

Blood Upon Dry Land

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of God's Word and the believer's call to be instruments of deliverance in a hurting world.

Duration: 56:17

Scripture: Exodus 4:10-13, Psalm 107:4-6, Psalm 107:32-34, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Promises Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the commission given to believers to deliver multitudes who are sorrowing and crying out in our generation. He uses the example of Moses, who witnessed a burning bush that was not consumed by the fire. The speaker highlights that one of the ways God witnesses to the lost is through the change He brings about in believers' lives. He shares a personal story of a police officer who shared the gospel with him, and how it was not the theological arguments that impacted him, but the transformation he saw in the officer's life. The speaker encourages believers to be messengers of God's deliverance to their families, neighbors, and coworkers.

Transcript

Merry Christmas, everyone. Thanks be to God that it's not just one day a week, for those that know Christ as Lord and Savior, but every day. Exodus chapter 4, please, if you'll turn there with me.

And for those who have come to Christ, especially in this church during this holiday season, we've had many, many who've made first-time decisions to follow Jesus as Lord and Savior. And for those who have, we have New Believers classes every Friday night in the Education Annex, and that's at 7 o'clock in the evening. All you have to do is just go to the main desk, the commissioner will help you to find those classes.

No registration necessary. There is no fee. And if you don't have a Bible, we'll give you a Gospel of John and help get you started in your walk with God.

You have to get into the Word of God. It's wonderful to come to church, wonderful to sing songs, but you must get into the Word of God. And even more so now as the day of the Lord's return approaches us.

We've got to be in this book. I'm believing, God, with all my heart that I've heard from the Holy Spirit, that this is going to be the year of the Bible for Times Square Church. Now, this has been a Bible-preaching

and teaching church.

And there's been great revelation has been spoken from this pulpit, not just from the pastors that minister here, but many who visit with us as well. But I'm not talking about the pulpit necessarily. I'm talking about you.

This is going to be a year when you get into the Word. And the Word of God comes alive to every person who is called by the name of Christ. We're believing God for that.

We're going to fast for it. That you'll be delivered as it is from just meaningless rote as it is devotional times in the morning. You get into this book because the Word of God is alive.

It's a living Word. And God's Word begins to speak to you, begins to breathe into your deepest inner parts, begins to change you, and you develop a love for God's Word like you've never had in your entire life. I believe that with all my heart that God is going to do that this year for everyone who hungers.

He's going to open His Word to you. I thank God for it with all my heart. I'm going to speak this morning about blood upon the dry land from Exodus chapter 4, beginning at verse 1. And Moses answered and said, But behold, they will not believe me nor hearken unto my voice.

For they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee. And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground.

And he cast it on the ground and became a serpent. And Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand and take it by the tail.

And he put forth his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand. Verse 5 says, That they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared unto thee. And the Lord said furthermore unto him, Put now thy hand into thy bosom.

And he put his hand into his bosom. And when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, Put again, put thine hand into thy bosom again.

And he put his hand into his bosom again and plucked it out of his bosom. And behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river and pour it upon the dry land. And the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land. Now, Father, I stand before you with no desire in my heart but to be an oracle of God.

I pray, Holy Spirit, that you lift me out of the confines of the weakness of my own flesh, my own thinking. God, take me into that which is supernatural, that which comes from your mind and your heart. Lord, the hour is late and your people need to hear from you.

God, we need desperately to hear your voice. And I'm asking you, Lord, now to speak through me. I'm asking you to animate my mind and heart, my emotions.

I'm asking you to expand the borders of my thinking. Take me, O God, where you want this to go. Lord, I pray for the stamp of eternity on this word this morning, that it not fall to the ground but be deeply impressed in the hearts and in the minds of your people.

For this is your promise. You said, I'll give you a new spirit. I'll give you a new heart.

I'll give you a new mind. God, that comes through hearing and understanding your word. Father, I pray that you take this word now and cause it to have that which you've intended from the beginning in your heart for this day and for this people.

I thank you for it in Jesus' mighty name. Amen. Now, the commission from the beginning has been to go and deliver multitudes, multitudes who are sorrowing and crying out in our generation.

Remember, the Lord came to Moses. Moses was just tending his flock, the scripture says, in the back part of the desert. And as he was tending this flock, he observed a bush that was burning.

And yet, even though there was this incredible fire seemingly surrounding and emanating perhaps from within this dry bush, this bush was not being consumed by the fire. And Moses stopped to consider this thing and turned to look at it. And when he turned to look at it, of course, he was looking at what God does in a person's life.

He comes as a consuming fire, yet he doesn't destroy the vessel that he touches. He will change us. He will make us more and more into the image of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

But he does not destroy us. And, you know, of course, in those days to see God meant to die. And Moses turned and looked.

