

A Sure Path Through the Coming Storm

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon calls the church to prepare for the coming storm by addressing character flaws and embracing God's will for the sake of others.

Duration: 47:52

Scripture: Proverbs 8:22-30, Matthew 26:39, Philippians 4:13, Hebrews 4:15-16

Topics: "Surrender To God", "Divine Guidance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God's will, even when it goes against our own desires and plans. It challenges believers to let go of self-preservation, fear, and comfort, and to seek God's guidance for their lives. The speaker encourages a bold approach to the throne of grace, acknowledging human weaknesses and the need for divine strength to fulfill God's purposes.

Transcript

If you turn your Bibles please to Matthew chapter 26. Matthew chapter 26, this is part two of a word that I believe that the Lord has given me for this time of fasting and prayer that we are entering into as a church. We're praying for the future of Times Square Church.

We're praying for the testimony of this church. We're praying that as I said earlier last week, God told Pastor David Wilkerson when this church was founded in 1987 that it was founded by God to be a lighthouse in the coming storm. The storm is here and it is really time for us to polish the windows, to make sure the light is strong, to check every part of this lighthouse.

That's why the Lord is asking us to let him deal with the small issues of character. Not things that will take us away from heaven, but things that will cause our testimony to be dull in this generation. And he's asking us, all of us, all the leadership, everyone.

And I do believe because this is a sovereign moment, there really is no escaping this. You're suddenly aware, if you're a sensitive Christian, you're suddenly aware of issues in your character that you're just so used to being there. You've never really seen anything wrong with them other than there are smudge on the window of the lighthouse.

And the hand of God has come with a cloth of cleansing and saying, let me just clean that. It's not affecting your eternal destiny, but it is affecting the testimony of the life of God through us. And as I said earlier, I've

been chasing foxes all week to the point where I just last night laid down in bed and said, Lord God, catch the foxes for me.

And he's going to be faithful to do that. It's just little things in your character, little things that hinder him. Today, I want to talk about a sure path through the coming storm, Matthew chapter 26.

Now, Father, I thank you, God, for the anointing of your Holy Spirit. God, I praise you for your presence. I thank you, Lord, that you've allowed us to be born into this world at this time.

And you brought us here to this house for this testimony for this season. Help us, God. Lord, we acknowledge we need your power for there is no light without your power.

There's no testimony. There's nothing without you, Lord. There's just a bunch of noise in a building calling itself the church.

Without you, Lord, we don't really have the power we need. But we do ask you, Almighty God, to shake the place where we are, as you did for your early church, and come upon us with power. Give us boldness to speak your word.

And through us, stretch out your hand to heal this sin-sick generation we live in. Let the light of Christ so shine that people will see it from miles away and walk towards the light that offers life and strength and eternity. God, help us now.

Help me this morning. Lord Jesus, help us to reach the full potential of what our lives are called to be, not what we think they should be, but what you've called them to be. There's a huge difference.

I pray, Lord, God, for the courage to go through every door. I ask you for the courage to speak every word you put upon our hearts. I ask you, Lord, for the ability to do everything you call us to do.

Sing every song you call us to sing, no matter where or under what circumstance. Jesus, anoint your word. If you don't anoint it, it's only just an accumulation of more knowledge.

Even if it's good knowledge, it has no power if you don't touch it and make it live in our hearts. God Almighty, let your word live in our hearts. Let your kingdom become our most prized possession.

Let your will be that which we embrace more than life. Help me, God. Help me, Lord Jesus Christ, to fulfill your call on my life.

Help me, God, not to draw back. Help me, Lord Jesus Christ. I pray in your precious name.

Amen. It's your path through the coming storm. Matthew chapter 26, beginning at verse 39.

