

A Call for Intercessors

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the vital role of intercessory prayer and the need for humility and reverence in approaching God.

Duration: 56:16

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:16, John 2:13

Topics: "Intercessors"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by acknowledging that all our learning is meaningless without God's guidance. He prays for God to touch his physical body, mind, and the hearts of the listeners. The preacher then focuses on the story of Esther in the Bible, specifically Esther chapter 5. He emphasizes the importance of approaching God with humility and confidence, acknowledging His authority. The preacher calls for the church to humble themselves and turn to intercession, recognizing that relying on human efforts alone has not brought deliverance to the nation. He encourages the church to engage in intercessory prayer and minister to the needs of others, believing that this will bring about a revival in the prayer meetings.

Transcript

Thank God. What a wonderful thing it is to come into the house of the Lord and to feel the presence of God. Oh, thank God.

We're approaching the 25th anniversary of this church in October. It'll be the end of 25 years as a congregation. Thank God for His faithfulness.

Bless the Lord for that. I leaned over to Pastor Patrick this morning, and I told him, I said, in case you haven't thought of it lately, most of the young people you minister to on Friday night weren't born when you first started attending this church. Needless to say, he was very thankful for that reminder.

Last week, we had a board meeting, and I do thank God for board members in this church who are men of faith and vision, because the Lord put something on our hearts, and we simply put it on the table in prayer, and said, Lord, we don't want anything in this church that's not led of the Holy Spirit, because if God's not leading it, it's pointless. It doesn't matter how grand it is. It's pointless if it's not birthed in God.

But there was a discussion, a roundtable discussion. There was a unanimous witness that we're to set aside \$1.5 million for the funding, the seed funding, of up to 100 inner city church feeding programs in New York City. We're going to make this available initially to churches that are listed with nycprayer.org. Now, these churches already have prayer meetings, but many of the churches don't have the funding to start a feeding program.

They would if they would start, and so we're going to help them to get started, and throughout the year have meetings encouraging these various leaders and pastors and bringing in people from larger organizations around the city to help get them plugged in to food distribution programs that are already available, which they might not be able to plug into at the moment. And we'll bring in speakers. We'll talk about nutrition.

We'll talk about prayer. We'll form an association and have innovative ways to get food, especially to the hardest-hit areas of the city. And the ultimate goal is the prayer meetings, of course, will take life, because Isaiah 58, verse 9 says, if you don't hide from your own flesh and you start ministering to the needs of people, you call out, and the Lord says, I'll answer you, and I'll say, here I am.

So the prayer meetings will come alive. That's what we believe. That's the best-case scenario.

Worst-case scenario, a lot of people are going to be fed for a 12-month period. So it's a win-win for this church in any way we look at it. And we'll be spending the next few months building an infrastructure for this.

It requires a lot of organization on our part and having the initial applications and meetings. And then I believe in October, our target date is October 1, 2012, to October 1, 2013, to help up to 100 inner-city churches start and hopefully maintain feeding programs in the city. I thank God for that with all my heart.

I'll still be out, Lord willing, on 1010 WINS Radio, and I'll be able to say, if you want a place to pray and if you're hungry, go to nycprayer.org, and there'll be churches there that you can find that will have food available to you, and you can call them and determine how to access that. So I thank the Lord for this with all my heart. Thank God for a church of faith and vision.

Anybody who wants to support this program, you just have to write Feed New York. We'll know what that's about. But we are pledging \$1.5 million for the 12-month period.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, God.

I want to talk to you this morning about a call for intercessors. If you can go to 2 Chronicles 7, and then three little books ahead in your Bible. We're going to begin in the book of Esther 5, and then we're going to go back to 2 Chronicles 7. The two are very close together in the Old Testament.

Easier to find, 2 Chronicles, and then go ahead three books to Esther, chapter 5. Father, I thank you, Lord, for the anointing of your Holy Spirit. Lord, if you don't build the kingdom, we labor in vain. All of our learning comes to nothing if you're not leading us.

I'm asking you this morning, God, to touch my physical body, touch my mind, touch the hearts of the hearers in this house today. Show us, Lord, the truth that's contained in these pages of Scripture. And help us, Lord, to apply it.

Many of us, Lord, you're calling to something far deeper than we've known. You're calling to this church for something deeper than we've walked in. Lord, I thank you for this with all my heart.

Now, I'm asking you for the ability to convey this. And Lord, do the miraculous as these words are being spoken. Give strength and sight.

Father, I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Esther, chapter 5, a call for intercessors, beginning at verse 1. Now, it came to pass on the third day that Esther put on her royal apparel and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house.

And the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house over against the gate of the house. And it was so when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court that she obtained favor in his sight. And the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand.

So Esther drew near and touched the top of the scepter. Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? And what is thy request? It shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom. Now, I want to talk to you today about the power of prayer.

