

All Things

by Carter Conlon

This sermon emphasizes the concept that all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose. It shares personal testimonies of affliction and how God's faithfulness and purpose were revealed through suffering, leading to a deeper trust in Him. The message encourages listeners to embrace their current circumstances, seek God's purpose in their trials, and trust that He will bring good out of every situation.

Scripture: Romans 8:28, Psalms 119:67, Psalms 119:71, Psalms 119:75, Philippians 4:13, 2 Corinthians 1:8, Psalms 119:75, Psalms 119:67, Psalms 119:71, Philippians 4:13

Topics: "God's Faithfulness", "Purpose in Suffering"

Description

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Transcript

And can we turn that off, please? Yeah, thank you. I'm gonna share a couple of thoughts with you this evening and and As we do after we do we're gonna go to the communion table together so if you would be Kind enough to get some juice and some bread maybe from your kitchen and then are some crackers and you can partake With us as we share the Lord's table tonight together If you just bow with me in a word of prayer for just a moment now father I just thank you for the anointing of your Holy Spirit I thank you my God for your strength I thank you Lord that you are the only one that can make your word live in each of our hearts So make your word live tonight God, if you don't make it live, it's just letter on a page It's learning that doesn't lead us to the knowledge of the truth Lead us to the knowledge of where this truth leads tonight and God help us to embrace it and every time we open your word let Your words become part of the very fabric of our character and Lord We thank you God that you're a God of absolute truth You cannot lie speak to our hearts Lord and give us the grace to embrace it in Jesus name Amen One particular verse. I just want to focus on tonight I want to build on what pastor Tim Delina the senior pastor of Times Square Church spoke on on Sunday morning Romans chapter 8 and Verse 28.

I'm just simply going to call it all things and We know that all things work together for good to those who love God To those who are the called according to his purpose Now that means that all things everything

that God allows into your life and into my life has a purpose a divine purpose God puts it there for a reason because he's conforming us to the image of His son and he's leading us on a pathway That will bring his name to glory through the purpose that he wants to accomplish through your life and through my life now quite often We are reluctant to hear the truth of God's Word without the all things that God brings into our life now You keep in mind the Apostle Paul wrote these words as a man who had been shipwrecked stoned betrayed He'd been a day and night in the deep He had been in perils among brethren in perils among false brethren in perils among those who hated him his enemies and Beaten with rods imprisoned when you look at the life of the Apostle Paul It's very hard for anybody alive today to say well My life has had a dip more difficult trajectory than his and yet He was able to write after all the things that he had suffered that all things work together For good in other words everything that God allowed into my life had a divine purpose Whether I understood it or whether I didn't he was doing something in me He was bringing me to a specific place He was teaching me specific truths that I might not be willing to learn without the all things coming Into my life. I remember being in the Middle East I spoke at a pastor's conference in Jordan one time and the room was filled with pastors who suffer for the cause of Jesus Christ Some of them were so down. They couldn't lift their heads during the worship time I spoke a message along these lines and I said if God is all-powerful and if God could Put it into all suffering then why doesn't he put an end to our suffering and if he allows suffering into our lives Is there a possibility that there is a divine purpose to it? I want to tell you by the time we got to the end of the sessions in Jordan these same pastors whose heads had been down were dancing in the aisles They were arm-in-arm and they were shouting they were rejoicing because they suddenly understood That there is a divine purpose to all the things that God allows into our lives And I'm looking at so many prayer requests that are coming in from all over The world and thinking about this particular verse, you know We we spend our days as believers in Christ quite often trying to get out of all things This is what our prayer life is all about God get me out of this and how much I will love you Deliver me from this and how much I will serve you and so a lot of times our focus is about getting out of the very things that God is allowing to form his Character and his purposes in our lives.

And so instead of praying God get me out We should pray Lord. What are you teaching me? What is it that you're producing in my character in my life that maybe wouldn't come into my life any other way? But that you have to allow all things to come my way to form something in me that I won't learn any other way Here's some prayer requests that have come in from around the world, California I'm a member of the church since I was a boy. I Currently live in Southern, California, please pray I need shelter for my wife and my two-year-old son Staten Island pray for my living situation I have nowhere to go in New York and I'm in the midst of heart failure as well Pray for healing in a place to live from New York again pray for my emotional life It's a mess and I don't even feel like living Again, I need a breakthrough in my mind.

