

# A Perfect Heart and a Willing Mind

by Carter Conlon

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*Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the necessity of a perfect heart and a willing mind in fulfilling God's calling and leaving a strong legacy for future generations.*

**Duration:** 51:09

**Scripture:** 1 Chronicles 28:9, 2 Chronicles 1:7-10, Matthew 6:33, John 16:23

**Topics:** "Willingness"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing when something is wrong in the church. He warns against being so focused on personal interests and material possessions that we neglect the work of God. The speaker highlights the work of Christ, which includes releasing those in prison, healing the brokenhearted, and giving sight to the spiritually blind. He encourages believers to come together, encourage one another, and fulfill their individual callings to leave a strong inheritance for future generations. The sermon references verses from the Bible, including Ecclesiastes 6:1-2 and Deuteronomy 4:40, to support these teachings.

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## Transcript

Bless the Lord. God bless you this morning. Times Square Church.

If you'll just go to First Chronicles 28, please, in the Old Testament. Appreciate it very much and find that book, if you will. I'm going to speak a message to you this morning entitled, A Perfect Heart and a Willing Mind.

Now, these verses of Scripture I'm about to speak from are very precious to me because in the springtime of 1994, while sitting in my office at the former church that I pastored, the Holy Spirit came to me in a profound way. I remember telling my secretary, I said, please, I don't want to be disturbed. No phone calls, nothing.

I knew that God had come to meet with me. He led me into First Chronicles chapter 28 and spoke to my heart about a commission that he was giving to me. He said, I'm sending you to a place to help to finish a work that has been begun by another man.

And he spoke to me from the verses of Scripture that I'm going to quote to you today. And I was so sure I'd heard from God after an hour or two in the presence of the Lord and in prayer, I left my office. I went to the

office of my associate pastor at that time and I told him, prepare to take over the church.

I'll be leaving shortly. And he said, where are you going? I said, I don't know, but I know the Lord has spoken to me. I'll be leaving very shortly.

That was in the spring of 1994. It was only a matter of a few weeks. Pastor David called and the rest is history.

And so these are very precious verses to me. And knowing that God spoke to me from these verses, there are some great words of encouragement in them. And there are also some great words of caution.

I'm bringing this to you today the way that I feel the Lord is speaking it to my heart. As Pastor Neal said, I believe it was last week, he said, I'm preaching to my own heart first and to your second, but also to this church, Times Square Church, and anybody who is affiliated with this church, even if it's just with the expression of your faith and confidence in God. For those who are online, those who hear these words in the future.

I'm going to speak something so profound that it makes a difference between success and failure in the kingdom of God. It makes the difference as to whether we get to the end with a shout of glory or a sigh of regret. I want you to give me your best ear today, if you can.

The best of your heart. Even if you utter a silent cry and say, oh God, please, would you help me to hear this? Would you help me, Lord? Because this is a word for this congregation today. For me as your pastor and for you as the congregation of Times Square Church, this is a word from God to this church today.

Let's pray together. Father, I thank you, God, for your word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. Your word is something that you say that we should hide in our heart that we might not sin against you.

Lord, if any man thinks he stands, your word says, let him take heed lest he fall. Lord, we can't stand in our own strength, none of us, Lord. We can't stand in our own wisdom.

We'll not make it through if we lean on our own resources. God, I bend my knee to you today. I bend my heart to you.

I ask you for the grace not only to speak this, but to live this right to the end. I ask you, God, that when I get to the end of this journey, I may put my feet up in my bed and bless God with everything in my heart, that I've not gone astray. I've not failed of the grace of God.

I pray for this church, Lord. I ask you, God, that you do something deep and powerful in each of our hearts today. We thank you for it in Jesus' mighty name.

First Chronicles chapter 28, a perfect heart and a willing mind, beginning at verse 6. Now, these are the words David, King David is speaking this, and when it says in verse 6, and he said unto me, this is, he's speaking about a former conversation that he had with the Lord, and God had spoken to him about Solomon, his son. And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts. For I've chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father.

Moreover, I will establish his kingdom forever, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments as at this day. Now, therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the Lord, and in the audience of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God, that you may

possess this good land and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you forever. And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind.

For the Lord searches all the hearts and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever. Take heed now, for the Lord has chosen thee to build a house for the sanctuary.

