

All is Calm, All is Bright... Really

by Carter Conlon

This sermon emphasizes the call for individuals to surrender to God's plan and purpose for their lives, highlighting the need to move beyond personal limitations and excuses to embrace the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. It draws parallels between the weakness of humanity and the strength of God, encouraging listeners to step out in faith and allow God to use them as builders in a broken world, bringing healing, freedom, and restoration to many generations.

Scripture: Isaiah 60:1, Isaiah 61:1, Matthew 9:37, 1 Corinthians 1:26, Psalms 29:3

Topics: "Surrender to God's Plan", "Empowerment of the Holy Spirit"

Description

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Transcript

Prophet Isaiah took him to chapter 60 for his light to begin to shine. All the way through the book of the prophet there's all there's a build of truth but when you get to Isaiah chapter 60 verse 1 he starts with these words, arise shine for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. There's just something about that number 60 isn't there? Does anybody know anybody here that's turning 60 this week? I know somebody that's turning 60 this week and you know him too.

Pastor Tim would you come because your light's about to shine. Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday Pastor Tim, happy birthday to you. That's all 60.

That's how many years you've been alive. We had to have a fire extinguisher because it's dangerous when you get to be 60 years of age. You can burn the house down with your, with your, yeah that's it.

Every one of those is 12 months in your life. Yeah, no, no, that's a lot. The second part of the prophecy of Isaiah says darkness will cover the earth and a deep darkness the people.

That's what we're experiencing now in our generation but the Lord will arise over you and his glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles will come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising and we, we see online all of the people coming in from all over the world every week now to hear the word that God's

given you. This church was prophesied 35 years ago that it would be a lighthouse in a very, very dark day and the darker it gets the farther the beam would go and we knew this, Pastor David knew this before there was even an internet.

He foresaw it. He said something is going to come from this pulpit that will go around the world and God has anointed you for this time and we thank God for you Pastor Tim with all of our heart. We thank God for the man that you are and we're committed to pray for you.

Stretch your hands out please. Elders if you'd gather, stretch your hands out to your pastor please. Father, God, we thank you that you have taken 60 years to prepare this man for this day, this season Lord that's just ahead of him.

God, thank you that you have given him a voice, you've given him wisdom, you have empowered and strengthened him. Now God, we commission you and ourselves to stand in prayer with him and for him. Keep him, oh God, keep him in the days ahead.

Lord, give him even greater resolve and power to reach a billion souls in our generation. Why should that seem hard for the Lord? God Almighty, thank you for the great privilege of having a pastor in this pulpit with such a vision. We stand with him, we stand for him and God, we thank you for him with all of our heart.

May this be the happiest birthday ever in his life. In Jesus name, amen. Let's see what you got.

Oh, oh, oh, almost, oh. I'm, I'm afraid the choir all died of smoke inhalation back there, they're all gone. God bless you pastor, God bless you others, thank you so much.

Praise God, happy birthday Pastor Tim. Thank you, you may be seated. I'm going to bring you a message today that is prophetic.

Now, let me define that before I begin. A prophetic message is when you and I come into agreement with something God has clearly revealed in his word he's going to do through us. Do you remember Jesus Christ talked about the Holy Spirit and he said, when he has come, when the comforter has come, who is the spirit of truth, he will take what is mine and he will show it to you and he will show you things to come.

That's, that's part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, is to show us things that God intends to do in and through each one of our lives. Now, very, very many people in this and other generations, they never really come to fully understand the purpose of their lives. You have a divine calling on your life.

I do, you do, every one of us. There's no, there's no exceptions in this place. I'll show you that in the scripture.

We all have a divine calling. That calling involves allowing God to enable us to do what we can't do in our own strength, to say what we can't say in our own wisdom. It's a divine enablement of the spirit of God to do something that affects the lives of other people around us and ultimately brings glory to the name of God through his son Jesus Christ.

Because realistically, at the end of the journey, we can only point heavenward and say, I could never have done this. It's the spirit of God in me. As Paul said, it's Christ in you that's the hope of glory.

It's the Christ in you that's the hope of you and I becoming everything that God has intended us to be. You'll be given a choice at the end of this message today. You know, the interesting thing is, I was talking to Pastor Tim between services, that of all that God created in the universe, there's only one thing he created that has the capability to say no to him, and that's you and me.

It's amazing. The geese just get up and go south. They don't say, why? Has anybody considered this? I mean, why don't we stay here? Why don't we build a fire? I mean, they don't reason it.