God was trying to show him something in the physical realm that he was wanting to do in his life and wants to do, obviously, in the lives of all who are called by the name of Christ in our time and in our generation. And as he stopped to consider this thing, the Lord called him out of the midst of this bush. And he said, I've heard the cry of the people.

Their sorrow has come before me. And now I've remembered my covenant that I made with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. And I've come down now to deliver the people out of their affliction and away from their taskmasters.

And, folks, God hears a cry that you and I don't hear. We can be going about our business, especially in this busy, busy season that we're in right now. And we can be all consumed with ourselves and watching our watches, engaging our times and looking at our ovens and everything else that goes on around and about this time of the year.

But there's a cry that doesn't stop. And we may not hear it, but God hears it. And he is willing to let anyone who wants to hear it as well.

And he calls us just as he called Moses in his generation. He calls us to be deliverers. At the end of the Gospel of Matthew, he challenged us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, to every person ever who was born in our time and in our generation.

Now, God is about to move towards this cry that he's hearing from his people. And he's about to answer them. Now, Psalm 107 shows us that this work of God is an ongoing work continuously.

He hears the cry of all sorts of people in our society. Psalm 107 talks about those, in verse 4, who wander in the wilderness in a lonely way or a solitary way, finding no city to dwell in. Hungry, thirsty, their soul faints in them.

Verse 6 says, then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them out of their distresses. And he led them forth by the right way that they might go to a city of habitation. Or in other words, a place where they might find life.

A place where they might be secure. Those that are lonely. Those that are despairing.

You might even be here today and you might say, Pastor, that's me. I'm wandering in the wilderness and I'm lonely. And I'm hungry and I'm thirsty.

And I've not found in all of my travels anywhere that I can put down roots as it is. Anywhere I can trust in. Anywhere I can stay that gives me safety, stability and security.

But God, in his mercy, when you cry out to him, and some of you might even be here in the annex today of the main sanctuary. Because there's been a cry in your heart. And you are here not by chance.

Not just by happenstance. God has heard your cry. Nobody else knows it around you.

Your boss doesn't know it. Your neighbors don't know it. And even those that are most intimately acquainted with you may not hear this cry.

But God knows the cry that's in your heart every night. When you put your feet up into your bed and you sigh. And you dread the thought of one more day of walking the city streets alone.

Walking the city streets without hope. Wondering, what is life all about? Why was I born? What is the purpose of my life? And why do I even exist in the first place? You see, God hears your cry. And he led you to this place today that he might bring you to a place where you can live.

You might find that there is a reason for life. You are created by God, for God, in the image of God. You are created out of the passion of God's heart for fellowship and friendship.

And God loves you with an infinite and an everlasting love. The psalmist says, Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and his wonderful works to the children of men. For he satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness.

Verse 10 says, Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron, because they rebelled against the words of God and condemned the counsel of the Most High. Think about our generation, how many now are sitting in darkness and death is all around them. They are in affliction and in chains of iron that they cannot break in their own strength.

Therefore he brought down their heart with labor and they fell down and there was none to help. And then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and he saved them out of their distresses. And he brought them out of darkness in the shadow of death and break their bands and sunder.

Thanks be to God that we have a Savior that breaks the power and the chains of darkness over our lives. Thanks be to God that we're not coming to just a theory or a concept about God when we come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. But we're coming to the one who holds the keys to our freedom.

He opens every prison door. He gives sight to everyone who's been spiritually blind. He heals those that have been bruised in heart.

He sets the captive and the oppressed free. He breaks bondages of alcohol and pornography and immorality and drugs and suicide and depression and opens the prison door and sets people free, those that cry out to Him. And if you're crying out to Him in this house today, I've got news for you.

Before you leave this day, you're going to be set free from all that has afflicted you. Verse 15, he says, Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and His wonderful works to the children of men, for He has broken the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron and sunder. Verse 17, he says, Fools, because of their transgression and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.

Their soul abhors all manner of meat, and they draw near to the gates of death. These are people who reject the Word of God. They reject all of God's counsel.

They put it away as if it's some form of foolishness, even though it's God Almighty Himself who is speaking to them. And because they've denied the existence of God, they're afflicted. And they draw near to gates of death that are reserved for those who do not find Christ as Lord and Savior for all of eternity.

But then verse 20 says, He sent His Word and healed them and delivered them from their destructions or from that which would destroy them. He sends His Word. God is so merciful.

Amazing. He had the right, He had the lawful right just to take the whole thing when mankind sinned against Him and just grind it to powder and start all over again. But God is merciful.

And the Scripture says He's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. And He sends His Word. He sends His Word to you and to me.

Thank God for His Word. Thank God. Do you remember the first time you heard the Word of God? Not just some thing that you could put aside, but you knew that God was speaking to your heart.

