

Ask Jesus Now For The Things That You Need (video)

by Carter Conlon

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God for the strength and courage needed to live a life that reflects Christ. It highlights the need to ask God for help in changing our hearts, attitudes, and priorities to align with His will. The message urges believers to seek first the kingdom of God, to love others as Christ does, and to be willing to endure hardships for the sake of the gospel.

Duration: 53:37

Description

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Transcript

Ask Jesus now for the things you need. I want to say it again. Ask Jesus now for the things that you need.

Matthew chapter 7, please, if you go there in your Bibles. Matthew chapter 7. Now this doesn't seem like a prophetic message, but it actually is. Now Father, I thank you, God Almighty.

I praise you, Lord. That you always have a word in season for your people. And you'll take the frailty of humanity and you'll work with us.

I thank you, Lord God, for overshadowing my frailty with your strength. God giving me your mind and heart and letting me deliver this in a manner that's pleasing to you. I ask you, Jesus, for the courage and strength to disappear that you may appear.

That your word alone might be heard. And that the people might know. You have to put weight on the word this morning, Holy Spirit, so the people will know that they are indeed hearing from God.

It's pointless for me to say I have a word from the Lord. You are the one, Lord, that has to bear witness to yourself. I'm asking you, Jesus, to bear witness to what you've placed in my hand.

What I'll be reading today, Father, and I thank you, God, that you're preparing us for this coming day. Thank you with all my heart in Jesus' name. Ask Jesus now for the things that you need.

Matthew chapter 7 and verse 7. Ask and it shall be given you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you.

Thank God for these promises. That's red letter in my Bible. That means it's right out of the mouth of Jesus.

Ask, it will be given you. Seek, you'll find. Knock, it will be opened.

Not might be, should be, ought to be, potentially will be, shall be. For everyone that asks receives. Everyone.

Say that with me. Everyone. And that means you.

Not just me. Not just those that know the Bible better than you do. Not just those that have been around the church longer than you have.

Everyone that asks receives. And he that seeks finds. And to him that knocks, it shall be opened.

Or what man is there of you whom if his son asks bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him? Therefore, all things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. For this is the law and the prophets. In other words, Jesus is saying everything is summed up.

Everything that the prophets have seen. Everything that's written in the Old Testament. Everything that's in the law.

Everything that was promised. Everything that we long for is found in this one action. That we do to other people just in the same manner as we would have them do to us.

Now in John chapter 16, verse 24, Jesus said something to his disciples. And it was an interesting thought. He said, hitherto or up to this point, you've asked nothing in my name.

Ask, and you shall receive that your joy might be full. That's actually, would be considered by those who are sitting at, the scene actually of this is at the Last Supper. It's in between John chapter 13 and 30 where Jesus, Judas, has gone out into the night, his heart filled with the devil himself, fully intending on betraying the Son of God.

And John chapter 18, verse 3, where Judas with a band of people that have been given him by the scribes and the Pharisees have come into the garden with torches and lanterns and weapons to take Jesus Christ captive and ultimately usher him to the cross on Calvary. That's the scene. Now John 16 falls right into the midst of these things.

Now to say that they had asked nothing until this time must have been somewhat perplexing to the disciples. For the, I mean, James and John, the Gospels tell us they had asked him to be seated at the right hand and the left hand of power when he came into his kingdom. The disciples had asked at one point, Lord, teach us to pray.

And so it must have been somewhat perplexing to them. What does he really mean, ask us? Up to this point, ask me rather, up to this point you've not asked for anything. Now the very essence of discipling is a master-student relationship, and it's a relationship really of asking and receiving.

When they left their nets, when they left the receipt of custom as Matthew did, all of them as they began to follow, that was the basis of the relationship. We ask, you give us, you tell us. Now, Jesus was in effect telling them at this particular time in the Gospel of John that a time is soon coming when things around you will seem to spin completely out of control.

Now they had Him at that moment. They were at a banquet table as they saw it. He's speaking perhaps at greater length than other than perhaps in an amount of beatitudes that they had heard Him speak.

He's praying directly to His Father in these chapters in the Gospel of John. They're listening to mysteries. They're listening to revelation.

But yet in the midst of it all, you and I know in retrospect that He was soon to be taken captive. They were soon to flee. Everything around, everything that the three years of walking with Him had seemingly put into their hearts was about to be sent into a tailspin, a time of trial and hardship unprecedented, such as they'd never even imagined was coming.

I don't think that any of them could imagine. He was trying to tell them that hardship awaited Him, but it seems that there was a deep reluctance within them to hear it. And that's the way it is with human nature.

