

Celebrating 25 Years of Times Square Church

by Carter Conlon

This sermon is a powerful message of encouragement and faith, emphasizing the challenges believers face in opposition and discouragement, but also highlighting the faithfulness of God to protect, guide, and strengthen His people. The speaker shares personal experiences and reflections on God's mercy, redemption, and the transformative power of walking with Christ. The message calls for a deep trust in God's provision, victory, and the joy that comes from Him, even in the midst of trials and discouragement.

Scripture: Psalm 71:12, Psalm 37:4, Matthew 25:21, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Isaiah 40:31, Psalm 71:17, Psalm 71:20, Psalm 71:24, Psalm 71:23, Psalm 71:5

Topics: "Faithfulness of God", "Overcoming Trials"

Description

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Transcript

I want to read to you from Psalm, I'm just going to read it to you from Psalm 71. It is a psalm written by a psalmist who was probably my age or maybe a little bit older. And here are the words he said, beginning in verse 12, he says, Oh God, do not be far from me.

Oh my God, make haste to help me. Let them be confounded and consumed who are adversaries of my life. Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor who seek my heart.

As a believer in Christ, you will always have to fight a battle. Now some of it will be physical and some of it will be spiritual, but ultimately you'll be opposed as you live for God. And some people will consider it their God-given ministry to oppose you.

That's just the reality of how things are in this world. But I'm telling you, God will be faithful. You read Psalm 37, the one I gave to Louie that one day, and he starts out by saying fret not.

In other words, you delight yourself in God. You walk with God. You live for God.

You serve God. You open your heart that God can correct you if you veer to the left or to the right. And God says, you do that.

That's your part. My part. My part is to keep you and protect you.

My part is to push away your enemies from your life and declare that I am with you. And that's the part of God. So don't lose heart because you and I are going to be opposed.

You're being opposed. Many now. You're opposed in the workplace.

You're opposed in society now. It's not popular to hold to a biblical worldview any longer. But I promise you, you keep your mind focused on God and your enemies will flee from you in every direction.

And you will one day, now I get the privilege of being recognized today. That's part of the privilege of pastoral leadership. But God recognizes everyone who's here today in this church.

He recognizes your sacrifice. He recognizes your attempts to walk with him. He recognizes the witness that you are or long to be in your community.

And one day, yes, I get a few people to clap for me today, but one day all heaven's going to stand for you. You're going to come before the throne of God. And so don't worry about it if nobody knows what you do here.

No, there's a record. There's a video camera up there that's recording what you do for the glory of God. And one day, one day, you're going to look into the face of Christ himself and he will look at you and say, well done, good and faithful servant.

He saw everything that you did and all of heaven will rejoice that you chose to live for him. And you didn't let the circumstances of life back you away from what God had called you to do and what God had called you to be. I told a group of people recently in Florida, I said, I would be a liar.

It was young people. I said, be a liar. If I told you that it's not difficult to walk this Christian walk, there are days where you're going to groan.

You wouldn't breathe if you weren't sighing. That's how you're going to breathe. It's through sighing.

I've been there. I've been through fire. I've been through flood.

I've been through trial. I've been through betrayal. I've been through the difficult things that come your way as a believer in Jesus Christ.

But by the grace of God, you come out the other side with a presence of God, a sweetness of Christ, a confidence in God, a love for people that could only be God breathed into your heart. There's no other way it could happen. It is all him.

It is fully in him. It is all him. It will always be all of Jesus Christ.

The psalmist says, I will hope continually and I will praise you yet more and more. My mouth shall tell of your righteousness and your salvation all the day for I do not know their limits. In other words, I'm not able to search the depth of this incredible love relationship that God has entered into with us through his son on the cross 2,000 years ago.

There is power in that salvation. There's grace in that salvation. There's a pathway in that salvation.

There's a glory in that salvation. And I am not capable of reaching the end of that in my lifetime, but I will do the best I can to go down as deep in the well as God enables me to and bring that living water out and give it to you so you may drink. By God's grace, by God's grace, by God's grace, I will praise him more and more, not for what he did, but for what he's going to do, for what he will do, for who he is.

That's the cry of my heart now. The Psalmist says it this way, I will go on in the strength of the Lord God, and I will make mention of your righteousness of yours only. Everyone who's walked with God, if they have any weight of God in their life at all, recognizes as I do today that without him, we are nothing.

Without him, we go nowhere. But because of him, we are the possessor of all things. Because of him, we have the promise that even in old age, we shall dream dreams.

As the Bible tells us, we shall see something ahead. We shall be given a vision that can only come from God and given the strength to achieve it that God gives to those, not when they are strong in themselves, but when we recognize that without him, we don't have a way forward. But because of him, we cannot be stopped.

