

# A Dry Stick At A Religious Meeting

by Carter Conlon

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*This sermon emphasizes the need for individuals to bring their dryness and weaknesses before God, trusting in His touch to bring life and fruitfulness. It highlights the importance of recognizing God's calling on our lives, even in the midst of mistakes and doubts, and surrendering to His supernatural work within us. The message encourages a shift from self-condemnation to praising God for His mercy and grace, leading to a renewed commitment to fulfill the ministry God has given each person.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 43:19, Psalms 92:10, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Numbers 17:1, Isaiah 54:2

**Topics:** "Trusting God's Touch", "Embracing God's Calling"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Father, I thank you, God, with all my heart for the touch of heaven that is so evident in this sanctuary this morning. Who can debate but that your presence is here? And when you come down so powerfully, it's because you want to speak to the people. Thank you, Lord, for coming to us today and speaking.

Thank you for putting this message on my heart. Thank you for giving me the power to speak it. Thank you for taking me out of the frailty of my own physical body and bringing me into the strength of the indwelling spirit of God.

Thank you, God, for giving us hearts to hear in a generation that is almost deaf to the things of God. Thank you for taking us out of a place of just serving you out of convenience. And God, help us to have a missionary spirit again in our generation.

Oh, God, oh, God, oh, God, give us the grace to understand this incredible moment that you've given to us, and we thank you for it. In Jesus' name. The psalmist in Psalm 42, I'll read the first three verses.

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? Or actually, the better translation is, when shall God appear before me? When will we meet again face to face? My tears have been my food day and night

while they continually say to me, where is your God? Lord, I'm thirsty for you.

Lord, I want more of you. Lord, I know there is more of you. But O God, in the midst of what seems to be a place of plenty, I've gone dry.

You ever had that happen in your life? You ever come to the point, you're saying, I don't have anything to give. I can barely sing my songs of praise and worship. If the other people weren't here, if I was all alone, I don't think you'd get a sound out of me.

Greg could play until his fingers bled, and I still wouldn't be able to worship. I'm kind of carried along by everybody else. And God, what have you got for me? What is my life going to amount to? Is there a promise for me, Lord? When will you speak to me? When will you appear before me? When will you and I meet face to face? I'm tired of crying at night, and I'm tired of going to bed with these thoughts from hell, permeating my mind saying, where is your God? Where is your God? Why are you so dry if God is with you? Now in the Old Testament, there was a man, and he was called into ministry, and I don't think he was ever secure in that calling.

Now, he was dragged into ministry because somebody else invited him. I don't think he was overly sure, right out of the gate, that God was the one who had initiated the ministry in his life. But nevertheless, because somebody else told him he was needed, he went along and he got involved in the ministry of that time.

Some people are like that in the house of God. You're not sure that you really heard the call yourself, but somebody else told you you should get involved in something, so you got up and got involved. And you're just simply not sure, even today, God, am I in the right place? Am I doing the right thing? And if I am, why am I so dry? And if you're with me, Lord, where's the evidence of your presence in my life? He went along in ministry, this man, and he made mistakes.

And I'm sure there was no shortage of people. Matter of fact, I'm positive there was no shortage of people that would remind him every day of the mistakes that he had made. He made a huge one along the way.

Anybody ever done that? Anybody ever made a huge mistake? Anybody, you know, what this man did is that he crafted a wrong image of God. He was sincere, but he crafted a wrong image of God before the people. And it was a horrible mistake that was brought to his attention by his own brother, and subsequently by many, many people around him.

Everywhere he went, I'm sure there's whispers. There's the man that did that thing. There's the man that did... You ever felt like you're walking in church and everybody knows every wrong thing that you've done? Well, do you ever felt at least the pastor knows when he talks to you every wrong thing? I remember when I was a young pastor, when I first came to Christ, I have an undergraduate degree in law, a bachelor's degree, majoring in law.

And I was a police officer. So it was my natural instinct to read the Bible and see the legal side of God. I mean, I just saw it all.

I saw all the requirements. I saw all the do not dos. And it was really... And so I started traveling the country and I became somewhat masterful.

I even got a reputation. I could demolish a church. I did have spiritual giftings to see the underbelly of what was going on among the people.

And I could go to a church and I could fill the altar with weeping people. But I remember coming home, I was out in Western Canada and I came back home and I was talking to Pastor Teresa and I said, the Jesus that I preach is deficient. Now, I don't believe that Jesus Christ is deficient, but the Christ that I preach is.

