

A Promise That You Will Never Fall

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon emphasizes the importance of cultivating virtues and loving the church to ensure a successful faith journey and fulfill God's promise of never falling.

Duration: 46:48

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:1-11

Topics: "Critical Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having certain qualities in our lives as believers. He highlights that these qualities, such as love, faith, and knowledge of Jesus Christ, are essential for us to bear fruit and not be spiritually barren. The speaker also warns against the dangers of lacking these qualities, as it leads to spiritual blindness and forgetting God's mercy. He encourages the listeners to put into practice what they have heard and to strive to love one another genuinely. The sermon concludes with a prayer for strength to persevere in the Christian journey and to be a blessing to others.

Transcript

I have been on a personal quest for a number of years now. Part of it is experience, some of it's the age I am now, some of it is a foreboding of my own future, because I have had the privilege of, if you want to call it such, over the years I have, I was one time at the bedside of a minister that had had somewhat of an effect on my life in the early years and he was dying and I was there to try to comfort him and he was convinced that he was lost, that the salvation he had preached all his life was not for him. I, through discussion with him, found out there was a root of bitterness in his heart that had never been dealt with and it had come back, as the scripture says, to defile him.

I was in another place one time with a decorated missionary who felt condemned, cut off from God. I have seen too many times the same scenario repeat itself over the years and it put an honest fear of God in my heart and it set me on a quest. I said, Lord, I don't want to fail in the latter part of my life and I don't want there to be anything in me that's going to spring to life when I least expect it.

It's like the devil has this ace up his sleeve and he saves it for my life when I get to being more frail physically and he suddenly springs it and throws it on the table and I'm powerless against it. I have seen this so many times, folks. There's a lot of examples I could tell you that it really does put the fear of God in your heart.

I'm not talking about lightweight players in the kingdom of God. Many of these are people that were used greatly of the Lord but their finish was not very good. There was one common thing in every one of these lives as I look over them and I meditate on them because it's been my prayer, Lord, don't let me fail.

Don't let me finish poorly. I'm fortunate I got maybe 20 years ahead of me but God, don't let me fail in that short span of time. Don't let me come to the place that I have seen others come to which really terrified my heart when I saw it.

After years and years of serving the Lord, don't let me come there. The one common factor in all of these lives is that every one of these ministers resented the people of God for various reasons. Some of it was an intolerance with God's church based on her poor performance.

Others had had experiences in the church that had left them wary of people. They'd been wounded and those wounds had never been healed. Others were just plain critical and they spiritualized their critical spirit and made it in their own sight a holy thing but in reality it wasn't holy.

I've been there to see them all go off track. I do believe the Lord let me see that over the last 30 years to prepare my own heart for the days we're living in now. I could speak a message like this to you and it's been a constant cry, Lord, don't let me fail.

I saw something in the scriptures this week that I think will gladden your heart. It's in the book of 2 Peter chapter 1. It's a message that I've entitled, A Promise That You Will Never Fall. A promise that you will never fall.

It's amazing, isn't it? Father, I thank you, God, with all my heart that your word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. Your word is true. It can be trusted and what you say is absolute truth.

If you tell us in this word that if we do certain things we will not fall, then that's true. So give us the grace to do these things. I pray, Father, from my own heart.

I pray for the people that I'm speaking to today. Lord, help us, God Almighty, to get to the finish line as we sang about this morning. I'm going to put on my robe and tell the story as soon as I get home.

And let it not be a story of failure or woe. Let it not be a story where we fell just before the finish line. We fell on our faces and couldn't get back up.

God Almighty, I want to draw my feet up in my bed in the last days and bless my children, my grandchildren, my nephews, my nieces, my wife. God Almighty, all of those close to me, I want to be able to speak words of faith into their hearts. I want to finish strong.

It's the cry of my heart, and Lord, you will answer that cry. I believe that with everything in me. And I bless you for it.