We're an unstoppable army because of the presence of Jesus Christ that is in each of our lives. He goes on to say, oh God, you have taught me from my youth, and to this day, I declare your wondrous works. Now also when I'm old and gray-headed, now one of the things I've been blessed with is that my hair is not that gray for 66 years of age, and I just thank God for that.

Some people ask me, do you dye your hair? Paul said, I dye daily, but I don't. I don't dye my hair. Praise God.

Now when I'm old and gray-headed, oh God, do not forsake me until I declare, the original King James says, until I have shown your strength to this generation and your power to everyone who is to come. The mark of those of us who have walked with God is that at the end of our days, it's not about ourselves. It's all about you.

It's about passing a torch that is lit, something we've learned of God, and passing it to you and say, my brother, my sister, young and old, and rich and poor, and whatever class or culture you come from, this torch is for you. This presence of God is for you. The testimony of God is yours.

If you will reach out and take it and run the race that God has set before you, you will find a strength that can only come from God. You'll find a victory that was already won, that God is more than willing through his son to impart to you. You'll find depth in the word of God.

You'll find power through the Holy Spirit. And day to day, you'll see new mercy. Day to day, you'll change from image to image and glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of God.

So the cry of my heart is not to be comfortable in my old age. The cry of my heart is that you take the torch and begin to run with God, and you hit the full stride that God has ordained for your life. You have a unique purpose.

Everybody here, given to you in Christ Jesus before the world began, that's what the Scripture tells us. You have a unique purpose. It's not somebody else's, it's yours.

Jesus Christ called you to glorify him in a way that only you can, because he is the one who determines how that's going to be done. And as you make the determination in your heart, I said this when I was a young Christian, when we came to Christ, I said to Pastor Teresa, if this thing is real, I'm going the whole distance. And if it's not, I want no part of it.

And I found that God is real. I found that his power is real. I found that his victory is real.

And part of the Christian walk is, as Pastor Teresa said, just showing up, showing up to the house of God, showing up in the morning and reading your Bible, showing up to prayer meetings, the willingness, when God moves on you to speak to a simple person, a single person on the street, the Holy Spirit just moves you and you start speaking and it doesn't have to be the whole Bible. It can be just a word. I want you to know that God loves you.

I want you to know that you're not going to be overpowered or don't give up or don't quit, whatever it is that God puts in your heart. Just show up. You don't have to be a super Christian.

Just show up. Be there. Be in the place you're supposed to be.

Do the work that God has called you to do and he is responsible for all of the rest. I praise God for that with all of my heart. Now when I'm old and gray headed, do not forsake me.

In other words, God, don't take your hand from me. Don't let me finish my days in a rocking chair somewhere. But oh God, let me show your strength, not just talk about it, but let me show your strength to this next generation and your power to everyone who is to come by the grace of Almighty God.

I find now at this stage in my life that the Lord is opening bigger doors than I've ever seen in my lifetime, inviting me to go through into places that I'm honestly not qualified to go to and speak to people that I'm really not qualified to speak to. But he is the one who qualifies. He is the one who gives the word.

He is the one who, if we simply will just get up and go through the door, don't look to your resumes, don't look to the things that you have or don't have on the wall because God doesn't need any of that. He needs an obedient heart. He needs a person like you or me that just says, Holy Spirit, speak to me.

That's what I do every week. Most times on Sunday, I don't preach what I'm studying during the week. I'll just go with an empty basket.

I have a habit of just lifting my hands up and say, Lord, your people are going to gather on Sunday and they need a word from you and I don't have anything. You have the word that they need. You know who's going to be sitting there.

You know the struggles they're going through. I don't. I'm studying something in the book of Ezekiel or whatever, but it may mean nothing to the people.

So God, give me a word. And every week he has been faithful to give me his word for his people. And sometimes it's hard to put away the things you're studying because in the natural, you think they're so profound.

By God's grace, by God's grace, the promise I now hold in my heart is the glory of the latter house will be greater than the former. And he really does save the best wine for the end of the banquet, the wedding feast. He really does.

I've started to go through into something of him that I can't explain to you. I don't have words to explain it, but it's a confidence in him. It's a, it's, it's a relationship with Christ where I'm just letting him speak to others through my life.

It's a comfort in God that I'm comfortable at home just being in his presence. I don't feel like I have a duty to perform any kind of religious activity in his presence. I just enjoy his presence.

It's truly a wonderful and amazing time. The one thing I can tell you is that in Christ, there's no fear of growing old. And I thank God for that.

Absolutely not. Absolutely not. People apart from Christ, they do everything in their power not to grow old, don't they? They get this lifted and they get that lifted and they, you're going to lift it so long, it's going to turn to jello on a stick eventually, and they buy this product, they buy that product and they, they get this and they get that all, all, all in this attempt to not end up in the grave.