Not just a broad concept of prayer, but a specific type of prayer called intercession. This is what we see in the story of Esther. We have a visual image of what it looks like when an intercessor approaches the throne of God.

Now, an intercessor is not somebody who's praying just for generic things in their own life. An intercessor is somebody who sees the need, who sees the peril that people are in, are suddenly gripped with it. Now, Esther was more or less influenced by her, an outside voice to do what she did, because it's not necessarily in our hearts to go to the lengths that she went to.

It's not in my heart, it's not in your heart. It has to be the voice of the Holy Spirit that's guiding us, that's wooing us to this. Something a little deeper than praying for our own jobs, our own safety, our own bread, and all of the things that are justifiable to go into the prayer closet and pray for.

There's nothing wrong with these things. But the call of an intercessor is deeper. It comes from the Holy Spirit.

It's something that God puts in the heart of a man or woman and calls you into his presence in a way that others may not be familiar with at certain points in their walk with God. Verse two tells us that when the king saw her, he wanted her to draw near, and he extended to her an invitation to partake of his authority, even before he knew her request. There's something in this that you and I need to lay hold of.

She stood in that outer court, and when the king saw her, he put forward the scepter, which represents the complete power and authority that he held as a king at that time. And when Esther was allowed to touch the top of that scepter, she literally had laid hold. She had touched his heart.

She had laid hold of something that's not available to the rank and file, to casual seekers of God. And he said these incredible words, what is your request? I'll give it to you, even to half of the kingdom. What a phenomenal statement that is.

In other words, he was saying there'd be nothing in essence, except for the throne that will be withheld from you. Now, second Chronicles chapter seven, we get another glimpse of this power of prayer and

intercession. When the Lord appeared to Solomon, second Chronicles seven, verse 11.

The scripture says, then Solomon finished the house of the Lord and the king's house, and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of the Lord and in his own house, he prosperously effected. And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night and said to him, I've heard thy prayer, and I've chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven, that there'd be no rain.

Or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people. Now here are the intercessors. If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Now, mine eyes shall be open and my ears a tender listening unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now, I have chosen and sanctified this house that my name might be there forever and mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually. I'll be looking, I'll be watching, I'll be listening, I'll be longing.

That's what God essentially said to Solomon. I have come to this house and there's a certain type of prayer that I'm looking for. Now it's a prayer.

Now he said, if I send into the land, if I send locusts to devour it, if there be no rain, that means the people are in jeopardy, the locusts are devouring the supply, or if there's a sudden outbreak of disease, like sin, immorality, corrupt thinking, there's a certain type of people, he says, I'm going to be looking for to come into this house, come into the temple of God. It's not just the casual seeker. It's not just the person who's coming in and saying, God, for my sake and for my garden in the backyard, would you send rain? As much as God doesn't despise that, he's talking about something much deeper than that.

There's a certain type of person that he's looking for, certain churches perhaps, even in our generation. He said, I've chosen this in verse 12 to be a house of sacrifice. Now in the original Hebrew, the word sacrifice really refers to the shedding of blood.

It was a person who came into this house, into this temple, had to sacrifice a lamb, a goat, a dove, a calf, in order to approach God in prayer. And so there was, it was a place where God said, those who approach me for whatever reason, realize the costliness of this opportunity, which has been given them. It's not a light thing to approach the throne of God.

It costs something. So those who came into the temple, he said, I've ordained this a house of sacrifice. So those who would come in to pray these kinds of prayers, when the nation itself and the people of God were in jeopardy, would be aware because they would have been at the altar.

They would have watched a young calf have its throat slit, literally. They would have seen the blood poured out into basins. They would have watched the carcass put on an altar.

And so they would be, it would be so fresh in their minds that this is not a light thing. This is not a casual thing. It has cost something.

It's life for me to approach this throne and to bring my intercessions before God. And folks, you and I need to be aware that when we come into the presence of God to pray, it's not a light thing. It's not a casual thing.

It costs the Son of God, to make a way for you and I to come inside that veil and to have a face-to-face interaction with God. In the same way, when Esther stood in the inner court of the king's house, in Esther chapter 5 and verse 1, it was against the law. And anybody who came into that inner court without being invited expressly by the king would pay with their life.

And everybody knew that. And there were most likely no exceptions to the rule. And Esther knew that to come into this inner court was going to cost her.

But when she stood in the inner court of the king's house, the king had to withdraw his lawful right to execute his wrath. When he held that scepter out, you see, you just did not come into that. Just the similar way in the temple.

You didn't peek behind the curtain, folks. You died. You died.

If you were in the temple and you were in charge of cleaning the place, for example, and you just curiously wanted to see what God looked like, so you just separated the veil and you died. You didn't come in. And it was only one man once a year by invitation.