Be strong and do it. Now, Solomon was set apart at a young age, just as you and I and many here today are. Though you might be young in serving the Lord, still God has appointed you to a specific work that will glorify his name of the earth.

Solomon was young and tender, but called of God, appointed of God, and he had every advantage that you and I have today. It sounds spiritual instruction in the word and the ways and the work of God, yet a father, a spiritual father, it says in verse 11, David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the ports, the houses, the treasuries, the upper chambers, the inner parlors, and the place of the mercy seat, and the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit. Folks, if you have attended this church, if you are born again of the Spirit of God, if you have a Bible in your hands, you have every advantage that Solomon had.

You have the word of God, you understand the ways of God, and the work of God is in here. Nothing is hidden from any seeking heart. There's nobody can get to the end of this journey and say, I didn't know, it wasn't clear.

If it wasn't clear, you didn't want it to be clear, I didn't want it to be clear. If we didn't know, it's because we shut our minds to what God wanted to speak. Verse 10, Solomon knew what he'd been called to do.

He said, take heed now, the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary, be strong and do it. Now you know what you're called to do, and I know what I'm called to do. You and I are the temple of the living God now in our generation.

The Holy Spirit of God and the truth of God has come into these physical bodies and we are called to be a testimony of the reality of God, the life of God, the mercy of God, the power of God in every generation. We know what we're called to do. Corporately, we meet together to worship as a church body, but individually, we are to be so alive in Christ that it becomes a living testimony to those who live in darkness that God is indeed alive and raised from the dead.

He had all the provision necessary to fulfill his calling. Chapter 28 verses 13 right through to verse 18 tells us of all the things that David, his father, a Christ type in a sense for us, had provided. He had everything he needed to build this temple.

You and I have all the provision. It's all ours in Christ. There's nothing hindering, there's nothing lacking, and don't you ever believe the lie of the devil that you can't become what God has called you to be.

In Christ you have the full resource of the Godhead. You have everything of God inside a physical body and whatever he's called you to be, you will be. Whatever he's spoken to you will happen.

Wherever he leads you, you will go. Whatever he asks you to do, it will be accomplished, not by your might or power, but by the Holy Spirit living inside of you and inside of me. And more so than all of this, he was not alone.

I thank God. In verse 21 it says the choristers of the priests and the Levites, they will be with you for the service of the house of God. And they will be with you for all manner of workmanship, every willing, skillful man, for every manner of service.

And also the princes and the people will be holy at your commandment. We're not alone, folks. We're part of a body.

It's the house of God. The testimony of Jesus Christ is alive in you and in me. And I thank God I don't have to do this alone.

I thank God you don't have to do it alone. We can come together. We can encourage one another.

And we can realize that everything moves forward by that which every and each one of us is called to do. And the testimony that God has given us as part of his witness in the earth. Verse eight, he was told by David his father that if he fully fulfilled his calling, he would leave a complete and strong inheritance for those who would follow him.

In the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the Lord and in the audience of our God, keep and seek the commandments of the Lord your God, that you may possess this good land and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you forever. Those who follow God will leave a strong inheritance. I thank God for that with all my heart.

There are certain forms of knowledge that God plants in the heart that causes you and I to walk with him. I don't want to leave a weak inheritance after me. I don't want to leave a weak church when my season in this pulpit is over.

I don't want to leave you emaciated and wondering where God is and how to find God. And Solomon left a divided kingdom and he left a weakened son. And he set the stage for the spiritual declension of Israel and the eventual overpowering and being conquered by its enemies.

You know the story, the Assyrians swallowed the north of Israel. The south lasted a little longer but was eventually swallowed up and taken captive into Babylon. And it was Solomon who set the stage for this.

Folks, a nation doesn't go into captivity before the church goes into captivity. The church goes first and then the nation follows. Verse 9, he was told what would be necessary to finish his course and he was warned of the consequences if he forsook the ways of God.

And thou, Solomon, my son, he said, know the God of your father and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind. He said, if for the Lord searches the hearts and understands the imaginations of your thoughts, if you seek him, he'll be found of you. But if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.

He was told what was necessary. He said, Solomon, you need a perfect heart and a willing mind. Now at the beginning of his ministry in 2 Chronicles 1, verses 7 to 10, the Lord appeared to him and he said to him, ask what I shall give thee.

