

Bend, Bow or Burn

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the necessity for believers to stand firm in their faith amidst societal pressures to conform, drawing on biblical examples of opposition and the power of prayer.

Duration: 45:20

Scripture: Psalm 2:1

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Faithfulness"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of standing firm in faith and righteousness in the face of opposition and societal pressures to compromise. It calls for a willingness to pray, to refuse to embrace evil, and to trust in God's strength for the journey ahead. The speaker urges believers to be prepared for spiritual battles, to pray for a spiritual awakening, and to be willing to make sacrifices for the cause of Christ.

Transcript

Praise God. Thank you, choir. Thank you, orchestra.

God bless you this morning, Times Square Church and those that are visiting with us. Trust that the Lord has already blessed you this morning just by His presence and that your heart is gladdened just knowing that He has everything in His hands. Thank God for that.

Thank God with all of our heart. I'd like to speak to you this morning from Psalm 2, please, if you will turn there, Psalm 2, a message that's entitled Bend, Bow, or Burn. Now, Father, I thank you, God, with all my heart.

I thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, for the anointing of your Holy Spirit. God, I wouldn't even attempt to deliver messages like this unless you had called me to, unless you animate me, give me your heart. Lord God Almighty, I give my body to you and I ask you, Lord, to be the very passion of my heart, the intonation of my voice.

Give us the ears to hear what you're speaking to your people in these days in which we're living. These are dark days, but there is a glorious, glorious light on the horizon. Oh, God Almighty, help me to do justice to your word today.

Father, I thank you for these things, Lord. I bless you, God, for what you will do. Strengthen us, Lord, prepare us.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Psalm 2, please, beginning at verse 1. I'll read through till verse 5. Why do the nations rage and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us.

He who sits in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall hold them in derision. He shall speak to them in his wrath and distress them in his deep displeasure.

Why do the nations rage? The psalmist said. Why do they continuously fall into this cycle of saying, let's put away the testimony of God from within our borders and let's break the cords that have restrained us, in a sense, from behaving the way fallen people want to behave. There's a certain restriction that comes upon a society when the church of Jesus Christ has occupied her place, has prayed the way she stood.

We have spoken the words that God's given us to speak. It causes a restraint to come into a society. It causes the people of that particular time, place, causes them to have to keep their behaviors in check because the gospel is being preached and the restraining influence of the church of Christ is in the midst of that society.

But there's something in the hearts of fallen men in every generation, ours included. There's this internal rage that says, I will not be under the governorship of God. I will not obey God.

I will not live according to God's ways and his plan for humanity. No, we will cast away these cords as they've done throughout history, and we will do what we want to do. We will be God in ourselves, and we will decide what is good and what is evil, and we will even create our own utopia at the end of it all, but we will do it our way, not God's way.

From the beginning of biblical history, fallen humanity has tried to cast out of its consciousness the knowledge of and the testimony in the presence of God. Folks, it just repeats itself over and over again. Unable to confront the spiritual reality with fallen reasoning and dealing with historical facts that they cannot deny, fallen men usually resort to threats and intimidation.

It's always been that way throughout history, and it will be that way and is in measure again in our generation. Let me read to you from the book of Acts chapter four, beginning at verse 14. And seeing the men who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men? For indeed, a notable miracle has been done through them, and it's evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But that it spreads no further among the people, and let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name. So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all or teach in the name of Jesus.

But Peter and John answered and said to them, Whether it's right in the sight of God to listen to you more than God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done.

Now these New Testament threats were nothing new, and they shouldn't catch you and I by surprise in our time. I like to call them the pre-awakening threats of darkness. When God's about to do something, we will have to come up against an opposition that is no different than the opposition that those who have come before us have had to face.

Peter said it this way in 1st Peter chapter 4 verses 12 and 13. Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened to you, but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. Peter was saying to the people of that time, don't think it's a strange thing.

Theologically we may have produced some kind of a stupor in the modern day testimony in this and other societies that will make it seem as if it's a strange thing when we have to fight opposition to maintaining, retaining, or reclaiming godliness in the nation. Darkness is not going to lay down and go away. God has sent awakenings throughout history and if we are praying for an awakening, we have to get prepared for the opposition that's going to come.