And even he had a rope on his ankle in case he died in the presence of God so they could pull him out. And nobody would have to die doing it. And it would have been a situation in this king's court of awe where the people who are actually inside and ministering to him around, the temple guards, there would have been cup bearers, there would be all kinds of people looking to his every need and whim.

When they saw him extend that scepter to Esther, there would have been a collective gasp, really. Many people maybe never had seen this in their whole lifetime. And they knew the law.

You just simply don't appear in the king's court. And if you do, you die. It's that simple.

And it was a law that only the king had the power to suspend. And I want to, I dare say today, it probably had never been suspended for perhaps most of his reign. So you can just picture this collective gasp as Esther is standing there and he moves the scepter towards her.

In the same way at Calvary, Jesus Christ suspended his lawful right to execute his wrath upon us. And he tore the veil in two and invited you and I into his presence to partake of his power, to the absolute awe of every created being in heaven. You see, because we don't understand the holiness of God.

We have a very dim view, a very dull view of the majesty of God. One day you and I will stand in the presence of the Lord and we will have an Isaiah experience. Woe is me.

Oh God, if you had dealt with me on the earth as I deserved, I'd not be here. I'd not be standing in your presence. But when Jesus Christ shed his blood and ripped that veil in two, he suspended his own law of, in a sense, anybody coming into the presence of God would die uninvited.

And amazingly enough, he invited all of us in. It's an absolutely, it should boggle the mind. It's starting to boggle mind, I'm telling you right now.

The fact that I'm invited in to the presence of a holy God who, by the words of his mouth, can create galaxies, has all power, has all authority, has always existed and will always exist, is all holy, is all good, there's no fault, there's no flaw in him. And yet we rebelled against him and in our abject ignorance declared ourselves to be God. In his kindness to us, he sacrificed his own blood, tore the veil that

separated us from his very person and invited us in.

To the collective gasp, I am absolutely sure of all of heaven, I think the angels just went, have you seen what God has done through his son, Jesus Christ? When Esther touched the king's scepter, she tapped into a place of authority which didn't belong to her, it belonged to somebody else. And it was at this moment hers by acceptance and divine invitation. Well, not divine in her case, but divine in our case.

It was hers by acceptance and invitation. Remember Hebrews 4, verse 16 tells us to come to the throne of grace boldly, that means with confidence, to find grace to help and to find mercy and to find grace to help in our time of need. We don't come in strong, we don't come in proud, we don't come in full of ideas.

How obnoxious that must be to heaven and to a holy God, when men who consider themselves to be as God or equal with God step into the holy place with their ideas and say, God, would you bless what I've come up with? How absolutely obnoxious it must be. And so it is in the heart of God to answer prayer. Verses 15 and 16 of 2 Chronicles 7. Now my eyes shall be open and my ears attend to the prayer that is made in this place.

For now I've chosen and sanctified this house that my name might be there forever and mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually. Now it's only in this issue of prayer that scripture records Jesus Christ visibly and physically demonstrating the anger of God towards those who are robbing the people of what God wanted to do for them and through them. That's the only place that you see the visible, manifested, righteous anger of God in the New Testament.

Now he verbally, in a sense, had things to say to the Pharisees which were certainly sharp and pointed, but the only time you ever see Jesus get physically angry. John chapter 2 says he made a scourge of cords. Matthew chapter 21 says it this way.

Verses 12 to 14. And Jesus went into the temple of God and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple over through the tables of the money changers and the seats of them that sold doves. And he said to them, it is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer but you have made it a den of thieves.

In other words, you have stolen what I wanted to do. It's not so much that they were thieving as probably they were, but it's not so much about the thievery that went on, about the bartering for the exchange rates for currency and the prices for lambs. They had created a casualness in the heart of the people.

They had taken away the holiness of the temple. The sense of awe was gone. All the hucksters and buyers and sellers in the house of the Lord had created this casualness in the house of God.

This loss of the sense that I'm invited here by sacrifice that God might do something profound through my life. That he might answer my prayers beyond anything I can even think or imagine. That he might take this simple prayer that I bring before him in the sincerity of my heart and multiply it and feed thousands through it.

You see in their casualness, in their lack of reverence, they had taken this out of the hearts of the people and this is the greater thievery I believe that Jesus Christ was speaking about and why his anger was so manifested. I had determined in the temple to be God to a people who would come to me when the nation was in difficulty. When there was famine.

When there was pestilence. When there was no rain. When there were no crops.

When the people were being overwhelmed by their enemies. When they were put to flight before the enemy. I had determined to have a people who come into the temple and through their prayers I was going to move heaven and earth on their behalf.

But the casualness of those who kept the temple robbed the people of what I intended to do. In verse 14 says the blind and the lame came to him in the temple and he healed them. How symbolic.