God can be speaking directly about days that are just ahead of us, but there's just something within us that doesn't want to hear it. We don't want to see it. We choose to be optimistic as we see it.

Well, maybe, just maybe it won't be that way. Maybe we'll just get through this. Maybe there won't have to be a cross.

Maybe He won't be taken captive. Maybe He won't be delivered to the authorities and spit upon and mocked and crucified. He was telling them very directly, but it seemed to take them by surprise, ironically, when it actually came.

And He was telling them, you're going to be afraid and a sense of loss and sorrow will want to fill your heart. But I will be with you and give you an inner strength and joy and vision that's only available to those who love me and are willing to do my work in the earth. Now, if you read these chapters in John, you'll see this thought very, very clearly presented in there to those disciples.

You're going to be afraid. It's going to spin out of control, but I'm going to be with you. And as you walk in the pathway that I prescribed before you as my body, as my church, you're going to have hope.

You're going to have vision. Matter of fact, you're going to have joy. He said up to this point, you've not really asked for what is really yours.

But if now you're willing to ask, if now in the midst of your crisis you're willing, and obviously they did on the day of Pentecost, they did in that upper room. They must have remembered these words, gone back to that upper room in their failure, in their confusion, in their lack of understanding of the hour that they were living in. But they did remember this one thing that He said, if you ask me for what you need in that time, and you will receive it and your joy will be full.

Joy, not just endurance. The Christian church is not just to endure difficult days. We're to have the joy of the Lord in our heart.

That is our strength. We're to walk in a place that common men can't walk in. That people who are focused on themselves know nothing about.

We're to walk in a realm of joy that is hidden to those who are outside of the actual working of the kingdom of God. Now people can be in church, but they can be outside of the working of God's kingdom. And folks, it's imperative that you and I understand that in this hour.

You can have been in church for years, but actually be outside of where the kingdom of God really is, and how the kingdom of God works, where the power of God is actually found. In Matthew 25 in verse 4, Jesus himself gives an illustration of the day of Christ's return, that there were people who were foolish, and the wise took oil in their vessels and in their lamps, but the foolish had no oil. And when the crisis hit, they went to the wise and said, you seem to see something that we don't see.

You're standing here saying, behold the bridegroom. We don't see anything but darkness and calamity. We don't see anything but difficulty and distress and anguish and perplexity, the seas roaring, nations in turmoil and distress.

We don't see anything around us, but here you say, look, the bridegroom is coming. They say, give us of your oil. Give us.

You see folks, but the tragedy is they ask too late. Very hard to get the resources that Christ is willing to give in a time of calamity. Remember Noah's day, the floods came.

But before the floods came, the scripture says that God closed the door of the ark and sealed Noah and his family inside. And you and I can imagine those, when the rain started and as they were, got to be a foot deep and two feet deep, that people are banging on the door, but they can't get into that ark because it's closed now. The time of asking is over.

The time of getting the strength that is needed has passed. And I believe that this oil represents the light and the life of Christ. And that oil is present in the body of believers that are doing His work on the earth.

It gives us the ability to see wondrous things in the present and in the future which are hidden from the eyes of non-spiritual people. And the reason we can see is because we are doing the work of God in the earth. Now in order to understand exactly what Jesus was telling His disciples to ask for in our opening text, we need to understand exactly what kind of a testimony that He was asking them to have everywhere they went.

Now keep in mind, Matthew 7-7 comes at the end of a very long discourse that begins in Matthew chapter 5. The scripture says, He saw the multitudes went into a mountain, His disciples came to Him, and He opened His mouth and taught them. So now, He starts in Matthew 5 and verse 3 to teach His disciples. And the text I read is in Matthew chapter 7 and verse 7. There's a lot that He has said.

It's one statement. It's one teaching. Now, just take... I'm going to paraphrase it.

And the synopsis of these verses of scripture is mine. I encourage you when you go home to study it in detail. Perhaps get this CD at some point and go through this yourself.

But here's what Jesus was telling them as His disciples. This is what you are being called to be in the earth. Matthew 5-3.

They were to know their need of God. Verse 4. They were to long for God's ways to be known in the earth. I'll just read them through as I've written them.

They were to act with restraint even when it was within their power to do otherwise. They were to hunger and thirst for inward purity. They were to be merciful.

They were to feel as God does about things. That's where He said, Blessed are the pure in heart, they shall see God. They were to be at peace with all men and call others to peace with God and with each other also.