Phenomenal. Think about that for a moment. Now in John 16, 23, Jesus said, verily, verily, I say unto you that whatever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you.

So realistically, we're in the same place that he was in. Ask. Ask what it is that you want and I will give it to you.

Incredible. Now this is the first evidence that we have that Solomon had not been carefully listening to what had been told to him. Because his response to God, now God came and said, ask.

He could have asked for anything. The Lord said, whatever you ask for, I'll give it to you. It would be to God he had drawn back just for a moment and rethought some things.

He said to the Lord, I want wisdom and I want knowledge so I can come in and go out and judge the people. In other words, I want giftings. It's like the type of a person that God says, ask for whatever you want.

He says, well, I'd like discernment. I'd like miracles and I'd like compassion. I'd like all of these things.

And they're all good in themselves. He's asking in a sense for the tools to do the job without the heart to do it. And David had said to him, you need a perfect heart and a willing mind.

Now, if he had drawn back, if he had been really listening, if when God came to him, what if Solomon had said, Lord, I want a perfect heart and a willing mind as David, my father has told me I need to have. And I would like wisdom and knowledge. You see, God would have given it all to him, but he wasn't listening.

And how many people today in our generation come into the house of God and it's just all about things and accumulation of words as it is and abilities and giftings and such like, but not having the heart for where it leads, not having the mind as it is. I'll explain this further as we go on. Wisdom and knowledge without the heart and mind that must accompany it can become a corrupting influence in the life of any believer.

If you and I just gather, remember Paul said in the last days, what are the, what's the condition of the church going to be? Always learning, never coming to the knowledge of the truth. What it actually means is never being brought to the place where all that knowledge is supposed to lead, but just gathering knowledge, more Hebrew and Greek, perhaps than any other generation in church history, more tapes, more conferences, more knowledge moving farther and farther away from the heart of God. Every hour having little or no influence in society as the whole of society just travels down a course into ever deepening darkness.

And so many of God's people are just gathering and learning, but there's no heart to the learning. There's no mind that comes with it. These things are missing and they were missing in the life of Solomon.

Did Solomon have any idea where wisdom and knowledge without the heart and mind of God, which God provides to undergird, it would lead him. Did Solomon have any idea? I want you to think of Solomon for a moment on a brazen scaffold. When the temple was built, Solomon, this, this, I forget how big this probably five or six feet by six feet.

And he's on this scaffold in the middle of the temple. He's on his knees before God. The people are all gathered around.

He prays a prayer that literally touches heaven, brings down the presence of God. Did he ever think that one day he would build a heathen temple? Did he ever think that he'd, he'd build a temple where the demonic power of that temple required that people put their sons and daughters in the fire? Did he ever think that he'd get to the place where in his mind, well, one God is the same as the other. What harm if we just all kind of get together? Ecclesiastes is a tragic book.

Right after Proverbs is Ecclesiastes. I want you to turn there with me just for a moment. I want you to see theologically where Solomon ended up.

If you don't have the heart for truth, if I don't have the heart for truth, and if I don't have the mind to be taken where God leads me in that truth, I run the risk, the grave risk of becoming as theologically dark as Solomon. Ecclesiastes chapter 1 and verse 10. I want, I'm just going to skim through just a few things because if you want to study it later in greater depth you can.

But it's a very dark book really. Here are the words of Solomon. At the end of his life he said, is there anything whereof it may be said, see this is new.

How he lost sight of what God wanted to miraculously do. In 2nd Chronicles chapter 6 when he prayed in the temple, these are the essential elements of his prayer. That God would respond to the prayers of all people who came into that temple and out of confusion would bring about divine order and justice.

That there would be justice, there would be a sense of right and a sense of wrong. That there would be a new order as it is in people's minds and in their hearts. That every new enemy would be defeated that would rise against the people of God.

That God would bring fresh rain in times of drought and new provision in times of famine. That God would answer the heart cry of every new stranger that came in and was looking for hope and help. That God would answer that cry.

That God would give new strength for every new battle because there is a new battle just around the corner and by God's grace you and I need new strength to face. We can't go on yesterday's strength. Morning by morning there has to be new mercy.

We need new strength. We need to be renewed every day in the strength of our God. We need new strength and to give new freedom from old sin and captivity.

