

# Caesar or God

by Carter Conlon

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*The sermon 'Caesar or God' explores the idea that our culture and upbringing have imprinted certain values and ways of thinking on us, but we can change our heart and receive a new nature through Christ.*

**Duration:** 1:10:40

**Scripture:** Matthew 11:28

**Topics:** "Serving God", "Spiritual Warfare"

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## Description

The sermon titled 'Caesar or God' emphasizes the importance of choosing between serving Caesar, representing worldly influences, or serving God. It highlights the need for sincere surrender to God, acknowledging the struggle against sin and the enemy's attempts to hinder believers. The message urges individuals to honestly assess their hearts, seek transformation by the Holy Spirit, and commit to living a life that reflects the image of God.

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## Transcript

Well, I really fought with a title for this. It's one of the few times that I even came to the platform with no title. And I was going to leave it like that and then finally a sort of a title came.

I'm gonna call it Caesar or God. Caesar or God. Now Father, I just come before you and I ask you to anoint me.

I ask you to empower the words that you've given me to speak and let your kingdom come. Lord Jesus, you have intended in your heart to do something in this sanctuary tonight. And God, I thank you that in spite of any of any circumstantial things that may be going on, your kingdom will still advance with power and great glory.

Asking you tonight to enable me to speak simply, I'm asking you, God, to give an auction of the Holy Spirit for every heart of every hearer who's come into this house. Lord, hell will fight hard to keep many hearts in captivity. But Jesus, we believe and stand at the victory of the cross.

We believe that you triumphed over the powers of darkness and you've given gifts unto men and that your kingdom and your name will be glorified in this house tonight. Father, I thank you for what you're going to accomplish among your people in Jesus' mighty name. Mark chapter 12, beginning at verse 13, And they sent unto him certain of the Pharisees and the Herodians to catch him in his words.

When they were come, they said unto the master, We know that thou art true and cares for no man. For thou regardest not the persons of men, but teachest the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not? Shall we give or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Bring me a penny that I may see it.

And they brought it, and he said to them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's. And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marveled at him.

Always trying to religious, we're always trying to ensnare him, to entrap him. How foolish it is for humanity to somehow think we can snare God. Incredible when you really think of it.

But they wanted, they asked him a question, but there were a lot of underlying motives. The question was not really the issue. They were trying to find against him an accusation.

They're trying to find a fault so that they could take that to the leadership of the day and somehow bring an accusation against him and hasten his demise. Hasten being rid of him, because really that's, he was bringing such chaos, as they saw it, into their organized religious system. The people were beginning to believe.

They were beginning to follow. Obviously, those that had upheld the standard as they had seen it were extremely threatened by him. And they asked a question about giving taxes, and he told them to bring a coin.

And he looked at the coin, and he said, now whose image is on the coin? Now, the word for image in the original text means resemblance. It's a bodily representation. It's a prototype from which something not merely resembles it, but from which it is drawn.

The closest illustration to this would be the reflection of the sun on the water. The reflection is not the sun itself, but it is an absolute reflection of something else from which it draws its type. In other words, let me say it simply, Jesus held up a coin and said, who does it look like on the coin? And they said, Caesar.

Then he said, give to Caesar the things that draw their image from him, and give to God the things that draw their image from God. An incredible thing. He was taking them, in a sense, in their own craftiness, because he was speaking, I believe, of another day that was coming, when there's going to be a separation from that which belongs to God and that which doesn't belong to him.

And they will be identified by the image that's upon them. Now, an image such as a coin is most often made by placing a substance in a form. It can be a liquid substance.

It can be a substance that is moldable or soft and can be pressed into a specific image. And generally, it's formed by applying pressure until it becomes what the designer intended it to be. Now, in effect, that's what culture is.

Now, culture, by definition, is the sum total of a way in which a certain group of people believe. And every culture takes its children or people who desire to be adherents, as it is to that culture, and they begin to press into them certain beliefs or certain tenets of that culture. And they begin to press, as it is their children or those who adjoin it, into understanding and agreeing with a certain belief system.

Now, believe it or not, culture has imprinted you. Now, there's some obvious marks of culture in this house tonight. Over a hundred nationalities represented here.

Now, first of all, you obviously bear the image of your parents. You have little choice, in that matter, if you were born. And there was an image, in a sense, that was passed on to you--your height, your hair color, your skin color, oftentimes other factors that are actually in your physical appearance.

How often I heard it when I was growing up, oh, how you look like your father. I don't know if anybody has ever heard that--well, the guys, anyway, certainly not the girls, hopefully. But how much you look like your father, how much you look like your mother.

You bear the image, in a sense, of those that gave you physical life. Obviously not spiritual life, but your physical life, you bear their image. Culture imprinted in you language.

You were not born speaking English or Spanish or French. It was the culture. You were born with a nature that was ready to be developed as it is.

And culture came, and you began to hear sounds all around you. And those sounds began to imprint themselves in you. And you began to repeat those sounds.

And before you knew it, you were speaking a language. You were communicating. And you became a speaker of whatever language is your primary language.