It caused a trembling in your inward parts. And you began to understand this is not just God or somebody speaking a theory about God, but I'm actually hearing the voice of God speaking right to the very deepest need of my life. He sent His Word and healed them and delivered them from their destructions or that which was going to destroy them.

Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and His wonderful works to the children of men. They go down to the sea in ships and do business in great waters. They see the works of the Lord and wonders in the deep.

He commands and raises the stormy wind and lifts up the waves. They mount up to heaven and go down again to the depths and their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man and are at their wits end.

And then they cry to the Lord in their trouble and He brings them out of their distresses. This is talking about business people. He makes the storm a calm so that the waves thereof are still.

Then are they glad because they are quiet and He brings them to their desired haven. People are traveling through the world, buying, selling, looking for security, not finding it. The longer they go, the deeper the fear begins to grip their heart that is this all there is to life? And if I do achieve the next step in the ladder,

as it is, and there is not more there than there is here, then what is the hope for my life? What does my future hold? And they are driven up and down by these deep inward fears that always plague those who are searching for security in a world that does not offer it.

And so God sends His word, His ambassadors to them and they find their desired haven. In other words, He brings them to the place that they have longed for all along. They've longed for safety.

They've longed for security. They've longed to know that they are going to be provided for and that the end of their lives is going to be a blessing and not a curse. He turns the rivers into wilderness and the water springs into dry ground.

God, He says, let them exalt Him in the congregation of the people and praise Him in the assembly of the elders. Thank God for His word that came to us. Thank God.

Aren't you thankful today that Christmas is not just a concept? It's a living relationship with the Savior this morning that you have in this house. Now, this is the work of God. Please, if somebody could get me a glass of water, I'd very much appreciate it.

He does this through frail human messengers like Moses, like you and I. Now, Moses, in Exodus chapter 4, he asks a question. Now, you see, because God is calling each of us to be a deliverer, whether or not you realize it, you're called to deliver your family. You're called to deliver your neighbors, the people you work with in your office, all those that are spoken about in Psalm 107 and others.

God calls you and calls me to be messengers of His deliverance to them, just as He called Moses. Moses was just an ordinary man, just doing ordinary things. He was 40 years just tending sheep in the back parts of the desert.

And all of a sudden, the call of God that was on his life, he becomes aware of it. Thank you. And some of you slipped in to this church today, thinking, well, this is going to be a nice message about baby Jesus.

Only to find out that there's a call of God on your life. You thought you're going to sit in the congregation and hear a nice, smooth message about some angels appearing in heaven, saying glory to God on earth, peace towards men. You're going to go home.

You're going to have your ham or turkey dinner, whatever it is you've prepared for this afternoon. And everything is going to be fine. It's going to be a nice day for you.

Only to come to the house of God to find the pulpit is a burning bush. And you are being confronted with something that God wants you to do. You've stopped in this house and you've turned for a moment to consider what God is speaking to your heart.

And just as He is sending Moses, in effect, to his family, that's who Moses was sent to. This was his own family that was in captivity. Whether or not you understand that God is sending you to deliver your family.

And He's going to give you the power to do it. This is the amazing thing. You don't have to go into your house with just a theory about God.

Moses asked a question that all of us asked in chapter 4, verse 1. He said, But behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice. And they will say, The Lord has not appeared to thee. In other words, Moses said, I'm going to go back.

It's been a long time. But I'm going to go back to my family and distant relatives and such like. And I'm going to say, Well, I've met with God.

God's speaking to me. And He wants to bring you out of captivity. And He wants to bring you into a place where you can serve Him.

And you're going to begin to see the miraculous. And Moses says, Well, what happens now if they say God's not appeared to you? He's not spoken to you. You've been to church.

You just got all excited about something. But there's no reality to this thing. And the Lord said to him, Now what is in your hand? He said, A rod.

Now he was a shepherd. He had a shepherd's staff in his hand. And the Lord said to him, Cast it on the ground.

Verse 3. And he cast it on the ground and it became a serpent. And Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said to Moses, Put forth thine hand and take it by the tail.

And he put forth his hand and caught it. And it became a rod in his hand. Now, this was the reason for this.

In verse 5, he says that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob has appeared to them. Well, most here would say, OK, if I could do that, my family would probably believe. If I could pick up a stick on the way home, maybe a hockey stick or something like that, walk into the house, throw it down, it becomes a snake on the carpet and pick it up again.

Most families would probably believe that there's something going on here now. But there was a reason for this. And it was a type of something.

It was showing something to Moses that is just as relevant to you and I today. What do you have in your hand? He takes this rod that is in his hand and he casts it down and it becomes a serpent. And immediately, the scripture says he turns and begins to run away from it.