In Jesus' name. Now what if I told you today that contained in the Bible was an ironclad promise that you will finish your Christian journey successfully? Would you be interested in knowing what it is? Would you be willing to undertake the pathway it lays out before you, even if you know that it would take the strength of God in you to do it? Would you be willing? I have to say in my heart, I am God. And suddenly the Lord is unlocking some things to me because it's a quest in my heart.

And so I'm actually preaching out of my own journey today. I'm going to give you a lot of definitions of a lot of words. This is going to come across as more of a teaching than a traditional preach.

But you're going to see something if you'll stay with me. Don't let your mind wander. Be amazed at where this leads.

Chapter 1, verse 1, Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and of our Savior, Jesus Christ, grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue and to virtue knowledge and to knowledge temperance and to temperance patience and to patience godliness and to godliness brotherly kindness and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But he that lacks these things is blind and cannot see afar off and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore, the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you shall never fall.

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I was surprised. I've read this for years.

And when I would read this passage of scripture, it just looked like good attributes. Just a whole hodgepodge. It's almost as if Peter was writing and saying, now what would make a good Christian life? And he's writing glory, virtue, faith, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity.

Just kind of random things that you and I are to aspire to. And of course there is truth in that. But would you be surprised to know he was actually only saying one thing? You're too quiet.

He's called us according to his divine power in verse 3 to a life that is to true life and godliness. And he's called us to glory and virtue. And that means we're to live in a way, the word glory means we're to live in a way that brings reputation to God.

It brings a recognition that God is giving us the strength that we have. And the word virtue means it's the excellence of God. It's the evidence of the Holy Spirit revealed in our message.

So in other words we are bringing God to reputation by an enablement in us to do something that only God could do. Now I'm building something here so don't lose these definitions in your mind. Having escaped it said, whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises.

Now this is something you can't do and I can't do in our own strength. I have to trust the promises of God and he himself says if you trust my promises I will bring myself to reputation through you by giving you the ability to do things, a particular thing in this case that you can't do in your own strength. By these promises you become partakers of God's nature, that's the divine nature, the heart, the character of Christ as it is.

Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And the word lust is defined as desires and impulses that are emanating from the diseased condition of your soul. In other words there are certain responses to things that will come from you.

There are certain courses of action that will come from your inner man unless something greater than it comes and overpowers it. And besides this he says in verse 5, giving all diligence add to your faith. Now remember faith is the belief in the promises of God.

Faith is me and you going into this book and saying God this is mine, this is my inheritance, I believe this with all my heart and if I see it written here it's mine and I'm going to take you at your word. I'm not going to try to craft you, I'm not going to try to create you into something you're not. I'm going to just take it the way you speak it to my heart, I'm going to believe it God.

That's faith. To become an ambassador for Christ to be living a life that brings God to reputation in the earth. To be doing something that reveals the excellence of my salvation.

I'm not just relegated to an argument about truth and error. Some people are, it's sad to say that's about as far as they ever get. No I'm called to go beyond that.

I'm called to be a demonstration of the fact that God is alive in Christ. In my heart, in my life, I'm to go way, way, way beyond just the knowledge of certain things in the scriptures. Add to your faith virtue.

Now virtue is again, you believe and it's the same definition, it's this energy of the Holy Spirit. Add to your belief in the promises of God this energy of the Holy Spirit to make it a reality. Let God be God in you.

Don't argue with God. If he says something is wrong, it's wrong, don't try to make it right. If he says something is right, it's right, don't try to make it wrong.

Just move from what is wrong, move to what is right. That's what repentance means. Repentance simply means a change of mind, a change of heart.

I used to do this, now I'm going to do this. Add to your virtue in verse 5 knowledge. That means experience, the word actually means experiential knowledge.

It means participating in something and not just knowing it but experiencing it, letting it become a reality. Verse 6, he said into knowledge temperance which means self-control. This is all building into something.

