

# Disentangled Warriors

by Carter Conlon

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*To be a successful warrior for Jesus Christ, we must be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, live a surrendered life, and make unity a choice.*

**Duration:** 47:05

**Scripture:** 2 Timothy 2:3

**Topics:** "Caring For Others"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of encouraging and supporting one another in the body of Christ. He references the story of Paul in 2 Corinthians 2:7, where Paul encourages the church to comfort and encourage a disciplined man. The preacher also highlights the power of unity in praising and thanking God, even in the midst of battles and difficulties. He warns against starting something without counting the cost and emphasizes the need to finish what we start. Lastly, he uses the analogy of soldiers in the military to illustrate the importance of not leaving anyone behind and carrying one another when needed.

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## Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church Pulpit Series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing World Challenge PO Box 260 Lindell, Texas 75771 or calling 903-963-8626.

You are welcome to make additional cassettes of this message for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. Now if you'll turn in your Bibles with me to the book of 2 Timothy chapter 2. 2 Timothy chapter 2, I've entitled this message, Disentangled Warriors.

Disentangled Warriors. This is a letter from the apostle Paul to a young man who's heading out into the ministry. Paul has run his course, he's nearing the end of his life, not too far actually from the writing of this letter.

And he's giving some sound and solid advice for this young man who's heading out, as I feel in my heart, to give to this young man today and to this church. Paul says it this way, he says, Thou therefore, chapter 2, 2 Timothy chapter 2, Thou therefore my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. In other words, you have a strength Timothy, but remember this strength comes from God's goodness.

It comes from God's unmerited favor in your life. It doesn't come from any exuberance of the natural man. And to young people you'd be wise to learn that.

You see, the true song of God comes from a surrendered life. The true song comes from a life that is dependent on God. We've seen this in the church, we've come to understand this in the adult choir of this congregation.

If you had been with us in Nigeria, for example, on that first night, when everything is calm, there's more than half a million people in attendance, we begin, the first note hits on the piano and a wind comes from nowhere. A strong wind blows down a wall on part of our choir. It starts raining from every side.

One of the men on the platform said, I've never seen anything like this. Now he's an African man, he said, I've never seen this. Rain is coming from two directions at the same time.

He said, it just doesn't happen that way. There was a circle of lightning all around us. And we knew immediately that we were in a power and principality struggle.

Because witchcraft had dominated that area for as far back at least as we were aware of. And I remember the choir started to sing. The power goes out.

No musical instruments are left. Only Harry's left on the drums. And we began to worship.

The choir just began to worship. And I saw the power of praise demolish the strongholds of the devil. I saw praise come and bring a calm into what otherwise would have been a very, very difficult, if not even a disastrous evening.

The devil wanted to cause a riot. He wanted people to start fighting and shooting each other. For that's all they had been doing really up to that point in time of that particular meeting.

But I saw the power of purity in praise. The power of people's lives who said, this is not just a song, but this is a lifestyle. This is a trust that I have in God.

He has enabled me. And I've never been triumphed over by the powers of hell. And so I'm going to stand up.

And I'm going to make this declaration that Jesus Christ is faithful. And this choir began to sing like I've never seen it sing before. And I saw the powers of darkness pushed back.

There were witches chanting in the background. Powerless, absolutely powerless to stop the grace and the glory of God. We saw over 100,000 people that night come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

It was an amazing time. But I have seen the power of praise. I understand now when David's army went into battle, why oftentimes the Levites would be sent first.

Pure worshipers. Those who had a deep, heartfelt trust in God. It's not about a song.

It's about a life. It's about a decision that we make to walk with God. It's about singing through your pain.

Singing through your frustration. As God is going to use you, you can be sure that hell is going to come against your mind. You can be sure that circumstances are going to come against you.

And the devil's voice is going to say, you shouldn't be doing this. You're not worthy to sing. But beloved, I warn you, and I caution you, and I also encourage you.

None of us are worthy to sing. None of us are worthy to stand here. If God marked iniquity, none of us could stand.

Our song is not about ourselves. Our song is about a Savior who defeated the power of darkness. Rose from the grave and sits now at the right hand of all authority.

That's who our song is about. It's not about ourselves. And thanks be to God, it never has to be and never will be.

Hallelujah. Paul says, in the things that you've heard of me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. Timothy, God has planted grace in your life.

And through this grace, your life is going to become an instruction. You're not just going to be a sweet song that people gather to listen to and are unchallenged and unchanged in their ways. But Timothy, commit it to others.

Let your life be an example of what their lives are to be. Thou therefore, he says, endure hardness, in verse 3, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Paul says, Timothy, it's not going to be easy.

There are going to be wars. There are going to be great battles to be fought. And of course, the apostle Paul was an old battle scarred warrior for many years.

He himself said, don't bother me. I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't trouble me.

Don't try to lay anything on me. I have everything I need in Christ. I've borne in my body everything the devil can throw at me.

And I now know that God is able to keep everything I've entrusted to him. Paul says, Timothy, hardness is part of the walk. It's not going to be just a cake walk and a sweet song.

