

A Bride Worthy of Christ's Attention

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the qualities of a virtuous bride of Christ, urging believers to embody integrity, compassion, and a commitment to righteousness.

Duration: 49:41

Scripture: Proverbs 31:10

Topics: "Bride Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Proverbs 31 and discusses the qualities of a bride worthy of Christ's attention. The preacher emphasizes the importance of fallen people and their need for salvation through Jesus Christ. The sermon highlights the significance of planting something that will grow and bring increase to the house of God. The preacher also encourages the congregation to pray for New York City and believes that God will do something profound in their generation.

Transcript

Praise God. Good morning, Times Square Church, and thank God for those that have, so many have come out to the house of the Lord this morning. We're starting into a season of prayer and fasting in this church, beginning tomorrow for 21 days.

And as we've told you before, it's to your discretion as to what you do and how you fast. If you'd like to fast a meal a day, a day, a week, the only thing that we do ask is that nobody here go into any excessive kind of fasting, and never without liquids at any time. And if you are not familiar with fasting, then there are good books on it.

God's Chosen Fast by Arthur Wallace, W-A-L-L-I-S, is one of the books that we would recommend. And if you have any kind of a physical or medical condition, please consult your doctor before you attempt to fast. And this is, you're not holier because you fast more.

It's simply a season where you're setting aside times throughout the day and throughout your week to pray and to seek God. We're praying for New York City. We're praying for the five boroughs of this city, and we're believing God that he is going to do something profound in our generation.

This morning, I want to talk to you from, speak to you from Proverbs 31, about a bride worthy of Christ's attention. A bride worthy of Christ's attention. Proverbs 31, if you turn there, please.

Now, Father, thank you. Thank you, Lord, for your presence here today. Thank you for your word, which is indeed a lamp for our feet and a light for our path.

Open our hearts, Lord, to your word. Help us to not play loosely with truth. Help us to embrace what you speak, to see it clearly, to long for it more than life.

Give us grace and strength to be the people that we should be in this hour in which we're living. Be merciful to your church, Lord, in this city and throughout this country. And Father, we thank you, Lord, that you'll give us hearts to hear and you'll give me the ability to speak this clearly, plainly, in a manner that can be understood by all.

Father, I thank you for the anointing that breaks the yoke. In Jesus' name. Proverbs chapter 31, one verse, verse 10.

Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies. Now, it's important to understand today that the scriptures are penned by the hand of God. The specific writers over many years and times have put their pen to a text, but the scripture tells us conclusively in 2 Timothy 3.16 that all scripture is given by inspiration of God.

And it has profit to us for doctrine. That means for what is right and what is wrong to believe, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in what is right or in righteousness. In Proverbs 31, we see a bride whom God himself took notice of and asked us, in a sense, to consider what is it that caught his eye? Because he asked the question, who can find a virtuous woman? Now, I'm going to be speaking eventually of Proverbs 31 in the context of you and I as the bride of Jesus Christ.

God's eyes searching to and fro throughout the earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are right towards him, looking, asking. Maybe he's looking at you today and saying, are you the virtuous bride that I'm looking for? Can I do in you and through you what I desire to do? Just as in the book of Job in chapter 1 verse 8, the Lord asked the question, have you considered my servant Job? Now, you and I are asked to consider something. The fullness of it may have escaped our attention.

Now, God saw something in this man called Job of an enduring quality. It had not come to him by being intermixed with those things that bring weakness to ordinary people. There was a measure of strength in him, and even to Satan himself, the Lord said, have you considered this man? Now, there were some characteristics in this man, and as he looked down, he called him a perfect and an upright man.

If you look at that in its text, really, it talks about as it did with Abraham. He was honest and sincere. It doesn't mean he was without fault.

Doesn't mean he didn't have questions. Didn't mean he doesn't have struggles. There's no perfection in any human being apart from Jesus Christ within us.

We're all imperfect to the very core without God. No, the perfection was a sincerity, was an uprightness in his walk, one that fears God. In other words, this man was not a game player with the things of God.