And, you know, all of us have fears. We all have a past. We look in the mirror and there are certain things about us.

There are things that people in our families know about us. There are things in our own character. There are certain perceptions we have of deficiency within ourselves, failings, limitations.

Can't go there, won't go there. Nobody would believe it. Can't do this.

And the moment this rod, which represents, in a sense, the cross of Christ, or confidence in God, is cast down and it becomes that which he is afraid of. And he turns and he begins to flee from it. And as he begins to flee from it, God says to Moses, Stop.

Stop where you are and turn around and take it by the tail. Now, there is something very, very significant in this. You can't pick up a snake by the tail unless it's going the other way.

You see, what Moses didn't realize is that the enemy was already fleeing from him because the hand of God was on him. He was standing before God and God was calling him. And many, many people don't

realize.

The moment you came to Christ, the moment the Holy Spirit came, the Spirit of God, God himself came and made his abode within your physical body. And you became the temple of the living God. The serpent began to flee from you.

He's going in the opposite direction. Jesus said in Luke 10, 19, Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Now, the devil knows this.

The devil knows that the least of the least of the least of the least of God's people has the same Christ within him. The same one who triumphed over him on Calvary and rose from the grave and took all authority and dominion and power over him and sits at the right hand of all power and authority now lives in the heart of those who have come to Christ. The enemy knows it.

I give you power. This is one of the greatest revelations that a young Christian especially can have is that you don't have to run from your past any longer. No matter what you did.

No matter who you used to be. You are not that person any longer. You have Christ within you.

And the Bible says you are a new creation. The old things within you are passing away and behold, all things are becoming new. You don't have to run from your fears any longer.

No matter what it is that the enemy captivated you with. No matter how he lied into your mind. No matter what he caused you to do or convinced you that he was able to do in your life.

The moment Christ came into your heart, the devil began to run the other way. You have authority now. You don't have to fear your today.

You don't have to fear your yesterday. You don't have to fear your tomorrow. There is no fear in God's love.

Perfect love casts out all fear. The Scripture says God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a power and love and a sound mind. The day that God began to use my life for his glory in the measure that he has been using it, is the day that I turned and began to face my enemies.

And began to realize that my enemies were already running away from me. Already heading in the other direction. And the Lord says, reach down and pick up that which you used to fear.

And it will become a rod in your hand. It will become deeper abiding faith and confidence in the authority of the one who has everything under his foot. And all things are in his control.

You will pick up these fears. And no longer will you dance to the tune of the devil in your life. Now you think that would be enough.

But the Lord said in verse 6, the Lord said furthermore unto him, put now thine hand into thy bosom. Now you see folks, I want to tell you something. When people see this authority, when they see that you're no longer running away from your past.

When they see that you're no longer afraid of the future. When they see these things, many, many will begin to believe. They'll see a courage in you that you've never had before.

They'll see God giving you the ability to walk by what used to ensnare you. They'll see you taking captive what used to take you captive. And there'll be many around you.

Many, not all, but many will begin to believe. And in verse 6, the Lord said furthermore to him, put now your hand into your bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom.

And when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again and plucked it out of his bosom.

And behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. And it shall come to pass in verse 8, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. Now, if they will not believe because you walk with new authority, they will believe when they see the miraculous change in your deepest, innermost parts.

That's what this was a type of. Reach deep within your own heart, Moses. And he reached in and when he took out his hand, his hand was as corrupted as his inward parts would be.

This is the frailty as it is of human nature. There's an inward corruption that only God can cleanse. And he said, put your hand back in again.

And he put it in and came out and it was completely cleansed like the rest, like his other flesh. And verse 8, it says it will come to pass if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, they will believe the voice of the latter sign. You see, they will believe you when they see the miraculous change beginning to happen in your innermost parts.

When they see a man who used to be selfish and angry, now gentle and kind. When they see a woman who used to be completely self-consumed, now reaching out, concerned and compassionate about the needs of people, even those that are strangers all around her. When your children see fathers and mothers who used to be fighting in their house all the time, and all of a sudden there's a tenderness.

The husband is loving his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is respecting the position that God has placed her husband in, in the home. And when your children begin to see this, when they see this miraculous change coming into the innermost parts of their mothers and fathers, the scripture says this will be a voice.

God describes it in Exodus 4 as a voice that is calling out to people. Did you know that? Did you know that one of the ways that God witnesses to the lost, is that through the change that he brings about in your life and in my life, he cries out through you, he cries out through me to people. I remember when I was just a young police officer, and a policeman came to my house and started sharing with me about Christ.

I wasn't so much interested in all of the things, some of the things that he had to say were interesting. I wasn't so much interested in all of the theology that he was presenting before me, because in a lost state you can counter, even though it's a deceptive countering, you can counter most theological arguments. I mean, it's not a truthful countering, but most people who are lost can put up a pretty good argument.

