

A Foolish Time Demands an Answer

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the need for Christians to respond wisely and actively in a time marked by societal foolishness.

Duration: 52:43

Scripture: Psalm 14:1, Psalm 92:1-6, Proverbs 10:8-12

Topics: "End Times", "Response to Foolishness", "Empowerment through Prayer"

Description

Carter Conlon emphasizes that we are living in a foolish time that demands a response from Christians. He highlights the increasing immorality and mockery of morality in society, urging believers to stand firm in their faith and speak out against the foolishness around them. Conlon draws from Proverbs to illustrate the need for discernment in how to respond to folly, advocating for a spirit-led approach that reflects Christ's love and truth. He calls for a return to prayer and reliance on the Holy Spirit to empower believers to make a difference in a world that desperately needs the light of Christ. Ultimately, he challenges the church to rise up and be a bold witness in these challenging times.

Transcript

Bless the Lord, oh my soul. So good to see so many people in the house of the Lord this morning. And greetings also to Roxbury and to those that are joining with us online as well.

Thank God, thank God, thank God for a generation that wants to see Christ. The 26th, the 16th, 17th and 18th of September. Mark that on your calendars.

We're going to have a three day fast here at Times Square Church. And it will be an all day Sunday fast. All day Monday, all day Tuesday.

The church will be open, there will be services all day Sunday and then Tuesday evening and Wednesday evening. But throughout the day people will be invited to come and pray with us. I'll be on the radio basically saying something like this.

If you're as concerned about the future of our city and our country as we are, please join us to pray. And so we anticipate there will be people coming out to be part of that. So please mark that on your calendar, the 16th, 17th and 18th.

I also want to thank you for those who have been supporting the Summit Scholarship Funds, the David Wilkerson Memorial Fund and the Cross and the Switchblade Fund. You have given \$76,000 towards scholarship and students. And thank God for that.

We bless the Lord for how he's prospering that school and making a way for young people who may not otherwise have an opportunity for a post-secondary education. So we praise God for what he's doing in all of these things. Now, Father, I thank you, Lord, for your word today.

I thank you for your presence. Lord, you have come powerfully today. And it's as if you're simply brooding over us, wanting to speak something into every heart.

Would you help us to hear you, Lord? Would you help me to convey this clearly and to do no damage to what you put into my heart? Lord, your word is life, and your life is the light that we need. Lord, we thank you for this. Thank you for giving your people strength, especially in this hour that we're living in.

In Jesus' name. Proverbs, please, chapter 26, if you'll go there. My title of the message this morning is, A Foolish Time Demands an Answer.

A foolish time demands an answer. I originally had entitled it, Every Fool Needs an Answer. But, you know, too many people would turn to the one beside them and say, See, I knew it was your time to come to church today.

A foolish time demands an answer. Proverbs 26, verse 4 and verse 5. Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Verse 5. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

Now, it almost appears that these two verses are contradictory one to another, but they're not. And we'll get into that as we begin to discuss what exactly the writer Proverbs in these two verses is referring to. And the question we ask ourselves this morning is, How are we to respond as a Christian testimony in the time of history that we're now living in? I believe that I'm on solid ground to say that the Bible describes the hour that we're living in in America as a time of foolishness.

This is a foolish time. We are every day increasingly surrounded by mockers of morality. I'm stunned.

I'm shocked at how quickly this society is turning to immorality and mocking everything pure and everything holy. Folks, I was at the doctor's office at the hospital actually with my daughter this week. She was getting some tests.

We're sitting in the waiting room. I don't watch television. I haven't for a long time.

I was shocked. My daughter was shocked. She's turned off her television for the last couple of years or more.

And there was a daytime program on. It was like a quiz show. And it was at two o'clock in the afternoon.

And the waiting room is filled with mostly ladies who have cancer and are there for cancer treatment. There are nurses at a station. And they've got this thing blaring on the television in the corner.

The most vulgar, immoral, disgusting show I've ever seen on television in my life. A quiz show. All the questions are sexual on it.

A male, in a sense, host and female participants. It was just unbelievable. I couldn't handle it.

And I looked at my daughter. And I looked at the people in the waiting room and at the table. I said, here is how dumbed down this country has gotten.

When people in the public are willing to sit and listen to this trash. Absolute, unspeakable trash. On daytime television.

And folks, I just picked up my armchair and I carried it out the door into the hall. And I sat in the hall. And said to my daughter, if they have a problem with it, let them talk to me.