The sun comes up every morning. It goes down every evening. All of the universe moves in this manner that's been prescribed by the hand of God.

Everything around us, the leaves turn their color at their appointed seasons and such like, but there's only one thing in creation that can say no. Ironically, it's that which God loves the most. It's that which the Bible says is the center of His affection, which would be you, which would be me, but He had to redeem us because He knew creating us with the capability of saying no that we would have to be redeemed.

But once we are redeemed, once we have come to the cross of Jesus Christ and God's Holy Spirit now, we're in right relationship with God, God's Holy Spirit now has come upon us, it should be as natural as breathing to say yes, Lord, not my will but Thine. What is it that you would have for my life? God, would you deliver me out of this place of saying no? Because if you don't get delivered from that place, you will wind up like the children of Israel. Your whole testimony will be, I was in bondage, and He set me free.

I was captive, and He opened the prison doors. And that's a great...thank God for that. But you see the reality is they came out of a place of captivity, but they wouldn't go into what they were called to be in the earth, so they died in the wilderness.

And so many of God's people die, live and die in a place that He never intended for us to die in. We're a supernatural people. We ought to be...we ought to be time and again the people coming out of the upper room, empowered by the Spirit of God, speaking about as they were with an ability given by God about things that God had done, is doing, and is going to do.

That's the reality of what they were doing, and it was that testimony that caused the religion of the day to stop in its tracks and ultimately bend its knee to God. There has to be a people who come back into that reality again and I'm going to prophesy to you that there will be in our generation a people coming back into that reality. Bottom line is we're going to see a spiritual awakening in our time.

I fully expect to see it in my lifetime. In that context, I want to speak to you about the first Christmas that we sing about, a message entitled, All is Calm, All is Bright. Really? So Father, I thank you, God, for the anointing of your Holy Spirit.

God, I see this. I see it, Lord, and would you help me to convey it? And would you help those that are new to you, especially to receive it, God? Would you help those who have lived in a place of saying no to put that away, and perhaps for the first time in a major way to say yes to what you desire to do in their lives? Even in the worship today, Lord, we sense this incredible drawing of the Holy Spirit. We felt the cry coming to the surface, God, but don't let it be subdued now in any one of our hearts.

Oh, God, we recognize that church as usual is not going to win the day we're now living in. It has to be you empowering a people for your divine purpose, God, in the earth. Only you can do this now, and it's amazing that you invite us to be part of it, God.

We know our frailties. We know our weaknesses. We know our struggles, but yet you invite us.

Help me, Holy Spirit. Help me, Lord, to convey this to every heart that's here today, to those listening online, and to those who will hear this in the future. God Almighty, God Almighty, in Jesus' name.

Amen. All is calm. All is bright.

Really. Luke chapter 2, verse 1, It came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. There was absolutely nothing calm about this moment in history.

This particular leader got it in his heart to count all the people in the world of his dominion, which was the whole world, particularly as he saw it at that time, to be registered. And in the original King James, it basically says, for the purposes of taxation. Let's count the people.

Let's control the people. Let's see what we can get out of the people. You see, Rome was a dominant worldview.

They considered their way of thinking and living to be superior to anything and everything that was on the face of the earth. And their whole sense was to conquer by might. What could not be conquered by argument had to be conquered by force.

It's amazing how history repeats itself, isn't it? There's nothing calm. There's nothing in this moment, and the future certainly looked anything but bright. All is not calm, and all is not bright.

The people are being herded like cattle back to the city of their birth. There's no regard to loss of income. There's no regard to inconvenience.

For example, Mary is obviously in her ninth month of pregnancy and is about to deliver a child, but that didn't make any difference to the powers that be of that day. You just went where you were told, so we can count you, so we can ultimately challenge you, we can ultimately control you. And so they're heading to these places, and the future must have looked so bleak.

I can just imagine the people on that journey saying, were we not called to be a people who were supposed to bring praise to God in the earth? What happened to us? What happened to our purpose? We were founded on the principles of the presence and the rules and the laws of God, the Word of God, and our purpose was to bring glory to Him in the earth. And for a season, I suppose, we did that, but what happened to us? Scripture tells us, of course, clearly that they dealt casually with the things of God. They dealt casually with this wonderful invitation into a relationship with the living God, and may I say it, may you and I never deal casually with this relationship.

