or harmed. I know it's hard. But rather than think of evil, think instead of God's presence and power. And do this with spiritual conviction. That's what I did. I silently said, “I'm not afraid of anyone. God loves all of us. God is taking care of us all right now. No one can be harmed”.

**And lastly, a way to overcome evil with good is:** think of God and His power and control. Remind yourself that such spiritual thinking is completely protecting you. That's what I did while we were being attacked. I thought, “I will not hate these men, nor think of them as my enemies. Right here and now I will think of God's loving presence. This spiritual thinking is protecting me and my co-workers, as well as the men who are threatening us”. And thinking about overcoming evil with good like this, worked. We weren't harmed.

So let's now talk about,

#### • **When do we overcome “evil with good”?**

The author of *Science and Health*, Mary Baker Eddy, gives us the answer. She says in her book that we can overcome evil with good at **“all times and under all circumstances”**. To me, this means that we can overcome hardship and have control of our lives on **every** occasion, not just on *some* occasions. The experience that I just told you about taught me that it didn't matter *when* violence arose or under what circumstances. We can overcome evil with good. And you know something, I've proved this on other occasions since then.

Now so far we've talked about “how” and “when” we can overcome evil with good. What about the “where” of over-coming evil with good? **Where** does this activity take place?

### • **Where do we overcome “evil with good”?**

Overcoming evil with good takes place in our own thinking. It’s a mental activity. When I was locked in the storeroom, where did I overcome the fear and violence? Yes, in my own thinking. I overcame the fear and danger by remembering that God was with me. Also, by not hating or thinking of others as my enemies. I didn’t try to meet the hate with hate or the violence with violence. I knew that meeting evil with evil just compounds evil. It isn’t the way to overcome evil.

***You see I’d learned that the best way to overcome evil is with God’s loving, good, and powerful presence. And so that’s just what I did.***

Having considered the “how”, “when”, and “where” about overcoming evil with good, let’s consider “why” we should overcome evil with good?

### • **Why do we overcome “evil with good”?**

I believe we should always overcome evil with good because this is the method that works! I’ve proved it. I’ve proved that God’s love is powerful. That His goodness defeats hatred, injustice, and violence.

I’ve learned that even when things are very difficult we don’t have to fear for our lives or for our future well being. We’re not helpless. God is in control, not evil. I proved this to be true right in the middle of danger and violence.

**Idea 2.** I’ve also proved the truth of something else Mary Baker Eddy wrote in her book *Science and Health*, page 571.



**“Clad in the panoply of Love, human hatred cannot reach you”.**

The Love that she’s referring to in that statement is God’s love. God’s love acts like a shield. It’s His love that prevents human hatred from reaching us. I’ve proved this.

***When we turn to God and remember that He is All, and that He is near, we are totally protected. We render evil harmless. We overcome evil with good.***

These ideas of Mary Baker Eddy’s have certainly helped me. I’ve practiced these ideas. I’ve been empowered by these ideas. As a result of the ideas in her book *Science and Health*, I’ve overcome hardship on many occasions. These ideas have done the same for other people. They can do the same for you.

### **Mary Baker Eddy’s life:**

Mary Baker Eddy knew what it was like to be threatened by hardship. At different times she was confronted with homelessness and family rejection. She suffered chronic poor health and tragedy in her personal life. But she never gave up. She desperately wanted to overcome these hardships. She also wanted to help others do the same. So she spent many years searching for practical, permanent solutions.

Then a pivotal moment occurred in her life. She had a serious accident. Several days later it became apparent that neither medicine nor surgery could help her. At this sad, desperate moment, bedridden, with no family members present she asked to be left alone with her most precious book, the Bible. She opened this book seeking help, yearning for comfort. She knew that there was a divine healing power. Since early childhood she’d had an unshakable trust in God’s love and care.

Something remarkable took place. She opened the Bible to the third chapter of the Gospel of Mark. This chapter begins with the account of Jesus healing a man with a withered hand. She read this familiar story. And as she did, her strength returned. She was able to get out of bed and stand on her feet.

Mary Baker Eddy immediately dressed herself and walked unaided into the next room where her friends were waiting, fearing the worst. Imagine not only their utter astonishment, but also their absolute delight; she'd recovered from her injuries.

Right away she knew that her recovery without the use of drugs or surgery was significant. Yet she couldn't explain how she'd regained her health. So she set out to find the answers. For the next three years she searched the Scriptures for the solution. She wrote down her ideas.

This period of seeking, searching and writing was often a very lonely time for her. There were problems and tragedy in her personal life. But she never gave up. Finally her searching led her to discover a practical, spiritual system for overcoming hardship.

Mary Baker Eddy recorded her system in *Science and Health* thereby helping thousands of people overcome physical, emotional, and other hardships. She healed many people, taught others her spiritual system, gave public talks, and wrote and published many books and articles explaining her revolutionary ideas.

Today, over a century later, Mary Baker Eddy's ideas in *Science and Health* are still improving the lives of people around the world. And her ideas will continue to do so.

***So if you're threatened by hardship or you're caught up in danger and violence, please remember: there is a way to overcome desperate situations.***

- Remember, I told you how I was unexpectedly involved in a violent confrontation, and how with God's help I overcame the danger and remained safe during the violence.
- Then I shared two ideas from Mary Baker Eddy's book *Science and Health* that help and protect us in violent situations.
  1. **"At all times and under all circumstances, overcome evil with good."**
  2. **"Clad in the panoply of Love, human hatred cannot reach you."**
- And lastly I spoke about Mary Baker Eddy's life: how she was threatened by hardship, how she searched for practical, permanent solutions, and how she discovered and recorded this practical spiritual system in *Science and Health*.

So right now if you're struggling with fear and hopelessness, take heart. If you're caught up in violence remember that you're safe in God's care. God is guiding you, protecting you and yours, keeping you safe at all times and under all circumstances.

***No matter where you live in the world, or what you're personally facing, God's loving presence is right there with you. God is in control, not evil. His goodness defeats hate.***

***Through the power and goodness of God's love you can overcome danger and violence and remain safe.***