Even if God's people backslid, if they made mistakes, if they tragically found themselves in the enemy's camp, Solomon said when they come and face this temple, God give them freedom from their old captivities and their carelessness and their sin. This man knew this was the heart of God. This man knew that God wanted to work and is a God who creates all things new.

Everything is new every day. There's a freshness in God. The glory of God is revealed continuously.

God in Christ is always creating and recreating. That's why when we came to him, he said, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Now Solomon gets to the end of his days and he's so disheartened.

He's so lost sight of what the temple was to be. He says, is there anything whereof it may be said that this is new? In chapter 2 and verse 21, it gets even worse actually as you go on. He saw it as a great evil to labor for the benefit of those who had not themselves worked for something.

He said, verse 21, he said, for there is a man whose labor is in wisdom and in knowledge and in equity, yet to a man that has not labored therein shall he leave it for his portion. This is vanity and a great evil. He said, I saw a great evil that a man would work and give it to somebody or leave it for somebody who has not worked for it.

I mean, how far can you get from the heart of God? I mean, did you imagine any church that embraces this kind of a philosophy or a theology? Folks, do we not pray so that God might be glorified through us in releasing other people into the life and freedom of Christ who have not worked for it? Is it not all by grace? Is it not all the goodness of God? What he began to embrace was so far from the heart of God he saw no point that others should gain for free what somebody else has worked for. He actually, he was, he had an anti-Christ theology in his heart. It was completely the opposite to the heart of God who became a man and walked among us.

Chapter 3, verses 18 and 19 shows how far wisdom without heart had taken him from God. For I said in my heart concerning the estate of the sons of men that God might manifest them, that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which befalls the son of men befalls beasts, and every even one thing befalls them.

As one dies, so dies the other. Yea, they all have one breath, so that a man has no preeminence above a beast, for all is vanity. What an incredible loss of heart and focus.

He saw people as no better than beasts, of no value. He lost complete sight of the value of human persons created in the image of God. From the moment of dedicating that temple, he lost heart.

Chapter 4, verses 1 and 2, So I returned and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun, and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter. And on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter. Wherefore I praise the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.

They had no comforter. But isn't that what the temple was supposed to be about? Wasn't the temple to be a place of comfort for the oppressed, and the hungry, and the thirsty, and the captive? Isn't that what the temple was to be? Weren't people to come in contact with that temple and find they did have a comforter? There was one who was willing to be closer than a brother and relieve them from their burdens and their oppressions. In chapter 6, I'm only skimming this book, you may want to study it as I said earlier, verses 1 and 2. There's an evil which I've seen under the sun, and it is common among men.

Verse 1, A man to whom God has given riches, wealth, and honor, so that he wants nothing for his soul of all that he desires. Yet God gives him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eats it. This is vanity, and it is an evil disease.

He said, I see one man given great supply, and he gives it to a stranger to eat. He said, I see this is a great disease. Don't think for a second.

Folks, any church, any Christian who sees coming to Christ and the accumulation of knowledge as only an opportunity to gather wealth unto himself and his whole focus, his selfish focus is completely in line with this theology of Solomon at the end of his life. He said, I see a man being given great resource, and it's laid up for another. I see this as an evil disease.

I mean, I'm flabbergasted as I study this book of the transition from this point of dedication and calling to what this man actually became. Remember that Solomon was given charge of the actual testimony and presence of God on the earth. Think of that for a moment.

The temple was where God dwelt, and Solomon was given the charge of that house. Take heed, David said, the Lord has chosen you to build this place. Take heed, folks, because the Holy Spirit now dwells in

us, our physical bodies, and we are given charge as it is of seeing that this temple lives in such a way that it is a place that God has glorified.

In the beginning, when this temple was first established, the glory of God filled the house. Remember in 2 Chronicles 7-1, priests could not stand to minister. The people shouted, the glory of God had come into the house.

You and I have experienced this here in this sanctuary from time to time. When the glory is so thick, you just say, oh God, I would love to dwell here forever. It would be awesome if I didn't have to go home.

I'd be willing to forsake my car in the parking garage, just give it all, everything, if I could just stay here in the presence of the Lord. And the people had experienced that. Solomon knew it.

The glory of the Lord had filled the house. The goodness and mercy of God was revealed. They sang a song, God is good and his mercy endures forever.