Bring God to reputation. Let the excellence of your salvation come forward. Do not give in to the diseased condition of your soul.

Believe the promises of God. Through the belief in God's promises bring the name of God to reputation. Know this experientially, not just as a verses that you've memorized or something that you have a mental knowledge of but know it experientially.

Let God bring you and these impulses of your heart under the control, the dominion of the Holy Spirit. Add to temperance patience. That means the ability to endure circumstances and be long-suffering with people.

That's the definition in the New Testament. The ability to endure circumstances and be long-suffering with people. Add to temperance or add to patience godliness which means again a life which represents God

or the true worship of God.

Now something is unfolding here. The Lord's saying I'm asking you to be a partaker of something that's going to cause you to act in a way that you wouldn't be naturally inclined to act in. You're going to find that the way you start to act is something that only God could do through you.

It truly represents to this generation that you are a genuine worshiper of God. Add to godliness brotherly kindness. It means brotherly love out of a common spiritual life.

The other part of the definition means the love of Christians one for another. You see where this is leading. These are not just disjointed thoughts.

These are leading to something. Add to brotherly kindness charity which actually means love in modern English. It actually means unselfish benevolent love.

It means giving the person you love not what they desire but what they need. It's based on the scripture. It says God so loved the world he gave his only begotten son.

It was not what the world desired. It was what the world needed. Bottom line with all of this verse 8 to 11 says if these things be in you and abound they make you that you will neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But he that lacks these things is blind. He cannot see afar off. He's forgotten.

He was purged. He forgot that he was purged. He forgot that God was merciful to him.

He forgot that he stands by mercy. He forgot that he doesn't deserve to have what he was given. He forgot that God came to him not when he was seeking God but God came to him when he didn't even know that God cared.

Not that we love God but God loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins. Or that means the atoning sacrifice. Give diligence verse 10 to make this calling and election sure for if you do these things you shall never fall.

It means you'll have an abundant visible open door into all that God has promised in Christ Jesus. For so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In other words the life God says that I promised you will become yours.

The full life. The abundant life. He said I came to give you life.

I came to give it to you more abundantly and I will open a door to you that's clearly visible. You will come into this abundance of God in your heart. It will begin to flow through you.

So what are the common threads of these? Are these just unlinked attributes or is there a common thread here? And so I began to rewrite it as God was speaking to me and I paraphrased it. So if you'll permit me to do that. Let me read to you the way that the Lord spoke it to me.

I'm actually quite excited about this because God is answering my prayer. Here it is. I'm paraphrasing 1 Peter, 2 Peter rather chapter 1. I want you to bring God to reputation.

Your life must be a message of the excellence of God. The power of the Holy Spirit. And must be a demonstration of the worth of every person.

You must get victory over your own desires and impulses which come from the unsundered inner corruption of your own soul. You can get this victory by believing in God's promises to you. Yet it's not enough just to know them.

They must be allowed to become an ever deepening part of your character. They will give you the power to control your inner impulses. It will give you the ability to endure the failings and differences you experience in your relationships with others.

You will not give in when these things try you to the limit. You will in fact represent in truth the God you claim to worship. You will learn to love the church of Jesus Christ in a giving and unselfish way.

Not giving the people you love what they desire. Example harsh words for harsh words. But you give them what they need.

You'll become a visible demonstration to the world of something that only Jesus Christ could do. John 13 34 and 35 he said a new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you. In verse 35 he said by this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have loved one for another.

This will be the visible sign. This is what Peter was talking about in 2 Peter. If you will trust God.

If you want to bring the name of God to reputation. If you want to do something and allow God to do something in you that will be tangible evidence of the presence of God that will be a demonstration in this society of the reality of Christ. If you want to walk in a pathway that there's a promise in the word of God that you will never fall learn to love the church of Jesus Christ.

It's that simple. Learn to love the person on your left and on your right in spite of your differences. Fight in the Holy Ghost that diseased condition of the soul.

