

# An Incredible Neglected Treasure

by Carter Conlon

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of rediscovering and prioritizing God's voice in our lives, and being sensitive to the cry of others in order to experience spiritual awakening and make a difference in the world.*

**Duration:** 51:51

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:19

**Topics:** "Treasure"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not just having information about the word of God, but truly living it out. He prays for God to give him and the listeners the grace and strength to be representatives of God on earth. The speaker uses the story of Jeremiah and the discarded garments in the treasury to illustrate how many people in this generation have failed to value the mantle of Christ that was passed on to them at the cross. He encourages the listeners to pick up these 'old garments' and embrace the commission given to them to bring the gospel to all people. The sermon also touches on the cry of those who are burdened by their sins and the struggles of life, and invites the listeners to come forward and pray for God to give them His heart.

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## Transcript

Good morning to everybody this morning, and I trust that you've had a good week. And if not, you've made a good choice this morning to be here, be in the Lord's house, and nowhere else that you and I should be, especially at this time we're living in right now. I'm going to share with you a message this morning that I shared in Colorado last Sunday.

I felt to share it with this congregation. It's something that has deeply stirred my own heart for some time now. And if you'll go to Jeremiah chapter 38, please.

I want to speak to you about an incredible neglected treasure. An incredible neglected treasure. Now Lord, I thank you for the anointing of your Holy Spirit.

You're the only one, Jesus, that can make this word live. If it doesn't live, it just is information on a page. You have to quicken the word of God to us.

And cause our hearts to want to walk in your ways. Give us grace and strength, Lord, to be your people, your representatives on this earth, in this hour that we're living in. Father, I thank you for quickening my

physical body and mind, and giving me the ability to speak this.

And give us the ability to hear it. And I thank you for it, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Jeremiah 38, beginning at verse 6. An incredible neglected treasure. Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon. Chapter 38, verse 6. Of Hamalek, that was in the court of the prison.

And they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water but mire. So Jeremiah sunk in the mire.

Now when Abed-Melek, the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs, which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon, the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin, Abed-Melek went forth out of the king's house and spake to the king, saying, My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they've done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they've cast into the dungeon. And he's like to die for hunger in the place where he is, for there's no more bread in the city. Then the king commanded Abed-Melek, the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon before he die.

So Abed-Melek took the men with him and went into the house of the king under the treasury and took thence from there old cast clouts and old rotten rags, that means old cast away garments and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah. And Abed-Melek, the Ethiopian, said unto Jeremiah, Put now these old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine arm holes, under the cords. And Jeremiah did so.

And they drew up Jeremiah with cords and took him up out of the dungeon, and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison. Now there was a season in society, I think, that's very much like ours is today. Now Jeremiah being put into that dungeon really represents a two-fold thing.

Number one, Jeremiah was the voice of God to that generation. The people of that society and time were moving in a direction that was going to result in their destruction. Jeremiah knew it, and he was giving them counsel and advice that was generally against the collective will of the people.

And this is the way it is. When a society begins to turn away from God, when you and I live in a generation when one of our major political parties in its convention boos, 50% of the people booed putting the name of God back into their platform, we are living in a generation and a time exactly the same as Jeremiah chapter 38. Taking the voice of God and saying, Get this voice away from us.

They considered the voice of God actually, through Jeremiah, an enemy to their objectives. And we're living in a generation that wants to redefine marriage as between a man and a man and a woman and a woman. Wants to murder unborn children, even up to the point where they're starting to come out of the womb.

And all in the name of convenience. And yet the voice of God speaks through the pulpits that are still alive in this nation saying, Don't go this way. Other societies have tried this, and they no longer exist.

And we're not exempt from the justice of God when as a people, we begin to redefine some things that God says you cannot redefine these things. It is simply a line that you cannot pass in society. You cannot murder children for your convenience.

It simply is not allowed in the kingdom of God. There is a price to pay for shed blood in a nation. And yet these people took Jeremiah as we are attempting to take the voice of God and put that voice of God in a well, in a place in the ground as it is, where his voice can no longer be heard.