You're going to face it. Some of you are facing it now and those who aren't, you're going to face it in the very, very near future. When his glory is revealed, when God does that which only God can do, the scripture says you may be glad also with exceeding joy.

When you and I have made the choice to stand in the midst of the fire, when we've made the choice to be firm, when everything around us is telling us to bend, when we've made the choice to do right, when society has embraced the concept of doing wrong as if it's a good thing, when sometimes we even have to stand alone in our families, our communities, in the workplace, wherever it is, in your colleges, your classroom, your school, when you simply have to stand alone but you make the choice to stand. The one thing I know from scripture is God promises to be with you. God promises to walk with you through the flood and through the fire.

God promises to close the mouths of lions. God promises to bring you into a supernatural presence of his Holy Spirit in such a measure that you will know that you're being sustained by the hand of God. You think about it for a moment.

Had God's people historically bent under the weight of the threatenings, how many wonderful and divine life-changing moments might have been lost if they had gone home in the book of Acts chapter four and say, well, the authorities are threatening us and they're telling us that we can't preach or teach now in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. So let's all just settle for home fellowships. Let's just keep quiet.

Let's keep to ourselves to think of what would have been lost if that had been their reasonings. But instead of that, it says, being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all the chief priests and elders had said to them. When they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said, Lord, you are God who made heaven and earth and the sea and all that in them is who by the mouth of your servant David has said, why did the heathen rage in the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ for truly against your Holy servant, Jesus, whom you anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together.

In other words, the society of that day, secular, sacred, those who had some form of profession of walking with God and those who didn't gathered together, unified in this one thing to eradicate the name of Jesus

Christ from their society. Verse 28, he says, to do whatever your hand and your purpose determined before to be done. Now, Lord, look on their threats and grant to your servants that with all boldness, they may speak your word by stretching out your hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of your Holy servant, Jesus.

In other words, we're not going to bend. We're not going to bow. We're not going to back away, but God we're asking for more of what got us into trouble in the first place.

We're asking for more of your presence. We're asking for more power in the truth that you give us to profess. We ask you Lord for more healing than just this one man who was lame standing at the gate of the temple.

We ask you to stretch out your hand and begin to heal marvelously in our day and in our society. Oh God, do this for the Holy name sake of Jesus. And the scripture says, and when they prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy spirit.

And they spoke the word of God with boldness. That's why on Tuesday night, we're meeting now to pray in this church. That's why we gather at five 30 at seven o'clock.

We go online 139 countries now potentially involved either live or throughout the week. People submitting prayer requests over 2000 answers to prayer have already come in marvelous, phenomenal answers to prayer. And the cry of my heart is, Oh God, stretch out your hand and heal.

Stretch out your hand. Oh God. And do more than we could even think or ask for more than we could anticipate.

God, think about the threatenings of darkness that are against the testimony of Christ in this generation. I'm not concerned about myself, folks. I am concerned about the testimony of Jesus Christ.

I'm concerned about the honor of his name. I'm concerned about our children in our streets who've been raised to think there is no God and have an eternity apart from him ahead of them. I'm concerned for the single mother at home crying at night, not knowing where she's going to find the strength to feed and to guide her children.

I'm concerned for the honor of God. And it causes me to pray and it causes me to say, Oh God, do what you have to do. Do Lord Jesus Christ in my life and in the lives of your people what needs to be done in this generation that your name might be honored one more time.

And when they prayed, the place was shaken because they were sincere. They were not looking for an easy way out. They were not looking for an easy path.

They knew that they were praying to be sent into the center of a firestorm. And they knew that only the hand of God would be able to protect them there. Oh God, give us the power again.

Oh Jesus, to lay hands on the sick and see them recover. Give us the power to cast out devils. Give us the power.

Oh God, as your word says, to be your people, a people like none other. Set apart in the earth as a testimony of the reality of the living God. Oh Jesus, son of God, break the bondages in your house.