I'm not sitting here listening to this. So I put my chair in the hall. I found a table.

Brought out my Bible. And I opened it up and I began to read and study in the hall. We are living in a generation where Christian students are scorned in the classroom.

Liberal professors are using their pulpits as bully pulpits. To scorn and ridicule and mock any intellectual argument that disagrees with their view and their position. And we are ridiculed in the public arena.

As the people of God discounted as inferior and irrelevant. Even in some cases accused of creating the problems that we're facing today. We are threatened at every level of society with repercussions if we dare pray.

Stand up for God. If we even dare so much as to speak. Anyone else is allowed an opinion now except those who belong to Christ.

Any vocal, disgusting, vulgar opinion. No matter how stupid it might be. You're free to espouse it.

And everybody is supposed to say, well that's interesting. That's wonderful because of course we are all wonderful people going to a wonderful destiny. And except for the Christian person.

When you speak now you're mocked, you're ridiculed, you're called an idiot in public. Folks, this is a time of foolishness. Now the Bible describes a time of foolishness.

Let me just go through a few scriptures. There's a lot of them. Proverbs 14, 16 says it's a time when people feel free to display public rage.

And mistakenly remain confident that they're not undermining their own security. The fool rages and is confident. Now we're seeing these constant displays of public rage at every strata of society.

And even now many people who are doing these things don't even know why they're out there. They're just filled with hate. They hate everything.

They want anything that's good to be brought down. And their own misguided concepts of morality and future. Whatever that is to be made popular.

Except there's no consensus among them. And the fool rages and remains confident that he's not somehow undermining his own or her own foundation. Psalm 92 verses 1 to 6 tells us that fools refuse to recognize the past and present worship of God.

The victory that Christ has won. And the greatness of Christ's word and his work. There's a casting away as it is.

And remember Paul talked about being in the storm. Or the Bible does in Acts 27. When there's a throwing overboard in the storm of everything that had ever proven itself valuable.

To bring such like vessels on a journey to get them through the storm. To get them to a place of safety and security. And suddenly people are throwing all of these things overboard.

We're throwing over the board in this country the history. We're throwing over the cautions that have been given by others that have come before us. All of the things that guided this young country to becoming something that became the envy of the world in our generation.

Perhaps one of the greatest nations in the history of humankind. Because there was a freedom here to worship God. And built on that foundation.

Built on that foundation of the freedom to express and to worship. And the underlying at least appreciation. And somewhat of an obedience to the principles of God that are found in his word.

The nation became great. People came from other countries that in thousands of years didn't prosper as much as this particular society did. And it's strange that we're not willing to stop and recognize that.

I have a friend who has been asked to teach in universities in China. And here's what they say in Beijing. In one of their main universities.

They said we recognize that what made America great are the principles of Christianity. And so could you possibly teach our students how we could have those principles without the religion. Now folks that's profound if you stop to think about it.

Here's a foreign nation essentially anti-God. Looking at this country and saying we've studied it carefully. And we've drawn the conclusion rightly so that it's because it was built on a foundation of the word of God.

In that society that God gave this young nation with peoples from all over the world. The ability to become one of the greatest nations and one of the most enviable for a season at least. Nations on the face of the earth.

But fools refuse to recognize this. Fools refuse to recognize that God was worshipped in this country. That Jesus Christ was honored.

His name was spoken reverently. That he won a victory. And when we enter into that victory he gives us a mind and a heart and a new spirit.

Gives us the ability to do things that ordinary men and women can't do. Takes us places that only God could take us to. Would be to God we would just stop as a nation for a moment.

Just stop the madness. And just reflect and just be willing at least to consider our history. And to take an educated look at it.

And consider the greatness of Christ's word and his work. Psalm 14 verse 1 says, The fool has said in his heart there is no God. There is no God that we have to give an account to one day.

There is no God that will one day judge us in our foolishness. That's what happened to Belshazzar who was the inheritor of the Babylonian Empire. Who inherited in a sense the instruments of the kingdom of God.

For lack of a better way of saying it. And instead of revering this history he took it and he partied with it. And as he partied with it a hand appeared in the middle of the air and began to write on a wall.

And the handwriting said your kingdom has been numbered. And the days of it in other words have reached their end. And it's been found wanting.

And you're going to be replaced now. By something else and somebody else. And here's this man who's just sitting at a table.