And it represents a secondary thing. When we have cast away the voice of God, when we've thrown the voice of God out of our nation, when we've largely relegated the voice of God to a back room, even in our churches in our time, then we are our ears begin to be closed to the cry. There's a there's an inner cry in the hearts of people in every generation, but even more so in the time of Jeremiah and the time that you and I are living in today.

And when we throw the voice of God out of our sphere of where we live and dwell and what we're willing to listen to, then we can no longer hear that which is the closest to God's heart, that which was the reason that Christ came to the earth in the first place, that which caused God to go to Moses and said, I've heard a cry. You haven't heard it, Moses, but I've heard it. And I'm going to, I'm going to reveal it to you.

I'm going to put it in your heart. I happen to believe that we're on the verge of a spiritual awakening in America today. I believe it with all my heart.

I want to show you what the evidence of an awakening is. What does it look like? It obviously begins by you and I, once again, becoming one with the heart of God, moving away from our own dreams, our plans, our visions, our images of what our life should look like and what our future should be. And suddenly beginning to hear something that can only come from the voice and heart of God.

It begins to stir us. It begins to move us. And we begin to move in a certain direction.

Now, we're living at a time, as I said earlier, that many, many people are in, are sinking as it is in despair. I hear the cry now. There is a cry in people.

When I go on the radio, for example, on 1010 Winds, I pray when I'm in the studio doing these spots. I said, Lord, I'm going to be shortly in probably 1500 cars coming into New York City and going home from New York City. The Lord, you're going to take my voice into probably 100,000 or more homes, equal number of apartments, places of business.

God Almighty, in Christ's name, help me to feel what the people are feeling. I don't want to be just another generic thought on the radio about the things of God. But it's got to go deeper than that now.

The voice of God has to reach the people, the hearts of the people. And it's my constant prayer. Lord, don't let me just be some guy in a studio that's aloof from the suffering and the anguish.

You've got to help me to understand. You've got to reveal it to my heart. You've got to put that intonation in my voice and get me out of the way and give me that new heart that you promised and that new mind and that new spirit.

Help me, Lord, to go where the people are. Psalm 38. Listen to the cry of even a man of the caliber of King David.

Verse 4, he says, My iniquities have gone over my head as a heavy burden. They're too heavy for me. My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.

I'm troubled. I'm bowed down greatly. I go mourning all the day long.

My loins are filled with a loathsome disease and there's no sound that's in my flesh. And you can hear the cry of the father who's doing insane things in his home that he doesn't want to do. Of the inner despair of the mother, the young person who's heading out to get a college education, realizing in the time that we're living in that it may amount to just simply a mountain of death and no opportunity of employment after all the effort that's gone into it.

He says, I'm feeble and sore broken. I've roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart. Lord, all my desires before thee and my groaning is not hidden from you.

My heart pants. My strength is failing me. And as for the light in my eyes, it's also almost gone.

My lovers and friends stand aloof from my sore and my kinsmen stand far off. The psalmist is saying there's a cry in me that's so deep that I don't think anybody, there's nobody human that can answer this. How will I get out? Where will I find strength? How am I going to find a future? Where's life going to come from? And just like Jeremiah did, people have fallen into places just beneath and in the vicinity of the king's treasure house.

It's amazing. That's where he was. He was cast into a prison right in the vicinity of the treasure house.

People like Jeremiah know that the wealth and treasure of the king is above them. But how do I get to it? How many people in our generation went to Sunday school? At least people over their 30s, perhaps their 40s, went to Sunday school and at least heard a measure of who God is and what he's able to do. Doesn't the word of God say, he gives me feet like hinds feet and gives me wings like eagles.

And isn't this all part of the treasure of God? And I know he has the resources to get me out. People would say, but how am I going to get out? The psalmist in Psalm 22 verse 1 says, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me? And from the words of my roaring? God, how are you going to get me out? I don't know about you, but I can hear that cry now. There's 17 million people, I'm told, in the extended greater New York area.

And so many of these people are crying. Oh God, how am I going to get out of this struggle? And some here today are, that's your prayer. That's the cry of your heart.

Now, as I said earlier, when the Lord is about to do something, one of the first signs is that his own people, that's a spiritual awakening. His own people suddenly become aware and sensitive to the hidden despair of others around them. When the Lord, Psalm 102 verses 16 to 21 says, When the Lord shall build up Zion, he will appear in his glory.