What he knew to do, he did that. When God spoke, he believed it. When something of the Lord came to his heart, he moved upon it.

He acted upon it. And thirdly, the Lord says he's a man who eschews evil. He shuns evil.

What God says is wrong, Job believed in his own heart it was wrong, and he moved away from it. Even if other people were allowed to do it, Job was not. And it brought him into a place of strength that even in the most difficult of circumstances, almost unimaginable what came against this man, Jesus knew that there was something of integrity in this man, something that God himself could bear witness to and say, you throw everything you've got at this man, but he will not fall.

He will not fail. Have you considered my servant Job? In the book of Ruth, we see a faithful young girl. Her name was Ruth.

And she caught the eye of the one man in her time who had the power to bring her into an incredible inheritance and a place of safety. He was called the kinsman redeemer. He was of her family and he had the power to bring her out of poverty and into strength, out of a place of vulnerability, out in the fields and into his protection.

A place where she wouldn't be just a marginal player as it is on the outskirts of the family, but somebody who was grafted into the strength that was coming through that family. And of course we know, you and I today, that eventually Ruth was grafted into the lineage of Jesus Christ, physical lineage of the man, Jesus. The kinsman redeemer said in Ruth 2.11, it has been faithfully showed me all that thou hast done.

Now she had been kind to her mother-in-law. She had been gleaning in the field. She had been doing what she knew to do.

And she caught the eye of the redeemer. I wonder, can you say that today? Can I say, can I say that my life, my devotion to God, my sincerity and the embracing of his word, my kindness to other people? Am I a man who eschews evil? Am I pursuing what is good? Can God look at me and say that there's a sincere and an upright heart inside of me? Have I caught the eye? And that's a question that you and I need to ask ourselves. I'm part of the bride of Jesus Christ.

You are part of the bride. If you've trusted in him for your salvation, if your faith for your salvation is in the shed blood of Christ, you are grafted in to the family of God and you are destined to be the bride of Christ for all eternity. So the question that you and I have to ask ourselves is, am I of such character? Am I of such quality? Am I of such an embracing of truth that I've actually caught the eye of the redeemer? Now Ruth caught the eye of her kinsman redeemer Boaz.

And listen to the incredible words that he said to her in Ruth chapter three in verse 11. He says, and now my daughter, fear not. I will do to thee all that they'll require us for all the city of my people know that you are a virtuous woman.

In other words, they know that what you have done conforms to what is right. All the city of my people know it. You know, the Bible speaks of a great cloud of witnesses appearing as it is over the balcony of heaven, encouraging us forward.

And I suppose we should ask ourselves the question, does all the city know that you are virtuous and I'm virtuous? Do they know? Is your life something that God can point to and say, have you considered my servant in New York city, in the Bronx or wherever it is that you live or Brooklyn, wherever you work? Have you considered this servant of mine? Have you caught the eyes of God? It's important that you and I be able to answer this question because in Proverbs 31, 10, he says, who can find a virtuous woman? You know, there's another problem. It says everyone boasts of his own goodness, but a faithful man who can

find, if we examine ourselves, we'll always come out smelling good and looking rosy. But if the Holy spirit examines us, if we have the courage to let the Christ of the church walk through the candlesticks as it is the testimony of our life and say, Lord, would you, as David said, would you prove me? Would you try me? Would you see if there's anything in me that offends any wicked way? David says, and lead me in the way of life everlasting.

I don't ever assume that everything I'm doing is right in the sight of God. Even if it's right in my sight, it may not be right in the sight of God. And that's Job.

It said he has sinned evilly. He ran from what God spoke to his heart. And the point I'm trying to make is it infused something into him that he being dead still speaks as the scripture says that he's physically dead.

I know he's alive in the presence of God, but physically dead. His life still speaks to us today. Where can I find this bride? Which the scripture speaks of that I may show her my favor.