She said, well, why do you say that? I said, because I'm filling the same altars in the same churches year after year with the same people crying the same tears over the same sins and struggles. Nobody gets... The Jesus I preach is not bringing anybody into victory. He's bringing everybody under conviction of their sin and their shortcomings and their failings.

But I'm not able to bring... The Christ I preach is not able to bring them into victory. I was so discouraged. I went away for three days to fast and pray and said, God, you've got to help me in this.

And I came out of it, that time of fasting with a message I didn't even understand. And I remember coming home doubly discouraged. Now I said, I went away to fast, said, Lord, you got to show me who you really are.

You got to show me the other half of this coin. And ironically he did. It was a message called the shout of a king.

And it was new covenant, but I didn't understand what it was because I was so entrenched in this other view of who Christ was. I felt so bad after I came into an understanding of grace that I actually had a reunion several years ago of the people I had once pastored in Canada and those that came under the influence and asked their forgiveness for not preaching the full counsel of Christ to them. We all make mistakes, folks.

We all make... We need to let our hair down. If you got hair, let it down a little bit and just say, God, look, listen, let's stop judging everybody around us and recognize that all of us have failed. We've all fallen short of the glory of God.

One thing that Pastor Teresa told me, she said one time, you were never a hypocrite ever in what you believe. She says, that's the one thing I can say about you. You've never been a hypocrite, dead wrong, but never a hypocrite.

Now at a certain point in this man's life in the Old Testament, there was a rising up of another generation. The Bible says they were men of renown. There were 250 of them that rose up.

And they said, listen, you guys, you've had your time. It's our time now. We hear from God just like you do.

And they rose up and I can just see Aaron because Aaron is the man I'm talking about. Aaron is the man who was dragged into ministry because his brother was too afraid to go on his own. Aaron was the man who made a golden calf and made a terrible mistake before God and before the people.

And Aaron was the man that the people now rose up against. And they were men of renown. You can just imagine this man's standing there with his dry stick in his hand.

That's all he had. He had really no litany of faithfulness or legacy of faithfulness in the sight of God. He just had a dry stick and somewhat of an ignoble history, may I put it that way.

And he's standing there and there's these leaders that are new and they're innovative and they're smart and they're powerful. You've got to have something to rise to the top of that many people traveling at that time. And they said, it's our turn now.

Your turn is finished. You ever had that happen to you? You ever felt that? You ever felt like your time in ministry is over? Your time of serving in a certain ministry is over because somebody else is coming in behind you so much more innovative and so much more filled with ideas and power as they see it. And to add insult to injury, Moses speaks to these men.

He says, therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the Lord. And then he says this, and what is Aaron that you complain against him? Can you imagine if somebody said that about you? So I can see you rising up against the ushers, but what is Sam that you rise against him or who is Jane that you rise against her? And it's his own brother. It's his own brother that he's done his best with what he had and what he knew.

And all he's left with is a dry stick. He's got a doubt in his heart, maybe that he was ever even called into ministry. And on top of that, he's built a calf along the way and he feels deep remorse for how he had misrepresented God among the people.

And now he's being trash talked by his own brother. He says, what is Aaron? In other words, Moses said, I can see you rising up against the Lord and maybe against me, but him. You imagine standing there and saying, yeah, you're right, you're right.

Who am I? Who am I that anybody should even rise up against me? And I've got no history of faithfulness and I've made mistakes. And all I have is a dry stick in my hand, a staff which represented the calling of God, but it was dry. It was dry.

That staff had been dead for so long. There's no moisture left in this thing. You know, we get like that sometimes in our service to God, we just go dry.

And there seems like there's no moisture left in us. And so Moses, after these men pay the price for what they had done, he says, I want, God says to Moses, I'm gonna show you now whom I've called. And I'm gonna show you the evidence of whom I've called.

I want every house of Israel to bring forth your staff, this evidence of calling. And I want everyone, there's gonna be 12 of them, 12 rods. And I want you to put these at the place of meeting.

I want you, in other words, to bring your dry stick to the place where we meet with God, hallelujah. And you're gonna put these rods in a pile outside the tent of meeting. And God says, I'll show you who belongs to me, hallelujah.

You're not laughing yet, but I am, because I know the end of the message and you don't, praise God. But I'll show you, he says, who belongs to me and who doesn't. I'll show you the evidence of the calling.

I call, God says, it's my choice, not man's choice. I called you, I put you where you are. I gave you your calling.

You didn't just slide into anywhere. You've been led by the Lord to do everything that you've done, everyone in this church. Whatever you're doing for God, no matter how you got there, God called you to do what you're doing.