In other words, when God's about to do something that only God can do, he comes and there's a weightiness of his character that comes with him. He will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer. And this will be written for the generation to come, and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.

For he has looked down from the height of his sanctuary. From heaven did the Lord behold the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner and to loose those that are appointed to death, to declare the name of the Lord in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem. Now, spiritual awakening happens first among the people of God.

There's something of the character of God comes into his house and into his own people. A weightiness of God comes when God is determining to do something that only he can do. In other words, things are going to change.

And they begin to change in my heart and your heart first. We're suddenly aware. Is it just me or is it happening to you too? Suddenly, I care more.

I want to do more. There's something, and it's not me. I know it's not me.

It's something of the compassion of God that's coming into my heart as I know it's coming into yours. And this groaning of Jeremiah came to the attention of Abed-Melech. And he was a servant slave of the king.

Now, most likely, it had been a long and suffering journey, which had finally brought him to the comfort of the king's house. Number one, he was not in his homeland. And number two, he was a eunuch, which means that he was captivated.

The ability to have family was taken from him. He was a servant to the king. And I have no doubt it had been a long, hard journey that finally brought him to a comfortable place in the king's house.

I can imagine that his duties would be doing the errands for the king and bringing in his food and serving the whims of the king and eating, perhaps, in the proximity of the king's table. Just like you and I, for many, many people here, I hear your testimonies on Sunday night in particular. And it's been a long, long, hard journey for many to end up here in the house of God.

It's been difficult. There's been pain along the way. There's scars that you're still waiting for God to heal.

There's longings in the heart that are as of yet not fully fulfilled. But here you are in the house of the Lord like Abed-Melech was. And I think it's Hendrickson's commentary that says that at least one writer believes that Abed-Melech either directly heard or heard a report of the groaning of this man Jeremiah in this dungeon, in this well actually as it was, not too far from the proximity of where he was.

Something came to him. Just as perhaps this morning I'm giving you a report of the fact that people are really, really hurting now in this society. There are cries.

If you and I had the ears to hear it, it might overwhelm us. God hears it. But the numbers of single mothers, the numbers of parents with wayward children, the numbers of people who don't know how they're going to pay the bills, the numbers of people who are, they've gotten involved in something that's captivated them because of their foolishness.

The numbers of people who just put on a good face in the daytime, but at night when they're alone in their room, before they sleep, they pace, they can't sleep, they roll over, they groan. Oh God, they don't know how to pray, they don't even know who God is, but suddenly His name is on their lips. God Almighty, if you're out there, can you hear me? Is there anybody who can help me? Can you show me the way out of this? Can you show me where help and where hope is? And this cry came into the ears of this man, Ebed Melech, who's in the King's house like you and I are in the King's house today.

We finally made it through all our pain, all our journey, all our trial. Thank God we're in the King's house. Thank God with all my heart.

And that's a blessing, but it presents a dilemma to us as well, because it would be so easy to ignore the sufferings of others after having found his place of rest and security. So easy to just come into this house Sunday, Tuesday, Friday, and any other day we happen to be meeting, and just shut out the cries. I found the King's house, and from here on in, it's going to be about me and getting healed of my pain, and getting free from my struggles, and finding the direction for my life.

And suddenly this man, Ebed Melech, hears directly or hears a report of the cry of a man who's been placed in a dungeon, and if somebody doesn't do something, he's going to die there. Jeremiah would have perished in that dungeon. Just like there are people in this city that if you and I can't hear the cry, and if we don't move in the direction of human suffering, there are people who are going to die in their sin.

They're going to die in their struggle. They're going to give up heart. They're going to give up hope, when you and I could make such a tremendous difference.

The scripture tells us in chapter 38 and verse 8, he went forth to petition the king. And it's amazing because don't forget that the king, this secular king had a hand in putting Jeremiah in the prison. And so he knew that his own prayer was, there was a potential jeopardy to him to pray this kind of a petition, to the king because Jeremiah was considered an enemy at that time of the people.