Proverbs 34, 15 says, the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open to their cry. And so going into a season of prayer as a church, it's so important that you and I might be able to say, I know in as much as is in me, I'm walking in what is right. I have been honest with God.

I've not played fast and loose with truth. I've been dedicated to what God has given me and I've used what God has given me for a righteous purpose. Therefore the Bible says that his ears are open to their cry.

Remember the David said in one of the Psalms, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. And so we can pray. We can, we can, we can pray as forcefully as the prophets of Baal did on the top of Mount Carmel.

We can shout and scream from morning until evening. We can be sincere. We can dance.

We can cry. We can even cut ourselves as they did before the Lord, but nothing and nobody heard them because they were not righteous in the sight of a holy God. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open to their cry.

The righteous, the righteous don't need to say a lot of words when they pray. You know that sometimes it's just, Oh God. And he says, I'm here and I've come to help you.

We don't need a myriad of sentences and a lot of words to fill the atmosphere before God answers us. If we are righteous, I want to be part of the bride in my time that has caught the eye of God. I wanted with all of my heart.

Now I want to look in Proverbs 31 at the characteristics of this bride that the Lord asks us to consider. Firstly, verses 11 and 12 tell us that she's trustworthy and seeks to honor her husband all the days of her life. Says the heart of her husband does safely trust in her so that he shall have no need of spoil.

She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeks to honor God. Do you seek to honor God? Do I seek to honor God? Is that the core of what you're doing here this morning? What is the reason you've come to the house of the Lord? Why do you have a Bible in your hands? Why are you professing to be a follower of Jesus Christ? We must have the courage to ask these questions in our time.

Is it in you? Is it in me to honor God all the days of my life? To bring honor to him that the Lord can look to me and say, I trust him. I know that he is a man or she is a woman who will do good and not evil all the

days of her life. Verses 13 and 14 tells us she seeks the best of materials to work with and willingly goes to work.

She seeks wool and flax and works willingly with her hands. She's like the merchant ship and she brings your food from afar. In other words, she makes sure that what she has in her hand to do the work she's been given to do is of the best quality possible.

She's not just simply grabbing something close and making do with it. Like the preacher who doesn't know what to preach and hasn't spent time in prayer and so goes to the internet Saturday night at nine o'clock and pulls up somebody else's thoughts. That's not a virtuous woman.

That's not a virtuous bride. Nobody like that will ever catch the eye of God. No, no, no.

She goes far. She goes into places that are not close by. It's not convenient.

It's not something that's available to the lazy person. She goes to the throne of God and she does it. It's far from where she is, but she goes and she gets it and then puts it to work.

She rises, verse 15, also while it's yet night. It gives meat to her household and a portion to her maidens. In other words, she gets up early and makes sure that those under her care are provided for.

She gets up early. She gets up before the sun does. She gets up and spends time in prayer and names the names of those that are under her care.

Makes sure that they are provided for. Make sure that she has a word to give to somebody in the workplace that's going through a divorce or a death or a disease or difficulty. Make sure that it's not just casual conversation, but she gets up and says, God, you've given me the care of these people around me and I don't want to have scraps and trivia to give them.

I want to have meat to give to those that are under my care. Verse 16 tells us she's industrious and brings increase to her husband's house. She considers a field and buys it.

And with the fruit of her hand, she plants a vineyard. She considers the harvest, considers what it is that she's called to do. And as the Scripture says, the kingdom of God is as a person going out and seeking wealth, goodly pearls, and finds something of great value, a pearl of great price, and goes and sells everything he has that he may own that field.

Finds the heart of God, finds that fallen people are really what the kingdom of God is all about, to bring people into the security and safety of salvation through Jesus Christ. Finds this, considers it, and buys it. And with the fruit of her hand, she plants a vineyard.

Plants something that will grow. Plants something that will need attention. Plants something that will bring increase to her husband's house.

Her husband, of course, being Christ in the case of the church. She considers the field and buys it. I think of my wife, Pastor Teresa, who considered Summit International School of Ministry and looked at the incredible potential that was there for young people to come in from all over the world and truly find out what it means to know Jesus Christ in freedom and to bring that freedom as servants to all people into all places.