Those things that have come upon your people and keep us incredibly and incessantly weak, break these bondages. Oh God, we ask it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and make us a free people. Turn us away from that which is bringing us into spiritual poverty and blinding our eyes and making us weak and bring us back into that place where we live for the glory of God and for the souls of men.

God, touch us in a way like we've never known in this generation. Forgive us, Lord Jesus, for what we've done to your name in America. Forgive us for the foolishness that we propagated on this generation, professing that it was the glory, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God, forgive us for our ways. We humble ourselves and we come before you and we begin to pray. And as you speak, we will turn from our wicked ways and you say you will heal.

You will forgive our sin and you will heal our nation. God, we believe it. We stand here in the gap, Lord, and we're not willing to let this country die on our watch.

We're not willing to let New York City perish in its sin when you still have a living testimony alive in the midst of this city. If you and I are going to pray, if we're going to continue to believe God for a spiritual awakening in our city and our nation, we can expect opposition. Now the question arises, what kind of opposition can we expect? It'll be nothing new.

As Solomon once said, there's nothing new under the sun. History repeats itself. Awakenings come, but so do the attempts of darkness and the opposition to stop it.

So we can expect nothing less than those who've gone before us have experienced. For example, in the book of Exodus, chapter one, the people of God were about to be delivered. They were about to have an awakening of sorts.

Verse eight says, there arose a new king over Egypt who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. In America today, the people who believe in God and believe these are the words of God, and at least believe that there are standards in this book, which society should live by.

And this society should seriously consider are more, many more than those who don't. We're right in the same position they were in. So how did darkness oppose these people of God at this time? In verse 10, he says, come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply.

And it happens in the event of war that they also join our enemies and fight against us and go up out of the land. Let's deal shrewdly with them unless they come out from under our control. Oh, folks, we need an awakening.

This nation needs to wake up. Most in this nation believe in God. More people go to church or have some form of religious affiliation that don't.

And yet a minority of this society are governing us at this time. Therefore, he says, set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities.

Now, this is exactly the opposition we're going to face. Here it is. We will tell you what you can build, and we will tell you how to build it.

And it will have to be built according to our specifications. Now you can go to your house of worship and you can worship, but you're going to do it our way. And you're going to build the way we tell you to build.

You're not going to build the way the word of God says to build. You're going to build the way we tell you to build. In other words, you will bend your will to our will.

That is the opposition that we face and we'll face in the coming days. It is the voice of those who know they are in the minority, but lest we should ever figure out the true power that we have as the church of Jesus Christ, they will come with the threatenings that say you build our way. And if you don't build our way, it's going to cost you.

It's going to hurt you. And then again, in the book of Daniel chapter six, there was a king called Darius of Medo-Persia and all the governors of the kingdom, the administrators, the satraps, the counselors, the advisors consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree that whoever petitions any God or man for 30 days, except you, O king shall be cast into the den of lions. Now keep in mind most believe that Daniel was strongly influential in the eventual king of Medo-Persia issuing a decree to let the people of God go home and begin to build again.

But before that awakening came, there came a threatening of darkness against Daniel himself. And basically that threatening of darkness says, we will tell you when you can pray. We'll tell you where you can pray.

We'll tell you how to pray. And we'll tell you who you can pray to. And if you don't listen to us, we're going to devour you.

You're going to be devoured. You're going to be cast into a den of lions. And those voices that have been raised against righteousness will defeat you.

Again, in Daniel chapter three, there were three young men before Babylon fell to Medo-Persia. And in Daniel chapter three, verses three to six, again, it says the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, this is the, the whole more or less people in authority of that time, the judges, the magistrates, all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Then a herald cried aloud to you, it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, the flute, the harp, the lyre, the psaltery in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. In other words, you are going to become one with us and you are going to embrace our new social direction, or you are going to burn. We have an image of humankind.

We've set that image up. And now we are commanding everyone everywhere to bend and bow. And when you hear the music, you better bow, because if you don't bow, you're going to burn.

Historically, on our part, for spiritual freedom to remain, for laws to remain and become just, for the hearts of kings and rulers to be turned back again to truth, for Christ to be glorified again in our day, it will require a people who bend only to the will of God and not to the will of man. That's what it will require. I don't care what kind of a statue the godless of this generation erect and try to get the society to bow down to.