And, of course, you were given that by your culture. You were not born speaking that language. And, for example, also those who speak English, you were not born with a particular accent you have.

Some say tomato, some say tomato, some say to-may-der, some - that's basically - that's the Bronx, I guess, would say that. All right. Okay, I give up.

But you were - that accent was imprinted in you. You can't really get rid of that. It will be with you all of your life.

You can travel to a distant land, you can live there for 40 years, and you'll meet somebody and say, hey, you're from Brooklyn, aren't you, or Queens, or you're from Manhattan. Because there's an imprint of your culture in you. And you simply can't get away.

You were pressed into that image, and it is impressed in you. And it will always really be part of you. You can't change that.

I have certain things in the way that I speak that identify me as Canadian, out and about in a boat with my mom. A lot of people find that very funny. I really don't know why, but they find it very funny, and they ask me to say it all the time, and they laugh and laugh.

And I just - I can't hear why it's so funny, but apparently it is. But it's impressed in me. I can't change it, no matter how hard I try.

That is in me. It will always be in me. There are certain values in the culture and the environment in which you were raised that were impressed in you.

Values are things that are held dear. We have certain values in a - what's called a Judeo-Christian society. The society imprinted and impressed in you and I certain values.

There were other values that were imprinted and impressed in you in your home, things that your parents or guardians taught you, like don't tell a lie. Now, other cultures, it's quite okay to tell a lie. Now, I'm not going to identify certain cultures, but there are cultures in the world where it's okay to tell a lie.

The whole commercial enterprise is based on lies. If I were the vendor, I lie about how much it costs me. You lie about how much you have to pay.

I lie, you lie, I lie, you lie, and then we finally arrive at a deal and everybody is happy. And it's quite all right to lie. It's part of the culture.

It's in the culture to lie when being involved in commercial dealings. You see, this is why you run into culture clashes, even sometimes in the body of Christ. There are certain things in our voices that we've picked up because of our culture.

They're imprinted in us. For example, Western culture. Typical Western culture has a low pitch drop at the end of every sentence.

If you were to graph it on a graph and I were to be speaking to you, I would say, hello, and you would see a low - if you were graphing my voice, it would go along in a line that it would drop at the end. Come in. Sit down.

How are you today? And it's just in us. It's part of what we are. It was engrafted into us by our culture.

Traditional Oriental culture has no low pitch drop at the end of their sentence. So a traditional Asian person, for example, would say, come in. Sit down.

How are you? Quite often it's perceived as very rude. I've had people say, and I'll never go to that restaurant again. If you heard how rude the waiters are, they really aren't.

The culture that they were raised in, it sounds quite normal to them because that's the imprint, the cultural imprint that was put into them. I do love discussing these issues because there's so much in it. You know what Jesus said? By every word you speak, you will be judged in the day of judgment.

You know, a lot of people feel that if I can just say the right words, I'm going to get by. But I tell you, there is a graph in heaven. You can walk up to somebody and say, I love you, brother.

It's good to see you. But heaven is graphing your voice. I want to tell you, it's a lot more than just the word.

It's the intent behind what you speak. Oh, it's going to be interesting on that day. We have just a little bit of knowledge down here, and the little bit of knowledge that we have causes the fear of the Lord to go very deep within me.

When I began to realize some of these things years ago when I used to teach cross-cultural communication, there's so many fascinating things about culture. But in other words, if I can bring it down and make it very short, culture is your total way of thinking. It's what the society around you made you.

It's what your home taught you. It's what the general consensus of right and wrong in your community instilled in you. It's the type of language you learn to speak.

And these things, from childhood until today, were pressed into you until they were hardened. That's an incredible thing. Pressed until they became hard.

You ever heard of the expression, he's so set in his ways? You ever notice that older people, a lot of older people, not all, obviously, but a lot of older people just get so set, you cannot break the routine. There's just a way of thinking, and it's just not going to change apart from the tenderness that comes from walking in the spirit of God. Pressed into you until it's hardened.

There is a day when, really, what society around you has pressed you into is what you are. And you and I come into the house of God, and I say very lovingly, but many of you have been pressed in ways that do not honor God. It is what you are.

You've been pressed to be a vengeful person. Maybe you grew up in a home where it was considered all right to take vengeance. And that desire, that innate desire is so deep in you, it's so pressed in you, it seems like it's hard, it's part of your nature.

I've had people come for counsel, and just weep in my office, I think of one particular couple a few years ago, just, oh, we've been like this, they said, so long, how could we change? We've fought a certain way for so long, we've been a certain way for so long, how is it possible that we will ever change? Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, 49, in part, he says, we have borne the image of the earthy. There's an earthy image. In other words, this world which lives in rebellion to God has had great influence in our formation.

Many of us, not raised next to a piano singing Amazing Grace, not raised in places where there was godly counsel day and night, not raised in places where there were definitive warnings about don't touch this, don't taste this, don't handle this. And in our formative years, looked at and became partakers of things that have had a great influence in our formation. And we come into even the kingdom of God and there's this cry in our hearts saying, God Almighty, how is it possible I'm never going to change? The Bible says clearly in Proverbs, a leopard can't change his spots.