Those who couldn't see a way forward and those who had no strength even if they could see. And those were the two that he mentions that he healed in the temple after he'd thrown out all of this other bartering and selling that was going on. If my people, he says, will humble themselves.

Unlike the self made strategists, the hucksters and the sellers who were driven out of the temple. Esther came humbly before the king. Only wearing that which the king had provided for her.

The scripture says that she came in her royal apparel. She humbled herself. She had no plan.

She wasn't asking God to bless her plan or the king to bless her plan because she had no plan at this point. She's not even quite sure what she was going to do. I'm sure of it.

But she knew that God was calling her to intercede. She didn't know how it was going to play out. Because when she went in she wasn't even sure if she was going to live or die.

She walked into that presence of that king with humility. And folks, you and I have to take heed to these words. We don't come arrogantly to the Lord of the universe.

We come humbly before him. We come, yes, with confidence. We come understanding that he desires.

But we come acknowledging who he is. And that without his covering, without the royal apparel, we are nothing. We have no right to be there.

We have no plan that's going to advance the kingdom of God. And sorely, the church of Jesus Christ has tried these things for 20 odd years now and it's not brought any deliverance to the nation. I think it might be time to humble ourselves once more and come into the place of intercession.

And turn from their wicked ways, how loathsome it must be when men and women acting in their lower natures. Now the lower nature was given to us when Adam and Eve sinned. And the essence of that lower nature is that we can be as God.

So that means we can bring ideas to God and say, God, what a good idea this is. Would you please bless it? And how wonderful it's going to be when you bless it. And how much deliverance you're going to bring about.

And God looks at this and suffice to say, a lot of our good ideas might be wickedness in the sight of a holy God because it isn't his idea. Remember through Isaiah he said, my plans are not your plans. My ways are not your ways.

So if I'm bringing something to God that is not his plan, that is not his way, is it not wickedness? Really in the sight of God. That's why when we prayed last week as leaders around the table, I dread having a plan that isn't the plan of God. I don't want to go anywhere near it.

Because if it isn't God, it's got no life in it. You simply have to, it's like a dead horse that you're taking on a parade down Broadway and you're dragging the thing the whole way trying to tell people how wonderful this thing is and how fast it goes. It's dead.

It has no life. It's not given life by the Spirit of God so it won't live. If they will pray, he said, and seek my face.

Now it's a different kind of a prayer. Esther called those that were close to her and part of her entourage to three days of fasting. It's a prayer that begins with self-denial.

It's a prayer that is not preoccupied with itself but it's preoccupied with the dilemma, in her case that her people were facing. There was a decree had been written over, for those who don't know the story, a law had been written that her people were going to be destroyed. They were going to be killed.

It's typical of the law of sin and death over our society today. Esther saw it, she knew it, and knowing that she was called to make intercession to the king, she fasted for three days. Intercession begins with self-denial.

Intercession is, it's not about me anymore, it's about you. That's the type of prayer that will move the hand of God in a more spectacular way. In a greater way than we've ever seen before.

And secondly, she said, if I perish, I'm going to go in and if I perish, I perish. It's not only the type of prayer that begins with fasting, but it's a prayer that throws its life in with its petition. If this prayer leads me to a place where I seemingly lose everything that's of value to me, even my own life, then so be it.

It's that kind of intercession. It's not enough to pray sometimes, Lord, send somebody. God's saying, no, I'm going to send you if you will seek me with all your heart, if you'll throw your life in with your prayers.

And that's exactly what Esther did. That's what intercession is all about. It's not just God help those poor people over there.

It's, Lord, if it costs me everything, if you send me, I'll go. I'm not just coming and praying a generic prayer to satisfy my own conscience that I have somehow exhibited some compassion. I'm willing to put my life in with my prayers.

And folks, that's the key. You show me anybody ever been used of God that a history book has been written about, that has done an exploit for Christ or one many to God who has not prayed that way, has not thrown their life in with their prayers, and all their future, and everything. I don't know.

Some people may, God may allow some of us to continue the way we are, and others may pay even the ultimate price. But folks, this is the type of intercession that the Lord is looking for in His people. She said in chapter 7, when she prayed to the King, she said, If I've found favor in your sight, verse 3, O King, if it please the King, let my life be given me at my petition and my people at my request.

For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. If we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I would have held my tongue. But we are sold to be destroyed.

She saw that this end game was about the lives of the people. And it's a type of the church in our generation who finally realizes people are going into an eternity without God. And everything that that means.

And suddenly, we're just simply not content for that to happen. I don't know about you, but I'm just not content. Yeah, thank God.

We have a wonderful church here. They tell me 8,000 people attend here. That's sufficient for me.

Thank God for that. The presence of the Lord is here. The worship is powerful.