They were to be peacemakers. They were to call men. They were to walk in peace with all men as much as is possible, it says in the scripture.

And they were to be at peace with God and call other people to be at peace with God. They were to endure persecution even to the point of rejoicing because of it. Can you imagine? Enduring persecution is one thing but rejoicing over it is an absolutely other thing.

They were not to lose the fervency for the work of God. They were to be of salt, which means that they were to bring flavor, create thirst, promote healing and bring preservation into the earth. Jesus himself said, If the salt loses its savor, if the salt loses its purpose, if the salt does not bring the flavor of God into a situation, if the salt does not create a thirst in people for the things of God, if the salt does not promote healing among the oppressed and the wounded, if the salt does not preserve the truth as it is written in the word of God.

Jesus himself said, It's good for nothing and it's cast out and it's trodden under the foot of man. Folks, there is a gospel that is discounted by men in every generation and especially in ours. A gospel that is ridiculed and mocked because there's no power in it and even the world knows there's no power in it.

It's nothing but self-seeking with Jesus added to it. That's all it is. And the world knows there's no power in it so it's literally trodden under the foot of man.

They were to do things publicly that bring glory to God but at the same time do them without the motive of themselves being seen. That's a phenomenal thought, isn't it? Let your light so shine that people may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. But yet elsewhere in these chapters Jesus also says, Be careful that you don't do your good deeds to be seen of men otherwise you have your reward.

Don't pray to be seen of men. Don't do charitable works to be seen of men. Don't stand in the synagogues professing to be holy to be seen of men or you have the full reward.

So we're to do publicly as a church for example we're to do things that bring glory to God but we're to do everything in our power not to be seen. They were to avoid religious hypocrisy at all costs. There was to be a quest for truth in your heart and in mine that I'm never willing to stand at any place at any time with the knowledge that I'm just a religious hypocrite.

I act a certain way but I do not embrace it in my own heart. They were to stay in right relationship with other believers at all costs. At every cost.

They were to agree with God when He challenged their ways. Remember He said, Agree with your adversary when you're in the way lest you be cast into prison and you don't get out of that prison until you've paid the full debt. Now especially when God is your adversary.

When you and I are in the way and it's the Lord actually who's standing and saying this is not right. This is not who I am. I can't walk with you unless the two of us be agreed.

Agree with your adversary especially when it's God. They were to understand the danger and to shun immoral sexual lust. He said if you even look upon a woman in the scriptures with a lustful eye you've committed adultery in your heart.

And if your eye offends you pluck it out. If your hand offends you cut it off. Now he's saying you have to shun this.

He's not suggesting you physically pluck your eye out and cut your hand off. They were to remain true to their marriage vows. Folks when you and I stand before an altar and I know there are circumstances in some cases there are innocent parties or it's simply out of your control.

There was nothing you could do about it. But if your marriage is going through a rough spot don't walk out because you stood before God and you said for better for worse in sickness and in health for richer for poorer till death do us part. So help me God.

That's a vow you made before God. It's a vow you made to another person and it's the closest type Paul says in the New Testament to Christ and his church on the earth is your marriage and my marriage. Folks Jesus doesn't walk out on us when we go through a rough time.

And marriages are to be our marriages are to be a representation of Jesus in the earth especially in the Christian church. We're living in an hour when the divorce rate in the church is very high and it's no glory to God that's for certain. They were to speak truth at all times.

Jesus said don't say I swear this is true. He said don't do it. You can't make one hair on your head white or black.

You can't change anything. He said just does anything more than speaking truth comes from evil. Let your communication be yay yay and nay nay.

In other words you don't have to swear and you don't have to say now this is a true story. You know when you say that what does it tell people about your other stories? Speak the truth. Just speak the truth.

At all times. Just speak the truth. They were not to respond in like spirit when treated wrongfully.

But do everything in their power to respond in a godly manner. They were to love and bless and do good to them which were their enemies. Phenomenal thought.

I can see Peter mulling it over in his mind. Maybe seven times. That ought to do it.

Would that be good enough? I mean the eighth time. You're history. You do this to me.

But seven times. That's got to be godly. Remember when he came to Jesus? How many times should I forgive? Seven times? I think he expected Jesus to say Buster thou Simon Barjona for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you.

It's been given to you my father in heaven. And Jesus said no not seven times. Seven.

Seventy times seven. Is it seven or seventy? Seventy times seven. That's 490 times.

I wasn't very good in math. But that's 490 times. And you can imagine Peter walking 490 times to forgive somebody who comes and does the same thing to me over and over and over again.