May we never let the calling of God, the presence of God fall through our fingers. May it never become just a Sunday morning or Sunday afternoon thing, or a Tuesday night, whatever it is for you or for me. Oh God, may I be aware of Your presence in my life every day.

Help me to move in unison with the Spirit of God, to cooperate with Your presence inside of my life. I often pray this prayer. I say, God, You know what the people around me are thinking.

You heard the cry last night. You were there. You were there in that room where somebody sighed, somebody cried.

God, help me to... You live inside of me, so help me to walk in unison with You now. Give me the ability to step outside of my own trepidation, my own fear of rejection or looking like an idiot, and God, help me to reach out and just speak to that person, or reach out and say, can I pray for you? Worst case scenario, they say no. Nothing is lost in it.

You can still pray for them, even if they say no, you can still pray. The place which once held such promise had been invaded now by a godless culture. This culture's purpose, the Roman culture, was to intimidate, to corral, and to control the people.

Oh, God, help us again in our generation, where we see history repeating itself one more time. The people of God who are to be a voice for God in the earth, whose mouths were to be speaking truth, who were to be leaders in the way of right living and right relationship with God and with one another, were now relegated to just being whispering among themselves. And I think in our time of the numbers of people, all you can do is whisper now in the workplace, in the lunchroom, or whisper on the subway, or whisper on the way home.

Everybody has to be careful what they say now lest they be canceled or ridiculed or even attacked in this generation we're now living in. Whispering just because of their own safety, lest the powers that be should think that they're not loyal to this new world order that was being imposed on the people. You know, the scripture tells us in Isaiah chapter, I think it's 29, because they had not dealt honorably with God, as I can honestly say we have not, in this nation, dealt honorably with God.

We've had 400 years of freedom, and what did we do with it? We took our freedom when we drove the name of Christ out of our schools. We stopped teaching our children to pray. We ridiculed and mocked the name of God.

We started trampling into the dust everything that is holy in the Word of God. We took 400 years of freedom, 400 years of people who came here to escape tyranny. Oh yes, our history has been far from perfect, I know that.

But as a nation, America could always be reasoned with, and at least brought more closely in line to what true biblical Christianity should look like. But the people of Isaiah's time dealt dishonorably against this incredible calling of God that was on their lives, and here's what the Lord said to even Jerusalem. In Isaiah 29, verse 4, He said, You shall be brought down, you shall speak out of the ground, your speech shall be low and out of the dust, your voice shall be like a medium's out of the ground, and your speech shall whisper out of the dust.

And I can just imagine all these people whispering to one another when they should have been free to sing the praises of God. The gospel as they knew it, per se, should have been preached publicly and declared, but now all they can do is whisper and hope, in a sense, for a better day. All is not calm, and all is not bright in their day.

They're being counted to be controlled, and it's a picture of another day that's soon to come where the enemies of God will again attempt to dominate the whole world. You see, it's always been the design of darkness to corral, to marginalize, to suppress, to destroy the influence of God in the earth. This is a spiritual war, folks.

It always has been a spiritual war. We're not fighting against flesh and blood. We're fighting against powers and principalities, spiritual wickedness in high places.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they're mighty in God, to the pulling down of strongholds, and casting down imaginations, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. There's an incredible power in the surrendered saint of God. There's an incredible power in the life of the man, the woman who lays hold of the garment of Christ one more time and begins to pray and says, I will not let you go until you bless my family.

I will not let you go until you change my life. I will not let you go until you make my life an influence in my community. I will not let you go, God, until you do something so profound and powerful in me and the others that I know who are called by your name that men and women and children will turn back to you again in droves.

I will not let you go. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they are mighty in God. Mighty in God.

Hallelujah. In Revelation, it talks about a final day before Christ's return, where he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on the right hand or on their foreheads, that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name. Yes, we will always have to fight this spiritual warfare, but as the people of God, I remind you, we are not on the losing side.

We are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ. He won the victory. He sits at the right hand of God.

Every name that is named, every power that ever will be named, every principality, both now, then, and to come, is under the dominion of Jesus Christ. He is the head. We are his body on the earth.

It's time that you and I started living as sons and daughters of God. It's time that we learn to take our rightful position in the kingdom of heaven. And God promises to take us and bring his name to praise and glory in the earth one more time.

And you say, Pastor, you have no idea who you're talking to. No, I'd say to you, you have no idea who's talking to you through the Scriptures. The problem is not with God.

The problem is with us, because we are the only ones who have the capability of saying no. And if I can challenge you today, don't say no to God any longer. Don't say no.