And she looked at the field and she considered it and came to me and said, I feel God would have me do this. She said, but if you don't want me to do it, I won't do it. I had only one question for her.

I said, has the Holy Spirit asked you to do this? She said, I'm certain of it. Then I said, I have nothing else to say. I dare not stand in the way of the work of God, as difficult as it might be.

She considers a field and she buys it and brings increase to her husband's house, which is not my house. It's the house of her ultimate husband, Jesus Christ. Brings increase to the house of God.

Verse 17 to 19 tells us she takes time to keep herself strong and takes inventory of the quality of her work and to not give up regardless of the darkness of the hour. She girds her loins with strength, verse 17, and strengthens her arms. She perceives that her merchandise is good and her candle does not go out by night.

She keeps herself strong, girds her loins with strength. She is not afraid to have the quality of her work judged by the Christ himself and perceives as much as he knows that her work is good and her candle does not go out, no matter how dark it is, no matter how difficult the days are. It's so important that we be a bride that catches the eye of the master in this generation.

Verse 20 and 21 tells us that she stretches, she helps the poor and gives double garments to those of her family. She stretches out her hand to the poor. Yeah, she reaches forth her hands to the needy.

She's not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are covered with scarlet. The actual other meaning of that word is double garments. She is concerned about other people.

She's concerned about those who have nothing in society because she once knew what it was like to need strength and found a kind hand gave it to her and she gives double garments to those of her household. She has an eye, in another word, for the needs of the body of Jesus Christ. She's not selfish.

She's not sitting at home reading to focus on herself. Everything is bringing her towards other people, the field, the honor of her husband, the integrity of her husband. She gives to the poor and gives double garments to those of her family.

Verse 22 and 23 says she makes herself coverings of tapestry. Her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land.

In other words, she carries herself with such dignity that it brings public honor to her husband. I want you to think about that for a moment. How do you carry yourself throughout the day? How do we carry ourselves in the workplace? What is our conversation like at tables where other conversation is not appropriate? How do we carry ourselves? Are we bringing dignity? You remember in Book of Chronicles and Kings when the queen of Sheba, as a stranger in a sense to the kingdom of God, came into the temple.

She'd heard a report and said to Solomon, when I've seen the dignity, when I've seen how you walk into the house of God, when I've watched the divine order of those around that are serving the kingdom of God, she said, my breath was taken away. This dignity, this bearing of the people of God in the house of God had stirred her heart to the point where her breath was gone. And you and I have to ask ourselves the question, do we carry ourselves with such dignity that it brings public honor to Jesus Christ? I can't help but think of the charismatic church in the last 20 or so years, the absolute insanity that's gone on in the

name of God, God's people barking like dogs and running the aisles like monkeys, such incredible foolishness in the house of God, bringing no dignity to the name of Jesus, just making the name of Christ a laughing stock in the Western world.

If ever there was a time when you and I are called now to walk with dignity and there's no other way to do this, but we have to have an inner bearing of Jesus Christ. We have to be gripped by the spirit of God. We have to have another mind, another heart.

We have to have another spirit. We can't be of this world. We can't be embraced by foolishness and have foolishness embracing us.

Verse 25 and 26 tells us she has great hope for the future and wisdom and kindness for every day. She makes fine linen and sells it. Strength and honor, verse 25, are her clothing and she shall rejoice in time to come.

She opens her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She has great hope for the future. I have great hope for the future.

I'm not rattled at all by anything I read anymore. Don't expect it to get any better. My value system and thinking is not there anymore.

I have great hope for the future because in my heart I see multitudes coming back to the kingdom of God. I see prodigals from everywhere coming home. I see sinners coming back into the house of God.

I see God doing something in our generation of stability and strength where our testimony is very simple and very real. We love God. He loves us.