God's given us the resources to do wonderful things in the city. But I don't know about you, but I'm not content to have this city go to hell on my watch. I'm not content to see a nation sink into immorality.

I'm not content to let the sodomites lead our society. I'm not content to let wicked and evil television and music determine the value system of our children. I'm simply not content.

I'm not content to say, well Lord, you've taken my life this far and that's far enough. You know, I've got some accomplishments. I've got a few things I can stick on the wall and hopefully that will be good enough when I get to heaven.

No, there's something deeper for all of us. There's something more profound. There's something that I feel God calling me to.

A depth of Him. How do I explain it? I don't know how to put it into words, but it's something that He is doing in my heart. It's an incessant groan that's come upon me.

Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! This is not right that our society is going this way. It's not right that our children are dying in our streets and don't even know your name apart from being a curse word in G-rated movies. My God! My God! My God! You can do so much more than that.

It's something that's gotten into my heart that says, Oh God, if it costs me everything, You'll give me the strength to pay the cost. Because I don't have it within myself, but You do, Oh God. And Esther knew she didn't have it within herself either.

That's why she had to pray. She had to fast. She had to get to the place where she's willing to say, If I perish, I perish.

If my plans go down the tube. If my vision of my future doesn't materialize. If the comfort of the palace is taken away.

Lord, Jesus Christ, don't let this generation perish. Don't let these people die in their sin. Don't let America go down the tube spiritually or any other way.

God Almighty, send a revival. Folks, revival starts with somebody. Why not you? Start somewhere.

Revival in your neighborhood starts somewhere. In the workplace it starts somewhere. In your home it starts somewhere.

I think it's time that we stop looking for somebody else and just say, God take me. Chapter 7 tells us that the first thing she had to overcome was the enemy at hand. And that's the first thing that you will have to overcome.

After she had touched the scepter of the king, she arranged a banquet. And of course the devil himself is at the banquet. She has to listen to his endless chatter at the table.

She has to know the deceptiveness of his heart. And there would be every force of hell will be around her, sneering at her saying, who do you think you are? Do you really think you can change the law? Do you really? There's a law of death that's been written over your people. Do you really think you can change that? She'd have to fight through that initial battle.

When you go into the prayer closet, the devil is going to come in with you and you've got to fight through. You've got to fight through and God will give you wisdom. And God will give you a word.

And God will give you a strategy. It will all come from the mind of God. And when the time was right, the Lord had already set a trap.

She hadn't done it, the Lord had done it. He had already set a trap for Haman. And he ended up hanged on his own gallows.

Now, Esther is put in a place that in chapter 8 verse 3, now here she comes again. And Esther spake yet again before the king and fell down at his feet and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman and his device that he devised against the Jews. Now look at verse 4. Then the king held out the golden scepter towards Esther.

So Esther arose and stood before the king. This is the second time now we see this. Now you begin to see something is happening.

She's coming in. She's learned, in a sense, what is necessary to approach the king. The king is automatically holding his scepter out to Esther.

And Esther is given the power of the king as she touches that scepter to rewrite the law. There's a law of sin and death over her own people. Suddenly, she finds the king taking off the ring of authority and giving it to her uncle.

And she is now directly involved in rewriting the law of sin and death into a law of life. It's an amazing thing. The scripture says it was written out, this law of life.

And suddenly, messengers are heading out. In chapter, verse 9, chapter 8, it says the lieutenants, the deputies, the rulers of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces, according to the writing thereof. Verse 10 says it was sealed with the king's ring.

It was sent out by posts on horseback, mules, camels, young camels. Folks, it was, the word went out. You don't have to die in your sin.

You don't have to be overcome by the enemy. There is a law of freedom. There is a law of victory.

There is a law of strength. There is a law. Somebody has touched the scepter of the king.

There's a law gone out. There's a law of liberty. There's a law that heals the oppressed.

There's a law that causes the gospel to be preached to the poor. There's a law that opens prison doors. There's a law that gives strength to those that have no strength.

That gives sight to those that can't see. There is a law gone out. Gone out from India to Ethiopia.

Gone out into 127 provinces throughout the world. This law went out. It was a borderless law.

It had gone out by the power of almighty God himself. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God. Folks, this all came from one young lady who made a choice to go into the king.

If she hadn't made the choice none of this would have happened. And now chapter 9 something amazing happens. In verse 12 the king was getting the report of all that had happened and all the victory that had been won by Esther's people.

And verse 12 says the king said unto Esther, the queen, that's chapter 9 verse 12, the Jews have slain and destroyed 500 men in Shushan the palace the 10 sons of Haman. What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? And then he says something amazing. Now what is thy petition? There's not even a scepter involved in this anymore.

And it shall be granted thee. And what is thy request further? That shall be done. The king is now approaching Esther.

Folks, you've got to get this. It starts by Esther approaching the king. It ends with the king approaching Esther.