God called you. And maybe you're sitting here and all you've got is a dry stick in your hand. And just like Aaron, you say, I don't know.

There's so many people around that could do this so much better than me. And suddenly God says, come, meet with me. Everybody who's called by my name, come and meet with me and put those rods down, those dry sticks down in front of that tent of meeting.

And I'll show you whom I've called. I can see Aaron coming with his stick and he just thunk, thunk. He just throws it in the pile thinking, man, nothing's gonna happen.

I don't even know what this is all about. Nothing's gonna happen. And I hope God doesn't take this thing and hit me with it after all I've done or not done.

And you can get to the point where you just, it's so hopeless, but it's one last act of faith or recognition that maybe I am called of God and maybe God did call me to do what I'm doing. And all the rods were placed in front of the tabernacle. And on the next day, Moses went to the tabernacle of witness.

The scripture says, behold, the rod of Aaron of the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds. All the rods of all the people of all abilities and leadership qualities, they were all just still dry. But the one that God had called blossomed and bloomed miraculously.

That is the evidence of the calling. And sometimes you and I don't know how gracious God is and how much God is in each one of our lives until we get to the point where we are dry and it has to all be him and only him and not us, where there's no chance of going forward. There's nothing to brag about.

Our old resume is in shreds. We don't necessarily feel the best about ourselves, but we come to the tent of meeting as you are here this morning. The presence of God is there.

And God says, now I'm gonna show you who belongs to me and I'm gonna show you whom I've called. Praise be to God. That's why Isaiah the prophet cries out and he says, sing, O barren and you who have not born.

Break forth into singing and cry aloud. You have not labored with child for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman, says the Lord. God says, I'm about to do something in you.

I'm about to do something through you that is me. It is only me. It is all me.

And all I require of you is to pick up that rod. Once you have seen the grace of my touch upon your life, you take that ministry up into your hand again and you'll never again be the same as long as you walk on the face of the earth. Enlarge the place of your tent.

Let them stretch out your curtains or your dwellings. Do not spare. Lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes for you shall expand to the right and to the left.

And on your descendants, your descendants will inherit the nations that make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Times Square Church. God is going to do something here that only God can do.

My part and your part, my brother, my sister, is pick up your calling. Pick up the calling that God gave you. Whatever that calling is or was, no matter how you feel about it, you pick up that calling and you watch what God is going to do in this generation because it's not by might nor by power.

It's by the spirit of Almighty God. We are going to live to see a spiritual awakening in this nation. Not by human effort, not by human strategy, not by human wisdom, but by the calling, the power of Almighty God.

Psalms 92, the psalmist says, verse 10, I've been anointed with fresh oil. Mine eye also has seen my desire on my enemies and my ears hear my desire on the wicked who rise up against me. The righteous will flourish like a palm tree.

He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. And those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age.

They shall be fresh and flourishing to declare that the Lord is upright. He is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in him. There is no diminishing with age in the kingdom of God.

There's no such thing as an insignificant ministry in the kingdom of God. There are no big people or little people in the kingdom of God. Every voice counts.

Every life matters. Every ministry is important. Aaron's rod was taken eventually and put inside the ark of the covenant.

The testimony of God of that time on the earth, the promise of God for those that would walk with him and trust him in the future. Inside the lid of that ark was the tablets of the law, the requirements of God, the requirements to do right, live right, think right, to be committed to the things of God on the earth. Inside that ark was also a bowl full of manna, which speaks about the provision that was going to be given us to fulfill the law through Jesus Christ.

You remember he said, I am the bread that came down from heaven. I am the bread. If you eat of me, you'll never hunger again.

And the manna, the provision of God, and the rod of Aaron, praise be to God, the rod of Aaron that bloomed, and not just bloomed flowers, which speaks of the fragrance of Christ, but also ripe almonds, almonds ready for eating, fruit that God alone can produce, fruit that others could come to. You can just see, Pastor David shared this with me because I shared part of this in Rochester recently and you can see Aaron walking through the camp. Would you like an almond? Would you like an almond? Somebody pick one, another one would immediately appear.

Would you like an almond? Anybody like an almond? Anybody like an almond? This man that I think so many had written off and he'd probably written himself off, but the only one who didn't write him off was God himself and say, no, I called this man. I called this man. And yes, he's made mistakes.