The diseased condition of the soul that wants to magnify differences. Magnify differences in worship. That wants to magnify different approaches to serving God.

Wants to divide us and make us weak. If there's going to be an awakening in our generation the church of Jesus Christ must come back together again and it cannot be a program. Hear me on this.

It can't be a program. It has to be the breath of God himself breathing into us leading us into this truth and showing us that we are part of a body that cannot be divided and once we get together, once we begin to walk as the church of Jesus Christ there's going to be a testimony in this bitter generation, in this divided generation, in this generation that speaks evil easily now of one another at every possible level in society. Now speech is uncontrolled.

I'm getting increasingly uncomfortable even going to a restaurant now. My wife and I went out to a restaurant last night. Two men sitting beside us cursing and swearing.

No, all anger based. Everything, everybody's accusing somebody now. Everybody's becoming bitter and divided.

Jesus himself said that ethnic culture is going to rise against ethnic culture in the last days. We're moving rapidly to that moment in history but there will be a church. There will be a body and by the enablement of the Holy Spirit we will be unified in a love that is not a program.

It's not just coming together and giving each other flowers and chocolates. It's much deeper than that stuff. It's a love that is birthed in God.

It is you and I saying I desire this. God Almighty take me from image to image and glory to glory. Take me through the things that I need to get through that I don't finish this journey as a detrimental testimony to God but I finish it with my hands raised and a hand in each one of my hands with the body of Jesus Christ.

God is putting something in my heart that I never felt. For years I felt well the answer has got to be proper theology or praying more or doing more or some of these things as good as many of them are but the one I just was sitting thinking one day and it dawned on me the common factor I've seen over the years. Every one of these people were critical of the body of Jesus Christ.

Everyone were focused on themselves. Everyone felt they had the only corner on the truth and everyone else was marginally effective or in error. God help us never to fall into that kind of arrogance in this church.

We are just a part of a grand grand body of believers worldwide in the kingdom of God. Listen to what Paul said in 1st Corinthians chapter 4. Charity that's the same word as Peter uses. Love suffers long, is kind, does not envy, does not need its own way, is not proud, is not puffed up, does not behave unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil, rejoices not in iniquity but rejoices in the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.

In 1st Corinthians chapter 13 verse 8 says love never fails. It never fails. If you do these things, Peter said, you shall never fall.

Hallelujah. I don't know if it means much to anybody here today but it means an awful lot to me because it's been a quest of my heart for years. God says you do this, you love my people.

You love my church in New York City. You love, no matter if they wear Salvation Army uniform, if they're Messianic Jewish, it doesn't matter if they worship in a way that you're comfortable with or you're not comfortable with. If they're Catholic Charismatics, if they're genuine believers in Christ of every persuasion, if they're people who run up and down the aisles in service, I don't recommend that here please.

There's too many people and the aisles are too small. God spoke to my heart. This is my church.

I went to a conference a few years ago. It's been a long journey and I don't know what was it, it was a piece of paper just stuck to my hand. I just, I tried to throw it in the garbage, it just wouldn't go.

And I read it and I said I don't want to go there. And I put it away and I read it again and I tried to throw it away and it just wouldn't go away. And so I agreed.

It was a large missions conference of a huge organization. And I remember going to it and the first night I got there and oh goodness sakes man, I was like a lot of white guys in African robes just dancing in the aisle stuff. You know, just wow, this is really not good.

I just don't want to be here. You know, this is everything I really don't like in the Church of Jesus Christ. I just, it seemed flaky to the core to me.

And I was, then they had a speaker there and it was, his message, I'll never forget it, it was called Tower Zero Hearing from God. It was very well named. That man hadn't heard anything from God for years.

And I was there and I said, oh goodness sakes man. And at the end of his message he had passed out index cards to everybody and said, now serving God requires certain things. And he said, I needed a car and the Lord gave me a Mercedes and I needed a house, he gave me a mansion.