We are serving him. He has given us his strength and his strength is all about telling you that 2,000 years ago he died on the cross for your sins. He's willing to forgive you and bring you into his church and make you part of an everlasting kingdom.

Thank God for the simplicity that's in Christ. Verse 28 says, her children arise up and call her blessed. Her husband also and he praises her.

In other words, the children that are raised up around her love her and consider her ways worth following. The children rise up and they look at this bride and they say, this is awesome. The blessing of God is here.

Why would I go anywhere else? Why would I consider any other kind of lifestyle? Why would I be drawn into things that are of no profit and are powerful? Why would I see something here? I see something in this bride. I see something in this church. Thank God.

Folks, I thank God children stay in this church. I thank God they're singing in our hallways. I thank God with all my heart that even our teenagers, should they even stray for a moment, they don't stray for long.

They come back because the scripture says the children rise up. They love her and they consider her ways worth following. Thank God.

Thank God. Thank God. Then verse 31 says something really phenomenal.

Give her the fruit of her hands and let her own works praise her in the gates. So the question is, what does this mean? What is the fruit of her hands? Give her the fruit of her hands. So what is it that God wants to give us? We're going to pray for 21 days.

We're going to fast for portions of that. And so the question that we have to ask is what is it that God wants to give us? What does he want to give us that we may not have? Where do we need to go that we may not be? What is to be the end result of this? Are we going to come out of this simply feeling better? Are we going to be stronger? I would assume so in measure, but is there something that God wants to give to his church? Is there something he wants to do in my life and he wants to do in your life that we may not have considered yet? Have you considered my servant? Is it possible that God is looking for something in us to be able to do something in us? Looking for an honesty, looking for a sincerity, an uprightness of heart, a willingness to turn away from what is wrong and turn towards what is right. In order to understand this, I want you to go to the book of Acts where we're going to finish in Acts chapter 4 verse 29.

Now the church of that time is first generation. They are only a stone's throw from the day of Pentecost. They're heading out, they're making a difference in their society.

A lame man has been healed in the temple. It has brought Peter and John into trouble with authorities. They've been threatened to stop speaking in the name of Jesus.

First generation folks, so important to understand this. They went into prayer as we're going to go into prayer and they said these words, and now Lord, verse 29, behold their threatenings and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word by stretching forth thine hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. Here's what they prayed.

Lord, darkness is encroaching upon the testimony of Jesus Christ. Darkness is rising up to try to stop the voice of God and the testimony of our Christ in our generation. Grant to us with all boldness we may speak your word by stretching forth your hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

Now listen, what these folks were praying about was not themselves. They were not, this prayer meeting was not to say, Lord give us protection, give us prosperity, give us homes, give us food. I think they'd gotten beyond that and they knew that if you seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things are going to already be added to you.

I think they knew that, but they were praying for something that only God could give. And they said, Lord, give us boldness to speak your word. It doesn't mean that we're just going to stand in the marketplace and become obnoxious.

No, no, here's what it means. Lord, do more through us. Stretch out your, give her the fruit of her hands.

The fruit of my hands is God stretching out his hands. If I've walked in a righteous way, if I've done what is right, if I've turned from evil, I have the right to go to the throne and say, Lord, stretch your hands out through my hands and speak through my voice and give me a heart to believe you. Let me bring honor to you in my generation, bring healing to the oppressed.

Let my hands be used to anoint the eyes of the blind. Let my hands be a key to prison doors. Let my hands show those that are wounded by the past, the way out of that, which threatens to destroy them.

Let my hands be signposts. Let my hands be tender. Let them be gentle.

Let them be as the hands of God in this generation. Let my hands be given to the needs of others and let me speak boldly. In other words, let me believe.

Let me be able to say something to people and God do it when I say it. If I tell a man he's going to be free, don't leave him in jail. If I tell the blind spiritually, they can be given sight, give them sight.

Stretch forth your hand through my hands. Give me authority. Give me boldness to honor you, to bring glory to your name, to walk through the streets of the city and bring you again to reputation in my generation.