I am this way. This is the way I was made by life's experiences, what I was taught by my environment, and I'm bent in this direction. How am I ever going to change? And you see that all the way from all these issues that have been pressed into our sin nature, from immorality right through to fear, all of these things that have been pressed upon and have had great influence in our formation.

And they leave us with an incredible dilemma, and the dilemma is simply this, every human being without God after a certain point in their life has a hardened heart, a hardened sin nature. And it cannot be changed by human effort. It cannot be.

You dress it up all you want. You can try to give it a new corporate image. You can, oh, I assure you after the Enron debacle here in New York City, that a lot of corporations were trying to create a new corporate image.

Same old rot from Floor 1 to Floor 74. But just try to change the image, and that's what man tries to do with himself. He is something inside that is not going to change.

It's institutionalized. It's been there for so long, irrespective of our best directives, it doesn't change. Paul said it this way.

I'll just read it to you in Romans chapter 7. Paul says, he said, I know that in me that is in my flesh dwells no good thing, for the will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. Paul said there's a law in me, there's a nature in me. I come to God as it is, and I know that I should be doing things a certain way, but how? How? I can't do it.

For the good that I would, I do not, but the evil that I would not, that I do. Now if I do that that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me. Paul is saying I have a nature.

It is a nature in rebellion to God. It has been formed by sin and by everything around it that's in rebellion to God has formed this nature and this nature is so alienated to the things of God. I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but Paul says I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

O wretched man who I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Paul's saying how do I change? I am what I am. I am what I've been made into. You think about Paul.

Now Paul was a Pharisee. Paul was a very religious man. Paul so believed even though his zeal was misguided, he so believed in what he had embraced that he was willing to kill others who disagreed with him or who made, as he saw, the mockery of his sense of righteousness.

He so believed it. Then when he finally comes to the Lord, he speaks in these words the very dilemma that every man or woman faces. I am what I am.

How do I change? But then in verse 25, he says I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. I thank God that it's through Christ I can change. But beloved, I want to tell you something.

We have to know what Christ offers. Now Paul's not just making a statement and saying okay everybody go home and be happy now. Jesus will change you.

Now it can be, I suppose, that simple but there's got to be somewhat of a legal basis for that understanding or that trust. Now I think the best way that I can explain this is a Pharisee in John chapter 3 came to Jesus. And the Pharisee is a man in this context who is attempting to change himself from the outside in.

He has taken religious robes and added them to his old nature. And he's trying hard. This man Nicodemus, I suppose, he was held in reputation.

It could be he was a fair man, a just man, an honest seeking man as it was. But he was, he may have even arrived at as much of a righteousness as a man possibly could have. I'm only speaking by conjecture, but he might have arrived at it by simple obedience and attempts to change.

But it left him with questions because there was a certain sense of powerlessness in him. And he saw another man come who was speaking the gospel. And as Pastor Neal said today, he was familiar with the words, but perhaps had never heard it spoken with such power.

And he came to Jesus and said, Jesus, I know that you're a man who's come from heaven for nobody could do what you do unless God was with him. I know it. And Christ looks at him and says, unless a man

be born again, he cannot see the word for see.

And actually the Greek means perceive, understand. He cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus didn't understand this.

And he, he started speaking as, as all men would under the circumstances and saying, Christ Jesus, what are you talking about? You're talking about going back into my mother's womb and being born again the second time. What is it that you're trying to convey to me? What is it? I'm having a hard time to understand. He's saying to Nicodemus, yes, you've had a birth of water, but unless you be, you were born as it is of a physical woman and you were formed in an embryonic sack.

But unless you have another birth, you'll never see the kingdom of God. You'll never understand it. Nicodemus, I'm giving you a unique opportunity that I'm giving to all of humanity.

I'm giving you the opportunity to be born again by the spirit of God. Now I want to talk to you a little bit about what that is. Being born again by the spirit of God.

I want to try to make it as simple as I can for everyone to understand. By the blood of Christ shed 2000 years ago on Calvary, a way was made for God to come to his creation and to wash away that which separated us from him. That's our sin nature, the rebellion.

The moment we sin, we're separated from God. We're born with the nature to sin, and the moment we form a conscious decision to sin, we are separated from God forever. But God became a man and died on a cross and made a way for his life to come in touch with ours again.

And in effect what he's saying, Nicodemus, when I die, I'm going to make a way that in the power of the Holy Spirit, I'm going to come to my creation again. And I'm going to fill them with my spirit. And it's going to be like they were born again.

In other words, remember in the first birth, those are the formative years. Those are the years where there's a curiosity. Those are the years of trust.

Those are the years where every voice speaks something into your life, and every day there's a change. Every day your mother or father or guardian said, look at Johnny or Mary, whatever it is, is now speaking a word, is now walking, is now getting up and going to school, is now able to dress herself or himself, is now able to eat by themselves, is now able to recite the 23rd Psalm, whatever it is. Jesus was saying, there's a day coming when I'm giving a people an opportunity to return as it is to the formative years.