You're going to have to fight powers of darkness. You're going to have evil men come against you, Timothy. You're going to have times when you're going to be pressed out even beyond measure.

And as we did in Asia, perhaps you'll even despair of life. But Timothy, have the sense of death in yourself. And trust in God who is able to raise the dead.

Paul goes on and says, Timothy, no man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life. That he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier. Oh, Timothy, you cannot have the world's mentality and fight this battle.

You cannot be selfish like the world is selfish. You cannot be self-focused like the world is self-focused. You have to have God's mind.

You have to have a God heart. You have to have a new nature or you're never going to make it to the end of the battle. Do not entangle yourself, Timothy.

Don't get all wound up like the world is. Don't get ensnared by the things that ensnare those who are outside of this army of Jesus Christ. Yet he says, if a man also strive, in verse 5, for masteries, he's not

crowned except he strive lawfully.

In other words, Timothy, there is a reward. But you've got to do it God's way to get the reward. There's an end goal.

There's a time of victory. But you're not going to experience that victory unless you do it God's way. You have to do it lawfully.

There's no skirting around it. Now, you're going to understand this as I get deeper into this message. He says, the husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.

In other words, Timothy, the things you're going to teach, you have to go through it first, Timothy. You'll have no authority to say, God can take you through the storm until you've gone through the storm. You're going to have to go through a storm or two.

You're going to have to have some waves crashing into your boat. You're going to have to have some times when you need God. There's nothing else.

There's no other resource to get you through. You're going to need God. And when he does come through.

When he is faithful to you because he cannot fail. He's not a man that can lie. Timothy, you're going to have an authority then.

You're going to stand up and it's not just going to be a song, it's going to be a life experience. The adult choirs move beyond singing. I don't know if you've ever noticed that.

There are some services now in Times Square Church where they've moved away from singing and they've all moved into preaching. I've seen it in our crusades. I've seen it in the church.

You've seen the finger come out. Have you ever noticed that? They're singing like this. That means they're no longer singing.

They're now preaching to the congregation. They're now saying, God can. Listen, I've been in the battle.

I've been in the struggle. I've been in the hard times. And not just now one preacher standing behind the pulpit, but you've got 180 or 200 in the choir loft that are all now preaching to you because they've made the choice to walk in with God.

They've gotten something in their heart that says, Lord, this is not a picnic. This is a war. And we've determined to walk together in this war.

We've fought some battles. If you understood some of the testimonies that have happened to people in the adult choir even since they have been there, you'd understand there have been some wounds and some scars, some deep battles. But many have made the choice to sing through it all.

They've been the first partaker of the fruits. They're the first to say, I've walked through this way. I've gone through the fire.

And just as God's word says, it didn't burn me. I've walked through the water. And just as God's word says, it didn't drown me.

Hallelujah. Paul says, consider what I say. And the Lord give the understanding in all things.

Many, many people claim to be disciples of Christ. But there are not very many that become mighty in the kingdom of God. And there are some characteristics of the mighty.

First Chronicles chapter 12 talks about the mighty men. As a matter of fact, the whole chapter, First Chronicles 12, is about David's mighty men. Distressed in debt and discontent that gathered around him.

And by the grace of God became mighty. Came out of a cave of despair with a staff or a sword in their hand. Beyond it all, they had courage in their heart, which is not natural.

It was supernatural. An ability to walk together. The Bible says they were not of a divided heart or a double heart.

They could keep rank. They came out of that cave and they marched together. And these are the definable characteristics of this army that God raised up.

They could walk together. They could keep rank. Every man knew where he belonged.

Just like on the platform, the pastors of this church were able to keep rank by God's grace. We all know who we are. We all know where we're placed.

We're not looking for another man's spot because we realize that even in the pursuit of another man's spot, we are bringing death into our own lives, into our own ministry. They can walk together. It's an awesome thing when I know the second seat is mine.

And if somebody should decide the third is mine or the fourth, then I know that's mine. The issue is I'm in the seat that God puts me in. I'm in the ministry where God has called me.

Where there's no striving. It's amazing. Remember Psalm 133 says, Where brethren dwell together in unity, there's a glorious anointing of God.

It flows all the way down throughout the whole body. When you all are in your right place. And whether you're in the tenor section or the altos or whatever other toes there are in the choir, I don't really know all of these things.

But no matter where you are, as long as you know that you are in the place that you're supposed to be, as long as there's no pride gets in the heart and says, Hey, I could sing that solo a whole lot better than this person. And all of a sudden you find yourself mighty in your own sight, but very small in the sight of God. The issue is they could keep rank.

I want to ask you today, Times Square Church, can you keep rank in the house of God? If God makes you an usher, can you be there? Can you be content? Now, we're not always picking on the ushers. I consider that a very, very high calling. It just happens to be the illustration that virtually every preacher in America uses and Canada.

We talk about the ushers. I don't know why we do that. We just do that.

But if you happen to be an usher, can you keep rank? Can you say this is where God has placed me? This is what he wants me to do. I'm going to do this with all my heart. I'm going to be a good usher.