And he went, this was Jesus, he went a little farther and fell on his face and prayed, saying, Oh, my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping and said to Peter, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. And again, the second time he went away and prayed, saying, Oh, my father, if this cup cannot pass away from me unless I drink it, your will be done. And he came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

So he left them and went away again and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Now, the author of the book of Hebrews in chapter four, verses 15 and 16 says, we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but he was in all points tempted as we are yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

You know, we can, we can grasp sometimes this erroneous view that Jesus Christ never struggled as we do. We forget that he was not only fully God, but he was fully man. And the fact that he was touched, he's touched with our weaknesses and he's touched with them because he also struggled with some of these things that we struggle with.

And so he understands because he was fully man, what you and I fight. And that's why the invitation is to come boldly to the throne of grace. When, when we pray this week, God says, come boldly to the throne of grace.

I understand your weaknesses. I understand your fears. I understand your reluctance.

In Matthew 26 and 29, verse 29, he said, not as I will, but as you will. Now it's an interesting thing. Here's the son of God.

He knows from birth that the purpose of his life is to go to a cross that's never hidden from him. He knows that, knows it from his youth. And yet when it comes time, when the actual moment comes, that the full expression of God through his life is about to happen, something of his human will starts fighting against what he knows.

He goes into the garden and he says, not as I want it to happen, not as I will, but as you will, became the essence of his prayer. And I started thinking about this. And I asked God this question.

I said, what was, what was the will of Christ that had to be overcome so that his life through his life, God might introduce to us the salvation that God was willing to offer humanity. But there was something in the heart of Jesus that he had to overcome the human side of him, which is common to all of us. So I simply asked the question, what was it? And here's what I feel in my heart that the Lord has spoken to me.

Firstly, it was the will to have nothing change. Jesus had forever enjoyed a pattern of fellowship with his father. The father whose will would cause interruption to that pattern, even though it was only for a moment.

You ever had some moments in your life? I've had them. I said, Oh God, I wish that would never change. You ever had a given just after a Sunday service sometime or a Sunday night, you're just jumping up and down.

You're so happy. And you just in your heart say, Oh God, I wish this would never change. Peter was like that.

When Jesus appeared with Moses and Elijah on the top of the Mount of Transfiguration, he wanted to build houses. They're basically dwellings. He just never wanted to leave that place.

He wanted to stay there forever. I understand that you understand that we all grasp for a place in life that makes us feel happy and fulfilled. We search for it.

We go to school for it. We study for it. We work for it.

This kind of elusive place that we're always looking for on this earth, that is going to so satisfy us, that career, that recognition, that whatever it is that we're looking for, it's going to so satisfy us that we will be able to more or less camp there and never leave there. And our life will be complete and we'll come to church and we'll sing songs to God and we'll believe him for our salvation. And we'll be just so happy there.

Listen to the words of Proverbs chapter eight. I'm going to read it to you from verse 22 to 30. But think about Jesus Christ.

Remember that he is God. There's never a time he was without his father. There's never a time the fellowship between he and his father and the Holy Spirit was broken.

The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his way before his works of old. I have been established from everlasting from the beginning before there ever was an earth. When there were no depths, I was brought forth.

When there were no fountains abounding with water before the mountains were settled before the hills, I was brought forth while as yet he had not made the earth or the fields or the primal dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there. When he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limits so that the waters could not transgress his command.

When he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him as a master craftsman. I was daily his delight rejoicing always before him. Jesus spoke these very words.

John spoke these very words about Jesus Christ in the beginning of his gospel when he said in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him and without him nothing was made that was made.

He had enjoyed this eternal fellowship. There was no beginning to it. It had always been.

It was a delightful place. I have no doubt it was a place of communion. It was a place of intimacy.

It was a place of wonderment. It was a place that brings satisfaction to the heart that you and I can't and won't fully understand until we get to heaven one day and we too become partakers of it. But even as a man on this earth, Luke says in his gospel chapter 6 verse 12, it came to pass in those days and you'll see this frequently in the life of Jesus that he went out into the mountain to pray and he continued all night in prayer to God.

The fellowship he'd always enjoyed. The wondrousness of what that must mean to be one and completely in union with God. In our humanity we want nothing to change.