And all of the history is before him. And the potential to understand the holiness of God is there. And he just throws it all away.

And parties with it. And the handwriting appears and he's so blind he can't see it. He can't understand it.

He ends up promoting the man who told him your kingdom is over. It was over actually that night. And he ends up simply promoting Daniel who warned him to the third ruler in his kingdom.

And Daniel had just told him your kingdom is over. It's finished. The handwriting of God is against it.

And folks if we had the courage to look in the word of God. You and I will see that there's a point in history where the handwriting of God is against the people. We have to.

It's wonderful to look at the promises of God. I feed on the promises of God. I've grown in the promises of God.

I have a continuing strength by the promises of God. But folks there are warnings in the word of God as well. And we have to look at these warnings.

We have to take them seriously. Proverbs chapter 10 and verse 8 tells us that a foolish time is when the disregard of God's word is leading many to certain failure. It says the wise in heart will receive commandments but a prating fool shall fall.

The turning away from the word of God. Proverbs 10 and verse 18 talks about a foolish time when people speak whatever they want without any fear of consequence. I can't get over how quickly this country is degenerating folks.

Be careful you don't get caught. You see if you're sitting and watching this daytime television. If your mind is steep you're not even aware of what's going on right now.

Just like a frog. You put a frog in a pot of water. And if you put it in boiling water it will try to hop out.

But if you just heat the water gradually it will just float there until it dies. And that's what happens with the people who simply refuse to make the break from the godlessness of this society. And this hour that we're living in.

Folks listen to me. I say this with a loving heart. But if you're sitting in front of this stupid television.

Don't deceive yourself into thinking you're going to have any vision for God in the future. The direction you're looking in that's what you're going to become. That's where your heart is.

That's where your mind will be. That's where your spirit will be. And that's where your strength is gone.

Into these places of foolishness. Into these arguments that are of no profit. When people begin to speak whatever they want without fear of consequence.

Be careful. Folks there are articles. My wife was telling me she just read an article in Time Magazine last night.

And she said it's so vile. She said I never would have thought something so disgusting would ever be in such kind of a publication. Folks I don't know.

I said what's it about? She said I don't want to tell you what it's about. I don't want to talk about it. She said I just never believed I'd live to read something so vile in a mainstream publication.

When foolishness, Proverbs 10.23 becomes entertainment. Watch out. When every movie is stupid.

Stupid. It's what they are. We've taken a whole band full of stupid people and made movies with them.

I wish I could call them others something else. But that's what they are. Stupid people.

Stupid movies. Stupid lines. Stupid plots.

Nothing of virtue. Nothing of praise. Nothing worth thinking about.

It's just stupid. Stupid. Movies about, I haven't watched them but I've seen the ads.

Movies about grown men getting drunk for a weekend. It's just stupid. What are God's people doing? Sitting in front of these stupid things.

Filling our minds. Now I'm not going to say are because I don't sit there. But folks it brings a dullness into your spirit.

When foolishness has become entertainment we're living in a foolish time. Proverbs 12.15 talks about a season of foolishness. When foolishness has become right and right has become foolishness.

When there's a mockery of things that are good. Proverbs 15.5 talks about a season of foolishness is marked. As a time when correction by fathers is despised.

When we throw away our history. We throw away our morality. We throw away the warnings.

We throw away the writings. We throw away the word of God. We throw away every warning we've ever been given.

Because that's the purpose of a father. Our fathers gave us warnings. There were warnings written.

There are speeches that have been spoken. If we have the courage to go back. But in a foolish time we despise the correction of our fathers.

We won't go back and look at those who were used of God to form this nation. And those throughout history have stood. And they've stood for something of value and virtue.

They saw something into the future. And they warned us. But a foolish time when the foolish people will not listen.

And they will despise the correction. And they will say well that was for another time. Now we're more enlightened.

We're smarter than they were. We have access to more information. We're living in a society that's unfolding.

They were narrow and now we're global. As if collective idiocy is a reason now. To throw away the very moorings of what made us a great people.

Proverbs 17 and 21 tells us a foolish time is when society itself seems to be reaching the point of no return. When what delighted the heart of God is in blessing a nation is quickly fading. When the signs of judgment begin to appear.

And the ominous handwriting of God appears against it. When it could be said about a nation or a collective people. He that begets a fool does it to his sorrow.