God's people must not bow down to it. All the arrogance of humanity to say, we can take wrong and make it right. We can redefine the family.

We can redefine marriage. We can decide when life should be born and when it should die. All the arrogance of humanity.

And they put up their golden statue of themselves and strike up the band and say, now it's commanded to all people of all nations. Now you bend your knee and you worship the way we do and you worship what we do and you worship in the way we worship it. There comes a time in history when men and women of God hold up this book again and say, no, sir, no, sir, no, sir.

You cannot take evil and call it good. You cannot change the laws of God. You cannot rage against a holy God and say, let us cast off their bands from us.

Let us cast away their cords. He who sits in the heaven shall laugh and he shall speak to you in his displeasure. And he will have you in utter confusion for that is what awaits those who turn from the ways of God.

People who are willing to turn wholeheartedly towards God's truth and prepare to take a spiritual journey. In the days of the Exodus, the word of God came to the people. The word of God looked like it didn't have the upper hand, but somehow in the hearts of God's people, truth found a lodging place.

And they gathered together around the table in their homes and fellowship. And they began to eat of the lamb. They began to partake of the strength that God was willing to provide them.

Of course, the whole thing was a type of the cross. And if you and I as the church of Jesus Christ today, and they prepared to take a journey into an unfamiliar place, I'm telling you, prepare to take a journey now into an unfamiliar place. The comfort as we've known it is going to be gone.

Difficult days are ahead of us as the people of God. But if you will partake of what Jesus Christ bought for you on that cross on Calvary, you gather together as a body in the sweetest fellowship that is known on this side of heaven. You watch what God will begin to do.

The songs of joy that will come into your heart. He told the people partake of the lamb, bring in your friends and family together and put shoes on your feet and gird up your loins and get your staff in your hand. We're about to take a journey.

It's a journey into a place where natural comforts are gone, where physical comforts are not visible. It's a place where we live by the promises of the word of God. It's a place of restoration.

It's a place of comfort. It's a place where there are no signposts, but the presence of God himself. Oh God, thank you for this Lord with all of our hearts for what you're about to do in this generation.

Laws will change. Freedom remains. Hearts are turned.

Christ is glorified by people who choose to pray, no matter what the laws of man may say. We choose to pray. It is our right to pray.

It is still, as far as I know, in the constitution of this country that we can pray. There's nothing forbidding us to pray, except a vocal minority that's trying to tell us when and where we can pray and when and where

we can't pray. But I can pray anywhere I want to pray.

For those who are in school and colleges and the workplace, you can pray walking down the corridor. You can pray shopping for groceries. You can pray on the subway.

You can pray sitting at your desk in the work. You can pray any time you want to pray. You can talk to God whenever you want.

And when people ask you, what are you doing? You can just say, I'm praying. I'm talking to God. Would you like to join me? Would you like to meet me after school? Would you like to come to my house? Would you like to come to church with me? We pray there.

We can pray any time we want. And not only can we pray, God is answering our prayer. God is giving us peace.

God is providing for our needs. God is defending us against our enemies. God is giving us strength where we are weak.

God is bringing us sons and daughters home as we begin to trust him for what only he is capable of doing. Oh, thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, that the true church of Christ will never bend her knee to ungodliness, will never admit to defeat, will never go down into silence. Let the redeemed and the Lord say so.

Spiritual freedom will come. Laws will change. Hearts of even kings and rulers will be turned to truth and Christ will glorify it again.

When God has a people who simply refuse to embrace evil, they refuse to call evil good. Firstly, a people who walk out of evil themselves. Get away from these things that are taking your strength.

You know what I'm talking about. Those that are listening to me today, get away from the ungodly friendships and relationships and the things that you're reading and seeing and doing and places you're going. And you know you shouldn't be going there.

It's taking your strength. It's not going to be enough just to come to church Sunday and clap your hands and sing a few sweet songs to get rid of the bad feeling of your week. Those things are not going to cover you.

When the Titanic hit the iceberg, you either had God in your life or you didn't have God. No, a people who refuse to embrace evil and call it good. We will never embrace evil in this church.