I needed money, he gave me hundreds of thousands of dollars. And he said, so write down on the card, this is after an hour and a half of saying nothing, write down on the card what you want God to do for you and bring it to the altar and we're going to pray. And so at this point I turned to my friend, I said, let's get out of here.

So we snuck out through the kitchen and found an exit door and we got out. And I went back to my hotel room and I was on my face, literally, I said, God, forgive me. I'm so sorry for coming to this place.

And I'll be tying the church of New York City, Times Square Church into this stuff. And, you know, just, oh God, I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry.

And I was praying and praying. And I just, you know, I felt the Lord speak clearly to me, go to bed. It was that clear, go to bed.

And so I was in real anguish of soul. So I went to bed, I fell asleep. At four o'clock I woke up just wide awake.

He said, I'd like to speak to you now. And I went out into my room and he said, this is my church. I love these people.

These are my people. It's not what you think it is. It's not what you see with your eyes.

You judge by outward appearance. I judge by the heart. He said, I want to show you something.

And he said, this is what I want you to speak tomorrow. So I was the speaker the next night and I got up and I said, I appreciate, you know, what's going on here. And I finished.

I said, I want to talk to you tonight about the purpose of suffering in the Christian life. Went through the life of the apostle Paul. And I said, I want you to take out your index cards from last night.

And that's what the Lord told me to do. Take out the index cards and flip them over. I said, we do need houses and cars and supplies, and God knows that.

And I said, so let's go a little deeper than that tonight. Flip your card over. And I said, I want you to write these things down.

I said, I have to teach you on the life of Paul. He said, we must die to ourselves that others may live. We must be willing to give up our freedom that others may be set free.

And I began, we must be willing to suffer that the sufferings of others may cease. And they never got to the third line. People fell on their knees.

They started weeping and wailing. So I saw lots of people trying to get back up and they couldn't get, they were crying so hard they couldn't get back up. And they fell on their knees and a true, I saw the heart.

The heart was really alive in God. The people really did want truth. They really did want to live for the Lord.

And the next two services were phenomenal. The presence of God in a marvelous way came in. And at the end of it all, they prayed for me.

And I got a letter later on and by one of their denominational leaders, he said, those three meetings changed our movement. So changed the direction, changed our course, invigorated us, caused something of God to come alive in our hearts. We are forever and eternally grateful.

We will pray for you. And folks, you see, God loves in a way that we don't. Remember the disease condition of the soul.

Remember Peter said the disease condition causes us to respond in a way that isn't godly. If God marked our iniquities, we'd be here by ourselves today. The Holy Spirit would not be here.

I mean, who here today reasonably say you have not done or thought something that is disgraceful to the name of Christ? Well, surely we have. We've all fallen short in great measure, but yet God in his mercy is here. God is still wooing.

God is still speaking. God is still drawing us. God is still allowing us to worship.

And you and I have to learn to be willing to extend that to others who belong to the kingdom of God. I'm talking bloodline fellowship here now. I'm not talking ecumenism that is about a unity in spite of truth.

I'm talking about unity in truth, the truth of salvation through the blood of Christ and the cross of Calvary. That's what I'm talking. It's always what I'm talking about when I share about these things.

And I thank God that the Lord will not allow us to become even preachers of the gospel that are operating out of the disease condition of our own soul, but by the grace of God, be able to come into a place where we begin to see who is and who is not part of the body of Jesus Christ. And if you are part of the body of Christ, I am, I am duty bound. I'm commanded by Christ to love you as Christ loved his church.

That's a phenomenal thing. Now I can only do that through the Holy Spirit inside of me, but God promises that if I'm willing to do it, he will bring his own name to reputation. He will carry me and you through to the end.

We'll finish this journey together. We're not going to be finished throwing theological stones at one another over the fence and showing the world we're no different than the divided government in this country right now. Just throwing stones at each other.