That's really what I'm trying to say. But this man was telling me, I used to be a drunkard, I used to be a gambler, I used to be this type of person, I used to be angry, aggressive. And I'm looking at this man, and he's completely the opposite of what he's telling me he used to be.

And the very testimony of Christ in him was a voice crying out to me. I was more intrigued by how this man had changed than by what he had to say. And the Lord said to Moses, when they see this sign, when they see this inward corruption changed, when they see you becoming a man that only God could make you into, when your family sees it, when your sons and daughters see it, when your mothers and fathers see it, when your children see it, your neighbors see it, it will be a voice calling out to them.

I remember, I was thinking of a story when I was preparing this. I remember when I was a teenager, one time my father asked me to pile some wood. We had a cottage in the woods, and he asked me to pile some wood.

And I was rather lazy in those days and didn't really feel like doing the work. And so I did a little bit of work, probably next to nothing. And when he finally came, he said, did you pile the wood? Did you bring it out of the - he had been cutting wood.

Did you bring it out of the woods? Did you put it in a pile? I said, did you use the wheelbarrow? And I said, yes, I did. And he said, come with me. He took me up to the top of the hill, and the wheelbarrow had spiderwebs from the handles right to the ground on both sides.

And I looked at it, and I said, man, those things work fast, don't they? And I remember how it stung me. My father looked at me and said, you are a liar. Now, of course, I was a teenager, and I held my ground, even as foolish as it was.

No, I've been out there. I've been working. And he looked at me and said, you are a liar.

And I remember how that stung, because it was true. And just the pride in my heart wouldn't allow me to admit that I had lied to him. And I never forgot that.

It stayed with me. There's something about when your father speaks into your life that you just can't shake it. And years and years later, I was visiting.

I was already pastoring here in New York City. This is probably five years ago or so now. And I remember I was visiting his house, and my father was not one that dished out a whole lot of compliments.

But I was walking into the living room one day in his house, and he looked at me and he said, you are a man of truth. You're a truthful man, he said. And it's amazing.

I believe, because I was able to lead him to Christ before he died. And I believe the change that was coming into my life over the years was a voice that was crying out to him. Much more than all of my theology, much more than all of the messages he heard me preach, or all of the times I may have opened the Bible, talked about heaven, hell, a redeemer.

Much more than this. That is part of the voice. But there was a deeper voice calling out to a man who had arguments against everything that I would say theologically.

But what could he say against this voice that was calling out to him from a son who had once lied to him as a teenager, but now he knew and could say, he's a man of truth. There's a voice. That's why you and I

need to do, as the apostle Paul tells us, we're to put off the old man.

We're to put off, by the grace of God, this old nature. That's why you and I need to be in this Bible like never before. Because in this Bible are the promises of God.

And the apostle Peter tells us that by these promises we become partakers of the divine nature. We don't do it through self-effort or human effort. We do it by reading this book and seeing what it is that God is speaking to us.

And saying, Lord, if that's what you say, then I'm believing that you're going to make it a reality in my life. My part in the new covenant is to believe. God's part is to make what I believe and what he has spoken a reality to my heart.

We need to be in this book like never before, folks. It's not going to be an argument that's going to win the day in our generation. It's going to be a people whose lives have been changed inwardly by the power of Almighty God, who day to day are being renewed in the image of their Creator.

Day to day are walking in to their families, coming to the breakfast table, going down the corridors of their apartment buildings, walking in to the places of their employment. Day to day there is an indisputable change going on inside of their lives. Day to day they're becoming more like Christ as they read these promises and are trusting the power of the Holy Spirit to make these promises of God a living reality within their heart.

Day to day there's a voice within them crying out to every man or woman who may have a good argument against somebody simply opening the Bible, but they cannot argue. The voice of God crying out from the heart of a man or woman who is changing day to day, moment to moment, into the image of their Savior by the power of the Holy Spirit within them. Though our outward man perish, Paul says, our inward man is renewed day by day.

Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God that you and I should never cease in this pursuit. It doesn't matter how far we've walked or how many people we've preached to.

You and I should never cease in this absolute pursuit of Christ through the Word of God. God changed me. Yes, I'm not what I was yesterday, but there's more.

You have purchased your very life for me, and God, I want this life. I want everything about your life to be lived inside of me. I want your presence in me to be a voice that calls out to my sons and my daughter, that calls out to my nieces and nephews, that calls out to my neighbors and friends and family.

I don't want a single person that comes in contact with me who knows me intimately to be able to write off the voice of God as being a non-reality. Folks, we need people who know God to be walking through this city in our generation. There's been too many arguments, and the television is full of religious confusion.