Matthew 6 tells us that they were to pray that God's will be done. That supply be given to do it. That they might be ambassadors of forgiveness.

They were to ask not to be led astray and acknowledge that God alone has the power to help them do this. Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. There's no other way this can be done.

That I might be an ambassador. That I might stay on this path that God has for my life. They were to be aware of the peril of seeking security in anything of this world and letting the fear of tomorrow's provision begin to consume their lives.

They were to be aware of it folks. And how much more in our generation. We are going in to a worldwide economic storm.

But the Lord Jesus Christ tells us that we are to seek first his kingdom with the promise that all that we will need will be given to us. Seek first his kingdom. Seek first the kingdom of God.

Seek first the work of God. Seek first to do the will of God. Seek first what the mandate of God is that was given to you and I in our generation.

Seek it first. And all these things shall be added unto you. Now it may not be as glamorous as you'd like.

But it will be added to you. That is a red letter out of the mouth of Jesus' promise. Don't be consumed about where shall we live and what shall we eat and what shall we wear.

For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. Seek first the kingdom of God.

Folks I can't overestimate it. I remember as a young Christian coming home from Eastern Canada having been out preaching at a conference, a small church conference. And my house was burnt to the ground.

By a miracle of God my children were spared. But we had absolutely nothing for a season. And I remember coming out of a friend's house that we were staying in over Christmas time.

And I said well Lord I've done my part. I'm seeking first the kingdom of God. I don't even have a toothbrush to brush my teeth with.

But I said your part of the verse is to add to me everything I need. And I just remember I went out for a jog one morning and said Lord I'm completely in your hands. I don't know what tomorrow is going to bring.

But I know that you promised me that you'd meet all of my needs. And folks he did miraculously. It was phenomenal to see how God met all of our needs.

Gave us another place to stay. Not as big as the first one but it was very nice. All the furniture we needed.

The clothing that we needed. Everything. And he said to me when it was all over I needed to show you.

I can take it all away and I can give it all back. Matthew 7 he says They were to be careful in dealing with other believers. Folks we need to be very very careful.

He says be careful how you judge another. Because you're looking at a speck in your brother's eye but there might be a log in your own that you're not even aware of. He said once you've dealt with what's in your own heart then you will see clearly.

In other words you'll see your brother as Christ sees him or her. And you'll deal tenderly. And you'll deal not for the purpose of being proven right but you'll deal with the purpose of seeing that person restored to spiritual health.

And then lastly in the final verse of Matthew chapter 7 verse 6 before we get into our opening text he says don't give that which is holy to the dogs. And don't cast your pearls before swine unless they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you. In other words you and I need to learn when to share truth and when to be quiet.

You don't have to unload a wagon load of scripture on everybody because some hearts are simply not ready. Remember when Jesus was brought before his accusers he knew what was in their hearts and he didn't answer them. There was no point in answering them because if he would have spoken divine truth they would have just trampled it underfoot and they would have just made a mockery of the things of God.

He knew that there was a time to share and there was a time to be quiet. Now he says ask. Like this has been a lot of things that have been shared with these disciples.

This has been one sitting. One teaching. Just like I've more or less paraphrased it for you today and they're thinking exactly what you're thinking today.

How in the world am I ever going to do all these things? It's not possible. I don't have the resources. I can't do this.

I mean I can probably take a little paragraph in these three chapters and more or less focus on it and give it my best effort but even my best efforts are going to fall short. How am I ever going to do this? And they have to be thinking that. I mean if they're just ordinary people like you and I how in the world am I supposed to do this? How do I love my enemies? How do I be as kind as God towards people who fall short of what they're supposed to be or the truth they're supposed to be walking in? How do I stop thinking and worrying about tomorrow? How do I do this? I can't.

That's why he comes to verse 7 and says Ask and it will be given you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you.

Now in verse 9 he says something rather interesting. What man is there of you whom if his son asks bread will he give him a stone? And then the next verse he says if he asks a fish will he give him a serpent? Now these are not just random examples folks. Just a few chapters before in Matthew chapter 4 he's been led

into the wilderness of the Holy Spirit.

He's been 40 days without food. At the end of that 40 days the Scripture says he was hungry. And I have read the book on fasting.

If you read the book it will tell you at a certain stage in a fast your body you're not hungry after a certain point. I've gone on not a 40 day but I've gone on a several day fast and it is true after a certain point you're not hungry anymore. Because your body is consuming fat and toxins and everything else that's laid up in it.