No matter who is trying to call it good, we will never embrace evil. Abortion is wrong. Marriage is between a man and a woman.

God ordained it to be so. It is wrong for politicians to lie. It's wrong for them to get up and lie and expect that there's no repercussions from it.

It is wrong to do certain things in certain behaviors. It's wrong to mock the name of God. It's wrong.

We will never ever embrace evil and call it good by the grace of God. No matter how many around us are bending when the band plays. It's historically through these types of people that freedom from oppression comes again.

Laws change and the hearts of even kings are softened. Remember the prophet Daniel had to go into a lion's den, but listen to what the king said when God delivered him. Thank you, Lord Jesus.

Then King Darius wrote to all people's nations and languages that dwell on the earth, peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom, men must tremble in fear before the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and steadfast forever.

His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed and his dominion shall endure to the end. He delivers and rescues. He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

This is the type of person I believe that all people deserve to be respected. I believe that we should treat in this church, all people fairly, honestly, and justly. I'm against discrimination in every one of its forms.

Every person, no matter how they choose to live, has been created in the image of God and we are duty bound to honor that. I believe as the Bible says that we should pray for kings and all who are in authority. I believe that we must be careful of our speech and we need to pray for our leaders that God would touch their hearts, that they can govern us righteously according to the word of God.

I believe that as much as physically possible, we should be model citizens in the nations, communities, towns that we find ourselves in. I believe that men should stand up and be men of God. I believe that we should be fearless in the face of opposition.

I believe this with all of my heart, but I also believe that the word of God is the standard of righteousness and living in truth. It has come out of the mouth of God himself and I believe it cannot be transgressed without consequence. I also believe that though the nations rage, they are plotting an empty thing.

Though the kings of the earth set themselves together and rulers take counsel against the Lord and against those that are called by his name, though they formulate their plans in secret saying, let us break their bonds and pieces and cast away the cords that they're putting on us and causing us to have to restrain our behaviors. I believe that the one who sits in heavens will laugh and have them in confusion. I believe it with all my heart.

I believe that God will speak to them and distress them in his deep displeasure. I believe as the end of Psalm 2 says, now therefore be wise, O kings, be instructed you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the son, that means embrace the son of God, lest he be angry and you perish in the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. But I also believe the last line of Psalm 2 that says, blessed are all those who put their trust in him. Oh God, thank you for peace in the midst of the storm.

Thank you for being the fourth person in the midst of the fire. Thank you for being the one who shuts the mouths of the lions. Thank you for being the one who gives us the courage, God Almighty, to prepare to take a journey that will bring honor and glory to your name in the earth.

God, thank you for these moments in which we're living. Thank you that we are born at such a time as this. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God.

Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ. You and I are living at a time exactly as they had to go through, those that have come before us. We're living with these threatenings of darkness coming our way every day and will increase in the days ahead.

The freedoms that we have known, you've heard me say this, started saying it five years ago. People would not fully understand then but more are starting to understand now. The freedoms we have known are now in jeopardy.

Laws are going to change for the worse. All it's going to take to make a difference is for God's people to be God's people again. The cry of my heart this week is, oh God, may I be such a person.

Will you give me the courage to never bend to man and only to bow to God? No matter the threatenings, give me the courage. I had a dream a couple of weeks ago. My wife and I were in this dream.

We're on a boat cruise of some sort and it must have been a Caribbean place because the water was very, very clear. A child fell off the railing of this boat and nobody was doing anything but a two-year-old child. I couldn't tell if it was a boy or girl but fell over the railing and nobody was doing anything.

I looked around, there were people younger and stronger than I am but nobody moved. So, I dove into the water and I began to swim towards this child. As I began to swim towards this baby, this little child's hands were stretched towards me and his or her eyes were opened.

I realized about halfway to the bottom, it was about 40 feet deep. When we got halfway, this child was still out of my reach and I realized I'd have to go to the bottom to be able to at least have a chance at saving this baby. About 20 feet down, I stopped in the middle of the water and I looked up and I had enough air left to get to the surface.