And the father of a fool has no joy. I dread the moment that God looks down on this nation. And says I have no more joy in it.

It's past the point of no return. I caused it to live. But it's become foolish.

And the scripture says the father of a fool has no joy. Now you and I are living at this time. We were born in this season.

And I have to believe that we were born into this time for a specific reason. And a specific purpose. This church was put here for a reason.

And so what ought to be our response. In a season of foolishness. And that's exactly what it is.

And it's spiraling down. At an ever increasing rate. God help us.

If there's not a divine intervention shortly. You look at Proverbs 26.4. It says answer not a fool according to his folly. Lest thou also be like him.

In other words don't be drawn into the same spirit that's operating in the foolishness of this present time. Speaking of Christ. Here's what Peter says in 1st Peter chapter 2 verses 21 to 23.

For even here unto where you called. Because Christ also suffered for us. Leaving us an example that you should follow in his steps.

Who did no sin and neither was guile found in his mouth. Who when he was reviled reviled not again. When he suffered he threatened not.

But committed himself to him that judges righteously. Now this scripture doesn't say. It says when he was reviled he didn't revile back.

It didn't say. It doesn't say that Jesus didn't answer. It just says that he didn't answer in the same spirit.

With which he had been spoken to. But he did answer. And this this generation this season of foolishness.

Demands an answer. There has to be an answer. You and I are not called to be a silent testimony at this time.

We're called to be salt and light. We're called to make a difference in our in our world that we're living in today. We're called to represent Christ.

We're not called to be drawn into that same spirit. We're not called to rail when we're railed upon. But we are called to answer.

Jesus did have an answer. Many times when he would go into the temple. Many times when he would confront the system of his day.

He would have an answer but he was of a different spirit. And so our spiritual fathers and mothers have much to teach us if we want to listen to them. The early church learned a deep spiritual lesson.

And here's what we need to learn today. Don't talk to men until you first talk to God. Talk to God first.

Have a secure and a sound and a living relationship with God. One time in my life when I was a young Christian. I was called in before somebody who was over me.

And I was threatened literally. With repercussion after repercussion. If I kept opening my mouth.

And I kept speaking about Jesus Christ. And this person was red in the face. Was literally so mad at me as almost spitting all over the desk.

And I'm sitting on the other side of the desk listening to this. And he went on and on and on and on. In a very very hostile manner.

And so when he was done he looked at me and said. What do you have to say for yourself? I paused for a moment. Because I had been praying while he was speaking.

I paused for a moment. I looked at him and I said. You need Jesus Christ in your life.

And he said to me. Why do you say that? I said because in the book of Proverbs. It says a city.

That is. A man who has no control over his own spirit. Is like a city that is broken down without walls.

And I said. You sir have no control over your own spirit. Now I didn't know what was.

Now I didn't say it arrogantly. I didn't. I didn't say it looking for a confrontation.

I didn't say it with the same measure. Edginess in my voice that was in his. I said it.

Out of compassion. Because I genuinely cared for his soul. And at that moment he more or less drew back.

And I was shocked at what came out of his mouth. He started telling me about the. The difficulty in his home.

And how his marriage had failed. And how he was struggling. And how he was going through difficult times.

Eventually ended up going to church. I thank God for this with all my heart. There is a point.

Of where we have to speak folks. There's a point. We spend time with God.

Get away from ungodliness. Have the compassion of Christ. For the people you're speaking to.

But there is a time to speak. There is a time for students. In the auditorium.

Who are being reviled. Because you simply have a belief system. In God.

And in Jesus Christ. To stand up. And with the wisdom of God.

And not in the same spirit. It's time to speak. It's time folks.

It's time to be light. It's time to be salt. You don't know who's listening in that place.

It's time folks. We have to count the cost. Absolutely.

But I want you to count the cost of not speaking. Count the cost of you and I doing nothing. One great man of old said it this way.

All it takes for evil to prosper. Is for good men to do nothing. That's all it will take.

For a whole nation to go down the tube. In the days ahead. For those who know Christ.

To do nothing. Or to get involved in things that are of no eternal. Lasting or spiritual profit.

Early church people learned a lesson. Don't talk to people until you first talk to God. In Acts chapter 2. They were in a very similar moment.

If not an identical moment of time. To the one we find ourselves in today. Society.

Listen. Society was exactly the way it is. They had just crucified Christ.

They were mocking morality. They were scorning the people of God. They had been ridiculed in the public arena.