And I'm sorry to have to inform you, but it's not going to work, but there's no fear of growing older in Christ whatsoever. I thank God for that. As a matter of fact, I look forward to it because there's something of God found when our bodies start to weaken.

There's something of God found that can't be discovered in our strength. It's found in him. When our natural strength is gone, the strength of God takes over and the richness of his mercy goes deeper and the revelation of his character goes farther.

The carrying power of his spirit becomes more obvious and more evident than ever before in life. And then we begin to realize that yes, we might not be high profile when we get older, but I tell you, our prayers can move the hand of God. There's more done in the prayer closet than probably half the messages that are preached in this country every Sunday.

When we pray, God promises to hear and forgive and heal. That's the cry of my heart for you. I want you to know that there's a strength in Christ.

It's not found by the casual seeker. I have to tell you straight out, the casual seeker will never find this strength, but the sincere seeker will. The sincere person.

It's not the volume of what you do or how you read or how you pray. It's the sincerity with which you seek God that makes the difference. It's the hungry heart that gets the victory.

And so Father, I want to thank you for this day, Lord. I want to thank you that as a congregation, we've had an opportunity to honor you, to honor your work. We are simply your body.

You are the life source of all that we have become, all of us, Lord, in the sanctuary and on this platform. Without you, we don't have a song. Without you, we have no testimony.

Without you, we have no future. Without you, we have no eternity with God. So Lord, it all belongs to you.

So Jesus Christ, Son of God, we lift up your name this day and we give you the glory. We give you the praise. And we're not even remotely trying to share it, Lord, because we recognize that you are the only reason we even have a song.

So thank you for all that you've done for us. Thank you, Lord, for what you will do in the future. Thank you, God, for the influence and exposure you've given to your testimony through this church and this city at this time.

Thank you, Lord, that you've taken the prayer meeting worldwide and countrywide from this church. And so many are being blessed and touched by us just showing up to pray. Lord, that's all we do.

We just show up. You take over. You do the rest.

Thank you for all that you're doing, O God. I bless you with all of my heart, Lord, for how you have led this church for the 32 years now you've led this church. Your presence has been here.

The hallmark of this church has been your manifested presence with us every time we meet. We've never had a service, Lord, where we don't feel the presence of your Holy Spirit. We've never met at any time where your word hasn't been open to us, where our hearts have not burned with a longing and a yearning for a deeper walk with you.

And Lord, for these things, we are eternally grateful. God Almighty, I pray that in this church our children, Lord, would find you in a way, Lord, that only you can reveal yourself to them. I pray that young people would take up the torch in this darkened time.

And as you said in the Gospel of Matthew, that there would be a generation who have oil in their lamps who can point the way to your soon coming. So thank you for these things, O God. Thank you for the music ministry in this church, for Greg Thomas, for his leadership, Lord, for those who have been so faithful and been with us for so long and given their time and their talent for your house and for the glorifying of your name.

Thank you for the pastors and the elders of this church, their wives and husbands, Lord. I thank you, God, for how you have blessed this house and you've kept us in unity, Lord, when all of hell would have tried to divide us, you've kept us, my God. And we recognize it's not us, we've not kept us, you've kept us, Lord.

You've kept us because we chose, Lord, to want to do things according to your word. Thank you for the choir behind me and ahead of this congregation today, Lord. Thank you for the translators, God, up in the booth who translate the words that are spoken here into so many different languages.

Thank you for the ushers, for the maintenance team, for the security staff, for all the volunteers in this church. Thank you for the staff you've given us, God, the employees of the church. Thank you, God.

You brought us together as a body and, Lord, we're not perfect, but in our weakness, Lord, you're leading us forward, God. You're giving us the grace and the strength to be the testimony you've called us to be in our time. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, God. Thank you, God, for putting faith in our hearts to believe there can be a third great spiritual awakening in this nation, in our generation. Thank you, God, that you found a people in the middle of Times Square willing to come together to see darkness pushed back one more time and godlessness pushed back one more time and to see our children released from the grip of darkness and brought into the life and light of Jesus Christ.

Thank you, God, for faith, Lord. We wouldn't have it, Lord, were it not for you. You're the only one that can make the word live inside of each of our hearts, Lord.

Other than that, it would just be letters and a page. We wouldn't even understand it. It's only you, Holy Spirit, that's given us illumination and caused our hearts to begin to believe.

Thank you, God, for the campus churches, Lord, for North Jersey, TSC Bronx, for the Summit Campus Church. Thank you for our Bible School, Lord, where young people from around the world, we have the privilege of sponsoring them so they can be trained and taught in the ways of God. Thank you, Lord, for all that you're doing, God.

Thank you for the resources to help a hundred churches in New York City feed the hungry in their communities. Thank you for the thousands of children that are being fed in 22 countries every day throughout the world through this congregation, Lord. God, the list goes on and on of what you have done and are willing to do in the future.