And yes, the rod in his hand became very, very dry, just like the other rods of those that are not called. But I'm showing you today the difference between those that are called and those that are not called. And the rod of Aaron was put in that Ark of the Covenant as the promise that God says, this life that you live, this

life that you will go forward in service to me will be supernaturally provided for.

It's not gonna be based on your efforts. It's not gonna be based on your sense of righteousness. It's going to be all me and none of you.

Praise be to God. So put your dry stick in the pile. You're in the tent of meeting this morning.

It's time. It's time. You put your dry stick in the pile and we're gonna pray.

And then you're gonna take it up again. And you're gonna take it up and it's gonna be new. You're gonna take it up and it's gonna have fruit.

You're gonna take it up, it's gonna have life. You're gonna take it up, it's gonna blossom. You're gonna take it up.

And the presence of God in your life is going to become the evidence that you belong to him and are called by him. We're not a people to be argued with in this generation. We're a people to be wondered at.

That's what the Bible tells us, a people to be wondered at. You can imagine Aaron walking through that camp, holding that rod in his hand with fresh leaves coming out, blossoms every day. The scent of it must have been amazing.

And the provision on it, you could just pluck it home anytime you wanted, just chew on it. And the people would stand back in wonderment, say, how is this possible for all this man has done or not done? How is it possible? It's only possible by the grace and mercy of Almighty God. We're not called because we're smart.

We're not called because we're noble. We're not called because we're strong or of royal birth or connected to the palace. We're called because we're weak and we're foolish.

We're called because we need the strength of God to stand in this hour against those, or for the sake of those who stand in their own strength and don't know that they need a savior. We are to be a people wondered at. I think again of the 120 coming out of the upper room and 3,000 coming back from just daily powerless religion, looked at them and said, what could this mean? I pray with all my heart that people who know you after this day will say about you, what could this mean? What could this mean? And you'll be able to say like Peter did to the crowd, this is that which God promised would come.

To not a people who are righteous in themselves or strong in themselves or done everything right or fulfilled every letter of the law, but a people who recognize that I'm called by God to make a difference in the earth in my generation. I'm called by God to make a difference in my office. I'm called by God to make a difference in the unemployment line.

I'm called by God to make a difference in my college, in my career, in my neighborhood. I'm called by God to make a difference at the dining room table in my own house. I'm called by God to have supernatural life, supernatural, this fragrance of Jesus just emanating from my life.

Not in my strength, but in my weakness. Not when I have it all together, but when I thought I lost it all. That now it's going to be all Jesus and none of me.

All Christ in my life and none of my own making. All him, all him folks, all him. Praise be to God, all him.

All him, everything of him, everything. And we sang that song, oh God send the rain. God sent moisture into that staff of Aaron and caused it to live.

God send the rain into my heart. God send the rain into my home. God send the rain into my life.

God send the rain into the calling you placed on my life and let me live. My God, by allowing you to live through me so that your name might be known in this generation. The church of Jesus Christ is not a spectator sport.

Everybody needs skin in the game now. Everybody, everybody, everybody. Everybody's called to God to make a difference now.

We're living in the last moments of time. By the grace of God, may we have the courage to bring our dryness and just put it at the tent of meeting and say simply, Lord, if I'm gonna live, it's gonna be you that causes me to live. If I'm gonna serve, it's gonna be you that causes me to serve.

If your name is gonna be brought to reputation through me, it's going to be you that brings your own name to reputation through me. I can't do it, God, but you can. I won't do it, but you will.

You'll make me willing, oh God, to go beyond where I am and to become the person that you're calling me to be. Praise be to God. This is an incredible moment for you and I. And so I'm gonna give you an altar call this morning for everyone who's dry, everyone who wonders, God, how did I get where I am and did you call me to be here? Everyone who by faith says, God, I'm just gonna bring my dryness to you now and I'm gonna trust you to touch it and bring life.

And I feel in my heart after the worship we've had this morning that God's going to do exactly that. He's gonna touch you. He's gonna touch you.

Nobody did anything to those rods outside the tent of meeting. God did it all. All we do is admit our condition.

All we do is bring our dryness to him and he does everything else. He brings the blossoms. He brings the fragrance.

He brings the right fruit. He does it all that no one can glory in anything but him. There was no seven steps to getting your staff to bloom.

There are no books written about it. All he could say is, well, it was dry and I took it to the tent of meeting. God came and touched it and told me to pick it back up.

So here I am, here I am. The Lord says, I will show you. Remember, I will show you whom I've called.

I will show you. So take him at his word today. Let him show you, let him show you.

Now, if you keep your dry stick to yourself and you stay where you are, then don't expect anything to happen. There's a step of faith involved. He did all he could do.