They were discounted as inferior and irrelevant. They were accused of creating the problem in society. They were threatened with repercussions.

If they so much dared as speak. The society was saying in a sense concerning Christ. There is no God.

They were disregarding. God's word. And being led to certain failure.

They were speaking whatever they wanted to. Remember standing at the cross. You said you're the son of God.

Come on down. And we believe you. Oh.

He said he saved others. But himself he cannot save. And they're speaking whatever they want.

Without any fear of consequence. Foolishness had become entertainment. Because there had to be people there.

At the cross of Christ. Who had gathered there just to be entertained. To watch this man who claimed to be the king of the Jews.

Nailed to a cross. Dying a terrible death. And I have no doubt.

That if they could have sold souvenirs there. People would have been selling them. Foolishness had become right.

And right had become foolishness. The warning of the spiritual fathers. The prophets.

Had been despised. There were even men. Like Nicodemus and others.

Who would be standing up in the Jewish councils. And saying. We ought not to do this.

Because the word of God says these things. But the council of those before. Was being despised.

And was being mocked and put away. Society had seemed to reach the point of no return. They just crucified the son of God.

And it could obviously be said. The father of a fool has no joy. But these early church people.

Were in this moment of time. Went into an upper room. And began to talk with God.

There was something. It was no. It's no worse today than it was then folks.

And our response has to be the same. A foolish moment in history. Demands a response.

It demands a response from the church. It doesn't demand a program. It doesn't demand us.

That we all hide in rocks and caves. And hope for a better day. Some tried to do that throughout history.

And they never amounted to anything. It demands a David. It demands a Jonathan.

It demands a Deborah. It demands a Barak again. A Barak who is willing to go down and fight.

In Acts chapter 2. In a similar moment. They went in and began to talk with God. And they had to believe.

That he wanted to supernaturally empower them. To face the social challenge of their time. And to make a difference.

And that's what you and I have to believe in this generation. God wants to fill you with his Holy Spirit. Jesus knew what they were going to have to face.

And he said go into Jerusalem. And tarry until you be endued with power from on high. I'm going to come.

He says I'm going to give you the power to stand. And to speak. And to make a difference.

I'm going to put a boldness in you. That doesn't come from human effort. It doesn't come from a natural mind.

It comes from the supernatural in working of the spirit of almighty God. You and I have to believe again in our generation. That God wants to fill us again with his Holy Spirit.

I make no apologies for saying this. We've had the strategists. We've tried to be nice and fill stadiums with nice people.

We've done everything that we know to do. And society is now headed on a trajectory into darkness at an unprecedented pace. It demands a response in our generation.

There's no other response that can be given in this generation. But a spirit led. A spirit filled.

A spirit empowered. A God gripped. A Christ honoring.

A soul redeeming people once again coming into the marketplace. People who are not afraid to take a stand for what they know is right. They're not embarrassed to be ridiculed because their savior said if they've called the master of the house bells above.

How much more will they call them of his household? A people who know they have spiritual authority. A people are not just fighting for their own integrity and identity. They're fighting for the lost.

We're fighting for the very people who are mocking us. Because they don't understand where they're headed for. They don't have any concept of what it would be like to be in a hell for all of eternity.

We're not fighting against them. We're fighting for them. We're fighting against spiritual wickedness in high places.

For the souls of men. For those who mock us. For those who in their own ignorance and foolishness are headed into hell for eternity.

They went into that place of prayer. They went into that place of personal commitment. And that's the issue.

We've tried in our generation to intermix the spirit of God with personal agendas. And personal pursuits. Personal happiness.

We've tried to intermix these things and come out of it powerless. Now the focus has got to be clean again. It's to honor Christ in the earth.

And to see the salvation of the lost. The true bringing to Christ of those whose sins are sending them to an eternal hell. When they came out of that upper room.

Their lives and their speech were able to penetrate the darkness. And the foolishness that had almost swallowed the masses before them. Remember Proverbs 26 5. 4 says don't answer a fool according to his folly lest you be like him.

But in verse 5 it says answer a fool according to his folly. Lest he be wise in his own conceit. And Peter got up.

And he didn't mince any words in Acts chapter 2. He spoke. Peter spoke passionately. Eloquently.

Supernaturally. Forcefully. And directly to the people.

His message was clear. There was understanding. There was clarity.

There was history. There was an entreating in it. And this is not the Peter.