But even more so, I want to thank you, Jesus, for glorifying your own name through this church body. Thank you, God. And I say with the people that are here today, glorify it again, Lord.

You have glorified it before, but glorify it again, Lord. Glorify it again. From coast to coast in this nation, from north to south, from east to west, oh God, glorify your name.

Let breathe upon your house, upon every church of every denomination. Breathe on your house, oh God, and raise up a vibrant testimony of you, Lord, in this last hour so people can find safety in their time of darkness and need. So God, thank you for these things, Lord.

Thank you, thank you, thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord. My heart is overwhelmed.

God almighty, I would never have chosen me to do this, but you did because you're a God of mercy. Thank you for reaching down into a small mining town in Canada, and you looked at that little boy. God, you looked down and you saw me when no one else did.

You saw something nobody else saw. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, God.

Even when I cursed your name as a habit, you were reaching out to me and whispering into my ears about your love and your redemption. Thank you, God, for not sending me to the hell that I deserved, but redeeming me by your blood, and bringing me into your kingdom, and letting me glorify your name, oh God, till the day I die, may your praise be on my lips, oh Jesus, son of God. Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

Thank you for covering my mistakes, Lord. Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, for mercy when I didn't deserve it, Lord. Thank you, God.

Thank you for enduring my misunderstandings of even you, Lord. Thank you, God, for leading me through those early foolish years, Lord, when I propagated the gospel, Lord, of rigidity and hardness, because I failed to understand your heart. Oh God, your mercy is beyond understanding.

Your mercy is beyond description. Thank you, Lord, for sending your Holy Spirit to this church in a new way, in a powerful way, oh God. Thank you for guiding us, and guarding us, and taking us into the future as a vibrant testimony of who you are.

Lord, we give you the glory, we give you the honor, we give you the praise, for yours is the kingdom, yours is the power, and yours is the glory. It all belongs to you, Lord. It all belongs to you.

Hallelujah, hallelujah. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. Thank you, Lord, my God.

Thank you, my God. Oh God, oh God, oh God. Oh Holy Spirit be pleased to dwell here be pleased to dwell with us be pleased to help us to change even when we're reluctant to God guide us and guard us and if we've erred in any way show us where that is and help us to walk on a path that will honor you Lord give us great grace as a church body Oh God and keep us Lord keep us my God and keep this testimony alive I agree Lord may it burn for another 25 years it may not be me here but may it burn for 25 more years Oh God Oh Jesus keep this church alive and father I thank you with all of my heart this day Oh God with all of my heart with all of my heart hallelujah to the Lamb of God hallelujah hallelujah hallelujah thank you Lord great is thy faithfulness Oh God my father there is no shadow of turning with thee thou changest not thy compassions they fail not has thou has been thou forever will be great is thy faithfulness great is thy faithfulness morning by morning new mercies I see Oh summer springtime Oh great great Oh great you to raise your hand if you're discouraged if you're discouraged everyone else keep your hands down everyone is just just be honest you're discouraged today you've come in everyone is around those who raise their hands put your hands on the shoulder please if you will of those who have their hands raised just reach out you're in a row behind or beside and we're gonna pray right now and we're gonna pray that God break that spirit because Christ will be faithful to you Jesus Christ will not fail you he will not forsake you you will not be overcome you go through the flood you will not drown you walk through the fire it won't burn you that's the promise in the Word of God he will be faithful father we lift up those that are with us this morning that are discouraged God those online that are discouraged you have raised their hands those in our campus churches that are fighting discouragement Lord God we just thank you that you will touch every heart you touch every life and lift that spirit off of these brothers and sisters in Christ and help them Lord to put their eyes upon you one more time you have won a victory you have conquered death you have defeated darkness and you promise that you will give gifts to those Lord that are called by your name so I'm asking for the gift of joy this very moment the joy that can only come from you you yourself told us that your joy is our strength so God lift him out of the discouragement for whatever reason that is upon their hearts and give them grace and give them strength right now Lord let this not ever be a house where people are discouraged let it be a place God where we come in and God we might come in with a tear but we go out with a shout of victory we go out with a shout of glory because God is with us God is our strength God is our provider God is our caregiver God is our hope God is our future Lord Jesus Christ thank you God thank you thank you for touching every life and we rebuke the devourer in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ Satan we stand against you and resist you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the strength of his victory we stand victorious today and we believe with all of our heart we will not be overcome by any weapon of hell that is formed against us and every tongue that rises us against us in judgment we condemn it this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord thank you God for a cleanness a righteousness that's not earned it is given by faith it is freely given by faith in your sacrifice on the cross so God we thank you with all of our heart you are faithful Lord you are faithful Lord you are faithful Lord you are faithful

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