But the moment hunger returns that means your body has begun to consume itself. Muscle tissue, vital tissue in your body. You're in effect starving at that point.

And the Scripture says at the end of the 40 days he was hungry. That means starvation technically. Physical starvation has begun to set into his body.

Satan comes to him at that point and says if you're the son of God command that these stones be made bread. If you are God's son do you have to go through hardship? If you are God's son shouldn't it be easy? Shouldn't there be like this constant shouldn't it smell good? Shouldn't it taste good? Shouldn't it be soft to the touch? Shouldn't it be comfortable? If you are the son of God you don't have to go through this. You don't have to suffer.

You don't have to be deprived. If you're the son of God just command these stones to be made bread. And Jesus said to Satan get behind me.

He said it is written that man will not live by bread alone but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God. In other words I've been sent on a mission by my father and I'm going to fulfill that mission and it doesn't mean that I'm always going to be comfortable. It doesn't mean that there's not going to be times of want and hardship.

But I have a word from the Father that I'm going to finish this journey and I'm going to finish it in victory. I'm not finishing it alone. Many are coming with me.

And so I'm not looking for a soft journey. And many people in this generation have looked for a soft journey and have tried to use the power of God to turn every stone to bread. Make every hard place easy.

And he said what man is there of you if his son asks for bread will he give him a stone? In other words God will give you what you need to get you through every difficult place that you're going to face. You don't have to try to change it. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

You don't have to spend your time trying to figure out a way out of your dilemma or your difficulty or trying to use the power of God to make hard places easy. He was on a redemptive mission. And then he says if he asks for fish will he give him a serpent? That's an incredible statement in itself.

Because God the Father had sent His Son to become a fisher of my soul and of yours. And consequently to call us into His work to become fishers of men. That's the call of God in the church.

It's the redemptive purpose of God in the earth. And in order to accomplish that it involved a cross. It involved being rejected by this world.

It involved having to endure the ridicule, the scorn. The absolute hatred of people who are opposing their own salvation. He said if you ask for fish will he give you a serpent? If you ask in your heart Jesus I want to follow you.

I want to take up my cross. Lord I want to be given for this generation. I want people to find you through my life.

I want my words to have weight behind them. I don't want to be just a light testimony of who you are in my generation. I want to be a fisher of men.

Just as the early church was. And that has to be a cry in the heart of an honest child of God. It has to be a cry in your heart.

If you truly are a child of God. And yet before him stands the serpent. And the serpent says look at here's all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.

And he says look all you have to do is bow before me. Just acknowledge that God's ways are not the only ways. That the way God says it is not the way it has to be.

There's other ways to do this. All you have to do is bend your knee and circumvent the cross. Go around the hardship and I'll give it all to you right now.

And folks that's the original sin. That's what Satan tempted Adam and Eve with in the garden of Eden. He came down and he told them this you don't have to listen to God.

He doesn't know everything. You partake of what I give you. Your eyes are going to be open and you're going to know good and evil.

In other words you can chart your own course and the very thing he tempted Adam and Eve with he's now coming to the Son of God in the wilderness. And Jesus is saying to his disciples I was sent to be a fisher of men and that path involves a cross. And if you ask for a fish God's not going to give you a serpent.

I was sent to the cross. I was sent for the purpose of redeeming humankind and the serpent appeared before me professing that his ways were in measure equal to the ways of God. And if you ask for a fish God the Father is not going to give you a serpent.

In other words he's not going to come to you and say no life is meant to be easy. Folks I tell you there have been serpents standing before much of the professed testimony of this generation. Saying no you don't have to talk about the blood.

No the cross isn't necessary. No the Christian life is all just about being happy and healthy and wealthy. That's the Christian life.

You don't have to be given. You don't have to be poured out. You don't have to go to the mission field.

You don't have to suffer for the cause of Christ so that others may come to the knowledge of God. No sir there's an easier way to do this. If all it is is just about ruling and reigning over people then try doing it my way.

Oh no. Then he says in verse 12 Therefore all things whatsoever you would that men should do to you do to them for this is the law and the prophets. It's as if Jesus was saying to them if I were lost I would want somebody to come for me.

I'd want somebody to reach out to me. I'd want somebody to give whatever they had to to get me out if I were lost. Whatever you would want others to do for you do for them.

See that's the key actually to all the resource that's spoken about in verses 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. All the resource is found in this one key. Whatever you would want people to do for you if you were in a certain situation do for them.

Go to them. That's the key to enduring the scorn of those who oppose their own salvation. That's the key to being kind to your enemies.