That was the same Peter before he was filled with the Holy Spirit. But this Peter was empowered. He was sovereignly touched of God.

He was enabled to stand in the masses and face this hostile crowd. That would still have had the bloodlust of killing Christ in its teeth. In verse 36 of Acts 2. He said therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly.

That God has made this same Jesus whom you crucified. Both Lord and Christ. Whom you crucified.

He made it straight. He set it straight. God has made this same Jesus whom you crucified.

Both Lord and Christ. When they heard this they were pricked in their hearts. And said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles.

Men and brethren what shall we do? Then Peter said repent. Which means turn. Turn from sin.

Turn from this hatred of God. Turn from this lifestyle that's leading you into destruction. And be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.

For the remission of sins. Put away your old life. Your old way of thinking.

Your old ways of doing things. And put on Christ. And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Turn. Turn. Many many of the people who attend the house of the Lord.

You're not turned yet. Turn. Turn from what is wrong and turn to what is right.

Turn from a self-seeking life to a Christ-seeking life. Turn from your plans to the plans of God. Turn.

Turn. That's what repent means. Turn.

Have a change of mind. Have a change of heart. And put off your old ways and take on the power of God.

Take on all that God has freely offered you and I through Jesus Christ. And God will give you His Holy Spirit. Peter said the promises to you, to your children and to all that are afar off.

That would include New York City. Even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort.

And said save yourselves from this crooked or foolish generation. Save yourselves from this generation. Get up and get out and get into the work of God.

Every child of God. Folks, it's no longer an option to be mixed. It's no longer an option to have one foot on either side of the fence.

Joshua said to the people of God. How long will you halt between two opinions? If the Lord be God, serve Him. Serve Him.

Give Him all your heart. Walk with Him all of your days. And when they were threatened again in Acts chapter 4. They went back in and did what they did the first time.

For they knew where the source of their strength was. They went in to the prayer closet. And began to talk with God before they spoke with men.

And they said Lord behold their threatenings. And give to us your servants. That with all boldness we may speak your word.

God don't let us draw back. Don't let us cower under the threatenings of darkness. Don't let us be silent when people are heading into a Christless eternity.

Don't let us cower before people that need to know Christ as Savior. Paul didn't. God don't let me cower.

Don't let us cower in this generation we're living in. Stretch forth your hand to heal. And let signs and wonders be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

And here's what they were praying. God stretch out your hands and bring healing even to those who want to hurt us. Bring healing to those who mock us.

Bring healing to those who discount us. Bring healing to those who don't appreciate us. Bring healing to them oh God.

When they are down let us be the first ones in there to help. When they're afraid let us be the first to offer comfort. When their families get into trouble let us be the first in to offer advice from the word of God.

Let us not cower any longer in our generation. But let us stand and be a bold declaration of who God is in Jesus Christ. For a foolish time demands an answer.

And that answer has always come from the church of Jesus Christ. It's always come from a David who walks into the valley to face a big mouth giant. It's always come from a Jonathan who says listen God can do miracles if we will just believe him.

It's always come from a Deborah who says God I've been praying and God's called me into the battle. And I'm going in with whoever will join me. It's always come from an Esther who says I don't fully understand it but I'm called into the king.

And into the king I shall go and if it cost me my life it cost me my life. But I'm not going to be silent at this time and let people around me go to an eternity without God. When there's power in the voice that God has given me.

When I can make a difference in my generation. I'm going to stand up and be counted for the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't have the strength to do this and neither do you.

But I know somebody who does. I know somebody who's willing to give us the strength to stand. I know somebody who'll give us the intelligence when we start to spend time in the word of God.

When our dependence is on the Holy Spirit he'll give us the intelligence to stand. In this day when we need to stand. He'll give us the right words to speak that can get through that canopy of darkness and violence and anger and foolishness and ignorance.

And can get through to people who need to know there is a God. There is a heaven, there is a hell, there is a savior, there is a cross. There is a life that God is willing to give to those who turn to him.

The day of the Caribbean Christian vacation is over. It's time to fight. It's time to get up folks.

It's time to be counted. Wherever we live, wherever we are. It's time to open our mouths and trust God to fill them.

It's time to open our hearts and let God fill our hearts with his compassion and love for this generation. It's time not to hate people but to love them more than we ever have before. It's time to go into our prayer closet and pray for our future.