Don't say not me. Don't say send somebody else. I'm going to challenge you to be like Isaiah.

When the question goes out in heaven, who shall I send and who will go for us? And nobody speaks and everybody's quiet. Suddenly, there's a guy in the back says, I'll go. I'll go.

If nobody else will go, I'll go. I'm the only one at this altar that's needed to be redeemed. I'm the only one that feels unclean.

I'm the only one that's needed a call from the altar to touch my filthy lips. But oh God, I have seen your mercy. God, I know your power.

I know your grace. I've seen your glory. I'll go, Lord.

I'll go. If nobody else will go, I'll go. It must have seemed that everything they built was gone.

Their testimony was in a shambles. Their cities were in ruins. You look at the news today and you just see what's going on in a lot of our major cities.

The unrest, the incivility, the listlessness, the starvation of a young generation. Just as one of the prophets said, the young ones in the street literally crying out for bread and nobody will give it to them. Not knowing what's right anymore, not knowing what's wrong, not knowing if there's anything that really matters just other than just living for the moment.

But it was in this place of destruction. It was in this place of seeming hopelessness that the greatest plan of God ever known was revealed in this place. It wasn't in a place of strength.

It wasn't in a place when they had it all together. It wasn't in a place where the glory of God's coming down in the temple. It wasn't in a time when nobody could even stand in the temple if the glory of God was so powerful.

No, it was in a time when the nation seemed to be taken captive. It was a time when the people's voices were just a whisper. It was a time when the dominant godless culture seemed to be swallowing the testimony of God, marginalizing, ridiculing the people of God and what their former trust had been.

You can just hear the Roman soldiers as people are heading to their cities, the mockery on them. Where's your God now? This God you boasted about, this God you said was all-powerful, where is he now? In Luke chapter 2, the angel appeared to the shepherds and said, Do not be afraid. I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For there's born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you. You will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill towards men. It was a plan that involved not only redemption, but a plan that God had to restore his own people back to divine purpose again. Now will you believe it if I show you your future in the scriptures? I'm serious.

If I show you your future, will you believe it? That's the question. So you have the power to say no, but as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Every yes vote in the kingdom of God, every person.

I shared this morning, I was in church and I was 25 or so years, 26 years of age, and I heard a message about give your whole future to God and let your life be used for God's glory. I felt like the most disadvantaged person in that congregation. I remember when the altar call was given, it was so stunning because nobody moved.

And I thought, what's wrong with these people? They have big Bibles and nice clothes, at least their conversation seems to be better than mine. And I'm probably, I don't know what I was wearing, but most likely jeans, jean jacket, a two-day growth of beard. I'm on my day off and I've gone to church.

I don't remember what I was wearing, but I do remember my heart started to pound. We were standing there. I was in the back, center row, way in the back, right over there.

See you in the white coat, right near where you are right now. And I was there and my heart, and I remember thinking, oh God, your kingdom must be on fumes if you need me. I'm talking about the bucket is hitting the bottom of the well.

There's no water in this well. And I'm sitting, my heart is pounding. I think, God, I don't, I'm not qualified to do this.

You're talking about going forward, making a difference in other people's lives. Look, I can't even make a difference in my own life. I've got a really bad temper.

I'm not a good husband. I'm not a good father. I'm not a good employee.

I'm not good at anything. As a matter of fact, I don't like people. But the drawing was there.

So I got out of my seat and I came and I knelt right down on this side of the altar. And I remember my prayer to this day. I said, Jesus, I have nothing to give you.

The little boy in the story, at least he had some loaves and fishes. I don't even have that. I have nothing.

If you need a bad temper, I'm your man. You need a lousy father, that's me. You want a husband that doesn't know how to give of himself, and somebody whose heart is selfish, that's me.

I don't even like people. And I said, I remember saying, God, I have nothing. But if you can use nothing, you can have me.

You can have my life. Now, in Luke chapter 4, which is the chapter that we use about the ministry of Jesus, I'm going to show you now how you fit into the ministry of Jesus. It's way beyond what you've even thought about yourself.

Now, he comes into the temple. He's now this baby that's born in a manger. Thirty years later, rather, he walks into the temple.