You and I want to find a place where we feel the most secure and we want to feel happy and we want to stay there. I often feel that way. I feel that way every time my wife comes home from the school.

God, I don't want her to go again. I have to fight that. It's within my power to tell her to stay home and she would.

But the call of God involves change. The call of God leads on a journey into the unknown and often into the uncomfortable. Many claim to love God but will not take this journey.

Paul said of a certain man in 2 Timothy chapter 4 verse 10, he said, Demas has forsaken me having loved this present world. In other words, this man called Demas found a place and he was just simply unwilling to let it go. No matter where the plan of God was leading him or the call of God was taking him.

He just had a comfortable place and he fought that battle that everyone fights and said, why can't I have both? Why can't I have this comfortable place and a relationship with God at the same time? In measure, I suppose, Jesus was praying that. Father, why does it have to be this way? Why does what the call that you placed on my life have to involve this separation from you even though it's only for a moment in time? Why does this have to be? Can't there be some other way this can be done? And that's a legitimate cry in your heart and in mind. God, is there not some other way this can be done? Does it have to be this lonely? Does it have to be this painful? The second thing that I'm convinced that Jesus had to fight was the will to live and preserve oneself.

It's the strongest inner planting of the DNA of God in your life and in mine is the will to survive, the will to live, the will to be preserved. It's John chapter 12 verse 27. I found this so interesting.

Jesus is teaching his disciples and he's getting close to the point where the cross is going to come and he says these words, now my soul is troubled and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, but for this purpose I came to this hour. So he knows this thing. He knows the scripture.

He knows this is the purpose for his life and he says in a sense in teaching the people around him, what do you expect? What am I supposed to say? Father, save me from this hour? But what did he say when he went to Gethsemane? He said, Father, save me from this hour. He was in all points tempted like we are. He was tested like we are.

The knowledge of what to do often finds the will to live to be its fiercest enemy. I know the Bible says, if any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. I know that.

I preach that. But there are times in my life when God tells me, take up the cross and follow me. And I find myself, even though I know the truth, I find myself saying, is there any other way this could happen? And you do too.

You pray the same way that I do, or you put your fingers in yours like they do in the schoolyard. You go la la la while you pray. I don't want to hear this.

I don't want to hear this. I have a plan, you know, Lord, and I'm asking you to help me to fulfill this plan that I have for my life. And this will to live, this will for self-preservation, can be our fiercest enemy.

The disciples were all, they all knew he made it clear he's going to the cross. He made it clear he's going to be rejected. He made it clear that on the third day he's going to be raised from the dead.

He didn't hide anything. He said it all to them. And then in bravado, they all said, we will fight with you.

We will go all the way with you. And all they were able to do is cut off one ear and then run. That's what the human spirit will do.

We'll come to church and we'll take out our sword of the spirit and we'll cut off an ear somewhere and then we'll flee. And that's exactly what they did. Matthew 26, 56 says that all the disciples forsook him and fled because that inner will to live and preserve ourselves is arguably one of the strongest inner desires that those of us who follow Christ will have to overcome.

It's the fuel source of fear, that will to live. It causes us just as Peter did at the fire. Remember Jesus is now taken into the place where his trial is about to begin, where he's being examined, where he's been arrested, where he seemingly is captivated.

And Peter still follows him, but he is in the outer court as it is warming himself by a fire. And it causes us to associate with Jesus, but only from a self-preserving distance. And when they asked him, do you know this man, Jesus? Peter says, no.

And he's actually telling in measure, he's actually speaking the truth. He says, I know a Jesus that heals. I know a Jesus that prospers.

I know a Jesus that blesses. I know a Jesus that does miracles. I know a Jesus that caused my heart to burn with passion for his kingdom coming to the earth.

I know this Jesus, but the Jesus that's been captivated and being despised and is on the road to suffering, I really don't know that Jesus. He was actually telling the truth. And there's many people today who worship him and they come to conferences.