But he went and petitioned the king, and the king commanded, it's a type of you and I beginning to pray, coming to Tuesday night for example, and I don't know if you've ever prayed this way, oh God, do something and help those poor people. Now it's so easy to come, it's the beginning of something. Have you ever been in a place where you prayed that way? And the Lord said, I found somebody to send.

Who Lord? Moses said that. Who is it you're going to send? He's going to get my full support. Lord, I assure you, he's going to get my full support.

And the Lord says you, I'm going to send you. Like Elise who worked for our missions department, who lived to escape Burundi after the genocide. She lost most of her family in Burundi, and was able to emigrate here to the U.S. and study here, and worked with us in the missions department for about 10 years.

And everything in her, all she could remember was the terror, the screams, the hiding, the difficulty of her whole nation. But a burden came on her and she began to pray, oh God, send somebody to Burundi to help make a difference. And she, with her own testimony, I remember her Sunday night, the absolute horror that came into her heart when she heard the Lord say, why don't you go? Long story short, she's there today, working with her mother, feeding hungry children.

And it says in verse 10, the king commanded Ebed-Melech, the Ethiopian, saying, take from here 30 men with you and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon. In other words, go and find a people of a similar heart, and partner up with them. Get involved, do something.

Find a place where people are doing what Isaiah says in chapter 58, or God says to the prophet Isaiah, people are, they're not hiding from human need. Get involved in some places, moving beyond ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth. And begin to move towards this mountain of human need that's all around us.

And his journey, it says, he took the men with him in verse 11, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took from there old cast cloths, it means cast away garments and old rotten rags, and let

them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah. Now this is an incredible thing. Like you and I got to think about this for a moment.

If the king said to you or me and said, go into the treasury and get what you need. I don't know about you, but I'd probably go and get some gold and buy a ladder. I mean, it's the king's treasury.

There has to be all kinds of instruments and implements and wealth and provision. I mean, especially the king of Israel at that time. I mean, the treasure was gathered from all over the world.

There'd be just incredible treasure. Picture yourself in a room at least this size, with just everything that you can think of this world has to offer is in that room. And he walks over into the corner, and sees some old garments cast there and some old rotten rags, and says, this is exactly what I need.

Now, it doesn't make sense to the natural mind, does it? But the ways of God don't make sense to the natural mind. If you were God, you wouldn't send an 80-year-old man and his 83-year-old brother into the mightiest army on the face of the earth to tell them to let millions of people go and stand there in the name of God. You wouldn't choose Gideon or you wouldn't wait until the wombs are barren.

God's ways are not our ways. His thoughts are not our thoughts. As high as the heaven is above the earth, His ways and thoughts are above us.

And now I want you to just go to Jeremiah, and picture him now, he puts his hands over his eyes, and he's trying to see God's provision for him in his time of despair. And I want you to think about people in New York City, and wherever it is that you're from, looking up and say, God, how are you going to help me? How am I going to get out of here? And suddenly he looks up, and at the top of his place of captivity is neither an angel, it's not an army, it's just a fellow bondservant. It's just a person who's touched with the feeling of his struggles.

It's somebody who suffered himself. Somebody who knows that there is comfort in the house of God. Somebody who just can't walk away.

Having been released and freed himself, and having found a place of comfort like you and I have, just simply can't turn his back on human need. He hears about a cry, and he's got to do something. And descending down towards Jeremiah, is something which in the hands of the right people has the power to get him out.

Think about it for a moment. Out of this treasury, Eben-Melech shows up, with garments which have long been discarded and esteemed to be of little worth. They're in the treasury, but they've been thrown in the corner.

I want you to think about this for a moment, because you and I live in a generation where many have failed to esteem the mantle of Christ which was passed on to us at the cross. There's nowhere there was a commission given to us at the cross that we were to go into all the world and bring the gospel to all men, women, and children created in the image of God. We were to baptize them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

We were to give them an understanding of the compassion of God, the life of God, the redemption of God, and the ways of God. And a type of this was the garment. Remember when Elijah went up into heaven, this mantle that was on him of God descended to the earth, and it was picked up by a man called Elisha.

When Christ rose from the dead and ascended, the mantle of God came down on the day of Pentecost and was picked up by 120 people in the upper room who went into all the known world, and by the grace of God within them changed that known world. But at the cross we have, in a sense, a type of the beginnings of that. Christ is on the cross.