It's his turn to read, so he steps up in the pulpit like I am today, opens the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, and reads the Scripture. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because, or for this reason, in other words, he's anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

In other words, God has sent me to show a resource that people who are poor in themselves are not aware that they have, or is available to them. He has sent me to bring healing to those whose hearts are so broken, so wounded, they don't think they'll ever recover. And, you know, at Christmas time, this is a great time to bring this to the fore, because many, many people here, Christmas time is a time of sorrow for you, because family was not there when you needed them.

And it just brings back a lot of memories. There's a brokenheartedness in many people's lives at this time of year. I came to set free those who were captive, those who the enemy succeeded in putting behind some kind of a prison door and telling them, you're never going to get out, you're never going to be free, you're never going to change.

Jesus said, no, the Spirit of God is upon me to break open those bars and to set free those who have been held captive by behaviors and experiences and such like, or addictions that they cannot get free from in their own strength. And the recovery of sight to the blind. In other words, I came, I've come to give a vision to those who can't see a way forward.

You don't see a purpose to their life. They don't understand why they were created. They have a vision, but it's very limited in most cases.

They don't see life the way I have prescribed their life to be. They don't understand why they were born. They don't see the plan that I have for them.

So I've come to give them sight. I've come to give them a revelation and to set at liberty those who are oppressed. In other words, those who are under this constant bombardment of darkness in their mind.

You're a loser. You'll never amount to anything. You're an addict, you'll always be an addict.

You're depressed, you'll always be depressed. You're always going to be marginalized. You're always going to be nothing.

No, he said, I came to set you free from those thoughts. I came to give you new thoughts. I came to give you a new mind, a new future, a new heart, a new spirit, a new reason to live, a new journey.

I'm going to do something so powerful in you that when you don't need the band to start playing to start shouting hallelujah in the house of God. Nobody, nobody, nobody has to hit the right note. Nobody has to get you stirred up.

You are going to walk in the house of God and you're going to be shouting before you even get in the door. You're going to be shouting on the street. You'll be shouting on the subway.

You'll be shouting on your way here. God is saying to you, I'm going to do something so profound. You're going to find a whole new level of worship.

You never, you never even knew this before. For many, it was singing. It's going to go beyond singing.

It's going to be worship now. There's going to be a shout in your heart because I'm going to take you where only I can and make you into what only can be done by the hand of God and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. In other words, to tell you and to tell the people you don't have to wait another month, another year, another decade.

Today is the day you can be free. Today is the day where this new journey of sight and healing and freedom can begin. Today, not tomorrow, not the next day, today.

And then he closed the book and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say, today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.

Now you'd think in that congregation they would have said, oh hallelujah, amen. But if you read a little farther and they took him to throw him off of a hill to kill him. That's what religion can do.

Because the voice of God comes to people who have settled into a certain level of religion, and the voice of God says, oh there's way more than you've settled for. You've settled for just ritual and repetition. But

I've come to give you life and come to give it to you more abundantly.

I've come to give you freedom. I've come to give you a purpose to live on the earth. But as I shared earlier, these are people they said no.

I mean they're waiting their whole life for the scripture to be fulfilled. They're waiting their whole life. This is the Messiah.

This is the this is the cornerstone of the Jewish religion. They've been waiting for years and years and years for this moment. And it comes and they want to throw it off of a cliff.

But we're like that aren't we? We get so entrenched in the self-view. We get so entrenched in in a certain way of living and thinking and doing things, even in the house of God. We come out of Egypt as it is, but we won't go in to what God has for us.

You know a lot of you here today you've come out of Egypt. If I were to say can I have a testimony for the Lord, and somebody will stand and say I used to be an addict and I'm free and I used to be blind and I see and I was poor and now the treasure of Christ is mine. You'd give testimonies, but I could say now where are you going with it? And for some all they can say is well to church, when the calling is way beyond that.

Way beyond that. I mean church is a good thing, and we need to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the scripture says, but the calling is way beyond that. Wow, I've come to give you life.

I've come to give it to you more abundantly. I've come to put a bounce in your step. I've come to put a light in your eyes.

I've come to put wisdom in your voice. I've come to put healing in your hands. I've come to give you spiritual authority over powers of darkness.

I've come to give you a sermon to preach that you don't even know anything about. I've come to give you a river of living water that I promised would flow from your inward parts. That's what I've come for.

But you see, I'm going to show you now your part. I showed you Jesus' part, but let me show you the scripture He was quoting in Isaiah 61 has you in it. Did you know that? You didn't know that, did you? Can anybody nod at me? Does anybody know it? Okay, Isaiah 61, He was quoting Isaiah 61.