Pray, we're not praying for the saving of buildings in this country. We're praying for the saving of people. Pray for our leaders, pray for our government, pray for our congress, pray for our senate.

Pray for our supreme court, pray for our appeals court, our appellate courts. Pray like we've never prayed before. God almighty, you are able, you've done it in the past.

You are able to come again and sweep away the refuge of lies. Pray for the church in America that she one more time have courage and stand up. And not cower down at every public event because somebody on a microphone says thou shalt not pray today.

Pray for courage for the people of God. If we remain silent, what a tragedy that will be. If at this time, this crisis moment in history, you and I don't speak.

God, give us the grace to go into the prayer closet and say these simple words. Lord, give me the power to turn from evil. Give me the grace to turn to good.

Give me the passion to love your word and love your people. And fill me with your Holy Spirit. Stretch forth your hand through me and let the healing begin.

In my whole sphere of influence, my neighborhood. Folks, you'd be amazed. David Wilkerson just left the comfort of a country pastorate after turning off his television.

Came to New York City and the rest is history. Millions of people have come into the kingdom of God. By his own admission, he was not an eloquent speaker.

And he had no commanding physical presence. He just simply started hearing from God. Knew the value of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

And started moving and doing what God asked him to do. And millions of people have come to Christ. And we sit here today because of the testimony of that one life.

And so, what will we do with it? The testimonies are there. Will we despise the teachings of our fathers or will we get up? And will we say, God, if you can do that, you've proven that in history. You can do that through any person that just simply says, God, use me.

Folks, you'd be stunned today. We'll be stunned if we have ten years left. We'll be stunned ten years from now if somebody, here, a handful of people, anybody just gets up and says, God, I'm going to do what you asked me to do.

I'm going to trust you for the power to do it. David Wilkerson ends up on a newspaper looking like a fool. But comes back, stands on a street corner, takes a little flag, because you couldn't do that except under the American flag, and starts to speak.

And in the crowd is Nicky Cruz. Violent people in the natural foolishness. But to us who are saved, the power of God, the preaching of what Christ did.

Folks, Nicky Cruz was diagnosed by secular psychologists as unredeemable. It's on his record. Unredeemable.

Too twisted, too dark, too violent to ever be of any benefit to society. And one man stood and said three words, and those words went right down every darkened corridor in that man's life. You know, those words weren't profound as we would say profoundness is.

He simply said, Jesus loves you. And those three words unlocked a hundred prison doors in that man's mind and that man's spirit. I can literally hear them starting to open and open and open.

Jesus loves you. Jesus loves you. Jesus loves you as he spoke it.

Darkness turned to light. Evil became good. Captivity was set free.

Blinded eyes were opened. A bruised heart was healed. By the simplicity of the cross of Jesus Christ.

By the simplicity of walking in the power of God. By the simplicity of shutting off the television and seeking God and simply obeying Him. You have no idea what the Lord will do.

You shut your television off. I know you're lonely. And television has become a comfort to you.

But goodness sakes, that's like saying I'm lonely so I bought a rattlesnake to keep me company in my apartment. I let it bite me every day and put poison into my system. That's what it is.

It's poison. It darkens your mind. It darkens your spirit.

Turn it off and begin to seek God. The next thing you know you're looking out the window. You're looking out the window and you see five, six kids hanging around the street corner.

And this inner voice says, go talk to them. I heard a testimony on a Sunday night a few months ago of a young man who was here who was serving the Lord in young people's ministry. Who was with a group of young men and they were going out to commit a crime.

They were going to rob somewhere. And a little old grandmother walked by down the street. She walked by, she stopped, she looked into his eyes, she said, the wages of sin is death.

It so shook him, it so rattled him, he ran home. He said to his friends, I'm not going with you. And he ran home.

Folks. The thing is she spoke. She spoke.

And that's what you and I have to do in this generation. There's 8,000 people in this church. There's no reason under heaven why it shouldn't be 16,000 by next week and 32,000 the week after that.

And 64,000 the week after that. There is no reason it shouldn't be. If you and I are willing to speak and be filled with the spirit of God and walk in the power of God and make the choice, I'm going to turn off what's robbing my spirit and my soul and my home and my mind.

I'm not living in this. I'm going to walk in the ways of God. You know, I turned my television off, I don't know how many years ago it is now.

It's a long, long time ago. I don't consider myself out of touch. I consider you out of touch if you're watching television.