The trumpeters sounded, the people shouted, and the glory of God came down in the temple. Do you remember the day you first found Christ and the glory filled your physical temple? Do you remember the day that the goodness of God and the mercy of God was fully revealed to you? You first understood that I don't stand here by works, I don't stand here by merit, I stand here by grace. Do you remember the day that there was a shout in your soul, nobody had to crank up the band or the choir to get you to sing, the song was there, the song was in you.

You could sing anywhere, you could sing all the time. You sat on the subway coming to church and you just wanted to burst into song. You sat in the workplace and it was all you could do to contain that song from coming out.

There are times you just found yourself having to sing. How many testimonies have I heard of new Christians? Do you remember when you first got saved, you'd do anything to go for a bathroom break, to open your Bible, just to get another verse of scripture. The glory had come into the house, the mercy was revealed.

And there was great sacrifice, folks. There was hunt, tens of thousands in the day of that dedication of bullocks and goats and sheep and Solomon himself, I forget the number, I think it's 120,000 sheep, Solomon himself offered up to the Lord. There's incredible sacrifice.

Do you remember the days where it didn't matter how long you had to drive, it didn't matter how far you had to go, it didn't matter how long the prayer meeting was. There was great sacrifice. I remember as a young Christian, in my heart, I lived 36 miles from the church I attended, and I'd drive home after work and I'd change my clothes and I'd drive back to church, driving back home again after church and driving back into work again the next morning.

And I didn't care how many miles I had to put on my car. If a prayer meeting was open, I was there. I'd go to church Sunday morning and stay there the whole day, come back again Wednesday night.

And on top of all that, I was asked to be an elder in the church, which even made, but it was not a burden to me. There was great sacrifice in those beginning years when you and I come to Christ and begin to live for God. It seems like no sacrifice is too much, doesn't it? We want to be where God is.

We want to be doing what God's calling us to do. An opening comes in the church to do something and we don't consider it too menial. Whatever was given to do in the church, I was the guy in the back with the one talent that just kept saying, Hey, use me.

I'm here. Tremendous worship. The scripture says all the people stood and I couldn't help but think of this church as I was going through these scriptures that we tell you, you may be seated and most of you don't.

What is it in your heart that makes you want to stand? Why do you feel that sometimes, not all the time, but sometimes just sitting down is just not appropriate? I've just got to stand. I've just got to lift my hands. I've just got to shout out to God.

I've just got to praise him. The second Chronicles 7 verses 15 and 16. Here's what the Lord said to Solomon.

Now my eyes shall be open and my ears listening 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 my eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually. I've chosen this house.

Now you and I can lay claim to that personally because God no longer dwells in temples made with physical hands. He lives in me. He lives in you.

And the Lord says I've chosen you. You. You're my house now.

And my eyes and my heart are there. I'm waiting for you to ask me for what you need. I'm waiting to give you my eyes.

I'm waiting to give you my heart. I'm waiting for you and I to walk together through this world. I'm waiting for our hearts to be one.

I'm waiting as Amos the prophet said for the two of us to be together in agreement walking through this world. God says I'm waiting. My eyes, my heart are with you.

I'm waiting for you and I to walk together as one. What happened to Solomon then? There are a lot of theories and I'm going to add mine to the mix. Quite simply I've been reading this and reading this and reading this and reading this and reading this.

And quite simply I believe Solomon got bored with the work of God. He dedicated the temple. The glory of the Lord came down.

The people sang their songs. Morning by morning there had to be this initial sense of wonderment as sinners came in and seekers came in and God was meeting need. Solomon was given charge of the house and giftings to keep that house alive.

And he came into the house and you could just see him as he walks in talking to the porters because it was quite a few years actually that he did maintain some form of integrity. But I see him telling the porters now be careful the way you carry that and maybe to the maintenance crew look at there one of the chairmen's got a chip in it would you mind fixing that? And he's walking through the temple. He's given the charge of the presence of God in the earth and the house where God dwells.

But he was also given giftings and he had a brilliant mind and he got bored. And folks one of the first signs that something is wrong is if you're in this church for example on a Sunday, a Sunday night, a Tuesday night and a hundred people come as have been happening lately to the saving knowledge of Christ at this altar. A hundred strangers, a hundred widows, a hundred people with questions, a hundred coming out of captivity and you're looking at your watch and you're wondering if you're gonna be the first to get to the parking garage.

I'm telling you folks something is wrong. It's a warning sign. This is the work of God.