Now let me read to you the whole Scripture. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because He has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of prison to those that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the Spirit of heaviness, that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He might be glorified.

In other words, He's saying this, I've come to set you free from your poverty, your brokenheartedness, your captivity, those things that bound you, everything that brought grief into your heart, and I've come to take you into a place where I'm going to beautify you. I'm going to beautify you because of my presence in your life. I'm going to give you joy for what used to cause you mourning.

I'm going to give you praise for what used to be heaviness. I'm going to make you solid. I'm going to plant you in a place where the forces of hell cannot blow you over.

You cannot be taken down. You will produce fruit even in the most difficult seasons of your life, that the Lord Himself might be glorified. God says, I'm going to do this.

I'm going to have a people. They're going to praise me. They're going to be fruit bearers.

They're going to be planted in a public place that people around can see, and they're going to bear fruit so that the name of the Lord God will be glorified through their lives. Now, here's where you come in, and verse four, they shall rebuild the old ruins. They shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.

This is where you come in. This is where you come in. Jesus said, I'm going to take you out of prison, out of heartache, out of captivity, out of poverty, out of blindness.

I'm going to give you a new heart, a new mind, a new spirit, and you are going to rebuild this fallen society all around you. It's you that's going to rebuild it, not some fancy preacher, not some new superstar, you, the addicted, the afflicted, the poor, the brokenhearted, the captives, those that were once bound, those that were blind. You will repair the desolations of many generations, not somebody else, you, not somebody else, but you and me who have the Spirit of God upon us and are now given the commission to go out and let God be God in us.

Let God take us to where He wants us to go and make us into what He wants us to be and give us what we need when we get where we're supposed to go, that He might be glorified, and people will see it, and the desolation of many generations shall be rebuilt again. That's called spiritual awakening. That's what it looks like.

This last day of awakening is going to be the whole church. Now, we've gone through the age of superstars in America where, you know, brother so-and-so, sister so-and-so rose up, and thank God, a lot of great good was done. But the last day awakening is going to be you.

Now, you can either stay where you are, or you can get up and fly south. That's as far as I'm concerned. You can either do what God programmed you to be, or you can say, no, no, not me.

Can't be me. This will be a sign to you. The angel said to the shepherds, this will be your sign.

You'll find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths lying in a manger. And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God and saying, glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men. I chuckle at this.

The joy just hits me. The more I study the Scriptures, the more the joy of the Lord is becoming my strength. The more I'm seeing the mercy of God, the greatness of God, the goodness of our God.

This will be a sign, a baby. Wah! I mean, come on, a baby? I mean, not like a Goliath, like an angelic Goliath, or like an angel army, a fifteen-foot bronze god. I mean, a baby? And that's my sign? You see, here's what God was saying.

This is the way I interpret it. I'm coming to the earth in the weakest form of humanity. I'm going to prove to you that I'm not ashamed of your struggles.

I'm not ashamed to indwell you when you're weak, and you can't change yourself, and you can't carry yourself, and you can't feed yourself, and you can't walk right, and you can't talk right. I'm going to be tempted or tested in all ways like as you are. And when it's all done, I'm going to invite you boldly to come to my throne of grace to find help in your time of need.

I can't get over the fact, Pastor Tim, that God, God, who created the universe, Almighty God, like when we sing in the worship today, and you see all those speckles on the screen, you know, it's symbolic of the universe, I assume, and you just, you're looking, you just, God, God, God who made all these things by the word of His mouth, God who's eternally existent forever and always, God who never, never was created, never will die, has the power to say let there be light, and light comes, has the power to breathe into a handful of dust, and it becomes a living soul created in His image. God comes to the earth as a baby, encapsulates Himself in probably six and a half pounds of human flesh. God, who holds the universe in the palm of His hands, has to be carried.

God, who gives life and breath to all things, has to be fed. God, who created the universe by the word of His mouth, has to be taught to speak. God, somebody has to hold His hand when He's young and when He's learning to walk.

God, who walks upon the oceans, who sits in the heavens and the earth as His footstool. God, God, it's His way of saying to you and I, I'll change you, I'll carry you, I'll feed you, I'll teach you to walk, I'll teach you to talk, I will be God to you, I will be God to you. This will not be you, this will be me.

I will carry you, I will bless you, I will change you, I will feed you, I will teach you what, how to walk, how to get where you're going, and I'll give you what to say when you get there. Hallelujah. You know, the reason I'm laughing is because I've walked this walk with God.