It is time for a people to rise up who know their God. Daniel, the prophet, said there's a day coming when knowledge is going to increase and people are going to run to and fro, speaking of the end days. But the people who know their God shall be strong and do exploits.

What do you think those exploits are? The exploit is walking through this generation of darkness, and people's eyes are being opened to the reality of Christ. Their prison doors are flinging wide open as they

begin to understand that the same Christ who is in this person can set them free. Exploits against the powers of darkness that have captivated the minds and lives of countless hundreds of thousands of people in our time.

It's time for the church to be the church of Jesus Christ. It's time for the testimony of Christ to be in the mouths and hearts, the eyes and lives of God's people. This is a voice that is much louder than any preaching that I will ever do.

It's a voice that God speaks through the surrendered life, beginning in your home, beginning with your own children. That's why so many people lose their families, because their lives are not an indisputable testimony of the reality of God. They have a theological argument with their lips, but their lives, as Paul says, in many cases are a denial that God has the power to change a person.

That's what he talks about in Timothy. He says they have a form of godliness, but deny the power. They speak the things of God.

They may even have correct theology, but their lives are a declaration that there is no substance to what they believe. But you and I are not to live there. We're to be a people who have to be reckoned with, because the living Christ lives within us.

Now he said, and it shall come to pass, verse 9, if they will not believe also these two signs, and neither hearken to thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land. And the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land. You know, an unusual sign.

He talks first about casting the rod down, and then picking up that which you fear. He talks about the change in the inward nature of a man who has had a true encounter with God. And that change will be a voice that cries out to a generation that need to be delivered from the power of darkness.

Then he gives them a third sign. He said, if they will not believe these two, I want you to take the water out of the river and pour it on the dry land. And the water which you take out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land.

Now, Psalm 46, verse 4, let me just read it to you. Verses 4 and 5. Speaking of this water, which is a type, it says, There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, and she shall not be moved, and God shall help her.

And that write early. Revelation chapter 22, verses 1 and 2. John says, He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. And then verse 2 tells us that life was found on either side of this river.

Now you're beginning to understand what this water is. Ezekiel chapter 47. Ezekiel, the prophet saw it as waters coming out of God's house.

And it was giving life to every dry and dead place that it touched. Ezekiel characterized it. He said, Now, this is not water that you have to carry.

This is water that can carry you. This is a force much more powerful than an argument. This is something so expansive.

It's something so vast. Ezekiel said, I see a river coming out, but I see it expanding. God was giving him a view of the church of Jesus Christ from the only perspective he could understand in his generation.

A river that was going to come from the throne of God. And it was going to encompass, as it is, the whole earth. And everywhere this river would go, there would be life would come.

There was healing for the nations to be found in this water. Jesus in John 37 and verse 8 brings it finally to a close and a conclusion. When he said, If any man believes in me, out of his inward parts shall flow rivers of living water.

Now, God said to Moses, Take the water of this river and pour it on the dry land. In other words, take the promises of God. Take what God says in His word.

And in your prayer time, don't confess your situation. Don't talk about what your son or daughter is doing or not doing. Start to speak what God is speaking.

Let the word that God has planted deep within you start to come out of your mouth in faith. Begin to pray in faith. Pray what God says.

As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house. Start confessing what God's word says.

Get a word in your mouth that comes from this book and start to pray it. And start to speak it to your children. Folks, you don't have any idea what the power of speech is.

We are the only thing of God's creation that has the power to speak as God does. And God invited Adam in the beginning to be a co-worker as it is in the ongoing work of creation. He would bring the animals to Adam and say, Adam, what are we going to call this? And Adam would give it a name and that's the name it's still called even to this day.

Then Adam fell and this ability to speak as it is became corrupted. But when we come to Christ, we are invited now back into this recreative power of God as it is. We're invited to speak what God is speaking.

We're invited to call things the way God calls them. He calls things that are not as if they are. We're invited to call the poor man who comes into the house of God a mighty evangelist.

We're invited to call our sons and daughters what God says they are. Not what we see with the natural eye, but what the Holy Spirit is speaking to us. Mothers, fathers, get a word from God about your children.

And pour it on the dry land. Start speaking to them. Not in anger.

Not in criticism. But say this is what God says. This is your life.

This is where you're going to go. And there are things you can speak from this word. Take these promises out of the river and pour them on the dry land.

Pour them. Every day. That's why Deuteronomy says when you stand up, when you walk in the way, when you go to bed at night, when you're walking with your children by the way, speak of these things of God.

Pour water on this dry land. And he says the water which you take out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land. I think of Calvary.

What an incredible illustration of when Jesus was on the cross and his blood poured out to the last drop out of his veins and the wounds in his body. You can see the blood touching the dry land at the foot of the cross. And the power of this blood judged evil.