This is the house of God. This is what God is doing in the earth. This is what God is all about.

This is what this is the work of Christ. It's the releasing of those who are in prison. It's the healing of those who are bruised in heart.

It's the giving of sight to the spiritually blind. It's that the poor have the treasure of Christ open to them. And everyone has an opportunity to understand that this is the time that God's heart and arms are open to all people.

And God help me and God help you if we ever get bored in this house with the work of God. God help us choir if you get out of bed Sunday morning and go, Oh no, I got to go to church again today. And I got to sit in church all day and I got to sing all day.

Time to go back to the prayer closet when that starts to happen folks time to get back to God. See Solomon had the nose, but I didn't have the heart, the willing heart that says, this is what my life is about. There will be no plan B, C or D down the road.

My life is to be given that God might be glorified, that his church might be strengthened, that his testimony might go forward in the earth. This is what my life is about. No plan B, C, D is necessary.

That's what it means to have a perfect heart and a willing mind means that I occupy the place that God gives me in his body and the testimony he establishes in my life in the earth that I say, Oh God, let my heart be in line with yours. Your purpose in coming to this world may it be fully known and realized in me. Oh God, help me never to turn from it.

Don't let me get bored with the work of God. And that's quite often the dilemma that comes to those of us whom God gives giftings to as we walk with him. Solomon got bored and the scripture tells us he began to build other cities.

At the end of 20 years it says in chapter 8, he built his house, built the Lord's house and then he began to build other houses and build other places. Then he began to build vineyards and then he began to build terraces. Then he began to plant gardens.

Then he began to farm animals. Then he began, he just began to move because he had this creative ability in him. And he didn't realize it was leading him farther and farther and farther away from what he had been called to be.

Folks, don't ever get bored. If you find yourself ever getting bored with the things of God, just stop. Stop everything and just go back into the prayer closet again and just ask one more time, God Almighty, please help me.

God please keep me. Give me a willing heart. Give me a perfect heart and a willing mind.

If you've called me to be a doorkeeper in the house of God, let that be sufficient for me. No matter how you gift me, no matter what you put into my life, let that be sufficient God. I'm only called to be obedient.

I'm only called to occupy what you've given me to do. Don't let me get bored, oh God. Don't let me get bored.

There's so many churches in the world today that people are bored to death. The pastors are bored. That's why they drift into all this foolishness, because they're bored with the simplicity of the work of God in Christ.

That's why Paul said, I fear lest having begun in the spirit, you're going to be turned from that simplicity. You're going to be turned from the simple focus of the work of God, which is the redemption of lost humanity, that people can come to the temple and find Christ as Savior. That's what happened to Adam and Eve.

It's the original sin, folks. The devil came. I still believe he came in a white suit.

He's a serpent, but I think he came in a white suit. And he said, is this what life is about? You know, here you are down looking after this garden, meeting with God periodically. Do you not think there's more than this? Do you not think life has more than this? Did God give you a mind just so that you can trim plants and name animals? Do you not think there's more? And that they bit into that fruit.

Yeah, there must be more. My life must be destined for more than what God has given me to do. And they bit into the fruit.

And when they bit into the fruit, look at the inheritance that Adam left. Think about yourself when you were in sin and despair and wanted to commit suicide. That was the inheritance of Adam, folks, that was left when the first man and the first woman bit into the lie that somehow that what God has made you to be is insufficient and what he has given you to do falls short of your capability.

We can end up like Sardis in Revelation 3, a church that, or an individual Christian that was going through all the motions but lost the heart. Sardis had a reputation of being alive. They really, really had gotten it down to a formula.

They knew how to pull all the levers. They knew how to sing the right songs. They could get the tears moving.

They could just do things that caused the society, the undiscerning society around them to believe that they had life. But Jesus said, no, you're dead. You've lost heart.

You don't have the heart of what truly is the church of Jesus Christ. And you've lost the mind of God. Your thoughts are different than the thoughts of God.

Have you ever really given that consideration that you and I are not called to be any more than what God has asked us to be? The cry has to be, God, give me the heart to embrace your work in the earth and to willingly accept the pathway you have laid before my life. God, give me the heart. I have gone into the prayer closet and I have asked the Lord for this for quite a long time.