It's just been amazing. It's been amazing to let God be God inside of each one of our lives. And He wrapped Himself in swaddling clothes, which are strips of discarded rags, and you realize that we are the swaddling clothes of God in this generation.

We are the rags that God wrapped Himself in. Come on now. He indwells this physical body.

If this isn't rags, I don't know what is. And He wrapped Himself in the rags of my failure, the rags of my thinking, the rags of just my, I'm just a rag, and He wrapped Himself in me. This shall be a sign.

No wonder, suddenly there was with the angel—that means the pastor, by the way, as well—a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and goodwill towards men. In other words, this is all the initiative of God. This is not based on human effort or human emotion.

This is God doing this, and God alone is going to get the glory. Psalm 29 talks about the voice of God, the power of His voice, how He moves the obstacles, and how He strips bare everything that would try to stop us from moving to this place that God has for us. His voice dispels confusion.

His voice takes us through the flames of fire. His voice walks with us through the flood. And then it goes on near the end of the psalm, and it says, Then everyone in His temple says, Glory, glory, glory to God.

When we get to the end of the journey, folks, you just lift your hands and you just say, Glory to God, glory to God. Only God could have done this. Only, only God.

It's not by—I'm not here by human effort. I'm not here by human might. I'm not here by human wisdom.

Oh, glory to God. I was poor. I was bound.

I was captive. I was heartbroken. I was blind, and Jesus came to me and saved me, empowered me with the Holy Spirit, and called me to let Him glorify His own name through my life.

So this Christmas, I can honestly tell you inside of my life, all is calm. All is bright. The life I live is not dependent on what's going on around me anymore in this world.

The life I lived is dependent on the voice of God, the plan of God, the purpose of God. I—it's just amazing how, as you get older, you see Him more. I can't explain it.

A friend of mine once said, you know, you finally get it right and you die, and he was right. He died shortly after. I finally figured this thing out.

It's just all love, he said. It's just all love. This was after years of theological stuff and books and everything.

It's all love. He says, I finally got it right. You know, and he died shortly after, but he got it right before he died, at least.

So the question is now, what do we do with what we know? You know, do we say, God, I'm in, or do we just say no? Not now, maybe some other time. You see, the call of Christ in this generation is an all-in call for His people. It's a call to the wounded, the marginalized, the abused, the broken, the nobodies, and the nothings.

I'm—you know, I'm not laughing at anything or anybody today. I've just got such joy in my heart today because I see it more. Here's—let me close with this.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 1, beginning of verse 26, Paul says, you see your calling, brethren. Do you see your calling? Not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, which means there are some, a few, but not many. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise.

Somebody here is saying right now, well, wow, I'm in the Bible. God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame things which are mighty. In other words, things that stand in their own might and their own wisdom.

God has chosen those who know they're not mighty nor wise in themselves to be given a might and to be given a wisdom that will bring His name to glory. And base things of the world and things which are despised, God has chosen. In other words, God says, I'm choosing people who wouldn't choose themselves.

I mean, if I were God and I needed a pastor, I wouldn't have chosen me. I'll tell you that straight out. I wouldn't have.

But God did. And things which are nothing, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. So, the calling of God and those that He has chosen, the scale is this.

It starts at foolish and goes to nothing. That's most of you here today. You're in that, you're in there somewhere.

Foolish to nothing. So, we're left without excuse because these are the people that God has chosen, that no flesh should glory in His presence. I just so thank God for His mercy.

But this last day's spiritual awakening is going to be led by a people who are awakened again to this truth and awakened to the reality that Christianity is not a spectator sport. We don't go to a game to sit in the stands and cheer somebody else on. Christianity, we get in the game.

Everybody gets in the game. Everybody has a position to play. Everybody, everybody, everybody, everybody, everybody.

It was 44 years ago, I guess now. I get out of my seat and I came to an altar and I just said, God, here am I. I've been all over the most of the world, I guess at this point. I've preached to crowds in the hundreds of thousands.

I've lived to see many, many people come to Christ and the guy who had no ability to speak and no care, nothing in my heart even for people. I had so much personal failure going on that I, in my own sight, I didn't qualify to do anything. But yet I got up and I said, God, I'll go.

Just think of what could happen today if you do the same. Don't look in the mirror. What you need is not there.

Don't go looking in your drawer for some resume to stick on your wall. It's not there either. It comes with upraised hands.

It comes with saying, here am I, send me. That's where it all begins. I'm bruised.