I knew in my heart that to continue going to the bottom, I was going to drown. I stayed there suspended for a moment but then I made the choice in this dream to turn and swim towards this child. You know, for some of us, it's going to cost us to fight for this next generation.

We're not just fighting for ourselves. Remember, Nehemiah said you're not just fighting for yourselves, you're fighting for your sons and daughters and for some of us, it's going to cost us even freedom. It's going to cost us what we thought our future was going to look like but I remember in my dream as I made the choice to turn and continue to swim towards this child that was still looking at me, even though I knew it was going to cost me my future, in my heart, there was this incredible peace of God that just surrounded me.

When I woke up, I knew I said, God, this is more than just a dream. You're speaking to my heart. You're asking me now to prepare to do whatever it's going to take that this generation coming after us might have a hope of knowing in God, living for God, of knowing Him.

And folks, you and I have to decide in our hearts today, we don't have the courage within ourselves. I don't, you don't, but God can give us that courage. I don't stand here and make a vain boast because Peter did that and he found out what was really inside himself.

I don't make a vain boast but in the strength of God, I'm willing. I'm willing to be that person who won't bend and won't bow. I'm willing to be the one who stands and swims upstream when everybody's going in the other direction, willing to be the one who's cast in when everyone stands in indecision, not quite

knowing what to do or how to do it.

These are the people that will make a difference in the days ahead. They're not necessarily all the big names and the big players in the big churches and big ministries. It's ordinary people like, like yourself and I that will make a difference in your family.

You'll make a difference in your school. When all hell breaks loose in this world, you'll be the one student that has, that has held firm. You've not given up the testimony of Christ.

You prayed when nobody else would or could. You threw caution to the wind and you began to stand and live for God. You are the one person that will make a difference.

Some will make a difference on a national scale and others will make a difference on a community scale, but in the sight of God, one is the same as the other. We will all have an opportunity to make a difference in this generation. There's not much time to lay hold of this because if we don't 10 years from now, you're not going to recognize this nation.

It'd be a tragedy. There's even a discussion ongoing now. I was told this week, I don't know if anybody here has heard of it.

It's called post-birth abortion now. Up to what age should we be allowed to abort children that have been born? There's no end to the evil folks. There's no end to where this will spiral down.

The only thing that can stop it is the church of Jesus Christ. So in my heart, I have a question. If sinners are willing to throw their hat in the ring and give their all for evil, shouldn't we be willing to do the same for the cause of Jesus Christ? It starts with the willingness.

You might not be the strongest. You might be very much like Gideon. Say, God, me? I'm the least in my father's house.

My father's house is the least in our neighborhood. I have no strength. But you're the very person that God is calling because he will become your strength.

And yes, you might have to suffer. But when you get through to the other side, when his glory, Peter said, when his glory is revealed, you can rejoice with exceeding great glory and joy. I'm praying now.

I pray every day. God, give us an awakening in America. An awakening is a season.

It's a short season. It can go anywhere from six months to two years. But it's a chance for everybody to hear that they have a savior.

It's an opportunity for people to get right with God. Some will choose wisely and others will reject. But at least they have the opportunity.

That's the cry of my heart now. If people in New York City choose to go to hell, then let them have at least have to make the choice and not end up there because nobody ever told them that there was a God, there was a savior. God, help us not to back away now.

Help us to stand for the reason why this church was planted here in the first place. Pastor David Wilkerson knew it day one. A dark time was coming and God had planted a lighthouse in the middle of Times

Square.

He knew it in his heart. God, give us strength to stand now. If that's the cry of your heart, I'd like that to make that the shoulder call this morning here in the main sanctuary, in the annex and over in North Jersey, that you're just an ordinary person.

You don't have any real strength, but you say, God, I'm willing. I'm willing to stand for you. I'm willing to pray.

I'm willing to do right when people are doing wrong. I'm willing, God, to be that person that stops this flood of evil. But I'm going to need your strength, Lord, to do it because I can't do it in my own strength.

If that's the cry of your heart, when we stand, I want you to just join with me at the front of this auditorium, and we're going to pray together. We're going to believe God for supernatural strength. Remember when they prayed, the place where they gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Let's stand, please, in the balcony. Go to either aisle in the main sanctuary. Slip out of where you are.