He just brought that dry stick and laid it in the pile. That's all he could do. He said, God, I'm one of many that are dry in the camp of Israel, but oh Lord, if you've called me, you've given me a promise of supernatural life.

And so Lord, I'm just bringing my dryness to you and trusting that you're going to touch me. So Father, I thank you. You are speaking, you are calling, you are meeting.

You're calling us to yourself in this generation for you know, Lord, what we will have to face in the days ahead of us. And so Father, I'm asking in Jesus' name for the courage for those who say I'm dry and I need a touch of God. I need you Lord to rekindle my life.

I need you to revive the ministry you've given me. I need you to take the tears from my eyes and give me faith back in my steps. And Father, I thank you.

God, you will not fail a single person, not a single one that will respond this day, whether in this sanctuary, in North Jersey, at home, at summit, wherever. You will not fail a single person that puts their confidence in you today. And Father, I thank you in Jesus' name.

Now listen to me, if you're dry and you want to be used of God in this generation, I'm going to ask as we stand, just get out of your seat and make your way down here to the front of this auditorium. The same in North Jersey and at home in your living rooms. Let's all stand, balcony, you can go to either exit.

Just come quickly, move your way down and we're going to pray and we're going to worship and we're going to believe God for miracles today. Absolute miracles in Jesus' name. Hallelujah.

The promise of Christ is a supernatural life. The promise of Christ is the fruit of God being lived inside of you, being born through you and I by no effort of our own other than by just allowing him to be God inside of us. And he changes us, the scripture says, just because of his presence inside of us.

When the touch of God came upon that dry stick, it immediately blossomed and produced fruit. Not by its own effort, but by the touch of God. That's the only thing you need.

It's the only thing I need is the touch of God. Father God in Jesus' name, Lord, we are your people, Lord, as dry as we might be, we are your people. And you've called us, Lord, for this time.

You've called us for a divine purpose, Lord. In spite of our frailties and failings, you've called us. And the evidence of that calling is a supernatural life.

It's something birthed through us of God that cannot be gotten by any amount of human effort. So Lord, today we simply yield to your touch. It's no deeper than that.

We yield to your promise. We yield to your life being lived out inside of us. And God, it's not about us, it's about you.

It's about your presence inside of us. It's about your name that you will bring to glory yourself through us, Lord. You brought Aaron's ministry to glory through the touch of your hand upon his dryness.

And so Father, in Jesus' name, in Jesus' name, this morning we take up our calling, anew and afresh into every hand. God, we hold it up before you unashamed because this is a calling of mercy. It's a calling of grace.

It's the message we have for others that in spite of us and our failings, God is merciful, God is powerful, God is gracious. God is willing to walk with us in our frailty. Father God, in Jesus' name, Lord, we make a choice to put away our tears and our sighing.

We make a choice, Lord, to put away the voices of condemnation. For you told us clearly every tongue that rises against us in judgment, we shall condemn. We have a calling, we have a righteousness that's born of you and not of ourselves.

And so God, in Jesus' name, in Jesus' name, in spite of our failings, in spite of our struggles, our trials, in spite, God, of the way we feel about ourselves, we reach down as Aaron did and we pick up that rod and we simply hold it up to you and start to give you praise and glory for who you are and for the people you choose to work in. And through Lord, that's all Aaron could do. All he could do is pick up that rod and start to praise you and start to thank you, God.

How merciful you are, God, to all of us, Lord, in our weakness, our struggles, our trials, oh God, our self-condemnation, Lord. How merciful you are, God, to your people. So we receive and we hold up our calling again and ask you, Lord, that that might be our message for the rest of our days.

All about you, Jesus, all about your grace, all about your mercy and your power. Hallelujah, hallelujah. I'm gonna ask you right now, everybody who's responded, whether you're physically at this altar or you've responded in your heart, I'm gonna ask you as much, just, you can't everybody bend down, but just kind of reach down, pick up your calling.

Would you do that right now? And hold it up before God and start to give him a shout of praise now. Start to glorify him. This is mine, this is my calling.

This is my promise from God. This is the ministry God gave to me. Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God.

It will blossom, it will bear fruit. It will give glory to God in the earth. This is mine, this is mine.

It was given to me of God and nobody can take it away from me. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God. Give God glory, give him praise.

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. Glory, glory, glory, glory, glory, glory. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God, glory to God. Glory to God, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. Hallelujah, glory, glory.

Give him a shout again, give him a shout of praise.

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