It's this heart of God that says I'm not willing that any should perish. That's the key that allows you to have your face slapped and yet not retaliate in like kind. It's the key that gives you joy and love in the workplace in spite of how rude and nasty and ignorant the people are getting all around you.

That's the key. Oh Jesus I could be just like one of them. Had somebody not come to me had you not come and gone to a cross I would be just as they are.

Oh Jesus would you let me represent you on the earth. Would you stretch me out beyond myself. Would you take me beyond my own quest for personal comfort.

Would you help me God to get rid of these feelings of desiring vengeance. Would you give me the mercy and compassion that God is willing to give to those who belong to Him. If I were lost I'd want somebody to walk with me and help me never to go down that road again.

Lord would you help me to be patient with brothers and sisters in the Lord that are younger and weaker and more confused and haven't made the full break with the things of this world. Instead of pointing a bony finger would you help me to stretch out a tender hand. That's the key.

And this is where life comes from. This is where life comes from. The promise at the end of the scripture.

He said therefore whoever hears these things of mine and does them I will liken him to a wise man that built his house upon a rock. The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew and beat on that house and it fell not for it was founded upon a rock. The house was founded upon the work of God in the earth.

That's why Paul in Acts 27 can be in a ship that is virtually falling apart and yet he could stand and take communion and rejoice and be an encourager to those who are going to have to swim to get to safety. Because it was all about other people now and the glory of God. It wasn't about his own preservation.

It was about others. And Paul could see what ordinary men couldn't see. The captain of the ship couldn't see it.

The merchant seamen couldn't see it. The experienced couldn't see it. The soldiers couldn't see it.

It was just this little guy who was down in the bowels of the ship who had chosen to be given for the glory of God and for the souls of men. His eyes were opened and he had this incredible vision. You might say he was the type of those who will have oil in the last days.

The last days on this planet are going to be the most horrendous days. Deeper, darker than anything that our natural minds can even imagine. And the Lord is saying to his church, ask me now for the things you're going to need.

Ask now. Study these chapters of scripture. I have read these three chapters over and over and over and over this week.

I want it so deep in my heart. I believe you can live the Christian life on these three chapters alone. I mean, have a clear vision of what the Christian life is supposed to be.

We can't live it ourselves. We need the power of God to live it. But we could see our way through just studying these three chapters of scripture.

Ask. Oh, my beloved church. The Lord would say to you, ask.

It's too late when the calamity begins. It's very hard to get right with God in a time of distress. Very hard to find strength.

And I see foolish people throughout the world running to those who seem to have a clarity. They have joy. They have purpose.

They're not moved by the afflictions that are coming on this world. And they're saying, give us of your oil. And the wife said, we can't give it to you.

It's not ours to give. You have to go and get it for yourself. And while they went to buy, the scripture says, the bridegroom came.

This is the time to ask. This is the time for you and I, as the church of Jesus Christ, to say, Lord Jesus, as part of your church, would you let me finish the way the church started? I'm going to go back into the book of Acts chapter 2, and I'm going to read it again, and I'm going to follow it all the way through. And I want a clear view of what your church looks like.

And Lord, would you help me to finish the way it started? I don't want to look different than these people look. I don't want to act differently. I don't want a different focus.

It seemed that they were willing to go throughout the whole world, that others may come to the knowledge of Christ that they had found. It seemed that no cost was too great. God, please help me.

And I think it's a prayer that all of us have to pray now. Please help me, Jesus. It's part of asking, isn't it? Please help me, God, to see what I don't see.

Help me to embrace what is still out of my reach. Help me to understand what still has eluded my mind. Help me, God.

Help me to be a Christian. Help me to be doing the work of God on the earth. Because your promise to me is that when the storms come, I will not be shaken by it.

There'll be no amount of positive thinking that's going to get anybody through these days. There'll be no amount of false promises. And the serpent will be laughing, because of so many that have bitten into this theology that the way of God is an easy way, a broad way.

And there's no cross involved in it, no hardship, no suffering. I want the power of Christ in my life. I want the power to shun evil and do good.

Not my concept of good and evil, but God's concept of good and evil. I want the power to put away what God says is wrong and embrace what is right. I want the power of God to live my life in the exact plan and purpose of God.

There's an exact plan for my life. It's not a haphazard plan. There's no A, B and C door in the kingdom of God.

God has a plan for my life and a purpose for my life. I want to finish that course. And I want the power to live it.

I want to love people as Christ does. That's a hard one. Matter of fact, it's impossible without God.