You don't believe in this. Well, you don't believe in that. Well, you don't believe in this and calling each other frauds and calling each other deficient, having the same spirit that emanates from those who don't know God and don't have the power of God.

No, sir. No, ma'am. I'm making a choice to walk this path.

It's a path of love. It's a path of recognition of the fact that I am born into something bigger than myself, bigger than my own thinking, bigger than my own viewpoints. The kingdom of God is bigger than I am.

I do recognize there is only one door in. So I want to make that very, very clear, lest anybody should accuse me of being ecumenical. I'm not.

I'm talking about the church of Jesus Christ, the true believers in God through Jesus Christ. In an age of bitter fragmentation, increasing intolerance and breakdown in our society, the body of Christ must come together in a true God-breathed love. It will be a greater testimony than our words.

Hear me on this. It will be a greater testimony than our words. When God brings us together, that's why this has been such a special church for so long, because there's over a hundred nations who gather here.

And by God's grace, there is and will be an increasing love in this body, one for another, nation to nation, culture to culture, color to color, language to language. It has the potential to bring God to reputation. That's what Peter says.

It has that potential. That's why Feed New York is so important. That's why bringing together pastors of a hundred churches is much more important than you and I think it is.

It has the potential to bring God to reputation. It has the potential to cause people in New York City to say, whoever their God is must be God, because nobody could do this. Nobody could bring people together in that kind of unity except God himself.

We must not settle for mutual tolerance. And I think a lot of people's idea of love, that's what it has been, is that we just, I tolerate you Sunday morning, you tolerate me. I shake your head, you shake mine.

I say, how are you doing? You say fine. And that's more or less the depth of our unity. Oh no, it's much bigger than that.

Thematically, Peter's on this in both of his epistles, even though many people don't fully see it. But in chapter one and verse 22, no, it's not there. It must be 2 Peter.

Anyways, if I can't find it, I know what it says. No, it's not 2 Peter either. It talks about purifying your hearts and the evidence of that purity of God coming into your life.

And the evidence, as King James says, is an unfeigned love of the brethren. The evidence of God having worked in your heart is that you and I have an unpretended love for each other. We become masters at pretending love in the church of Jesus Christ.

We pretend every Sunday morning that we love everybody. I'm not content to pretend. And by God's grace, you know, it's funny, I think why God took me is because I'm probably one of the more disadvantaged people in this area.

I was as hard as a stone before I got saved. I dealt with death all the time and I didn't care. I remember walking to the supermarket one time.

Pastor Theresa would remember this back in St. Isidore. Remember I yelled out, I hate people. You remember that, right? I did.

I hated people. People were a source of pain in my life. And so to be able to be here is a miracle.

When I came to Christ, I told her if this is true, I want the whole journey or none of it. I want all of it or none of it. I don't want just a part of this.

If this is truth, then I need to live by this. And if it's not, I'm not going to. But if it is true, I want it.

And that's never changed in my heart. And I find that over the years, God's mercy causes me to keep growing line by line, little by little, step by step. We don't get the whole package.

We do get the strength, but we don't get the understanding in the beginning, nor all of the victories. But I'm not willing to settle for mutual tolerance in the body of Jesus Christ. I am completely unwilling to look any pastor in the face in New York City and say, I love you.

And if I don't mean it, I'm not willing to do it. I remember when I was a young Christian, I started going to this, I was saved and disciplined in the Baptist church. And I started going to a Pentecostal church and I walked in and everybody was all about love there.

And they all said, well, we love you. We love every Sunday morning. We love you.

And I would just stare at them. And Pastor Teresa said to me, why don't you tell people you love them? I said, because I don't love them. It wasn't even complicated.

I just, I don't, and I'm not going to tell these guys I love them. I don't love them, you know, but it's been a long and a wonderful journey. It's, it's, there's been a, I feel like, you know, the scripture in speaking of Christ talks about when he comes, the desert will bloom as a, as a garden.