They want to warm themselves by the fire of God as it is, but they don't want to go any closer to him than a self-preserving distance. I don't want to suffer. I don't want to even think about what you might have for my life.

I want you as healer. I want you as provider. I want you as husband.

I want you as father. I want you as deliverer, but I don't want you as the one who calls me to follow you into suffering or rejection in a dark time. We're living in a dark time.

My brother, my sister, we're living at a time in this society when Christ is being rejected again. And those who follow him, it's not going to be a popular time to follow him. I believe we'll have a season of awakening.

I believe we'll have a moment where many are going to consider their eternity. But the testimony of the word of God tells us that there's a day coming that the whole world is going to turn in an unimaginable lawless rebellion against the ways of God. And it will not be popular to be a follower of Christ.

The only way through these things is by the power of God. And part of our strength rests in a God-given embracing of the real true and lasting purpose of our lives. It's coming to that point of saying, God, what do you want my life to be? Not what I think it should be.

Not me trying to cram my agenda into your kingdom and asking you to bless it. But what do you want my life to be? That's a fearful prayer to pray. Because you and I don't know where that's going to lead us.

But I tell you what the source of your strength will be. Hebrews chapter 12 verse 2 says, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. It was the joy of you and me finding salvation through him that send him to a cross.

If we are living for ourselves, we're not going to get through this. But if we are living for others, if we are willing to live, that men and women may come to that saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. If we are willing to be poured out that others may drink.

If we are willing to be broken that others may be made whole. If we're willing even to lose our freedom that others may gain theirs. Then there's a joy.

There's a strength that comes only from God. Paul said in Philippians chapter 4 verse 1, therefore my beloved, my longed for brethren, my joy and my crown. That's what gave this man such incredible strength.

It wasn't about him. It wasn't about preserving himself. It wasn't about his own agenda.

When he came to Christ, he let all that go. He let it go by the power of God. It was about you.

It was about me. It was about others. Paul had a vision of the divine purpose of his life.

And it's centered around the work of God and bringing home the lost. That is the work of God, bringing home the lost. Everything else is going to perish folks.

Everything else is going to be gone. There will be no Wall Street soon. There will be no towers in New York City.

Everything, even the heavens are going to be folded together one day as a scroll and all is going to be remade by the hand of God. All of this is going to be gone. All our sandcastles are going to wash into the oceans of time.

They're all going to be gone. It comes down to the point of saying in my heart, why do I want to live? What do I want my life to be? How do I want my life to finish? How do I want it to play out? Do I want to warm myself with the fire and say, no, I'm not familiar with that Jesus. But let me tell you about the Jesus I do know.

But I'm not familiar with that Jesus. I'm not familiar with the Jesus that a society was a darkened moment in history when society was not in the mood for him any longer. They wanted him out of their culture.

We're living in a very real and similar moment in this nation when there's a strong push to eradicate the name of Jesus from everything in this culture. They're not in the mood for him and they're not in the mood for his followers. And so we have a choice.

Do we live in the past? Do we hold to the Jesus that perhaps we knew in our infancy in those first years of walking with him? Or do we embrace the Jesus that this culture is rejecting and walk with him outside of the city being willing to bear his shame and to suffer his rejection? We won't be able to do it if our focus is not on people. It's about fighting for the lost. It's about fighting for people who fight against their own salvation.

It's about standing as lights in the dark in time for the sake of even people who hate us that one day will be drowning and looking for a safe harbor. That's what it's all about. If it's about me, I'm going to run.

I'm not going into the garden. I'm going to, I'm going to pray that prayer. Not my, not thy will, Lord, but mine will be my prayer.

That will be mine. I'll run. I will flee.

But if it's about other people, God will give me the courage that I need. God himself, I can come to that throne boldly, the scripture says. I can come there because I have a savior who understands my struggle because he went into a garden and he himself, though knowing the purpose of his life, said, father, if it'd be possible, take this from me.

He not only went in once, he went in three times and prayed the same prayer. And that's in measure in great measure. Why I believe that he's touched with the feelings of our weaknesses.