Let me be, oh God, as this virtuous bride, not gathering to myself for no avail, for no reason, for no purpose, but oh God, what I gather to myself and what flows through me, let it be for the benefits of others. Let people look upon my life and see only by the grace of God could this man or this woman continue to be given in this manner for me. Stretch forth your hands.

That was the cry. It was not about themselves and you can hear people in our time praying prayers like, oh God, they're threatening us, protect us, destroy them. They were not praying for these kind of things.

Bless them as what they were praying. Reach out to them through us. Increase the testimony.

Give us a decorum that brings honor to your name. Paul had this decorum upon his life. When he stood before kings and rulers, he had such a decorum of God, such a wisdom in his mouth, such a total otherness to the spirit of this world that kings and rulers could say, oh, most you persuade me.

Others trembled in his presence, not because he had any natural power or authority, but the decorum of God was upon him. His heart was right before God. His life was given to the purposes of God.

He was walking as much as he knew because he stood one time before the religious leaders and he said, I've lived to this day in good conscience. As much as I know, I'm free from offense towards God and towards man. Give her the fruit of her hands.

The scripture says, and when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost and they spoke the word of God with boldness. The place was shaken.

They were just a stone's throw from Pentecost. They were the first of the first days of the first generation church. They had the apostles with them.

Signs and wonders were happening. They were far ahead of where we are now, but they knew they needed more for the hour. And the scripture says the place was shaken.

My cry, and I prayed it. I prayed it this week. I prayed it last night.

I prayed it this morning. Shake the place where I am, oh God. Don't let me settle in and try to defend something when you're calling me forward into something more.

Shake it, oh God, where I am and fill me again with the Holy Ghost. Give me authority to speak your name in my generation. Give me the ability to stand against the onslaught of Satan.

Give me a heart like Ruth to believe that what you've spoken to me, you're going to do it. Give me the strength that I need. They were shaken in that place and something of God stirred in their hearts and they spoke it with boldness.

Boldness like this, approaching somebody across the table or across the aisle or across the desk from you and saying, Jesus can change your life. I know he can. I believe he can do it right now.

And stretching out your hand and believing and expecting God to do something. Now look at the outworking of this prayer. And the multitude of them that believed, verse 32, were of one heart and one soul.

Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all. Give her the fruit of her hands and let her own works, let her own works praise her in the gates.

In other words, let her own works declare who she is and let her influence be felt in the city. That's what it means. Let her own works praise her in the gates.

Do something so sovereign in this bride that even in the places of commerce, people have to stop and acknowledge her. Whether they agree or disagree, they have to stop that she can no longer be marginalized and pushed to the sides of society is irrelevant and insignificant. God do such a work that at least there will be a forcing of an acknowledgement if nothing else, because the tenderness and kindness of God, the decorum of God is upon this bride.

And when the place was shaken and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, the immediate fruit was exactly like Proverbs 31. Suddenly they're of one heart and one soul. Suddenly there's a release of selfishness.

Suddenly every man, every woman is doing exactly as the virtuous woman did in Proverbs 31 and is looking to the left, to the right, before and behind for the needs of others. There's a release of everything that is holding us back from the work of God through us. It doesn't mean everybody ran to the bank and took their money and threw it around the room.

There was just an awareness now. It was no longer. I think we might be one of the most selfish generations of all time.

Self-focused. This is the ultimate me, myself, and I generation. It's all about me, which is causing all the turmoil that we're experiencing in our world today.

But Jesus will have a church and the testimony of the church is going to be, it's all about you. God loves you. God can set you free.

God will provide for you. God knows the way out of your situation. God will give you direction for the future.

God will help you. God will teach us how to use our resources for good. We ought not to be accumulating all of this while people have nothing to eat.

God will give us strength collectively, individually, as a body of Jesus Christ. Give her the fruit of her hands and let her own works praise her in the gates. Let her influence be felt in the city.

Almost unthinkable in the city of New York that there are eight to ten thousand people in this church alone and our influence should not be felt. Unthinkable to me. Unthinkable.