I suffer from the fear of people Especially those who are above me bosses or otherwise. I've been that way for years The u.s. Pray for me at my job. I'm hated and treated badly.

I need this job I'm praying that I do an excellent job and God helps me to show his love to the people who are being mean to me From Maryland my parents at one time were committed to doing the will of God now have kovat 19 pray for them I asked for a prayer that God may heal them and have mercy on them California I need a breakthrough from fears. I have had abuse and betrayal in my life It's so hard to trust God and not let the past get in the way from Taiwan Pray that the strongholds of unworthiness living in shame and poverty are broken Pray for escape and restoration from Kentucky. My husband and I pastor a church and we're under heavy Spiritual attack we need wisdom grace humility and direction from North

Carolina.

I was laid off due to kovat 19 Please pray that God will open the door for me to supply for my family and lastly from Malaysia My son Julian has stopped believing in God He was a prayer warrior at one point my other son married a Muslim. Please pray that these prodigals will come home and the list just goes on and on and on and on and you and I have to make a choice now, especially those that are Texting or writing in and you're a believer in Christ We either have to believe that all things are working together For God's good purpose in our lives or they are not we can't have it both ways It can't be just some things it has to be all things the things that we like and the things we don't the things we Understand and the things we don't understand the things that are sweet and the things that are sour The things that we would love to come our way and the things that we would wish would be gone All of these things are working together a divine Purpose that God has ordained for each one of our lives and I want to tell you something This is the particular verse in Scripture. I know When pastor Tim Delina said on Sunday morning, there's a verse that answers every question and it's at the very I don't members exact words But it was something I say it's the very foundation of the Christian life.

I immediately shouted out Romans 828 Because it's been the verse that has kept me all The years of my Christian life through through flood through fire through trial through difficulty through hardship through blessing All of the things that God has allowed have been for divine reasons Sometimes I understand them and sometimes I don't until the worst of it sometimes is even over in my life. I Remember years ago I came to New York in 1994 We moved into a house in New Jersey. We had no idea that the house that we moved into was infested with toxic mold Yeah, I mean toxic mold to the point when it was discovered in the year 2001 the mold was so thick that those who inspected the house condemned it on the spot and They quarantined that nobody was allowed you had to wear a hazmat suit to go into the house that I used to live in They said when they discovered it the whole attic was so filled with black Toxic mold that there was no visible wood left in the attic.

It was all black from end to end in the house it was a construction defect in the house that allowed moisture to build in the attic and the moisture guts the the mold the toxic mold got so thick in the house that it was Actually growing behind pictures on the wall when it was finally fully discovered. It's it scarred my Bronchial tubes, that's why I cough a lot still even today and for a season I could hardly breathe we were fighting against a Terrible onslaught in New York City. I stood with pastor David Wilkerson.

I gave my all I gave my best I gave my strength We're fighting to have the church go forward this this testimony that was in its infancy in New York City and had to really fight The floods of hell to survive we were fighting and as I was fighting alongside pastor David I kept getting sicker and sicker and sicker by the day to the point where I could hardly breathe and The headaches were so bad and my energy level was almost at zero I could sleep for eight hours get up in the morning and feel like I'd not slept at all I could barely stay awake and I could hardly breathe and I remember when just before it was discovered The sweat was coming down my face in between services in New York City and pastor David Wilkerson said to me What's wrong with you Carter? And I said, I I don't know. I just can't breathe. I can't breathe.

I can't seem to get a breath no matter how hard I try and We went away that summer and that's when Inspectors were sent into our house and discovered the toxic mold so thick that they told me It was the worst case of toxic mold that they had ever seen in any particular house that they'd ever examined and Dr. Joanning in Albany who was the foremost expert on toxic mold poisoning in Albany at the time told me said you were just weeks away From death had this not been discovered one day I was walking down the

street in New York City on 8th Avenue And I was to the point where I could just see these black Flecks coming in front of my eyes because I was always on the verge of passing out and suddenly in frustration. I Just said out loud on the street. I said, oh god, is this really necessary? My life and I really meant it is this really necessary as if the battle wasn't hard enough as it was and I was walking a righteous walk and I was fighting a righteous fight and I was standing for truth and standing with the man of God that the Lord had sent me to help and as I was standing I could start I was getting sicker by the day and by the week.

And so I just finally an exasperation. I said, is this really necessary? I Was so surprised to hear the voice of God when he said to me it is Carter. It is very necessary in your life and Suddenly out of out of nowhere these verses from Psalm 119 came into my mind.