He understands why we struggle and how we struggle, but by the power of God's Holy Spirit and by his willingness to do the will of his father, he walked through that valley of the shadow of death. He did it victoriously for the joy that was set before him. The apostle Paul became a partaker of this joy in yielding his life for the sake of others.

God gave him joy in the storm in Acts chapter 27, as the ship is going down, Paul standing on the deck of that ship with a loaf of bread in his hand, giving thanks to God for the privilege of his life being poured out as a testimony of the reality of who God is and the wonderfulness of God, giving him the 276 people that sailed with him on that ship, that they might have an opportunity to receive Christ as savior. Paul had vision in darkness, even though his freedom was taken away momentarily and eventually at the end of his life, he ended up in prison, but he and Silas at the midnight hour, were able to sing. They had vision in the darkness and you and I are going to need vision in the darkness.

My friend, this is a dark hour we're living in. Everything can change in a moment of time. Now, God gave Paul clarity and confusion.

That's why he could say, I'm convinced all things work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to his purpose. Yielding to the will of God, took Jesus to a cross, took Paul to a prison, yet both of them finished their journey in victory. Both of them found a sure path through the storm.

Father, be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. We do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are yet without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. You see, we don't have to play games. We can come boldly.

I said, God, I don't have it in me to do this. I'm a coward. I can't even handle it if I'm snickered at at work.

I know what the truth is. I know what the scripture says, but I can't do it. But the writer of Hebrews says, come boldly to the throne of grace.

Come walking into that throne and openly, openly tell him the struggles in your heart. And that's what we're going to be doing this week. God, I want to be a witness at work, but I can't.

I'm afraid. I'm trying to preserve myself. I'm scared that people are going to reject me.

I want, oh God, to do your will. But deep inside, I found a comfortable place and I don't want anything to change. I lived my life to get out of hardship, but now I've found this comfortable place and I don't want to leave there.

And I have a deep inner sense that if I, if I pray that prayer, if I ask you what you would have me to do, you're going to take me to a place that I really don't want to go. And so it's safer for me just not to pray it. Safer for me just to come to church.

It's safer for me to warm myself by the fire, but I just, so I can keep you within visual distance, but I really don't have to stand beside you. And I really don't have to suffer the rejection that you're suffering and endure the societal beating that's about to come upon you. No, I can, I can just stay at a distance and warm myself every Sunday morning and I can even come Tuesday night and warm myself by the fire, but I don't have to go where you are.

Oh, the, it's the strength of the human will. And I do thank God that the scripture reveals to us the human side of Jesus, that he struggled as well. I always find it so humorous that his first public miracle, he was pushed, he was a son of God and he was pushed into doing his first public miracle by his mother.

Don't you love that about him? There's a humanness there. We, we always want, and we always want to see Jesus as if he walked through with some kind of a, an aura around him where he never struggled. No, he was fully human.

Keep that in mind as well. So he experienced our struggles, but it was the power of God that of course he was, that gave him the ability to overcome this frailty of humanity. But he understands your struggle.

He understands my struggling. He knows why we're afraid to pray that prayer. He knows why that we're going into a time of prayer and fasting.

This is a dark hour. The society is rejecting Christ. Evil's becoming good.

Good's becoming evil. It seems like society is being turned upside down. Well, that's what it must have seemed like for the people of that time.

I mean, such an incredulous thing to have had these miracles for this long happening in their society. And then suddenly there's this turning and suddenly people are yelling, crucify him, crucify him. I can see how those that loved him would have been so perplexed by this saying, are you insane? This is everything we've ever prayed for.

This is all we've ever longed for. This is our promise of provision and strength and hope for the future. And you're calling, calling for his crucifixion.

Let us come boldly. And what are the things that cross the strength of our own will? Number one is just to be willing to say, what would you have me to do? That's a fearful prayer. If you really don't want the answer, what would you have? Because most everybody here, you, you have a plan.