Not trying to revamp an old nature, but putting the old nature away and considering it dead and living again. It's an incredible thing when you begin to think of it, when it finally hits home. God says, I'll in effect take you and I'll remake you.

I will not try to decorate an old nature. I'm not trying to resurrect an old man. We will just consider it dead with Christ, and we'll start again.

You'll be born again, and I'll give you a new heart. I'll give you a new mind. I'll give you a new spirit.

I'll change you. I'll remake you. I'll speak into your life the things that were never spoken into you in your first or your formative years.

I'll take away the crooked places in you and make them straight. I'll refashion you in the image of God Almighty. I'll plant you in a watered place, and all who know you will have to stand and acknowledge that there is a God in heaven.

I'll change you from the inside out. You'll be pressed, but this time from within, not from without. I'll spoil the goods of a life that's been lived without God.

Christ himself identified it. He said in Mark 3 27 that he would enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods. He would first bind the strong man, and then he would spoil his house.

Hallelujah! I thank God for this with all of my heart. I thank God for the understanding of what it means to be born again. Being born again is not just a mental ascent toward truth.

It is the beginning of a new life, a brand new life. I look today. I've lost most of the pictures, I guess, of my B.C. days before Christ.

We had a fire in 1990, and most everything we had, everything we had actually was destroyed. So the only pictures I really have are pictures that people have given us, and I look at those pictures. It's incredible.

It's like that man doesn't live anymore. That man died. Thank God.

He is scary when you look at the pictures. He died, and a new man, not a resurrected old man, but a new man, created in another image, nurtured by another spirit, raised on another voice, began to live. And it's amazing.

It's absolutely amazing when you see, when you look back and see what God has done. You must be born again, or you cannot see the kingdom of God. And He's not talking just about a kingdom to come.

We know there's a kingdom coming, but the kingdom of God is here now. It's not a kingdom that comes with, Christ said, outward display, and many people run the world looking for some outward display that's evidence of God. Jesus Himself said, Behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

He's within you. That's an amazing thing. It's what causes me to want to shout from the mountaintops everywhere that God would send me, everywhere He would enable me to go, that Jesus Christ is alive.

He offers new life, you know, and it's equal ground. It doesn't matter if you're a homosexual or a drug addict or an adult or a thief or a liar, an ex-con. It really doesn't matter because it's not about what you were.

It's about what Jesus will make you. He said, I make all things new, all things new. If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature, a new creation.

The old things pass away. Behold, all things are made new, all things. Hallelujah.

Thanks be to God. Now, He will spoil the old house or the old goods by firstly giving you a new and a trusting heart like that of a little child. Go to 2nd Corinthians, please, with me, if you will.

2nd Corinthians chapter 3. He'll give you a new heart. This is what He says, a heart of a child, a trusting child. You know, a lot of people here tonight, you've been abused and your trust was misused and God

calls you to a place of trust again, and it's so hard to trust.

I know that. I understand what you feel. It's so hard because there's a deep set fear in you that if I trust God and He betrays me, then where could I go from here? Then my hope is lost.

So it's almost easier sometimes not to trust Him, to continue learning and just kind of sit on the periphery and to listen to testimonies and to come to wonderful services, but never to step over the line, to never to come into that place of trust for the deep-seated fear that if I trust Him and He betrays me, my hope is finished, it's lost. But I'll tell you tonight that although earthly people may have betrayed your trust, you can be sure that the one who died with nails in his hands and feet for you, you can be sure that the one who left heaven for you will never betray your trust. Never, never, never.

Everything you place in His hand, He will hold there to the day He brings you home. Everything you call out to Him for, He will do for you. Line upon line, little upon little, brick upon brick, piece by piece, He will build another kingdom into your heart and raise you up until one day it just dawns on you.

You wake up and say, I'm a new creation. I'm a new creation. All things are passing away and all things are becoming new, and an expectancy comes into your heart.

Morning by morning, new mercies. Morning by morning, you wake up and say, oh God, oh God, I didn't have the power to love like this yesterday. God, I didn't have the power to forgive.

I know you live, I know you live because I didn't have it, and you put it in my heart. I was selfish. What prompted me to give five dollars to that man on the street yesterday? That wasn't me, God.

That was your spirit within me. You're making me into another man, another woman. You are changing me into the image of your Son, Almighty God.

By this I know you live. Day by day, I change, and your kingdom advances in my life, and I see the kingdom of darkness being violently overthrown by the hand of God. 2 Corinthians 3, 17, Paul says the Lord is that spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

In the original text, the Greek text, it means freedom. There's generosity. It also speaks of the future state of God's children, where the Spirit of the Lord is.

There's generosity. There's freedom. There's change.

Now, he said, we all, with an open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Paul is speaking, in a sense, the Christian hope. We see him, and as we just look upon him, as we begin to hear him, as we meditate on him, as we allow the Holy Spirit to illuminate our understanding about him, because he is our inheritance, and as we look to him with a new heart and a new mind, as we meditate on him and behold him, we are changed by the Spirit of the Lord into the very thing that we're looking at.