Let me read them to you I'd never ever considered them before in verse 67. The psalmist says before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept your word Verse 71. He said it is good for me that I have been afflicted that I may learn your statutes in other words This affliction my life is going to take me deeper into a place of trusting you because I have no choice I have to learn to trust you and Verse 75 says I know Lord that your judgments are right and in faithfulness You have afflicted me now who preaches that today Where have you ever heard that that the faithfulness of God can actually allow an affliction into your life? That's in my Bible Psalm 119 verse 75 read it for yourself for a divine purpose that we may not fully understand God said in my Faithfulness.

I have allowed this to come into your life He could have kept us from moving into that house could have moved us out five years earlier But here's what he said to me on 8th Avenue that night. He said Carter You are you have a very strong will which is true. I am strong-willed and he said One day you're going to need to learn to lean on me because if you lead Times Square Church by your own ingenuity, you will bring it to a place of weakness I'm going to teach you how to be dependent on me You see folks I needed Christ every moment of every hour of every day because my own strength was gone And he began to teach me how to hear his voice I couldn't accept any invitation to go anywhere and speak that I wanted to because if I if I walked out and I went And preached somewhere and it wasn't the Holy Spirit leading me when I would come back It could take me a week or two to even recover physically But when the Spirit was leading me when I would come back, I would come back stronger than when I went out You see in this affliction that God allowed into my life He taught me how to hear his voice and he taught me that if he's not leading I ought not to follow I ought not to be governed by good ideas.

I Was learning to be governed by the voice of God and at this time I had no idea that I would be the next senior pastor of Times Square Church for that season that God allowed in my life I didn't know wasn't even in my thinking in my thinking I was only there to help this man of God for as long as he needed me I didn't know that God had another plan and I didn't know that in faithfulness He had afflicted me to be able to work that plan out in my life You see now when you get when you and I get to this understanding it brings our theology to a whole new place It brings our understanding of God to a whole new place It brings us to a place of saying God all things do work together for good To those who love you and are the called according to your purpose not not my idea of what God's purpose is But what God's purpose for my life actually is and quite often We are so stubborn that he can't teach us but through affliction He has to bring something into our lives so that we might before I was afflicted. I went astray But now I have learned your statutes How could Paul the Apostle write the words I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me? how could he write these words if he'd not been brought to a place through his own suffering of Understanding that only Christ can keep me in certain places You remember in one of the scriptures he said I want I don't want you to be ignorant brethren of the trouble that came to us in Asia That we were

pressed beyond measure in to the point where we despaired of even living He says I don't want you to be ignorant of the trouble that came our way But God helped us and Paul goes on and says God has helped us. God does help us and Christ Jesus will help us in the future.

He wouldn't have that revelation in his life had he not been given of God this incredible grace of needing incredible grace to go forward another day I Remember now we're back to the verse all things work together for good all things I remember the day when I had to go into my apartment I lived in on 51st for a season in New York City at part of the worst of this affliction. I Had an oxygen tank on wheels that I had to pull around The apartment with me with a long tube that came from it and a mask that I had to put over my face So I had a mask long before Covid-19 came around and in the morning I had to wear this mask and breathe for 15 minutes I remember the instructions pure oxygen for 15 minutes to Clear out the phlegm that was in my chest and to get rid of the massive headaches that I would wake up with every morning I had to do this before I could even read my Bible and I would be a liar if I stood here tonight and Told you that there was no despair that came into my life I want to tell you there were mornings that the despair just wanted to eat at my heart The the wondering Oh God, are you ever going to heal my life? And could any good ever come from this and some mornings I was so down I would I would take my pen And I just started writing poems what I thought were poems and I would I would hear in the distant a little tune Sometimes it came with some of these poems that I was writing in these these were just things from my heart I made a choice to declare God to be faithful in the midst of my affliction and I started writing down these little poems that eventually became songs and David Wilkinson insisted they'd be put on a CD and even hired an orchestra and brought an orchestra into studio To do the background music for a CD that was called quiet times Most of the songs on this CD were written in this time of affliction This particular CD that I wrote as poems in the worst of the headaches and the breathing situation and the affliction in the trial Sold over 40,000 copies in his first run and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for missions all around the world all Things work together for good To those who are who love God another called according to his purpose They work together when we choose to believe that God has allowed them for a divine reason and we choose to declare him to be faithful No matter what our circumstance is or how difficult it has become One particular morning. I sat down and I I wrote a song a poem actually and It became a song and it was called if you've lost your heaven song And here's the first verse in the chorus if you've lost your heaven song It's so hard to carry on when tomorrow looks as sad as yesterday Just remember Jesus came and he keeps singing just the same if you will listen when you go to him and pray When Jesus came to live in you he carried heaven's sweetest tune with words I love you and forever.