But I do want to love people as Christ does. And I want to have His love and power flowing through me towards them. I do want it, folks, with all my heart.

I've been studying these verses of Scripture, and I'm asking as well as you are. I want this. I want it with everything in me.

I want to finish this race like Paul. To be able to say in the presence of God, it doesn't matter what men think. It doesn't matter anything in eternity.

But to be able to say in the presence of God, I have run the race. I have run it God's way. I've finished my course.

There's no regret in my life. When you don't run it God's way, folks, it's not a good finish a lot of times. I want to run it God's way.

I was praying on this platform this morning. Whatever I've embraced, wherever I'm going, whatever I'm becoming, that displeases you, Lord. Or doesn't represent you, help me to see it.

I don't see it a lot of things, but God, you can help me to see it. You will help me to be what I need to be, because it's imperative that I stand for God in this last hour of time. All of the wolves and pulpits, especially in this country, when they... the false shepherds, actually, when they see the wolf coming, they will flee.

Suddenly their ministries are going to be gone, almost overnight. They don't have any word for the people, because what's about to happen will not fit their theology. But those of us who know God, for the sake of people, will stand.

And whatever that means, God will give us the strength to do it. Hallelujah. If the musicians would come, please, I'd appreciate it very much.

Ask. Now, I know that in the course of what I've shared this morning, the Holy Spirit has spoken things to different people, different hearts. Things that you need, things that I need.

And I want to give a simple altar call this morning. Ask. You need the power to turn from things that you know are wrong, attitudes of heart that don't represent Christ, pursuits that aren't God, a Christianity that's indifferent to the peril of those that are lost.

It's a self-serving Christianity, and it falls far short of the glory of God. And you say, but God, that's just the way I am. I don't know what to do about it.

And that had to be what these disciples were feeling when they got to chapter 7. There were no chapters in those days, but I mean, they got to chapter 7, verse 7. And they had to be saying, I don't know how to do this in their heart. Jesus knew that. I can't do this.

I fall too short of what is required. And that's why he said, ask. See, there was an incredible victory won on the cross.

When Jesus rose from the dead, the Apostle Paul says, the same spirit that raised him from the dead will also quicken our mortal bodies. Will lift us, give us strength, cause us to be what we're not. Bring us into the victory that another won for us.

And so it's possible now. It's all in the realm of possibility. I don't have to come at this altar and pray a prayer and then go home and buy seven books on how to do something.

I simply ask. I ask. God, help me.

Lord, give me the grace to forgive that person. Oh, God, help me to love the people in my workplace, my family. Help me, Lord, not to do works to be seen of men.

Help me, Lord, to not be led into temptation, but delivered from evil. Help me, God, to get out of this practice. Help me, Lord, to get out of any form of lukewarmness in my heart where I'm not really given to your work.

Help me, Lord, if I'm walking around with a lamp that has no oil in it. It looks like a lamp, but there's nothing in it to give light. Help me, God, if the salt of my life is not healing, not preserving, not producing thirst.

Help me, God. Help me, Lord Jesus Christ, to care about people. Your whole mission was redemptive.

The whole purpose of coming to the world was because you so loved people. And you went to a cross for it. God, help me.

I'm supposed to represent that on the earth. I'm supposed to be the embodiment called the church of this heart of God that went to Calvary for people. Help me, God.

Help me, God. I live my day consumed about myself, concerned about my own future. Here I am worried about what I'm going to eat, wear, or live.

And people are dying in the streets. They're going to hell without God. Lord Jesus Christ, would you help me to get my priorities straight? Would you help me, God? Would you help me? Would you help me? And, folks, all you do... I'm sure that some went out from that table.

And they were immediately from this table into the garden of Gethsemane. And, of course, these words would have come back. And, thank God, they had time to ask and to seek and to knock because the promise is everybody.

Everybody who wants the life of Christ can have it. And I don't know about you, but I want that. I want it with everything in my heart.

And if the Lord is speaking to you today about your life, your future, your pursuits, what you're doing, your marriage, if He's speaking to you and you're wondering, How do I change? How do I get out? How do I get into this life that will give me an assurance that I'll not be overthrown by storms that are coming? As I read it, ask. Ask. I've never done anything throughout my entire Christian life but ask.

For years, my prayer was, God, help me. God, help me. I would jog.

I'd jog for a mile or two. I call it jogging, but it didn't look much like a jog. My whole time would be, God, help me.

Most times, and that was as a pastor. God, help me. God, help me.