Incredible. That's why in Deuteronomy, God was so vehement. The second commandment, he said, don't create any other image, because if you look at anything besides me, you're going to turn into what you're looking at.

And he said later on, I think it's Deuteronomy 7, don't bring it into your house or you'll become an abomination just like it. Look to me. Therefore, Paul says, seeing we have this ministry and we have

received mercy, we faint not.

But we renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness or handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. If our gospel is hid, it's hidden to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. God says, I'll give you the heart of a child.

And as you simply behold me, I will begin to do things in your life. The truth that you begin to hear will begin to be manifested in you by the power of God. And the glorious image of Christ will come on you.

You will bear a resemblance as it is to Christ. Oh, please don't misunderstand. We'll never be little gods, as some say, but we will bear.

People will be able to say you look so much like your father. Go with me to Mark chapter 10, please. Mark chapter 10.

This is an instance where young children were brought to Jesus, a trusting heart. Verse 13 says, they brought young children to him that he should touch them, and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. When Jesus saw it, he was much displeased.

Now, there are two words that we have a tendency to just gloss over really, really quickly in the Scriptures, but when he saw the disciples pushing these children away, he was much displeased, because really, I believe the displeasure stemmed from something in the heart of God that he was saying, you are not getting it. I'm trying to convey something to you from the heart of God, but you're not understanding it. And then he said to them, suffer the little children that come to me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.

Allow them, in other words, and don't forbid them, because the kingdom of God is prepared for such as these. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. Now, it's incredible.

It's being born again. I'm speaking in this context, and Christ is saying, unless, until you come to the place where you have entrusted yourself into my hands like a little child, you will not ever know the power of my kingdom. And then he gave an incredible demonstration.

It says he took them up in his arms and put his hands upon them and blessed them. Now, I can see these little children just running to him. Your children are, at least in, you know, in our society today, there's a little bit of reservation because it's such an evil society.

But still, there are places in the world, and there are families where children are, of course, if they know you, they're not inhibited, and they'll run up, and they, I remember one time that, I don't know if any of you remember this, that the children's choir was singing on the platform one time, and this little girl just bolted from the front row and just jumped up on my knee and curled up, and, and Jesus, she just got insecure and just ran for cover, just all of a sudden, hundreds of people, and it scared her, and she just ran. And, and Jesus said, unless you become as a little child, he took them up in his arms, and the Bible says he put his hands on them. And the word for put his hands in the Greek text means as putting food on the table, and it also means to dispose of one's effects by last will and testament.

That's incredible. He put his hands on them. In other words, he, he spread a table, if you want to take it figuratively, he spread a table before them, and, and he said, everything that's mine is yours.

He put his hands on them. He, he, he disposed of all of his goods, and he placed his last will and testament, as it is, on these children who were just come to him and were beholding him. Children are so trusting.

You can speak into their lives, and they will trust you. They will believe you. You could, and they will be formed by what you say.

That's why, parents, I tell you, you have such an incredible responsibility in the formation of your children. Your actions, everything that you are, will impress them. And, and sad to say, some of them will become a replica of what you are, some in a good sense and some in a not-so-good sense.

He put his hands on them, and he says he blessed them. The word for blessed is eulogio, and it's an incredible thing. It means God's action in a man's life to bring him into the desired relationship with himself.

It also means miraculously multiplied. You'll find the very same word used in Matthew 14, 27, where it says he took the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed them, and miraculously multiplied them, giving them to his disciples, who in turn gave them to the multitude. These little children came and sat on the knee of Jesus as they simply beheld him.

He put his hands on them. He put a table before them, and he miraculously multiplied them. That's really what the Scriptures say.

Unless you become as a little child, God said, if you'll come to me, I will not betray your trust. I will speak into your life and miraculously multiply you. You'll have no tangible, you'll be able to say like, I just had a little bit, but what I had, I brought it to God.

I had enough strength just to say I need you, Jesus. That's all I had. But all of a sudden, I found it's like an insane hand came on me.

I saw a table spread before me, and the promises of God began to be miraculously multiplied in me. Incredible. So that people could be fed from the truth that God was implanting within my heart and within my life.

Incredible. When you think about it, I really don't have time to go into the rest of my notes, but he will give you the power to break wrong associations that have been formed in your life. He will divinely reveal himself in you and through you.

You can see that in Colossians chapter 3. If you have some time to read that, he will change you. I make no vain boast about my Savior tonight. What I'm telling you is the truth.

You can take it and you can go to your spiritual bank with it, and you can make it a withdrawal anytime you want, because God's promises are true to you. We asked the question, but why, why do so many seem to be struggling so hard then? I'm in the church. I do want to trust God, but I so struggle.

Can you tell me why? Can you tell me how I can get out of some of the struggles I'm experiencing? Well, firstly, and most obviously, you struggle because you have an adversary, the devil. Walks around looking to devour you every day, never stops seeking to devour you. Deathly afraid that you will come to the

knowledge of a simple truth that you're hearing tonight.

Simple. Paul said, I'm afraid of you, lest you be turned from the simplicity of the cross. I'm afraid if somebody will come and, as it is, mesmerize you with fanciful arguments and philosophies, you're going to be turned from the simplicity of the cross, the simplicity of the Christian life.