And my heart was a desert in this area, but God has put love in it. I can't explain it any other way. And I've become less of a judge and more of a, just a person that just lets the love of Christ.

And you and I must desire this because it carries with it the promise that we'll not fail or fall from being a living testimony to our generation. We, we must desire to go beyond the niceties, the mutual tolerances, and, and we must get away completely from the criticism, because I've seen too many not finish well. It's awful, actually, when you see the end of it.

It's terrifying to see people who've served God all their life and they have such a poor finish. And I'm not going there. And the common thread, and you know that, Brother Vest, is they've all despised the church.

It's the common thread. They've gotten bitter. They feel they have the market on truth and everyone else is in error.

And that isn't true. And as we move into what God has for us here in New York City, the fullness of that, God help us if we ever consider ourselves better than anybody else. We're on the road then to failure.

I want to love you honestly. And I know that only God can do it. And I know only God can do it in you too.

But according to what I read, it will be the evidence. It will be the evidence that brings God to reputation. And so I want to give an altar call this morning for people who have had a hard time loving other people, especially in New York City.

This is like the get out of my face capital of the world, for real. And the city gets into you. When I first came here, we were living in an apartment building over on 53rd, I would talk to people in the elevator.

I came from Canada. Everybody does that, you know, and everybody talks to everybody, you go to a store, people talk to you. And I would talk to them.

Hi, how's everybody doing today? And they don't like stiffen up and stare at the numbers like as if I'm like a mass murderer just got on the elevator. And you know, over the course of time that got into me, I was recently on holiday somewhere and people started talking to me in the elevator and I stiffen up and stare at the lights. You realize this, the spirit of the city gets into us and it takes the Holy Spirit to break those barriers down.

Now, I'm not saying that we get stupid. Don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying we let everybody sitting next to us pick our pocket.

You know, there's a sensibleness in this love. But I'm saying that we allow God to love others through us and bring us into the doorway. He said an entrance will be ministered to you abundantly into this life.

He said, for so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And he's not talking about just when you get to heaven. He's talking about here.

There is a kingdom here. The kingdom of God, Christ said, is within you. And he said an entrance will be given to you into this kingdom if we learn to unpretendedly love the brethren.

Now, it's going to be hard for some because in some cases it means forgiveness. The one man who thought he was lost had a root of unforgiveness in him. Another man who served on the mission field all his life, and he was even famous, at the end of his days thinking that God had left him.

And when I dug deeper, found out he's very bitter, very critical to the body because he felt like he had done something and nobody else was doing anything, and a superiority turned to a bitterness, turned to a pride, and ended up feeling like he's cut off from the Lord. I could not talk him out of it. I could not pull him out of that hole he was in.

After years and years and years of serving God, I couldn't bring him out. I saw another man go into doctrinal error, even though he'd done great, great, great good for the kingdom of God, watched him veer off. And because there was that twist inside of judging, everybody other than himself was under judgment, basically.

And he was the one who had the truth, and I watched him veer off into doctrinal oblivion. And it was so sad. I couldn't reach him.

I tried. I couldn't get through. And so God help us to get to the end loving the church of Jesus Christ.

It's an awesome way to live, folks. It is. It causes me to give you not what you want, but what you need.

It's a divine love. You might say something to me wanting to be rejected, but it causes me not to reject you. It causes me to have a heart that is animated by the Holy Spirit.

This is the breath, I believe, that God needs to bring into the church again in this last day that we're living in. May the Lord give us the courage. And just for those who have a hard time to trust, to love, you don't

mind the two hours at Sunday morning, but that's about as far as you want it to go.

But I'm telling you, if you're willing to let it go a little farther than that, you'll find something of God that you only dreamed could be yours. There's a peace in your heart that passes understanding. And Father, I thank you, Lord, for... I thank you, God, for a simple but a profound truth.