Absolutely unthinkable and should never be tolerated in my heart or in yours. It's not that we want to become a political force. I'm not talking about that kind of stuff.

We're not going in that direction. It's Jesus. Grip my heart.

Fill me, oh God, with compassion for this generation who are going to go into incredible need and let my life bring you to honor. Who can find a virtuous woman? Her price is far above rubies. Who can find one? I believe that this is the question the Lord's asking us before we go into prayer.

And if you and I are able to say, Lord, that is me. As much as I know, I'm walking in the truth that you've revealed to me. I'm not playing games with you.

I am walking away from evil and I'm walking towards your work, which is other people. As much as I know I'm doing this, then the Lord says at the end of his question, give her the fruit of her hands and let her own works praise her in the gates. Now, years ago, there was a young man and he was sitting with a friend.

He was only in his teens and the friend was an older man. And he said to him, the world has yet to see what God could do through a person who has completely surrendered to his will. And as his friend left, he sat on the bench and he said to himself, by the spirit of God within me, I shall be that man.

He went on to be one of the greatest evangelists among some of the greatest evangelists that the Western world has ever known in his time. I believe that much good can be done if we determine in our hearts that by the spirit of almighty God, we will be that virtuous bride. We will be that people through whom Christ can declare his own glory.

By the spirit of God, because many are looking this morning and saying, look, you don't know who you're talking to pastor. Like I'm just, I struggle just to stay sane. Glorifying God is not even an option for me.

Oh yes, it is an option for you because you're talking about the one who created you. You're talking about the one who separates light from darkness, who created the universe by the word of his mouth, who walked on water, raised the dead. This is who you're talking about.

Don't tell me he can't use you or change you. And you simply have to get up from where you are as this young man did and say, by the spirit of God within me, if you belong to Christ, if you're part of the bride of Jesus Christ, you say by the spirit of God within me, I shall be that person, that man, that woman, that young person, that older person, it doesn't matter. I will reach the full potential that God has for my life.

I will not be hindered by anything I think about myself, but by God's spirit, I will run from evil. I will do what I know is right by God's spirit. I will believe the words he speaks to me when he tells me that he'll bring me into my inheritance as Boaz did to Ruth.

I will believe that even though Satan himself will come against me with everything he's got, that I will not fall. God will not let me fall. I will not fail because I have an honest life.

I believe that the work of my hands will bring honor and glory to my savior and ultimately the bridegroom of all of us for eternity. I believe it with everything within me. This is a call and a cry to faith deeper, farther than we've ever gone before, and faith that moves to action, faith that has works to it.

Remember James said faith without works is dead. Faith that moves in faith, faith that believes God for the impossible, faith that says I'm not settling here, I'm not going to get something that's convenient and cheap and bring that as a testimony of the work of God. No, I'm going to go farther than others have gone.

I'm going to go wherever God leaves me and I'm going to become whatever God calls me to be. I'm not going to sell short the glory of my bridegroom in this generation. I'm going to trust him for the miraculous.

I'm going to ask God to shake the place where I am, fill me again with the Holy Spirit, and stretch out his hands through me and bring healing to this generation, healing to these children who need to know there's a God, healing to the minds of those that are oppressed, healing to those that are imprisoned in pain, healing through my hands. I'm going to believe God for it with everything that's in my heart. By the Spirit of God within me I will be that person and I will not stop short of the glory of God that he would reveal.

I will be the bride that catches the eye of Jesus Christ by the grace of Almighty God. I will. Now, Father, I thank you, Lord, that in this time of prayer that we're going into this will not be a prayer time that's in vain.

You've called us for this. This is a season for kings to fight. It's a season for the church to be the church again.

Forgive us, Lord, for where we failed and fallen short. It's in your heart to bless. We know that.

Father, the only thing I can say to you is that by the grace of God, you've called me to be. It will not be by might nor by power, but by your Spirit. There's no other way.