Most everybody has a plan and the plan's always centered around self-preservation. And now you remember when Paul had his moment of meeting God face to face, the first thing he said after that divine moment is, what would you have me to do? What do you want me to do? I prayed that prayer when I was a young Christian. God, what do you want my life to be? You know, I'm so thankful he didn't show me the whole thing.

I wouldn't be able to handle it. You know, there's been mountaintops, but there's been deep valleys. There's been lovely fellowship and deep betrayal.

There's been good times. There's been hard times. There's been times when I felt like I'm breathing in the breath of God.

And there's other times where I felt like I couldn't breathe anymore. It's not always been easy, but it was a prayer that I prayed, Lord, what would you have me to do? What do you want my life to be? Where do you want to take me? What, how do you want to glorify your name through my life? And now after this long, long journey, all these years have been 37 years or so now, maybe longer. And I've come to this point now in life.

And I find myself praying that same prayer again. What would you have me to do? It's so easy to settle in when you get to the pinnacle of ministry as it is, you get a public profile. You arrive at a place that everybody looks and says, wow, success, success.

But success is not in the things that we do. Success is in the fact that we keep following him right to the end. What would you have me to do? I mean, when you think of it in the natural, Paul has a ministry.

People are being healed by handkerchiefs. He's working his tent, making craftsmanship, and he's sending pieces of cloth that are left over and people are touching them and getting healed. He's got a phenomenal ministry going, but God calls him to testify before Caesar, an insane ruler who thinks he's God.

And Paul sends him there to testify. That's the call on his life. If he didn't have the courage to pray it, he wouldn't have undertaken the journey.

He wouldn't have had the joy on a sinking ship. He wouldn't have been able to endure the beatings and the rejection. If he had not prayed, Lord, what would you have me to do? What do you want my life to be? Not my will, but thine, not my plan, but yours, not my future, but the one you have outlined for me.

You'd be amazed at what could happen in this very sanctuary. If, if, if even 50 people prayed that person's surely the missionaries that would be born, the preachers that would rise up the voices that would go into government. I'm not kidding you.

God would take you and take you on a journey that you have no idea where it would lead to, but it starts with the prayer. What would you have me to do or just to let go? We need the strength to let go of our own vision of happiness and embrace the will of God for our lives. I had a vision of happiness.

I was going to reach my late fifties. I get invitations all over the world to preach in conferences. I was going to spend more time with my family.

I was going to be there for my grandkids at all their high school and grade school recitals and their sports games and do some of the things that I neglected to do when I was young because I was too driven. And then suddenly I had it all planned and it all mapped out. I, I, the longer you think about it, the more that you paint this picture.

It's amazing how idyllic and wonderful your life is going to be. And of course, I'm still serving God until this hand came out of the clouds one day and said, give me the final tithe of your life. Give me your plan.

Give me your future. Give me what you think your life should be. We all get to the point in life where we think, Hey, I've worked hard all my life.

I personally have worked since I'm 13 years old. I've worked hard for many, many years. And you get to the point of thinking, don't I get to smell the roses for a little while and God says, eventually I would not hear.

Give me your future. I didn't know it would involve being separated from my wife as she leads summit international school of ministry. And we're not separated.

We're just apart from each other quite a bit. Almost 50% of the time. I didn't know that.

That wasn't my plan for the future. That wasn't how I saw my life panning out. And now I feel that hand coming down deeper and saying, I want all of it.

I want your brush. And I want your canvas. I want all of it.

Let go of your own vision of happiness and what you think your life should be. Let me guide you now. Or maybe we need to come boldly to the throne of grace to ask for the strength to do what we already know.

He has told us it's that thought that won't go away. When you pray, it keeps coming back. It may start with just forgiving.

Somebody may start with just a first step into the unknown, but you already know, because I don't know the plan for your life. And no one can tell you because nobody but God and you know what that plan is. Don't be running to some meeting looking for some prophet to tell you because they don't know.