You have an adversary that constantly roars against you and roars against the truth of God. Does everything in his power to keep you from approaching Christ with an open heart and a trusting heart. Speaks unbelief, magnifies your failure, causes doubts and unbelief to go into your heart about the faithfulness of God and then magnifies another failure and tries constantly to create a gulf in the gap that God bridged through his son 2,000 years ago on Calvary.

Does everything in his power to create a gap. An adversary that tries to rob you of the simplicity of Jesus Christ. Oh, hallelujah.

If you could lay hold of this, folks, God has, has taken my life and he used it to this point for his glory. Not because I, I'm a theologian. I have had in my heart that simplicity from day one, that understanding that I have a father in heaven that will not disappoint me.

I have a savior that will not fail me. I have a word that is not the word of man. It's the word of God.

You battle also because you have a sin nature and I have a sin nature. We have been formed by things around us that are bent on walking away from God. It's, it's in you, it's in me, it's in all of us.

And in your nature, we'll always fight against the things of God. We'll always want to resurrect itself and come back and even look spiritual. We'll always want to rise from the dead and get in on the act.

But it's a dead man and it's a sin nature and it will always try to come back. And thirdly, and here's one of the most important points, I think, that the Holy Spirit's given me tonight. I just want to read this to you.

Luke 18, 19. It says, then came to him, that is Christ, his mother and his brethren. And they could not come at him for the press.

Now here, here are those that are his, his family, like we are tonight. They were trying to get to him, but there was such a mob. The word press means a disorganized mob around him or a multitude.

It's actually means multitude or disorganized mob. And there were so many people around pressing them that they couldn't get through the press. It's, the picture that I see of this is of, let's say I was trying to get to somebody and a crowd was going the other way and were dragging me back with them.

I'm trying to get close, but I can't break through. They're pressing me. They're pressing each other.

They're pressing me and I'm being conformed as it is to go their way, even though I want to go another way. They couldn't get to him because of the press. And there are many, many people today.

Hear me now on this. Even in this house, you can't get to Christ because of the mob, the disorganized mob that's all around you. You can't get through to Christ because you have people around you that are influencing you and forming you.

Contrary opinions. Talk about all you have to do is listen to talk radio for half an hour. I did the other day driving to another place.

I mean, this is a disorganized mob. And whether you agree or not with me, I'll tell you, they are pressing you. They're forming an image in you.

Their thoughts are becoming your thoughts. Their ways are becoming your ways. Their heart, their, the sneering, the cynicism, the constant criticism, the constant casting down of everything that is good and honorable.

The longer you sit, the mob is pressing and you can't get through. You come to the house of God, you can't get through. What kind of people are around you? What kind of an influence is forming you? What, what is pressing you into the crowd and keeping you from Christ? And who are you giving access to your spirit? There is a time to turn away.

It's long past. There is a time to get in your house, get the blood on the door and start eating the lamb. It's long past.

I fear for those who just casually, just casually, as in every generation, cast away the warnings of God. Still wanting Christ and Caesar. You can't have both.

Jesus said in the gospel of Luke chapter 13, there's a day coming when a group of people are going to knock at the door and say, open to us. He'll say to them, I don't know who you are. They'll say, well, we've, we've eaten and drank in your presence and you've taught in our streets.

But he says again, I don't know who you are. The word for no in the Greek means I don't recognize you. It means to proceed with the outward senses, particularly with physical sight.

I don't know you. I don't know you. I don't recognize you.

You don't look like any of my family. Then he says, depart from me, get away from my house, you workers of iniquity, which means that which is not conformable to God's goal for one's life. That's what the word iniquity means.

Not conformable. It said when I called you, I had a goal for you. I've, I've, I've been speaking into you.

I've been changing up and challenging all folks. Please don't misunderstand me. I'm not speaking about Christian perfection.

There is no perfection apart from God's righteousness. But if we are truly in Christ, we're moving step by step, little by little, we're pressing through. We're moving the crowd.

We're getting through to Christ. We're changing because we're beholding him and his image is coming into us. It also means dishonest money.

That's an incredible thing. When I was reading that, depart from me, you dishonest money. I think of the Pharisees and the Herodians coming to Christ and tempting him with a coin, thinking that we're going to catch him with their word, with his words.

But he caught them and they didn't even know it. And he was telling them, there is a day coming when the very image that's impressed on that which is presented to me will be given to who it belongs to. So give to Caesar what is his.

Give Caesar his dishonest money. Give him his worship. Give him his false godhead as it is.

Give him that, in other words, which resembles him. And give to God that which resembles God. There is a day coming, beloved.

There's a day coming. There will be no argument. Oh, there'll be those, the Bible seems to indicate, that will try to argue at the throne of God, but there will be no argument.

It will be so obvious. Paul talks about a day when Christ shall appear. We will also appear with him in glory.

And the original translation says that we will be just like he is. He will, there will be a glorious appearing of Christ, and those that are Christ will also share the glorious appearing. And they will look just like him.