I will stay when days are cold and darkness strong things might seem lost But not for long his song within you cannot ever pass away his song within you cannot ever Pass away. I got the most beautiful letter a Couple of years later after the CD was initially produced This lady who was a pastor's wife one day her husband came home and he said to his wife, honey He says our marriage is not working. I want out of this marriage.

I want to live a new life I want to go off and do my own thing. And as far as I'm concerned our marriage is over. It's finished.

It's done She was so devastated. It's so hit her out of left field That she decided to commit suicide She rented a hotel room not too far away from her house and she went to the pharmacy She got the prescription pills. She needed to commit suicide She got in the car intending to drive there and to take her life On the way there her husband had gotten a copy of this CD quiet times and it was in the CD player and the song I talked to you about if you've lost your heaven song was playing when she turned the car on

she started listening to this song And she wrote to me and she said for three days for three days I drove all I did every day and she'd stay in The hotel I'm assuming at night, but in the daytime, she would just drive around She said I put this your CD on repeat and I listened to this same song over and over and over and over again And she said it brought me back to the faith of my my childhood When I first received Christ in those early years when I walked with God and how faithful God has been to me and how God Won't forsake me in my affliction and she said after three days of driving around Knowing that my marriage was finished.

I just decided to go home and not take my life She said I drove back home got in the driveway get out of the car came in the house. And there's my husband Sick in heart sick in his spirit and he said you're all honey. He said I'm so sorry I don't know what came over me.

I don't know what I was thinking I made such a mistake and I've been such a fool and I love you And I believe that God is going to work out our marriage You see to keep a woman from committing suicide a pastor's wife God had to allow affliction in another man's life in a city far far away and sent him in his office with an oxygen mask on his face and put a pen in his hand and let him write the words to a song and gave him the tune to a song that would save a lady from committing suicide and Restore a marriage of a couple in ministry that the devil was going to try to destroy You try to tell me that all things don't work together for good to those who love God And are they called according to his purpose? I know they do I know they do and I can't tell you over the years the countless letters I've gotten from people who are shut in or sick or lonely or depressed who put this on and It has given them comfort it brought my father to Christ when he got cancer He would sit in the basement. I only found out after he died My mom said your dad would even though he was mocking me for a season for my faith in Christ She said he would sit downstairs all night because the pain was so so deep and he would listen to your CD all night Night after night after night after night He would just listen to the words of these songs then one day I went for a visit was able to lead him to Christ all things work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to his purpose And so I know I'm speaking to people who are suffering tonight. I know I'm speaking to people.

You've got Sickness in your life you get depression in your mind. You got difficult situations You don't know how you're gonna feed your kids. You don't know how you're gonna pay your rent You don't know how you're ever going to be sane again I want to tell you God will be faithful to you because all things work together for good if you love God and are the called According to his purpose if you choose to declare him faithful You will come out the other side of this valley this valley of the shadow of death will only last for a season You will come out the other side and you will be able to say as I can say tonight surely goodness and mercy Have followed me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever Praise be to God praise be to God.

No matter what's in your life. God will use it for good and part of the victory is finally coming to the realization Lord you put me on this job For a reason you put me in this marriage for a reason you gave me these children for a reason I live in this apartment for a reason and if I have an affliction in my physical body God there has to be a reason for it that maybe I don't yet fully understand How else would that order you that intern that nurse that doctor that medical person? Maybe somebody else is waiting outside the doctor's room in the hallway with you. How else would they ever know of A Savior that died for them if I wasn't there to tell them.