I thank you for the journey that you've had me on. Lord, I just love this journey. I love your people.

I thank you, God, for... You continue to do miracles, Lord. You continue to guide. You continue to take from image to image and glory to glory.

And I thank you for it, Lord. I thank you for the inner knowledge that the best is yet to come. I thank you for bringing into this church the pastors of Feed New York.

I thank you, God, for giving us the heart to see others as better than ourselves. I thank you for the ability to give a hug or grasp a hand and say, I love you and truly mean it. I thank you, Lord, for delivering us from hypocrisy and bringing us into the reality of Christ.

You said it was a commandment. And you said, by this, all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have this kind of love one to another. And so, Lord, take us out of the mediocrity of our profession and lift us into that which belongs to God.

And, Father, I thank you for it with all my heart. With all my heart, Lord, I thank you. You have been so good to me.

In Jesus' name. We're going to stand in a moment. And for those who would like to just undertake this journey, you bear witness to it and you want it.

You want it as part of your life. I'm going to ask you to come. Let's stand.

And just join me here at the front of the sanctuary, Roxbury, the same. You could stand between the screens. At home, those that are listening online, perhaps you could just go to your knees on your living room floor.

God bless you. Just come. Balcony, go to either exit.

We'll worship for a moment, then we're going to pray. You know, all of us look for that magical altar moment when everything changes. But in my experience, it has been that I've seen it in the Word of God and I've said, I want this.

And then the Lord will start to play it out. Now, don't be surprised. You're here today.

You say, God, help me to love and then don't be surprised if, you know, you get buddied up with somebody that you really don't like and that you're going to need, you're going to need God. And that's quite often the way he'll do it. Somebody in the church that just, you know, that just sees you from a mile off every Sunday and it's just the kind of a person you just are the most uncomfortable with and they just somehow just latched on to you as their best friend in the whole world.

And then you've got to learn to... I had a guy like that. It was just, it was everything. He would tell me every Sunday he loved me and it would give me the creeps when I'd come through the door in those first few

years, you know.

But he never quit. And one day he looked at me and said, you can't say that back to me, can you? And I said, no, no, I can't. I could today.

That's the grace of God. If we're growing in grace, what was not there, God will put there, but we just have to want it. And remember Peter said, you're given promises and by these you become partakers of the divine nature of God in Christ.

That's how his life begins to be manifested. We simply believe him. And then be willing to be stretched.

You can't, like Pastor William says, you can't walk around with a 10 foot pole with a glove on it. You've got to be willing to get in close. It doesn't mean you lose your intelligence, okay.

Like I said, you don't let your pockets get picked because it's sad to say there are people here like that, but it doesn't mean you have to let that happen. You keep your wits about you, but you're moving into something of God. That's the way it is.

My father, I thank you that you will help us, especially as people from other churches start coming here to pray with us. That this will be a love that becomes contagious, that others will want to love as they have been loved. God, I pray that the strangers that come into this church will see something that causes them to say, surely God is in this place.

I ask you, Lord, to give your church in New York City a testimony, your whole church, a testimony of the grace and the love of God by doing something so far beyond us, so much deeper than we could ever be in ourselves, bringing us together, Lord, with a love and unity that could only come from the Holy Spirit. And so, Lord, we thank you that you've given us the illustration of breathing on bones and causing them to live. No matter what we have become, Lord, you are well able to bring us back to that which we should be.

And I thank you for it in Jesus' name. Now, we're not going to join hands and sing kumbaya now, okay? But what we're going to do is, we're not going to have any music, we're going to bring the curtain down, and I'm just going to give you an opportunity to fellowship. Just put into practice what you've heard today, you know? If you have to, by faith, say, I really love you, then give it your best shot until it starts coming out naturally.

All right? See you at 3 o'clock. God bless you.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/25/SID25117.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/carter-conlon/a-promise-that-you-will-never-fall/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net