Esther has become the bride. She actually became a co-regent with her husband which was unheard of at that time and in that part of the world because the end of the chapter talks about the decree of Esther that was sent out confirming the feast. Esther was writing laws now.

She was a co-regent. Just as you and I are going to be with Christ and in Christ. We're going to rule and reign with him one day.

But Esther is a co-regent now with her husband. And her husband now, it's a daily thing. Esther's coming into the presence of the king and the king is saying, what can I do for you today? Up to half of my kingdom.

What is it that you want? He's seen the virtue of this woman. He knows the purity of her heart. He knows that her motives are not for herself.

He knows that she's not trying to take the kingdom for herself. She's all about other people and he's seen the virtue in her heart and now the king is approaching Esther. Praise be to God.

Wouldn't you like that to be your prayer time? That you get into your prayer closet and the king comes down and says, what can I do for you today? I want to do something for you. Remember God said to Solomon I've chosen this house as a house of prayer and my eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually. My heart is for freedom.

God's heart is to deliver the oppressed. God's heart is to set the captives free. God's heart is to minister to the poor.

And he says, when you come in and pray my heart will be there. And I don't know of a greater illustration of that than seeing this heathen king literally coming to his queen and saying, what is it that I can do for you today? There's no more. The court must have been amazed.

And wouldn't you like to be a person in our generation who could amaze heaven? A person who can say as we often sing, I am the friend of God. I know that. I can come into his presence and he knows my heart.

I'm not here casually. I respect and honor what was done so that I may have this privilege. But I love him and he loves me.

And in the strength of that relationship, I can come in and he says to me, what would you have me do for you today? Hallelujah to the Lamb of God. Hallelujah. There's a call for intercessors in this hour.

Prayer that is deeper than you and I have known before. There's a call going out of the Holy Spirit for we are living in a perilous time in our generation. A perilous hour in our society.

A time where calamity could come upon us at almost any moment. Society is about to change just simply because of economic reasons if for no other reason. And the Lord is looking for intercessors.

Now I've probably clumsily conveyed this today, but I know in my heart what God's calling me to. Something deeper. Something more profound than just oh God help me get through the day.

Something a lot, lot deeper than that. I trust that all these things as I seek him will be worked out in my life and for my life. But I'm asking him oh Jesus, Son of God it is simply not right that your name not be honored in our generation.

It is simply not right that children are perishing without the knowledge of you. It's simply not right Lord that evil is allowed to come in like a flood when your word says that the Spirit of God will raise a standard against it. It's simply not right that evil men seem to have the upper hand at this time.

And that's why God at this moment in history remember the word that came to Esther who knows that thou art born for a season, for this moment in history. Who knows times square church as we approach our 25th anniversary. I don't know how old Esther was maybe she was 25.

But who knows. But that we are born as a congregation for this moment in history. For this time in the city of New York.

We are born. We've been trained. We've been taught.

We've been wooed. We've known the blessing of God to be drawn into the presence of God in a profound and deeper way than we've ever known. Drawn in for the sake of the lost.

Drawn in for the sake of our future. Drawn in believing that God is able to change even New York City. God is able to bless our cities.

God is able to invade our schools. God is able to go into the financial part of this city. God is able to touch City Hall.

God is able to go into Broadway and save myriads of actors. God is able. God is able to flood our streets in New York City with crystal clear water from the very throne of heaven itself.

God is able to sweep away the refuge of lies. God is able to convince the atheists of the reality of God. God is able to straighten out the thinking of the agnostic.

God is able to go into our universities and colleges. God is able to invade our classrooms. God is able to invade our businesses.

God is able to invade our schools. God is able to go and invade our churches. God is able to come and do what God can do.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

It's not just a matter of believing this in my heart. I know this to be true. I know what God can do.

I've seen what God can do. I've walked in the midst of what God can do. Hallelujah.

I'm so thankful that he destroyed in Jamaica 30 years of murder and violence and now there's buildings and industry and schools and children playing on a playground that used to be a killing field. I thank God for Nigeria for he put out his hand and stopped a civil war and brought peace so profound that even the governor gave his life to Christ on this very platform. I thank God for what he did in Zambia.

For the myriads of people that came forward to receive Christ in that stadium. I thank God for what he's done in Argentina. Turning his church away from self-seeking to feeding the poor.

I thank God for what I've seen him do all over the world, but in my heart Lord, I've seen what you can do but now it's time for New York City. Now it's time for our boroughs. Hallelujah.

Do I have a plan? No, I don't need a plan. I know the King. I know who the King is.

I know who the power is. My plan is to get in that inner court and touch the top of that scepter. Hallelujah.

And have the King say to my heart, what is it that you want me to do? Up to the half of the kingdom shall be yours. That's the plan in my heart. Glory to God.