The nails are through his wrists and feet. The thorns are in his brow. His blood is dripping on the ground.

This is the Son of God who's come to us in our dungeon. He's come to us in our weakness. He's come to us in our hopelessness.

He's come to us in our inability to ever escape or get out or ever survive. There was no way out of the dilemma that you and I found ourselves in because of sin. But God so loved us that he sent his only begotten Son into the world and nailed him to a cross, and he paid the penalty for our wrong that we might have the power through him to escape not only the penalty and the peril of sin and hell, but escape the weakness and the condition that sin brought on all of humanity.

And at the foot of the cross is a garment that he was wearing. I saw a painting one time and it showed four soldiers at the foot of that cross gambling, the first responders, as may I call it, to the cross. And there are four soldiers there, perhaps even more, and here they are throwing dice for this garment.

It was a garment that was sewn in one piece. There was no seam in it to divide it. And every one of those men, you don't see a greater example of divine love versus human depravity than in that scene at the cross where the Son of God, as his blood, is literally dripping on the ground and creating a thunder roar in hell itself.

You have soldiers at the foot of that cross gambling for that garment. Everybody looking at that garment for personal gain. If you ever wondered how obscene the theological perspective is that we come to the cross for what we can get from God and not what God has called us to do, you see the obscenity of that theology.

Don't ever lose that picture of these men looking at that garment and say, every man say, how good I will look in that. How that will enhance my reputation. This, I will be wearing the garment that this man who claimed to be the Son of God wore and how it will give me a reputation in the marketplace.

How it will bring a good report to my house and all the money perhaps that I can get for it if I'm able to win it in this lottery and sell it to somebody around me. Many, many people today see the garment of Christ as something simply to be gotten for personal gain. Coming to the cross for a better job, a better future, better family, better personality, better slice of the pie.

All of these things which God says He won't withhold from us if we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. If the motivation of our heart is the continuance of the work of God moving into this mountain of crying out humanity. Now the garment speaks of compassion not only commission but compassion.

Such as when Elisha picked up the mantle of Elijah and immediately moves into this mountain of spiritual poverty to set other people free. The first city he goes into has sons of the prophets in it. They know the word of God but there's no power in it.

And the scripture tells us that there was the barrenness in the water there that was causing trees to lose their fruit before the time and even wombs to miscarry before they had come to a place of completion. And Elisha moves in with this mantle of God's not only commission but compassion. And instead of railing against the people for the spiritual ignorance and lack of power that had brought about this situation, he goes in with compassion for the sole purpose of setting other people free.

The garment speaks of rejoicing when you and I lift our brother and sister out of captivity and walk with him to a place of safety. This is not a garment that we hang on a rope like Ebed-Melech put it on a rope and lowered it into a dungeon. And we don't put it on a rope today, we put it on.

We pick up this old castaway garment and these old rotten rags which I liken to the giftings of the Holy Spirit. The power, the abilities that God is willing to give with this garment to do the job that he's called us to do. To go into places to see the release of people who can't get out in their own strength.

To go there under the commission of Christ, to go there with the compassion of Christ and to go there with the power and the giftings of the Holy Spirit. Thanks be to God that suddenly the fog is clearing in our generation and we're beginning to see what is the basis of being part of the Christian church? What is the basis of declaring ourselves followers of Christ other than if we follow Christ? Not to simply follow him into the palace but follow him into the pit, follow him into the workplace that he has called us to go into to bring out people that have no help unless the Spirit of God lifts them out. We don't lower these garments on ropes any longer, we put them on and we extend the both of our hands and the both of our arms and Ebed Melech said to Jeremiah, put these garments under your arms and let them lift you out.

And these garments are willing, God is willing to give them to you and I today we put this garment of Christ on and we extend our arms and we put them under the arms of people and say, come let me help to get you out. I have no greater joy as a pastor than to see on Sunday night preaching now in the services we have anywhere from 30 to 50 to 60 people coming to Christ almost every week now. But one of the joys of my heart one of the joys of my heart as your pastor is that when people come to the altar I'm seeing many of you come with them not beside them, with them.