The power of this blood judges sin. The power of this blood gives revelation that the atonement has been paid for all who come to Christ because God in his mercy poured out his wrath on his own son that all might be set free. The power of the blood of Christ judges all enemies and sets free everyone who's oppressed.

This water becomes blood. This water leads as it is to the blood. This water brings an understanding of the blood.

This water brings you and it brings me and it brings our families into an understanding that God in himself judged sin. God in himself judged our enemies. God in himself broke the power of death and hell in the grave.

God in himself gives hope and life and causes our enemies to flee. Pour the water. Pour it on the dry land.

I don't personally care what any young person says to me is in their heart or where they're going or how they feel. I only care what God is speaking. And you'll see when you and I begin to speak what God is speaking.

You will see this water lead to the blood. And then you begin to understand that there is power in the blood of Jesus. Power to forgive.

Power to heal. Power to set free. Power to open an entranceway into a life that is only possible by the power and the grace and the mercy of almighty God.

Now Moses, after all of this said what you and I normally say. I don't say it anymore. I have to be honest.

Maybe did at one time. But he said, oh, Lord, I'm not eloquent. Neither before here to for nor since you have spoken to me, spoken to thy servant.

But I'm of slow speech and of a slow tongue. You see why? Why God became angry with this after all that he had just revealed to him and spoken to him. And now he's presenting an excuse as to why he can't do these things.

And, you know, it's the same for you and I sit here and hear these types of words coming to our heart. We're being confronted as it is with the call of God that's on our life. And immediately after all of this revelation, we come back to this argument.

Well, Lord, I'm not eloquent. I don't make a mess. You're telling me to pour this water from this word on the dry land all around me.

But I don't know how to do this. I'm not good at speaking to people. I get all tongue tied.

And Moses said these words to the Lord and the Lord said to him, who made your mouth? Who makes the dumb or the deaf or the seeing or the blind? In other words, who creates all things? God says, now, therefore, go at verse 12 and I will be with your mouth and I will teach you what you shall say. Folks, I believe that this is the call of God for this church in our generation. The Lord says, go and I'll be with your

mouth and I'll teach you what you will say.

I'll be with you. All folks, I remember when God began to call me to preach the gospel. You have to understand.

Now, I suffered nine years of panic attacks. You have to understand you're looking at a pastor who used to run out of a classroom. If attention would be drawn to me or the room would focus its attention.

If I didn't run out the door, I'd pass out. You talk about grip with fear and then coming to Christ and the Lord starting to speak to my heart and saying, I want to use you for my glory. And every conceivable excuse wanted to rise in my heart and say, no, not me.

Moses ends up saying, now, well, that's a good idea. Verse 12, verse 13, he says, that's a terrific idea. You want to deliver people.

I pray send somebody who can do it. That's really what he said. Send somebody who can do it, even after all that God had spoken to him.

I remember the Lord calling me and by simple faith and obedience, I began to open my mouth and speak. Sometimes I felt like I'd get up to speak to a little group of people. I feel like my head was in a vice.

The longer I spoke, the tighter it got, but I would keep on speaking. And somehow, by God's grace, at the end of it, all people would get saved and filled with the Holy Ghost. They'd walk away and say, how did that happen? Folks, those that have stepped out in faith, you know what this is all about.

God is calling you to be a deliverer. He's calling you. It's as simple as that.

There are probably, I guess, guessing at about 3,300 people here this morning. Between the sanctuary and the annex, somewhere in that vicinity. And everyone who's in this building, you're called to be a deliverer.

You're called to bring freedom to your families. You're not called just to work where you work. You're called to be a deliverer where you work.

You're called to bring the grace of God in places where nobody else can go but you, because God has put you there. And, you know, it's the same in every generation. It was this way with Isaiah.

It's this way with many who've followed since the days of these men and women of God. God just looks for the man and looks for the woman who said, Lord, I'll go. I'll go and this is going to have to be you.

Because it isn't going to be me. I'll go and I'll read your word and I'll trust you to change me. I'll trust you to speak to people through my lifestyle.

I'll trust you to speak to them through the words you give me. But I'll go. I'll go.

I'm not coming to the throne of God empty handed. One day. I'm going to come with the souls of men and women and children who have been redeemed from darkness by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ.

Now, Father, Lord, I know I have delivered the word that you put in my heart today. And Jesus, I'm asking you. Did you give courage today for those who have come to this house? This is Christmas Day.

This was a day about God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. And, Lord, you're calling us to be witnesses of this incredible love of God. You're calling us to go where you've called us to go and to be what you've called us to be.

And I pray today, Father, you give great grace to those who are hearing these words. Because you've placed the call of a deliverer on many, many of our lives. Help us to respond to this.