Now, it's not just something new because I realize that position, influence, past preaching, it really doesn't matter. If I don't have a right heart, if I don't have a willing mind, and all of that entails, because there's a lot more, remember, let this mind be in you which was in Christ. If I don't have these things, I have no more guarantee that I won't go astray than Solomon did.

Folks, as a church, the cry of my heart, and I'm talking to this church now, Times Square Church, is that we never, ever, ever stray from the simplicity of the work of God in this temple, individually and collectively as a body, that we never get to the point where we see a dozen or even one person come to Christ and there's no rejoicing. We can't rejoice with the angels in heaven. We never get there, folks.

We never get there. I think if one person responds and receives Christ, then you and I should be dancing all over the place. If we are one in heart with God, if we are one in mind with Christ, we will find ourselves among the angels rejoicing.

I don't know how many years I've got left, but I have a prayer in my heart that I've been asking the Lord for, that when I get to the end, I can put my feet in my bed and give God glory with everything that's in my soul. I can say like Paul, I've run the race. I've finished the course.

I've done it, I know in my heart, God's way. I'm not finishing this course with deep regret in my heart. I challenge you with everything in me to let that be the cry of your heart.

The beauty of this whole story is that God came more than one time to Solomon, and God will come more than one time to you. No matter where you are or what you've done with what he gave you, he will come to you and he's coming to you again today and says, ask of me what you will. Ask of me.

Folks, maybe it's just time that individually and collectively we say, God, would you give us a perfect heart and a willing mind? Would you keep us alive in Christ? Would you keep our focus centered? Would you help me, Lord, never to get bored with the work of God? Never to get to the point where I start looking for an out. I start looking for something else to do, some other thing to build, other than the kingdom of God. Would you help me to have that singular focus that it's just all about people coming to Christ in the temple? May I find the deepest joy of my heart in seeing others find the joy of God.

May I not consider it a waste of my life that, God, you build in me a resource and others would benefit from it. Whereas I myself seem to be struggling and fighting and laboring and having to be buffeted, as Paul said, beaten up and stoned in his case. And yet it's others that seem to be benefiting from it.

Solomon considered this an evil disease and a waste. But, oh God, it is the very life of Christ. It's the very heart of God.

It's the very privilege of walking with Christ in this and any other generation. God forbid we should forsake the pathway of life and embrace a wider gate that simply just leads to theological apostasy and destruction. Let my heart always be attuned to the heart of God and the heart of this church always be alive in our Christ.

Now this morning is the morning where we're going to say goodbye to Pastor Neil and Sister Nolene. They're leaving this week for the Ukraine or actually beginning the journey that's going to end there in the Ukraine. You know, Pastor Neil, in my heart, I shouldn't talk to you because I get too emotional when I do.

I just hope we can meet at the finish line and these words will be reality in each of us. And Sister Nolene and others, because we may not meet again until the finish line, but that we can get there and say we've run the race. We've finished it God's way.

We didn't give in to all of the entrapments that would try to take us away from the work of God. Pastor Neil and Sister Nolene are going to come to this platform and the elders and pastors of this church are going to join them and we're going to kneel down together. In Acts 20 when Paul was leaving, on two occasions they gathered together at the seashore and they knelt down together.

We're going to commit them unto the Lord and send them from this church with a great blessing. Now, we're sending them out with strong financial blessing for the future, but we're going to send them out also with prayer and with a blessing from this congregation. I feel in my heart to pray for Pastor Neil, Sister Nolene, the same as I'm praying for myself today and for you, that we finish this course with a perfect heart and a willing mind.

That's what the Lord's put on my heart for this service this morning and so it's, even though we're commissioning Pastor Neil and Sister Nolene, we're also commissioning ourselves. We're only a few short years to the finish line folks. Let's finish it right.

Let's do it right as a church. Let's leave an inheritance. If such is the case, if the Lord should tarry for some, let's leave an inheritance for those who come after us.

Let's leave that inheritance to the life of Christ. If it's in your heart today in the main sanctuary or in the annex to want to pray along these lines that, oh God, maybe you feel that you've fallen short and if you do, that's a good thing. You feel that, Lord, I don't have a right heart and some of the things that Solomon eventually believed, I see the beginnings of it in my own heart.

God, I'm afraid of this and I don't want this in my life and I'm coming to you and asking you today that you give me, please almighty God, a perfect heart and a willing mind. I would forego the knowledge and the wisdom for the heart and the mind of God. I'd rather be simple and considered a fool and make it to the end than noted for wisdom among men as Solomon was and end up a fool when it's all over.