You actually are bringing these people to church, you're walking with them down the aisle, you're leading them to Christ and hopefully making the commitment to say I'm going to walk with you as long as it takes until you find the strength to do and be what God has called you to be. Thanks be to God. That's the joy of my heart that to see this church moving into this mountain of humanity called New York City and surrounding areas and not inviting the people to church because you feel they're going to hear some dynamic message.

No, the people are coming to this church by and large because of the people who are bringing them. Because you've gone to the pit. Because you've gone to the place of despair.

Because you've been sensitive to the needs of people around you and you've reached out and said hey, let me help you. I know where help is. Let me help get you out of the situation that you're in and give you the strength that God can give you.

I happen to believe this last day spiritual awakening that we're living in is going to be the whole church of Jesus Christ. No more superstars. There's no time for any of that stuff anymore.

It's going to be the whole church of Jesus Christ doing the work of God. Every ebb and mellow in the house of the Lord who says God Almighty this is not right that this person in my office is dying in their sin. It's not right that that person across the hall is living in such despair.

I don't do right because I have such a treasure. I know where the king's house is. I know where the treasury is.

I know I can petition the king and I know my life can make a difference. And so by the grace of God I'm going to go in and I'm going to petition the king and he's going to send me to the treasury to get what I need. To get my friends out of this bottomless pit that they can't find the strength to get out of.

This is the church of Jesus Christ in this last hour of time that you and I are living in. This is the church. This is your commission.

This is my commission. Praise be to God. And I thank God for that with all my heart.

Especially now on Tuesday night with these new prayer cards. If you've not seen them get one at the information table. It makes everybody here an evangelist that you have the opportunity to go to somebody in your neighborhood or somebody you work with or a complete stranger for that matter and say I'm going to a prayer meeting on Tuesday night and would you like me to pray for you? Is there something I can pray about? And folks the reports I'm hearing of the willingness the absolute willingness of people to fill that card out.

Unashamedly. One lady came here the other night with 25 cards that people had filled out. Of people saying please pray for my daughter.

She's struggling. Pray for my finance, my family, my marriage and they're writing stuff on these cards. It's amazing.

And giving you and I an opportunity not only to pray but to stay in touch with the people that we're meeting and saying I am praying for you and I'm going to continue to pray for you until God answers that prayer. That's you and I with those garments of commission and compassion on. Everyone should be an evangelist in this time we're living in now.

Everyone should be involved. Without exception and I preach to myself the same as you. Praise God.

Praise God. Praise God. Thank you Jesus.

A neglected treasure. God is willing to give us his heart. I don't know of any greater thing I could possess as a Christian man not just as a pastor but as a Christian man than the heart of God.

His heart. That I really care that evangelism is not a program. Or something I feel compelled to do because the pastor said we need to do this now.

But I have the heart of God. I hear the cry. And God says I'll give you that garment of compassion and commission.

And I'll cause you to rejoice. I'll put a garment of praise on you when you see people's hearts begin to respond. And you see that I've given you the strength to lift them out and bring them to the house of God.

I hope that I live to see people dancing in these aisles who have brought people to Christ on Sunday night. Hard to bring people in Sunday we don't have any more room in the morning but we do have room on Sunday night. That's strictly for those who just come on Sunday morning.

You've got an opportunity to bring somebody to this house on Sunday night. The heart of God. I want the heart of God.

That's the cry of my heart now. I want the heart of God. I don't want to see people as trees walking.

I don't want to be half way to seeing. I don't want to be coming to the cross every Sunday and every time I pray for something new I can get for myself. I want the commission of God, the compassion of God.

I want the rejoicing that goes on in heaven every time a sinner comes to Christ. I want to be part of that party. I want to be part of that.

And God is willing to give you and give me his heart. That's what's going to keep this church for the next 25 years. I'm really thankful for the previous 25.

We've had our successes, our struggles, our battles. We've learned to do things better in some cases. And some things have been a success.

But those days are over folks. We have a 25 year period if the Lord tarries ahead of us now. And what will really keep you and I is the heart of Christ.

Beating in the very center core of this church. Looking not just to build a tent on the Mount of Transfiguration but to go down into that valley where people are living with real problems and real struggles. And really to get involved.