You know, and God knows. And sometimes it can be so preposterous. It's just so out of the realm of what you think your life should be, that it borders on ridiculous if God's not in it.

I remember one time I was out for dinner with my wife in Canada, and I was still a police officer, and I was just delivered from fear. And she was off somewhere, and I was standing in the lobby, and I was just looking out the window, and a plane went overhead. And the Lord spoke to my heart and said, much of your life is going to be traveling on airplanes telling people what I've done for you.

I remember saying, well, if that's going to happen, it's sure going to be you. It's not going to be me. I'd never preached a sermon my whole life.

No ability to stand before people. No ability to testify. But the key is the key is there was a willingness in my heart to say, if that's you, God, I'll go.

If it is you, I'll go. And if it's not, I'm not going to try to make it happen. It's pointless.

I can't do this. But if it is you, I'll go. And I would venture a guess that everybody here, you've had a whisper of God into your heart.

He's already spoken to you. It's not a secret to you. You already know.

And in this time of prayer and fasting for this next three days, let's go boldly. That's the cry of my heart. Let's go boldly to the throne of grace.

Let's walk into the throne of grace. Let's go there. Let's just speak honestly to God.

Let's just, let's just ask him, what would you have me to do? Or if we know, say, God, I know, but I'm so full of fear. I'm so reluctant to let go of what I think my life should be. My image, my canvas I've painted of my life.

I'm so reluctant to let it go. I've found a comfortable place and I don't want to, I don't want to let it go. And others are going to say, I live my life to feel accepted.

And you're asking me to walk into willful rejection. You're asking me to be a one who partakes of your sufferings and, and suffers the rejection of a society turning away from you. I don't know if I want to do that.

And you can be honest with God. He himself was honest with his father. That's my point this morning.

He went in three times. It's not like he didn't have the answer the first time or the second time, but he understands our struggles. He went in three times and said, if it's possible, take this from me.

If it can be done another way, Oh God, do it another way. But nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. That was the key, that resolve in the heart that says, I want my life to play out a certain way.

And I feel there must be a way it can play out. But if it can't, let me not be driven by my own will. Let it be your will that guides me.

Oh God help me in this. We're being called of the Lord to come boldly. There's never going to be an awakening in this country.

If somebody doesn't come boldly to the throne of grace, religion as we have known it is not going to do it. Religion as it has been in America over the last 30 years as leading this country into the spiritual and moral poverty it's in now, there has to be an awakening in the house of God. It must start with the people of God.

And I don't know how many churches God is speaking to, but I know he's speaking to this one. I know he's calling us into something. He's speaking to my heart first.

And I wish I could say it's easy. I wish I could say I just hop, skip and jump to do the will of God. It's never been easy for me.

It's always been a fight. I fought against God for six months to even come into the ministry in the first place. Even when I knew what he was speaking, I would say no, I'm not doing that.

But eventually he's merciful. He's kind. The call of God doesn't go away.

The gifts and callings are without repentance. He doesn't go away. He doesn't forget.

He says, okay, talk to you again in six months. See how you feel then. Here's my altar call.

What would you have me to do? And folks, he doesn't show us the end. We wouldn't be able to handle it. It starts with just the first step.

What would you have me to do? He'll whisper something. Do this. And you just walk in obedience.

And then another door opens. Then another one. Then another one.

And you don't have to push them. You don't have to search for them. You don't have to kick them open.

They open. And suddenly they're right before you. And you just walk through.

And you just keep walking through. And you just keep walking through. What would you have me to do? It's not going to be you're sitting at your office.

You're sitting at a desk and he's not going to say I want you to go to Africa and preach to 500,000 people. It's not going to happen that way. It doesn't go from zero to a hundred.

It goes from zero to one. First step. What would you have me to do? And you just start obeying that.

Then pray it again the next day. What would you have me to do? What would you have me to do? Not my will, but thine. Not me trying to cram you into my program, but you guiding my steps all the rest of my life.

If that's the cry of your heart today, to be willing to say what would you have me to do? Give me the grace to not be afraid of what that might mean. You won't fail me. You won't forsake me, God.