Let it begin even today as we go home and we sit at a table with our families and friends. Help us, God, to be that which you've called us to be. Father, I thank you for this in Jesus' name.

Now, my other call this morning is very, very simple. The Lord says, go and I'll be with your mouth and I will teach you what to say. I want to give an altar call for those who are still running from their fears and have not yet realized that your fears are running from you.

I want to give an altar call today for those not only running from their fears, but they've not yet fully understood the change that God wants to bring about in your life. And then lastly, just for those who are fearful, to step out and be the testimony for Christ that God is calling you to be. Folks, not time to be embarrassed about the name of Jesus.

It's time to stand for the name of Christ in our generation. If God is calling you, if you're backslidden, you're always welcome to come home to God in this house. If you're lost, I encourage you to come to this altar and give your life to Jesus Christ.

Receive him as your Lord and Savior. He promises to forgive your sins and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Let's stand as the orchestra leads us to the song.

If the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, would you join me at this altar today, please? Balcony, you can slip out, either exit, make your way to this altar. And we're going to pray together that this be a year of deliverance for our families. Deliverance for our own lives, deliverance for our workplace.

This be a year when you and I are soul winners, not just in a pulpit, but privately in our day-to-day lives. Come join me here. We'll pray together.

Thank you, Lord. I want to speak first to the people who are here this morning who say, Pastor, you read from Psalm 107 and that was me at the beginning. I'm not even ready to be a testimony.

I'm not free yet myself. I'm not even sure that I belong to God. But you say in your heart today, if I'm hearing right, I believe that you're telling me that God loves me and that he became a man and died on the cross and paid the price for all the wrong things that I've done so that I might be forgiven through his sacrifice if I will trust in him.

You're telling me that God is willing to take my life and change me and so supernaturally give me and make me other than what I am so change me that I will be an undeniable testimony to my family and friends that, God, you do live. You did rise from the dead, Jesus. You do sit at the right hand of power.

Folks, I remember the first time I heard this, how incredible it seemed. Could it be true? Is it possible? I remember going home one night thinking, is it possible that I could have another life? Is it possible that I could be a different man? Is it possible this fear and despair could be taken away from me? That I could be changed? And, of course, today I know it to be a reality. And if you're here and you're not sure that

you're a Christian and you'd like to give your life to Jesus Christ today, that's what Christmas is all about, folks.

God gave his life for you that you might come back to him and be his for all of eternity. That's Christmas. That's the meaning of Christmas.

God so loved the world he gave his only begotten son. Whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. If that's the desire of your heart today, to receive him as your savior, to trust him for a new life that will give you the power to turn away from sin and to begin to live a life that is pleasing to God.

If you're looking for fulfillment that you believe, you've heard a message today that has directed you to where it can be found. It's not in a place. It's a person.

I want to ask you unashamedly right now just to join me and just raise your hand up wherever you are. Just go ahead all through the sanctuary, the balcony, wherever you are. Just raise your hand nice and high and say, Pastor, I'm coming home to Christ.

I'm giving my life to Jesus today. I want to be a Christian. I want to be saved.

Thanks be to God for so many who are responding. In the annex, I can't see your hands, but the Holy Spirit sees your hands. God will receive you.

Give a moment. Does anybody else who just wants to join the many now, who made a declaration saying, I want to come home. God bless you.

I want to come home to God. I want to be saved from my sin. Thanks be to God.

What a difference your life is going to make today. What a difference. Wherever it is that you go, you're going to be a different person.

I promise you this. Because when you open your heart to Christ and confess that you're a sinner, Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit, who is the third person of God, is going to come and he's going to live within you. And your change becomes, your salvation is a gift.

And the change becomes a supernatural outworking of the presence of God within your life. You simply believe him and he makes it a reality. Let's pray together.

Lord Jesus, I am a sinner. Jesus, I'm sorry that my sin nailed you to a cross. And you had to pay a terrible price for the wrong things that I have done.

I'm thankful that you loved me so much and you wanted me back so much that you were willing to pay this price that I might be forgiven, that I might be guaranteed that when I die, a place in heaven will be reserved just for me. I believe, Jesus, that you are the Son of God. I believe that you died to pay the price for all the wrong things that I have done.

I believe that on the third day, you were raised again by the power of God from the dead as living proof to me that my trust in you is not in vain. I open my heart. Jesus, I ask you at this very moment to receive me and to come into my life and be my Lord and my Savior because I do this in faith.

And according to your promise to me, I believe that I am now forgiven. I believe that I am a child of God. I believe that heaven and not hell from this day forward is my home.

I believe, Jesus, that you and I are one. You will use my life for your honor and for your glory. I believe at this very moment, I am saved.

I am saved. Thank God I am saved.

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