I thank God for what the Lord has done. But I don't think it's a tenth of what God wants to do. And what he's able to do.

We've started now to underwrite feeding programs in up to 100 churches in New York City. And I understand we have 60 churches have already applied and they're coming in at the rate of about three to five churches a day now. Who are looking for help to start feeding the hungry.

There's something underfoot folks. And if you and I can hear it. The Lord's about to do something phenomenal in New York City.

And my prayer is God if 400 off centered people can meet at Wall Street and can go around the world. How much more? How much more? If people start occupying the prayer meeting in New York City. People start coming to their churches and seeking God.

I've been praying for such a move of the Holy Spirit that the liberal media can't ignore it any longer. We had 60,000 people in Times Square praying for the future of this city. And yes the liberal media largely ignored it.

But I'm praying for God to do something that even those who choose to try to put the voice of God in a dungeon are going to have to stand up and take notice. They can't ignore it anymore. And the spark of that beginning is you and I going to those that have no helper.

Praying for the heart. Praying for the courage. Don't cower down.

Don't walk away. But praying for the courage to speak. And just even ask if there's something you can do.

Something you can pray for. Some way you can help. Not trying to pray that co-worker out of your office but praying God is there a way I can help.

This person is obviously miserable and lost. Is there something you can do through me to make a difference in this person's life. But you see for that you need the heart of God.

You and I have to see people the way that God sees them. We can't push away that cry and somehow be part of a live and vibrant testimony for Christ in our generation. We can't push that voice away.

We've got to move towards that voice of despair. And folks if God gives us the ears I promise you it's all around us. There's a despair.

We had a visitor. I just want to close with this. I heard the story yesterday and I thought it was worth repeating.

We had a visitor come to New York City from another country. And came to the streets of New York. This is only just a little while ago.

And said where are all the happy people. This is such a miserable looking city. And she said where I come from people are happy.

They say hello on the street. Hello. And she tried to say hello and nobody would answer.

Nobody even looked. Everybody just stared straight ahead as we do in the streets of New York. And said what an unhappy place.

There's got to be happy people here. And so somebody invited this lady to Times Square Church. She came in to a service and said oh there are the happy people.

Praise God. I pray with all my heart that that you and I can make more happy people in New York City. Deliver people out of this groan and bondage that they're in.

And so my altar call this morning is very very simple. God give me your heart. Abed Malik just went to the king.

That's all he did. He had no plan. He just knew that this man was crying out in his dungeon.

And somebody had to do something. And just give me your heart God. That's the prayer of my heart now.

And we all are deficient in some measure. We're proficient in religion but deficient in the heart of God. I want the heart of God.

I don't want to see people any other way than God sees them. And if you ask for that he'll give it to you. We can't conjure this up.

There's no amount of study can produce it. It's something miraculous that God gives. But I tell you one thing.

He'll take you into the treasury today if you ask. And he'll help you to pick up those old garments and those old rotten rags that our generation doesn't want. But I want it.

And I know today that you want it. And so we're going to worship just for a moment. And as we do if that's the cry of your heart.

God give me your heart. Give me your heart Jesus. I'm going to ask you to just slip out of your seat as we stand in a moment and just join me here at the front of this auditorium in the annex.

If you'd step between the screens the same in Roxbury as well. And those who are watching at home. Perhaps you could just go to your knees in your living room.

In whatever room you're in and just pray with us. Jesus give me your heart. Let's stand together please.

And just come. We sang a beautiful hymn earlier today. And it reminded me of the story behind it that John Newton many of you know the story he wrote Amazing Grace.

And he was a slave ship captain who came to Christ. And when he wrote the lines Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. He knew what a wretch he had been.

But God had reached down to him and not let him go. And he had a friend called William Cowper. Now William Cowper was what we would call today bipolar I guess.

Subject to severe fits of depression. To the point where William Cowper tried to commit suicide. And they had to put him in an institution.

And John Newton just wouldn't let his friend go. He would go visit his friend. He would help his friend.

He would counsel his friend. And some people said to John. Why do you bother with this man? You see how hopeless he is.

And to which John replied. God bothered with me. In my hopelessness.

And I'm not willing to let a man go. That Christ died for. And so John Newton became William Cowper's friend.