Oh, God, help me. And just various ways of saying, God, help me. And that would be my prayer for a whole hour sometimes.

Oh, God, help me. God, help me. God, help me.

God, you've prayed that too, haven't you? You know what that's all about. The whole hour of God, help me. God, help me.

God, help me. God, help me. And you know something? He answered it.

And continues to answer that prayer because it comes from an honest heart. So if that's all you can pray today, that's good enough, God. We'll take you right there.

Let's stand. These altars are open. If the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, just come, please, and we'll pray together.

Slip out of your seat, balcony, go to either exit. In the annex, you can stand between the screens if you will, please. The Holy Spirit is speaking to you.

You need to come out of something and into the life of Christ. Please, please, please, don't put this off. It's still tomorrow.

Please, folks, please hear me. This is a prophetic word today. There's a storm coming.

There's a terrible storm coming. It's going to happen suddenly. Don't get caught off guard.

Be ready. Have what you need to get through. Hallelujah.

Let's worship together and then we're going to pray. We began this service today with a quote from the prophet Malachi, last voice of the Old Testament. He talked about the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

How the Spirit of God, in a sense, would return to his people and turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to their fathers. Now, what that says to me is that it will be all about other people. That God's Spirit will one more time move upon the hearts of those who can still hear.

And it will become all about other people. It's the opposite to the gospel that says it's all about me. It's all about other people.

And the children will find that very attractive and want to follow that kind of a relation. Because they will be important and they find it attractive. And there will be this coming together of the body of Jesus Christ.

And you will be an integral part of that. Praise God. Just the fact that you're here, I expect the miraculous to happen in your heart.

I do. With everything in me. Just the fact that you are asking.

And sometimes the ask is just a groan. That's all it is. It's just a groan.

Oh God. It's just I fall so far short. And the Lord says, but I don't and I'm within you.

And we'll walk together. And from the inside out, you'll begin to change. And you'll see that I'm willing to be God to you.

Hallelujah. Father, just thank you so much, Lord, for these who have come to this altar. Thank you, Lord, that we can expect that you will infuse us into this city.

As light and salt. That's set upon a hill. And does bring preservation.

And thirst and healing. Lord, we thank you for giving us your eyes. Your heart.

Your mind. The things that you promised us, even through the Old Testament prophets. We thank you, God, for giving us these things.

And we don't have any merit. We just simply come because you invite us. Before your throne, not in our strength, but in our weakness.

And in our time of need. And we come thanking you, Lord Jesus Christ. That your victory is ours.

Everything you inherited of the Father now belongs to us. And so we come to you, Lord. For the strength that we need to represent you in our generation.

Help our thinking to be clear. Help us to see what you see and to understand what you understand. Give us a vision, Lord, for our lives.

Help us to see the value of every soul. Every person who walks these streets. Whether they're laying in their own vomit.

Or whether they're walking with a thousand dollar suit. Help us to see the value of every soul that you died for. Help us, God, not to see with natural eyes anymore.

Give us supernatural eyes and a supernatural heart. Give us the ability, Lord, to be kind. In hostile work environments to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Help us in our families, Lord, to be committed one to another. And not to back out because things get tough. Oh God Almighty, God Almighty, God Almighty.

God Almighty, God Almighty. Be God Almighty to us, Lord. Be our strength, oh God.

Be the one who carries us. Be our only testimony. Be the only song that is on our lips.

Be all that we have, Lord. Let it all come from you and from your hand. Hallelujah.

Father, we thank you for these little children today. Oh Jesus, we ask you to bless them. God, we lift them up before you.

And Lord, we thank you, Father. That we cherish these little ones as you do. They are of immeasurable value to your kingdom.

Lord, help us to be an example to them of what it means to be a Christian. Lord, may they never stumble over us on their journey to finding you as Savior. We claim them for the kingdom of God.

We cherish them as Moses cherished the family of God. Father, thank you, Lord, that our prayers are not in vain. Today we ask for the souls of these children, Lord, to be found at your throne one day.

Rejoicing and dancing and leaping. For the goodness of God. Father, give their moms and dads and guardians and parents, Lord.

And grandmas and grandpas the courage to live for Christ. To be godly, to be encouraging, to be kind. Let our conversation be filled with grace and seasoned with salt.

Oh God Almighty, help us to speak words of life over them and not condemnation. Give us a right heart and a right spirit. Oh God Almighty, we thank you, Lord.

We don't know what the future has, but we do know that you have the future. And that's all that matters to us, Lord. Hallelujah.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord.

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