Give me the strength to do what I know you've already spoken because it's against my will. But nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. Now, Father, I thank you, Lord, for this moment in this church.

I thank you for these men and women that you've gathered, the young people you've gathered here in New York City at this time. I know in my heart we would love an awakening in our generation, but there never can be one without the cooperation of your people. It must begin in the house of God.

Give us the grace. Give us the strength. Peter found it.

The rest of the disciples found it. Help us to find it. Give us the joy of living for others.

Help us to put away all the things that hinder us and to be able to say not my will, but thine be done. In Jesus name. We're going to stand in just a moment and here in the main sanctuary, the annex at North Jersey, and those that are with us from home this morning.

So, Lord, put on your heart just to pray that prayer with us, with me, with us. Not my will, but thine be done. God, show me what to do.

Show me the pathway of my life. If that's the cry of your heart as we stand, just come, please. Join me at the front of this auditorium and we'll pray together and we're going to believe God.

We're going to worship for a few moments, then we'll pray together. Let's all stand. Balcony, go to either exit.

In the main sanctuary, just slip out of where you are. Just come. Please just come.

Just come. Come with your struggles. Come with your trials.

Come with your fear. Come with your questions. But just come and let's honestly stand before God today.

Father, we know that it's only by your presence that we can do the things that you've called us to do. It's only by your power. It's only by your life being lived within us.

And so, knowing that we're already covered of our sin, we simply come to you, Lord, and say, we are selfish. We're self-focused. We're fearful.

We don't know how in ourselves to do these things, Lord. We live in a society that just simply lives for itself. It's in the air around us.

We need your power to break free of it. We need your power to be able to be given for the purpose of your work on the earth, Lord. We need your power.

We can't do it. It's hopeless. No amount of study can do this.

It doesn't matter how many diplomas we have. We can't do this. It has to be you.

It has to be your power. Jesus, you understand this. And you told us to come boldly.

So I come boldly. I'm not ashamed. I can't do this without your power.

I'll never make it to the end of what you want from my life without you doing it through me. And so, Lord, we come in our emptiness. We come to your throne in our bankruptcy.

We come, Lord, in our nothingness. And we ask you to be everything to us. We ask you to be our life and our breath.

We ask you for the authority, God, that you will plant within us to make a difference in our generation. We ask you for the heart to care. We ask you, God, for the words to speak.

We ask you for the hands to touch. We ask you, Lord, God, for the feet that will bring your gospel to those who need it the most. We ask you for the absence of fear that will be cast away from us by the presence of your love for fallen people.

God, we ask you for all of these things, Lord. And we know you won't turn us aside. You won't say no to us.

And so we're not afraid to come to you honestly. We're not afraid to come to you and just tell you the way it is because you already know anyway. Father, we thank you, Lord.

And you'll give us the courage to say, what would you have me to do? You give us the courage to find your plan for each of our lives. And you'll give us the power that the glory could be of you and not of man. For we will all know that only God could have done this.

I ask you, Father, to have mercy on this city. Have mercy, Lord. Raise your people up.

God, give us a testimony that can't be denied. With 120 people on day one of the Spirit-filled church, you turned 3,000 people to you, day one. How much more, Lord, should that not be happening in our generation? With all our knowledge and all our study and all the history we know.

But they went to you in an upper room. And they went honestly. And they went in as failures.

And they came out with the power of God. And so, Lord, we ask you for nothing less than the mightiest baptism of the Holy Spirit we've ever known. Not for our sakes, but for their sakes.

For the sake of the people outside the doors of this church and in our communities, our neighborhoods. For the sake of those that sit across the table in our homes. We ask for the mightiest baptism we've ever known.

Lead us to your throne as we pray this week. Oh, God, lead us there. And give us the grace, give us the strength to say yes.

We thank you for it in Jesus' name.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/26/SID26170.mp3>

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/Pz7WDnrWksk.mp4>

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