Oh Yes, there is a purpose and Paul learned to believe this As a matter of fact, he got to the point where he was able to write in his epistles when I'm weak Then I am strong He was able to believe that even though he was confined to a jail cell at the end of his life With soldiers guarding him on every side then all he had in his hand was a quill and some parchment He was able to believe that all things work together for good. Even if all I can do is write some letters to some of my friends somehow somehow God is working out something bigger than I can understand through my life He didn't know he was writing to hundreds of millions of people over thousands of years He didn't know that his letters to his friends were going to be the doctrinal basis for much of our practice of faith in Christ He had no idea what he was writing and God never showed it to him All he knew was that all things work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to his purpose So my friend don't just pray to get out of where you are right now pray to learn the lesson that needs to be learned Where you are Pray that when you do come out the other side of the valley of the shadow of death You will be able to say I've learned I've learned in whatever state I am there was to be content I've learned that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me I've learned that nothing can separate me from the love of God, which is mine in Christ Jesus I've learned I've learned that God has a purpose beyond my understanding God can do things that are so much bigger than what I can if I will just let him be God in Me and through me. I've learned.

Oh, yes, I've learned So take You know just as the kids often tell us if life hands you a lemon squeeze it and open a lemonade stand Just do something with what God's given you and trust him that somehow some goods gonna come out of it. I Think of all the people that were given a meal. I think of all the drug addicts that were given an opportunity to be set free I think of all the missionaries that were helped this really raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for missions And it was all raised through the pen of a man who was so sick that he had to breathe in an oxygen tank Every morning for he could read his Bible and you and I would look and say well what good could come from this? Oh So much more than we can ever think or we can ever imagine So father tonight as we come to the communion table People saw you on the cross Lord Jesus and there had to be many who said oh what good could come from this? It's all over what we thought was going to bring us victory is now ending in defeat But yet what looked to be defeat was the greatest victory in the history of this world Lord, thank you God for people out there tonight who might think they're in defeat, but they're not Your hand is on them for great good and I thank you for it Lord with all of my heart in Jesus name now, we're going to come to the communion table and That's that's my verse tonight for you is Simply all things work together.

Thank you for good all things The cross looked like a defeat in the natural It looked like this man who claimed to be the Son of God was at the mercy of an angry mob It looked like all his claim to be a king and have a kingdom was coming to nothing But it was in the weakness of the moment of the cross that the strength of God was made known Gates of hell were broken light came into this world and You and I were given a reason to live And if God should see fit to let me suffer a little bit between now and the day of my death and eventual Receiving into the kingdom of God then so be it I'll tell you why I can have confidence because all things work together for good To those who love God and are the called according to his purpose And so father tonight Lord, we receive these elements. I On the same night of which he was betrayed Took bread And when he had given thanks he broke it and said take heat. This is my body Which is broken for you This do and remembrance of me In the same manner.

He also took the cup after supper Seeing this cup is the new covenant in my blood This do as often as you drink it in remembrance of me for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup You proclaim the Lord's death life until He comes. Thank You, Jesus. Thank You, Lord.

Thank You, my God. When Jesus came to live in you, He carried heaven's sweetest tune with words, I love you and forever I will stay. When days seem cold and darkness strong, things might seem lost, but not for long.

His song within you cannot ever pass away. His song within you cannot ever pass away. If you've lost your heaven's song, it's so hard to carry on when tomorrow looks as sad as yesterday.

Just remember, Jesus came and He keeps singing just the same. If you will listen when you go to Him and pray. When Jesus came to live in you, He carried heaven's sweetest tune with words, I love you and forever I will stay.

When days seem cold and darkness strong, things might seem lost, but not for long. His song within you cannot ever pass away. His song within you cannot ever pass away.

I'll sing the last verse for you. There is a song on earth we sing, the words can change with what life brings, not so with heaven's song Christ sings for you today. The words are faithful, they are true and they were written just for you to give you comfort and to show you there's a way.

When Jesus came to live in you, He carried heaven's sweetest tune with words, I love you and forever I will stay. When days are cold and darkness strong, things might seem lost, but not for long. His song within you cannot ever pass away.

His song within you cannot ever pass away. What it means is that He's already singing inside of you if you'll listen, if you will just listen. The Bible does say that He rejoices over us with singing and how much more now that by the Holy Spirit of God He lives inside of you.

So maybe you've lost your song, but He hasn't lost His and He still lives in you. So why don't you just join Him in that song. Praise be to God.

We're going to finish tonight with another blast from the past. God bless you. Thank you for joining this prayer meeting.

Tell your friends about it. Text everybody you know. Send it out on your email blast or whatever you call that.

Just send it all out to all your friends. Let them know that God is answering prayer here at Times Square Church in New York City and from the North Jersey campus. And we're going to continue to meet, continue to pray every Tuesday night at 7 p.m.

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