Come meet me here, and in just a few moments, we're going to pray together. I'm going to ask if pastors and elders would join me around the pulpit just for a moment. We're all in this together.

We're going to all need the strength of God. Father, we yield our bodies to you, Lord, as a living sacrifice, which your word tells us is our reasonable service. We don't consider it unreasonable to have to go through the flood and fire, the trials and difficulties ahead of us, that your name might be glorified in the earth, and that subsequent generations, should there be such a thing, can look back and say, oh, thank God they stood in a dark time.

Thank God they didn't cave in. Thank God they stood strong and refused to bend. Thank God they went to pray as they always did, and did not listen to the decrees telling them when they could and couldn't pray.

Thank God, thank God they ate of the lamb of God and put shoes on their feet and made themselves ready for a journey. Because of it, we have hope and we have life. And so, Father, we reach beyond ourselves into the future.

Lord Jesus Christ, for the sake of those yet to be born, for the sake of the little ones in our streets already, my God, my God, my God, we ask you to shake the place where we are gathered and fill us with your Holy Spirit, and stretch forth your hand, God Almighty, and begin to heal through your church, Lord. We ask you to answer in miraculous ways in New York City, God, and let it be so noised abroad that people will begin to flood into every place of worship and begin to talk to you as you begin to heal the sick and deliver the oppressed, as you meet face to face with those who want to know who you are. God, we thank you, Lord, for this.

We thank you, Lord, that when evil comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against it. And so, God, we stand here today, Lord, God, as throughout history, Lord, these young men weren't strong. Daniel wasn't particularly strong in himself, but God, you made them strong.

And all through history, that's what you've done. You've taken the weak and made them strong, that your name and your name alone might be glorified. And we yield our bodies to you, O God, and we ask you to

use us for your glory.

And God, be merciful, Lord, to this nation. Be merciful, God, to those who lead us. Be merciful, God, and let a wave of mercy.

Lord, you were merciful to a Medo-Persian king. God, you were merciful to a Babylonian king in the days of the Hebrew boys. God, you'll be merciful, Lord, also to the leaders in our generation, those that don't know you, those that have turned away from you.

God, be merciful. God, be merciful, Lord. Be merciful, Lord Jesus Christ.

Father, we thank you for these things, God. We praise you and bless you. Let your name be glorified, O God.

Let your name be glorified in this generation in which we live. Turn back the flood of evil. Turn it back as your word says.

You who sits in the heavens will have them in derision. Let there be confusion. Hit the ranks of darkness.

My God, we call out to you in Jesus' name. We call out to you, Lord, send an awakening to this nation. Cause your house to become a house of prayer again.

Jesus, Son of God, fill the ministers and touch paupers with your Holy Spirit. God, bring us together as a body. Cause us to stand again by the breath of your mouth.

Oh, Father, we thank you for this and we praise you, God. We praise you for strength that could only come from heaven. We praise you the testimony will not be of ourselves, it will be of you.

It will be of your strength and your power within us, O God. All we can do is bring you ourselves a heart to say, Lord, use us for your glory. And God, we thank you for it and we praise you for it in Jesus' mighty, unmatched and holy name.

Hallelujah. Father, I ask you to bless my brothers and sisters, Lord, in this sanctuary and those of us who lead this church. God, give us strength.

We come humbly before you, Lord. We acknowledge we don't have the strength within ourselves. We don't have the plan or the power.

It's only in you abiding in us, Lord, and we abiding in you that our strength and purpose for life can even be found. And so guide us now, Holy Spirit, and lead us. Jesus, son of God, son of God, son of God, don't delay.

Come to us in power. Come to us and shake the place where we are. My God, my God, my God, shake the place where we are and fill us with your Holy Spirit.

Stretch out your hand through us, O God, and begin to bring healing into our city. Oh, everywhere we are, every neighborhood, every home, let the healing of Christ come. And Father, we thank you for it.

God, we praise you and we bless you in the mighty name of Jesus. Give him a shout of glory in this house.

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