Today we are being made more and more into his image, and one day that image will be fully realized in every one of us. There'll be no argument because it'll be obvious who belongs to Christ. Those who bear his image.

Isn't that incredible? Those who bear his image. People who refuse to forgive, they don't look like him. Covetous, the Bible says clearly those that love money more than God, they don't look like him.

They give to Caesar what is his. There's a day coming where I just see the throne. Now this is a picture of my own mind, but I just see the throne where Christ says, well give the devil what is his.

Give God the Father what is his. Give the devil what is his. Give God whose image is on you, give the devil what is his.

There won't be any big discussion. There'll be no point of it. It will be obvious.

It will be manifest, the scripture tells us we will know even as we are known. Incredible. What a day.

I know in my heart whose image is on me. I know it deep inside. I don't really have to prove it to anyone.

I know it. I have been provoked. I've been provoked by Pastor David's life.

I don't say this just because he's back here this week, but I've been provoked to see a man who's still so bendable, so moldable, so changeable in the hand of God. I pray God make me like that all the days of my life. Paul said, follow me as I follow Christ.

I'm bearing his image, in other words, and I can encourage you to follow me as I've chosen to follow him. You must be born again. You must.

You cannot put garments on an old nature. It won't work. You cannot fool God.

You cannot take him in his words. You cannot stand before the throne of God and say, well, hey, listen here. It says in, you see, because the mark will be as it is, you will bear his image or you won't.

And I want to give an altar call tonight for every sinner in the house. Now outside of the kingdom of God, I need Christ to come into my life. I need to be saved.

I need to be born again. I would also like to give an altar call tonight, and this is the Holy Spirit put this on my heart, for every counterfeit copy of Christ. There's going to be a hard altar call, but those would say, pastor, I am a counterfeit copy.

If you are, you really deceive nobody but yourself. You're, you're a Nicodemus in the sense you're here with all the robes, but you have no knowledge of the kingdom. Nothing changes in you.

You're still as wild and evil tempered as you always have been. You're still filled with lust. You're still fornicating, committing adultery.

You're still in the internet, hooked on pornography, and you've made peace with it. You've come to the house tonight, you're just, just simply a counterfeit coin. You're, you're, you're dishonest money.

You have an image, but there's a flaw in that image. It won't get you into heaven. There has to be an honest dealing with God.

And if you and I make the choice to deal honestly, he says, I'm going to lay my hands on you. I'm going to open your table of power and glory, and I'm going to give you everything you need to be, to live the Christian life, for life in Godliness. It's all found in me, but it's not given to the, to the dishonest Christian.

Hear me on this one. For those who take the covenant and say, this is a license to live a life of sin, you are dead wrong for eternity. It's not.

It's the power of God for those who make an honest confession and have an honest walk with God. God says, I'll give you the power to change image to image and glory to glory by my spirit. There'll be an evidence because you will bear my image.

Those areas where you were the weakest, I will make you the strongest. You'll have a living testimony. Now there's a third category of people.

It's just people who are struggling in some area of your life. We all do from time to time, just have struggles. It doesn't mean you've lost your, the presence of Christ in your life, but you're struggling.

But here's how you know you're on good ground. In that struggle, there's an honesty in you about it and a sincere desire to change. And like a little child, you just say, Jesus, you promised me.

Or if I've not heard you speaking to my life in a long time, I'm coming now. I'm going to come to you just like a little child. I'm going to simply take you at your word.

I'm, I'm giving you all I have. The best I can do is get out of my seat and say, I have a need and you're going to have to give me the rest. And if I read my Bible correctly, Christ put his hands on them, opened the table and miraculously multiplied.

And that's exactly what he will do in your life. Change you, change you. That's the kingdom of God.

This is the power of the miraculous that Christ promises to those that are his. Changed, born again, a new life, a new life, a new life, not in prison, no longer in prison, no longer wounded by things of the past, no

longer held in captivity and made blind by former experience, but by the spirit of almighty God set free to live and to love God for the rest of our lives. If the Holy Spirit is calling you tonight, if you're a sinner, a counterfeit, or struggling in an area that you just are convicted about tonight, you say, Pastor, I'm just going to be honest about this tonight.

This is dangerous. This game I'm playing is dangerous. I'm going to come to God and trust him for the power now to turn away from this area, this sin in my life.

And if that's you tonight, I'm going to ask you just to come annex. If there's anybody in the annex, you're free to come and join us at this altar. In the balcony, you can go to either exit, make your way down.

Let's all stand together. The Holy Spirit is drawing you. Please come.

We'll pray together, and let's believe God for a miracle tonight. Let's believe God for change. I'm going to ask you to unashamedly step out.

Unashamedly, those that are lost in your sin, step out, make your way down here. Nobody's going to make a fool of you or embarrass you. Just come, and we're going to pray together.

Move in close, please. Make room for those that are coming. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Let's move in. Let's please move in.

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

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, God. I praise you.

There's got to be all day today to preach this. There's got to be somebody here that the devil has fought real hard to keep you, but he's lost you tonight. He's lost you.