Oh God almighty. And if the Holy Spirit is speaking to you as I know he is to me and you want to be recommissioned, rededicated as it is, you're coming to the Lord and I feel in my heart God is saying to us, ask of me what you will. And I don't care what kind of a mess you've made this morning and how deeply you've blown your testimony.

The Lord is not concerned about that. It's now about the future. Ask of me what you will.

And I do believe that you will experience the miraculous power of God come into your life. Let's stand in the annex. You can stand between the screens, please, in the main sanctuary.

The Holy Spirit is speaking to you. Please come out of your seat right now. Just balcony, you can go to either exit.

Make your way to this altar and we're going to kneel together. We're going to commission our dear brother and his wife to the service of God and we're going to commission ourselves also to the service of God, believing that when we get to the finish line that Christ will be glorified. Just step in real close, make room for people if you will.

We appreciate it very, very much. Thank you, Lord. Elders, pastors, if you could gather, please.

Those who can, kneel. I'd encourage you to do so. They knelt down, it says, on the shore.

They commissioned this beloved man of God. We commissioned Nolene as well, obviously, to the hand of God. Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you, Lord, for the unbroken bonds of fellowship.

Lord, we thank you, God, for the pleasure that we have had of walking together with each other and with you, Lord, over these years. This morning, Lord, we commission Pastor Neal, Sister Nolene, into the hand of God. Lord, bless them and use them greatly, Lord, for your namesake and for your glory and for your kingdom.

Father, we ask, Lord, that you give them a perfect heart and a willing mind to occupy the place, O God, that you give them, Lord, to reach out to fallen and lost humanity at every level, O God, and never consider it a boring work. I ask that you reignite all of our hearts this morning for the work of God. Keep us in line with the work of God.

We pray for ourselves as a church, Lord, that we never get bored with the things of God. Father, that we consider it such a privilege that you pour a resource into us for the purpose of helping others. And, God, everything you put into our lives, we know it's for a purpose.

It's for other people. It's for the oppressed. It's for the addicted.

It's for the widow. It's for the orphan. It's for the hungry.

It's for the lost. It's for the confused. It's for the overwhelmed.

It's all for others, O God. Help us, Lord. Help us, Lord.

Help us, Lord, to embrace the heart of our Christ. Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

Keep the temple alive, Lord. Keep the testimony alive. Keep the testimony of this house alive in our generation and in this city, O God.

Keep the testimony alive, Father and Pastor Neal and Sister Loneline. Oh, God, almighty God, almighty. Keep the testimony alive.

Father, we thank you for it, O God, with everything in us, Lord. Father, we thank you, Jesus. I pray, God, we may get to the end of this journey.

We may get to the finish line, and there'll be a shout of glory as we meet again, God, that we might say, like Paul, we've run the race. We've done it God's way. We've finished the course, and there's a crown of righteousness laid out for us, O God.

Father, we thank you, Lord. Give us a multitude of souls. Give us a multitude, O God.

A multitude, Lord. A multitude, Lord. We're not asking for position or power or wealth or fame or status.

We're asking for the souls of man. God, give us the city, Lord. Give us everywhere you send our feet, God.

Give us the city, Lord. God, help Pastor Neal and Sister Loneline to be an encouragement, Lord, to the pastors and spiritual leaders of very darkened places who have lived up to their heavy religion. God, use them for your glory.

Keep them in the palm of your hand, Father. Lord, we thank you for this, God, with all our hearts. O Jesus, O Jesus, O Jesus, we commit ourselves into your hand as we commit them into your hands, O God.

Father, help us to do it right and finish it right, O God. We ask it in Jesus' mighty name. Hallelujah, hallelujah.

Thank you, Lord. Bless God. Bless God.

How sweet it is when brethren draw together in unity. Hallelujah. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. How sweet it is, how sweet it is. Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God.

Glory. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.

Praise God. If anybody here would like to just write a card, a note of appreciation, we'll make sure that Pastor Neal and Loneline get it in the Ukraine. I think there's a dog team heads up there once a month.

We'll make sure you get it. I asked Pastor Neal if he had anything to say, and for the first time ever, he said, no. God bless you.

God bless you. Let's go rejoice. God bless you.

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