Glory to God. Glory to God. Glory.

Glory. Glory to God. Glory to God.

Glory to God. Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Thank you Lord Jesus. Thank you mighty God.

Hallelujah. Glory to God. Glory to God.

A question to you this morning is simply this. Who would be brought into intercession? It was the voice of Mordecai, Esther's uncle, that prompted her to even consider the course of action that would change the future for her own people throughout most of the known world at that time. Only eternity will record how many people were truly saved by the hand of God through one girl providentially placed in a situation where she could touch the authority of the king.

You think today of 8,000 people in this church who have been providentially placed in a similar way. My voice to you is like the voice of Mordecai opening and unlocking the scriptures, but we all make that choice. Do we put on our royal apparel? Do we wear that righteousness that God's given us? Do we

recognize that there was a great cost involved to God in this so that we don't come in casually or lightly? We come in with a trembling in our heart before a holy God and we walk through and say, if I perish, I perish.

If my dreams, my plans, my visions, if it all changes, then so be it. But oh God, you can't let this generation die while I live. You can't let it die while I know, while I understand that I have the authority in Christ to touch the power of God.

Folks, we're being called to something deeper than we've ever known. It's not a program, it's much deeper than anything that we can produce, but it's you and I in our own prayer closets just going in and touching that place of power in Christ and asking Him to do what only He can do and then just simply doing what He calls us to do, whatever that is, starting in your own neighborhood. Who knows, you might be praying for the young kids on your corner that seem to be so given over to evil.

The Lord might be calling you to have a Bible study with them, to lay hands in them, let them be filled with the Holy Spirit. Don't say no. Don't say no to God.

Don't say not me. Because if that's what you say, then you're not a candidate for what I'm preaching about this morning. You have to have a willingness to say, if I perish, I perish.

Lord, just let my image of myself perish, if nothing else. The limitations that I've placed around my life, let them perish. Let all the walls come down.

And God, you take me wherever you want me to go. I'll trust you for this strength. And Lord, all I ask is that your name be glorified and people be saved.

It's that simple. And Jesus, I know you're going to answer my prayer. And you and I will get to the place one day where, before you have a chance to open your mouth, the King is saying, what can I do for you? Oh, God, help us to hear this.

Help us as a people, Lord, to understand this. Help us to want this, Lord, to embrace this calling that you're placing on us. Help us, Lord Jesus Christ, to be released to your care and to trust that your ways are right and to trust that you will use us, Lord, to save a multitude of people in our generation.

We're asking for good for the people of this country and not evil. We're asking for good for this city and not evil. We're asking, oh God, that you come down and push back the darkness and manifest your glory.

Hallelujah. If that's your heart today, if you want to be an intercessor, now, there's no formula to this, folks. You just come into the presence of God and you just ask him for people.

Ask him to save. There's no formula to this whatsoever. It's all about the heart and the heart of faith that says, God, I'm going to let you use my life, no matter what it costs me.

I'm going to give an invitation to just come and pray for a little while at this altar in front of this auditorium and the same thing in the annex. You could step between the screens at Roxbury and anywhere else in the world where people are listening today. We need an end time revival, folks, and the Lord is looking for esters in this generation.

And if this is you and you're willing, I'm going to ask you as we stand and begin to worship, just come. Just join this gentleman who's coming over on my left. Just come and we'll worship together.

Thank you, Lord, I am reminded how when Esther, that word first came to her Lord, she was reluctant to go. But Lord, she was afraid to go in.

She'd been an orphan, Lord, and she'd found a place of refuge in that palace. And Lord, she didn't see how it would make a difference if she went in. And she didn't feel like she was the one to go in.

And I thank you, Lord, that you sent the Holy Spirit to speak so clearly to her. And by your mercy and by your love for her and by what you wanted to do in and through her, you made her to understand, oh God. And you caused her, Lord, in spite of every unwillingness, every fear, everything that she felt would not make her worthy to go in, you were able, Lord, you were able to cause her to hear.

And Lord, she did go trembling. She did go with self-denial. She did go, Lord, counting the cost.

But we thank you, Lord, your Holy Spirit is able to work that in us. And that which held us back becomes desirable. And a longing to go into you.

And a longing, oh God, to obey you. A longing to believe you. You created that.

I thank you, Lord, that she probably remembered how you were so faithful that when she trusted you for simple things before she first went to the king, because she trusted, Lord, she was given things that when she went under the king, it made her desirable and she was chosen to be queen. She had a history, Lord, of how you led her. Lord, you will lead us.

And you will give us those things, Lord, that will make us desirable. You will give us those things, Lord, that we will be able to go into you and believe you, oh God. And Lord, it's on a history of faithfulness, Lord, that we present ourselves today.