He's fought hard to keep you because you are an incredible threat to his kingdom now, because you are one of the most zealous sinners in New York City. And the devil himself knows that that same zeal will translate into the kingdom of God. You'll become a wonderful child of God, because you're not coming into this to play games.

You give your all to where you... I'm speaking to somebody here tonight. You're like Paul. You just give your all.

Even if it's to sin, you give your all to it. But tonight, the chains of hell are broken off your life when God's called you. I want to ask tonight, Valkyne, Annex, I can't see everybody there, but the Lord sees you here in the main sanctuary.

If you can say, Pastor Carter, I am a sinner. And tonight, I want to confess that I'm a sinner, that I've lived outside the kingdom of God. But tonight, I'm giving my life to Jesus Christ.

I'm not coming to play a religious game. I acknowledge that I've sinned against God, and I deserve hell for eternity. But God so loved me and proved his love by dying on the cross for me 2,000 years ago.

He took my place and gave his life that I might live. And so tonight, I'm giving my life. If he died for me, I'm going to live for him.

And I'm going to do it right. I'm going to do it by the power of God. I'm going to do it by letting him speak into my life.

I'm going to do it by letting him touch me and begin to change me and make me into the person that God destined me to be. And I'm going to do it truthfully and honestly. And when I struggle, I'm going to say so.

I'm not going to be a fraud. I'm not putting on ever religious garments. I'm going to walk this thing through, and I'm going to take God at his word.

And I tell you tonight, God will not fail you. And if that's you tonight, you want to confess your sin. You want to come to God.

You want to be born again. The Bible says that there are angels waiting in heaven right now to rejoice. That's what the scripture says.

There are angels waiting to rejoice just over you. And if that's you tonight, I want you to unashamedly, wherever you are, raise your hand right now. Go ahead.

Just raise it up high, up in the balcony. Raise your hand high. Unashamedly, I'm coming to Christ.

I am coming to Christ. I'm giving my life to him as my Lord and my savior. Hallelujah.

Now, if you're serious, you'll pray this with me. And if you're serious, you will find a Bible teaching church. I know not everybody's from this area, but you will find a Bible teaching church and you will get there.

You'll begin to learn about Christ. You will get a Bible. You don't have one.

We'll give you one. And you'll begin to read the gospel of John and just ask Jesus to show you who you are in him. Now, let's pray everybody together in this house.

There are quite a few coming to Christ tonight. Let's all pray together. Lord Jesus, I am a sinner.

I thank you that you so loved me that you became a man. You died on a cross to pay the price for my sins. You love me so much that even if it was just me, whoever come to you, you still would have died for me.

I'm awestruck at the depth of your love. Tonight, I thank you for opening your heart to me, letting me understand my need of a savior and letting me see the depth of your love for me. This very moment, I confess my sin.

I turn from my sin. I don't want to live in it anymore. I offer you my life and I ask you to come into my heart and to be my Lord and my Savior.

I believe this very moment that as I'm confessing you with my mouth and believing in my heart that I'm saved. I'm saved. I'm saved.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. For the rest of you, I'm going to pray for you.

Father, forgive us all where we have been counterfeit copies of Christ. Forgive us in any area where we played a religious game and not dealt in the truth. Lord, this is a dangerous and a foolish game.

God, we repent of it tonight. We ask you to create in us a clean heart and a right spirit. We ask, Lord, that you give us again the joy of our salvation.

Father, I thank you tonight that you are going to set free those that are struggling. Lord, I'm asking you right now as I stretch out my hands, symbolically really, for you to put your hand on these, your children that you love so much. I'm asking you to open their hearts to the banquet table of truth and strength and life that is theirs in Christ.

And I'm asking you to miraculously multiply the truth that they're hearing this very moment. The truth that you speak to them through your word. Multiply it.

Break every chain. Open every prison door. Heal every wounded heart.

Set free every captive. I take authority tonight over the cords and iniquity of pornography and sin and anger and bitterness and fear. We count these things destroyed because the life of Christ is in us.

We declare to all of hell tonight that there's no power of evil that can hold us. We are the children of the living God. We ask you, Jesus, to establish in us a testimony that will shock the world.

Lord, we hear a lot about shock and awe, and we ask you, Lord, to shock and awe the world through us. We ask you to so come upon us with your power, so deliver us, God, from all that besets us, that we would be raised to be a sign to this generation that there is a Christ. He does rule and reign.

And Father, I thank you, God, for touching. I thank you for delivering. I thank you for releasing.

Thank you, mighty God, in Jesus' name. Amen and amen. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Before we go, before we go, can we sing, The Lord is high above the heavens? We're going to sing it. I want to just invite you to rejoice.

I want to invite you to be as excited as a child would be, I guess, in the presence of their father. Many of you have never known that, but you will know it soon. And then when we are done, or if you have to go now, I understand, but take time to fellowship tonight.

Take time to fellowship with this body of believers in Christ. God bless you. Tuesday night, 7 o'clock.

Until then, The Lord is high above the heavens. God bless you. The Lord is high above the heavens.

The Lord is high above the heavens.

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