Forgive me, Lord, for every time I've brought something of inferior quality to your people. Forgive me, Lord, for ever taking the easy way. I pray, Jesus Christ, you shake the place where I am.

Shake the place where we are as a church. Fill us with the Holy Spirit and stretch your hands out through us. Give us compassion, supernatural compassion.

It doesn't come from any amount of human effort or zeal. It comes from God. It was the immediate outworking of a fresh touch of the Holy Spirit.

It was the first fruit of that prayer meeting was compassion. Thank you for this, Lord. As I read Proverbs 31, that's all I see is compassion, compassion, compassion, compassion.

A bride that honors her husband and is compassionate to all people. Lord, I pray that as you look down in New York City these next 21 days that you can find a bride that is virtuous. Instead of asking the question, you could say, I have found a virtuous bride.

Thank you for this, Father, in Jesus' name. I want to give a simple altar call this morning. In the annex, you can step between the screens in the main sanctuary.

You could slip out of your seat and just join me at the front of the sanctuary. We're going to worship for a few moments, then bring our children out to dedicate them this morning. It's simply this.

By the Spirit of God within me, I will be that person. You've heard the message. I have nothing more to add to it.

As we stand, slip out of wherever you are and please just come. By the Spirit of God within me, let's stand together. I shall be, I shall be that person.

Let me just read to you quickly again the words of the kinsman Redeemer to Ruth. And now, my daughter, fear not. I will do to thee all that thou requirest, or I'll do to you everything you ask, for all the city of my people knows that you're a virtuous woman.

Praise be to God. Now, you may not feel that way. It doesn't matter.

You have it in your heart to do right. All heaven bears witness. All heaven is with you.

The Lord says, don't be afraid. Ask me for what you want me to do, and I will do it. I'll bring you in to an incredible inheritance.

I'll take you away from that which threatens you, your security, and your freedom. Father, I thank you, Lord, for these men and women who have responded in their hearts in this house today. Lord, as we take this time to pray, you're going to birth ministries here, things we've not anticipated doing we're going to do.

Kindnesses we've never shown are going to begin to emanate from us as the body of Jesus Christ. As we walk through the boroughs praying, you're going to show us what we can do to help. Lord, no matter what the situation, you're going to begin to speak to many who are here today.

Lord, you're going to take us out of where we are. Shake that place. You're going to fill us with the Holy Spirit and stretch out your hands to bring healing.

Lord, we think of the myriads of young people who have no direction. We think of those whose hell has opened their mouth and is about to swallow them. Lord, you're going to deliver people.

You're going to feed people. You're going to clothe people. You're going to do everything that you showed us to do in the Word of God.

Father, thank you, Lord, for the giftings of the Holy Spirit, the ability to be unafraid and to release those things that you give to us for the good of others. It is the fruit of prayer. It is the fruit of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

It is the immediate evidence that truly what we have encountered is the living God, that we're taken away from ourselves in the seeking of our own comfort, and we begin to seek the comfort of others. Father, give this to us as a gift. As a church, Lord, if I could ask for anything, this is what I would ask for, for such a heart of compassion, that as people are losing their jobs, they don't know where to go, they have no food for the future, that we will be found as the hands of God in this city, ministering, feeding, encouraging, helping, leading the way to strength.

Father, thank you for these things. Thank you, Lord, that we're going to ask and you're going to answer. We ask you, Lord, shake this church, Lord.

Thank you for yesterday, but that's over. This is a new day. Lord, you've got to shake us and take us into the future.

We thank you for it with all our hearts. We pray for these children on the platform today, that they will rise up and call us blessed. They will look at our lives and say, I want that.

This is the way I want to go. You yourself said the mark of the last day would be the hearts of the fathers turned to their children and the children to their fathers. Could it be, God, that this is what you're speaking about in our time? Oh, Jesus, Jesus, don't let one of these little ones perish because they see something of inferior quality in us.

Father, we ask you, Lord, God, that we would have the fullness of our inheritance in Christ and that our children may rise up and call us blessed. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

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