I'm broken. I'm poor. I'm blind.

God, I'm nothing. And the Lord looks down and says, oh, you're way more than that to me. You're my beloved bride.

You're my voice on the earth. You're the tenderness of my hands to those who need a touch from God. You're the one with the authority to go in and to take down those strongholds that are oppressing people's minds.

You're the ones I want to send into neighborhoods that look like they have no hope and to send into places that look like they can't be rebuilt. God, help us to recognize this moment we're living in now. This could be one of the greatest moments in the history that you and I will ever know in our lifetime.

And it all starts somewhere with somebody that says, here am I, send me. I'll go, God. You know, it was after Isaiah said that, that he wrote the words that we read today, that Jesus quoted in the scriptures.

Amazing what was given to him. It'd be amazing, too, what will be given to you if you make the choice. So I want to give as many as can hear God's voice speaking to you today, I want to give you the same opportunity I had 40 years ago.

I'm sure Pastor Tim has had the same, Pastor Teresa, Pastor Patrick and others have had the same opportunity. I want to give you the chance to let God use your life for his glory. I'm going to invite you just to get up and move towards the one who created you and wants to use your life.

We're going to pray together. And this morning we had a tarrying time at the altar. It was amazing.

And Pastor Tim said this morning, this is where the callings of God happen in moments like this, where you just, you just, you come in your emptiness. You just recognize, well, Lord, I'm not destined to stay here. I'm destined to be a builder.

So God put in my hands, whatever it is I'm going to need to do what you called me to do. If that's the cry of your heart today, we're going to stand. I'm going to ask you to come, just, just come.

And we're going to pray together in just a moment. Just make your way out of your seat in the balcony, go to either exit, the main sanctuary, just, just slip out and come on down. Join the Isaiahs of every generation that have come forward and said, here my Lord send me in my school, my family, my neighborhood, wherever it is, my workplace.

God, I want to be a builder. I want to be a builder in my generation. And you will, the Lord will do that in your life.

Come on. Don't sit in the valley of decision any longer. Hallelujah.

Just keep moving. Just keep coming in. Give room for people to come.

This will be the best Christmas of your whole life. I guarantee you that. There'll never, for some here, there'll never be a Christmas like this again in your life.

You're going to change. You're going to change into the very person that God destined you to be. So father, I pray God for those who are responding in heart today.

What a wonderful life this is. What a glorious thing to know that the God of the universe is willing to indwell us and take us and make us into builders in this seemingly destroyed generation that we live in. God help us, Lord, to go out, put the tools in our hands that we need.

Everyone here at this altar to become an evangelist, everyone to be given the empowerment of the Spirit of Almighty God. Father, thank you. Lift your hands, please, to the Lord, if you will, in surrender.

Help us, Lord, to put away our self-view. Help us to put away our excuses and our reasons why you can't use us. Help us, God, to embrace everything you have for each of our lives.

God, use us for your glory. I ask for a touch of the Holy Spirit. Oh, Holy Spirit, come.

Holy Spirit, come. Invade every area of these precious brothers and sisters' lives, their hearts, their minds, their eyes, the things that you promised that you would do. Healing, freedom, sight, and understanding of this incredible resource of God.

Jesus Christ, give us a voice again in our generation, Lord. Take away our whispering and give us back a shout. Give us back a shout of glory, God, everywhere we go.

We ask you, Lord, that people in this generation would bend their knee everywhere and acknowledge there is a God. We ask you to do something so powerful, Lord, that nobody can deny it, nobody can ignore it, nobody can mock it. It would be you, Lord, and all you and only you.

Oh, Jesus Christ, thank you, God, for the giftings of the Holy Spirit being given this afternoon. Thank you, Lord, for the callings of God. Thank you, Lord, for those who are going to become so much more than they ever dreamt they could be.

Thank you, Lord, for healing and repair in our homes this Christmas, God, at our own family table. Thank you for healing. Thank you for sons and daughters coming home.

Thank you for marriages being healed. Thank you for minds being brought back into clear thinking. Thank you for miracles, God, miracles, Lord, miracles, miracles in our homes.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, God. Thank you for a shout of glory in our homes and among our families.

Thank you for our children, our grandchildren, God. Thank you for our neighbors. Thank you for our communities, God.

Thank you for what you're going to do. And, Lord, we know we're going to come back in your house and we're going to shout glory, glory, glory, glory to the living God. Glory to the name of Jesus.

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

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