Because you are good and because you choose, Lord, the people and the things, Lord, that look like they're nothing in their own eyes. Who truly have a fear of you and will go in, Lord, with understanding there is a sacrifice involved. The sacrifice of your son.

And it makes us to come boldly. Because if you would not withhold your son, oh God, if you would freely give him, oh God, shed his blood and give his life for the world, oh God, we know that when we go in, we shall be heard. And I thank you we go in in the finest of garments in our royal apparel.

We come in covered by the blood of the Lamb. We come in chosen, loved, accepted, cleansed and forgiven. We come in with a robe, oh God.

The royal robes, oh God, of your children as your bride, oh God. And we thank you this day, Lord. We thank you that we will not tremble before the enemy.

We will not tremble, oh God, that we will not be heard. For we have an Esther anointing upon us. We have an Esther understanding with us.

We have the Holy Spirit that's clothed us, Lord. And we know when we come in unto you in these royal robes, Lord, your heart is drawn out to us. I thank you, Lord, you will keep us in this place.

And we will not look anymore for our own comfort, oh God, in building our own lives. For we have heard you, oh God. And we see the call upon our lives.

We say with Esther, if we perish, we perish. For we don't want any other life except the life you've chosen for us. We don't want to live it, oh God, according to our own understanding.

And with our own plans, oh God. For we know we have been saved and empowered for a higher purpose. We know our sin has been forgiven because of Calvary.

And we come, Lord, on the merits of Christ, knowing we will be heard, oh God. And I thank you, Lord, that you will put to death the fear, the unworthiness, and the unwillingness. And you will cause us to move into these streets, oh God.

You will cause us to love to walk these streets, oh God, with faith in our hearts, saying our God is able. Our God is greater. Our God is stronger.

I thank you the darkness will be pushed back, oh God. I thank you for this plan of yours, Lord Jesus. That a hundred churches, oh God, will become feeding stations and prayer stations.

That the youth are going to be reached, oh God. That the darkness will be pushed back. That the law of sin and death will be cancelled, oh God.

Because you will hear our prayer. That we will get to rewrite the law. The law of sin and death, oh God, will be cancelled by the law of life in the spirit of Christ.

Thank you, Lord. We live in a kingdom where the laws can be changed. Thank you.

We live in a kingdom. You will hear us, oh God. Thank you, Lord.

You will be faithful to us. Thank you. You will deal, oh God, with the fear and reluctance on our heart.

And it will translate into your power and love being felt in these streets because our voice is heard. Thank you. You will not forsake us.

Thank you. You will lead us. Thank you for the spirit of intercession.

We receive it in Jesus' name. We will be changed in this moment, oh God. We receive, oh God, the anointing of Esther.

The call of Esther to believe we've been raised for such a time as this. Our voice will be heard, oh God, in the inner court. And I thank you, oh God, that you will come to us, oh God, because we have your heart.

We're not seeking to build a kingdom for ourselves. And you will trust us with your heart. And we can ask what we shall.

And we will ask that the law of sin and death be rewritten. And the law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ be ruled. It will rule and reign, oh God, in places where only darkness have reigned.

Have your way, oh God. We look to you to do this. We have no plan, but we have you, Lord Jesus.

We are going in. We are going in. We are going in.

We are going in. Thank you, oh God. We receive this today.

Thank you for the mercy. Thank you. We will come in a glorious salvation.

We will come knowing we've received mercy. We will come knowing our sin is forgiven. We will come knowing you will break the power of sin and death in our own lives.

And Lord, we will be heard because you are looking for such a people for such a time as this. You take the weak and the frail and you use them for your glory. So we say, Lord, we are made willing in the day of your power.

This is the day of your power. You are true to your word. We are made willing to God be the glory.

And may this city feel the impact of an Esther anointing upon your church in Jesus' name. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Lord, thank you. God, thank you.

Just take us individually in our prayer closets to a whole new level of understanding and faith. In the streets, Lord, let it be different. In the workplace, in our families, in our apartment buildings, let it be different, Lord.

God, put faith in us. Faith, Lord, faith. God almighty, we thank you, Lord.

We don't come in arrogance. We come in our need. But we come because you've invited us, you've clothed us, you tore the veil, and you said come.

Lord, your eyes and your heart are here. And Lord, we're not going to disappoint you. By the grace of God, we won't disappoint you in this house.

We'll pray for the right things, Lord. And we expect to see your glory. We expect to see it in every state.

We expect to see it in every borough in this city. We expect your glory to be manifested, O God, in this generation. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, God. Forgive us, Lord, for how we've so limited you for so long. But God, the time of this ignorance you've winked at, now you've commanded us everywhere to come into your presence, Lord.

And we do so. We do it willingly, Lord. We do it, God.

And Father, we thank you for this with all our hearts in the mighty, unmatched, holy name of Jesus. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

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