And actually was used to the Lord to pull him out of depression. And they became friends. And he walked with William Cowper for the rest of his life.

And William Cowper was the man. Probably under John's guidance. Who wrote.

There is a fountain filled with blood. Drawn from Emmanuel's veins. And sinners plunged beneath that flood.

Lose all their guilty stains. The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day. And there may I though vile as he.

Wash all my sins away. Thank God that John Newton didn't let this man go. And the Lord is going to give us that kind of perseverance.

In our generation. And you say to me. Well how's it going to happen? Well here it is in Matthew 7. Keep on asking.

And you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking. And you will find.

Keep on knocking. And the door will be open to you. For everyone who asks receives.

Everyone. Who seeks. Finds.

Everyone. Who knocks the door will be open. You parents.

If you know how to give your children a loaf of bread. Would you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish. Do you give them a snake? Of course not.

So if you know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more will your heavenly father. Give good gifts to those.

Who ask him. Keep on asking. Keep on seeking.

Keep on knocking. Lift your voice. Lift your hands.

Lift your voice now. And ask the Lord for what you need. Ask him.

Ask him. No. Somebody else can't do it for you.

I can't do it for you. You lift your voice now. Lift your voice and ask God for what it is that you need.

For compassion. For strength. For power.

For the ability to do the work of God. For a heart that even cares. To do the work of God.

For the strength to move away from our own need. And to the needs of others. Ask.

Ask he says. And you will receive. Hallelujah.

Keep on praying. Just pray for the next 3-4 minutes. Lift your voice to the Lord.

Just lift your voice to God. And we're going to play that song. There is a fountain.

Lift your voice to the Lord now. You have to ask. You have to ask.

Hallelujah. The Lord asked for this church God. God almighty.

God almighty. Put a heart in this church. Deeper than anything we've ever known.

Do something sovereign. Do something supernatural among us. Awaken us to the needs of others.

Awaken us to the power of God that's available for us. To do the work you've called us to do. Oh God.

Awaken us to the other churches in the city. Help us not to be isolated. From other believers in Christ.

Break down the barriers and the walls. And the denominational names. And give us a supernatural love for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

All over the city. Awaken us to the struggles of other pastors. Other churches.

Other congregations. And help us Lord to be a helping hand to others. Give us great grace in these days ahead.

Oh God. Father we thank you for it God. We praise you.

We bless you Lord. I ask you for a sovereign miracle today. God almighty.

You said you would give the Holy Spirit to those who ask. And so Lord we take you at your word. And we ask you for another outpouring of your spirit upon this church.

That you take us farther than we've ever gone. And make us more than we could ever hope to be. And take us where we could never go in our own strength.

And give us what we could never possess. No matter how sincere our efforts. God guide us and lead us in the strength of our Christ.

Lord we thank you. We thank you Lord for the past 25 years. But now we look forward to the next 25.

The next season ahead of us Lord. Let there be a shout of glory in New York City. Let there be a shout of glory in every church of every denomination.

God almighty fill your house with praying people. Lord do something so profound that the whole world will have to stop and take notice. The whole world will have to stop and say have you heard what God is doing in New York City.

Save our children in the streets of God. In our schools and in our colleges Lord. God almighty.

Let a baptism of your compassion and your power come upon your people Lord. And Father we thank you. We praise you.

We bless you in the mighty unmatched and holy name of Jesus Christ. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God. Thank you Lord.

Thank you God. Thank you Father. We're going to leave.

But we want to sing that song before we go. I want you to think of this man William Cowper. In an asylum.

With only one friend left who cares. And what God was able to do through that man's life. We sing about it.

And countless millions of people throughout the ages. Their lives have been touched through this one man's pen that was put to paper. And he wrote a beautiful song.

There is a fountain filled with blood. Before we go today. God bless you.

Let us plunge beneath the flood. Let us plunge beneath the flood. Lose all their guilty stains.

Oh God indeed. Rejoice to see. A fountain in His name.

And there may I. Go wide as He. And there may I. Wash all my sins away. For dying lamb.

Thy precious blood. Shall never lose its power. Till all the ransomed.

The ransomed. Till all the ransomed. The ransomed.

Be safe to sin no more.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24517.mp3>

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