I'm not out of touch at all. I know exactly what's going on. Feed on this book.

And go into the prayer closet. Say, Lord Jesus Christ. Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord Jesus Christ. Fill me with your Holy Spirit. You know, a lot of people have wanted a casual infilling of the Holy Spirit.

They agree with it theologically. Say, well, yeah, that's right. I see it in the book of Acts.

I see it in some people's lives that the Lord's put before me, so therefore I want this. But you see, folks, there's a purpose to being filled with the Holy Spirit. That's to be led into the work of God.

That's not just to be given power to continue your present pursuit. It's to be led into the work of God for the purposes of God. I beg you in Christ's name.

Don't let go of the hem of his garment until he fills you with the Holy Spirit. Don't let go. And he will.

He will. I remember as a young Christian, I was two years in a church that taught that the gifts and the day of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was gone. And I didn't know anything.

I believed that because that's what I was taught. But I got so hungry. I got so hungry to make a difference.

I got so hungry for God to do something through my life. And he came to me. And I didn't even know about this baptism of the Holy Spirit, but he came to me.

Very powerfully, very sovereignly one night. Just came to me. Because he saw the hunger in my heart.

And the reasoning was right. I wanted to make a difference. I wanted the power to speak.

I wanted my life to count for something good. And he came to me. And when that's the cry of your heart, he will come.

When you say, Lord, I want your power to honor you in the earth, to speak for you in my workplace, in my neighborhood, my society. I want to live for you for the rest of my days. Whatever that means and wherever that takes me, I want that.

I want my life to count. When I get to the end, and I put my feet up in my bed, I want to be able to say, God, what a journey this has been. How awesome this journey has been walking with you.

Let's stand together, please, if we will. I want to give an altar call this morning for everybody that just says, Pastor, I want what you spoke about. I want every part of it.

I want the coming out that is necessary of where I am. And I want the walking into where I need to be. I want the power of God in my life.

And you come, just come. In the balcony, you can go to either exit. In the main sanctuary, just slip out.

In the annex, if you'd step between the screens. For everybody here who just says, Look, I'm just not satisfied where I am. I know God has more for my life.

I'm tired of being a coward in this generation. I want the power of God to begin to speak. I want the healing of God to begin to flow through my life.

I want the word of God to explode in my heart. I want faith to move mountains. Lord Jesus Christ, I want your full power and pathway that you have for my life.

Just come, just slip out. We'll worship together for a few moments. Lord, I, Father, we stand before you today.

God is your people perhaps in the last moments of time. We read in your word clearly that you promise an outpouring of your Holy Spirit. And to give us the strength to stand in such a wicked hour.

Lord, not just to stand, but to be triumphant. Father, we ask you that you send revival to our city and God to the cities and towns of our nation. That your house be filled again and be called a place of prayer.

Lord, forgive us, God, for just the likeness with which we've handled such holy things. But, oh God, today we dedicate our lives to you, our futures to you. Lord, we ask you to keep us free from things that would rob us of faith and rob us of vision and sight.

Lord, keep us free from things that would take away the power of the Holy Spirit from our lives. Help us, Lord, to be singularly focused by the power of your Holy Spirit and the promises of your word. Lord, just help us to be focused on what matters and to fight for what is eternal.

God, we thank you, Lord. I pray that the spirit of cowardice be driven away from us, Lord. And we be given a love that causes all fear to be driven out.

Give us a love for the people we speak to, Lord, even those who hate and scorn the name of Christ. Give us a love, Lord, that's born of your spirit within us, oh God. And Father, we thank you, Lord.

God, don't let us be quiet any longer. It's time to speak, Lord. And Father, we thank you.

I thank you for what you're going to do today for the marvelous futures you have for so many, Lord, who are going to give their all to you and live for you. Lord, that's where you begin to do the supernatural. That's where churches come to life.

That's where ministries turn to fire once again. God, thank you, Lord. We praise you, Lord.

Jesus, thank you. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, mighty God.

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

Hallelujah. Now, remember, you don't let go of God until you are filled with the Holy Spirit. You don't let go until you have the courage to let go of your agenda and your worldview and your self-view.

And you get a hold of the view of God. And you'd be amazed what the Lord will do. You'd be stunned and shocked what God will do and where he'll take you.

And the testimony will all be about him. It won't be about you because it's supernatural and you know it's supernatural. Hallelujah.

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