I'm going to do it to the glory of God. And if God wants me to do something else, he knows where I live. He knows my phone number.

He knows my name. As a matter of fact, he knows how many hairs are on the top of my head. Nothing is hidden from him.

If he wants me, he knows where I am. But until then, I'm keeping rank. I'm keeping rank.

I'm walking in unity with the brothers and sisters that God has around me. The scripture says they were not of a divided heart. And actually, the definition of that is found in Psalm 12 and verse 2. It talks about those with a double heart are empty talkers or vain deceivers to their neighbor.

They speak, David said, with a double heart to their neighbor. And it means empty talk. It's that voice that says, I'm with you.

I love you. But there's really no substance to it. There's nothing behind it.

You see, unity, beloved, is not a feeling. It's a choice. A feeling may come.

Thank God for that. But unity is a choice. And we'll talk about that in just a moment.

In 2 Chronicles chapter 5, I read it for you this morning. The scriptures talks about the power of one voice. I think of a choir when it begins to sing with one voice.

And by God's grace, you're going to get there. You'll be that choir. But when you begin to sing one voice, 2 Chronicles 5, 13 and 14, I'll read it to you.

The scripture says it came even to pass as the trumpeters and singers were as one to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord. You see, they were as one. When the trumpeters and singers were in unity and they were speaking with one voice and they were praising God and they were thanking Him, that means that talks to me about there were battles.

There had been battles, difficulties, and they had seen the faithfulness of God. And they were praising Him and they were thanking Him. God, nothing worse than people who start out and don't finish something.

Jesus said, count the cost before you attempt to build this tower, lest you get halfway through and you're not able to finish. And everybody you've sung to begins to mock your song. Count the cost and let that commitment in your heart be very, very sure.

They were praising and thanking the Lord. And when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments and music and praised the Lord and said, He is good and His mercy endures forever. God is good.

You know, the scripture says He's a good and He's a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. And you're going to have that song if you've not got it already. You're going to be able to say, God, you've been good to me.

I've been seeking you. And I have found that you have rewarded me as I have pressed in to seek you. And God, thank you for your mercy.

Oh, you're going to need it. You're going to understand it soon. As many, many in this church already do.

I know that's your song. Many are here today. God is good and His mercy endures forever.

It's God, you've been merciful to me forever. As long as I can remember, you've been merciful to me. You were merciful to me on the car on the way into church today when I lost my temper and started saying things to my own family that I shouldn't say.

And you know what I'm talking about. Many of you are living there right now. His mercy endures forever.

When they sang that song, the house was filled with a cloud, which represents the presence of God, even the house of the Lord. So the priest could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God. And that glory is the very manifested presence of Jesus Christ.

The glory of the Lord. The presence of God. Nothing more attractive than a surrendered soul.

Did you know that? You come into the house of God and perhaps you're a hungry person looking for truth. You walk into the house of God and there's something about a surrendered vessel. There's something about somebody somewhere who has surrendered to God and they are a worshiper of God.

They don't have to put on a show. They don't have to do it for anybody around here because they're doing it just the same way at home in their private quiet times. And there's something about the glory of God filling.

Now the glory used to be in an Old Testament building. But that glory is now in you and it's in me. The glory is the manifestation of Jesus Christ.

The glory. The glory. We experience it here when we worship God many times in this house.

The glory of the Lord begins to be manifested. And the glory is manifested in lives. No longer outward display, but in lives.

The glory is in your own heart. It's in my heart. When I lift up my hands to God and say, God, you've been good to me.

You've been merciful to me. You've been faithful to me. I trust you, God.

I trusted you in the past and you didn't fail me. I trust you for today and tomorrow. God, you will never fail me.

And you lift up your hands and say, God, you've been merciful. God, you've been good. The glory begins to be released in your heart.

These are the praises that God inhabits. He inhabits the praises the scripture says. It doesn't mean he comes down when we hit the right note in our songs.

God's glory begins to rise up in our own hearts. When we lift our voices and say, Oh, God, I trust you, Lord, for the future. I trust you for my family.

I trust you, God, for the strength that I need to fulfill the ministry that you've given me. God, I trust you for everything I will ever require to live the Christian life. The glory is being manifested in your heart.

The glory. The strength. The glory, actually, in the original text, it means recognizing a person for who he is.

It's the recognition of Christ in you, which is the hope, Paul said, of glory. That's the hope of our glory. It's Christ in us.

Christ in me. Christ in you. Thanks be to God.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Now, I want to give you an example from the military.

My son, my oldest son, was a Marine for four years. And he shared with me some things about the training that they go through as soldiers. Remember that Paul said no man who's a soldier entangles himself in the affairs of this life, that he may please him who's chosen him to be a soldier.

Now, firstly, Paul calls Timothy a soldier. So I want to look at it from the perspective of a soldier. Number one, unity is a choice.

I said that earlier. Not a feeling. It's a choice.

I choose to walk in unity with Pastor Neil, Pastor David, Pastor Patrick. And I choose to do this. It's not a feeling.

Because if it's feelings, it's not going to last very long. It doesn't take very long for something to happen, something to be said, some wrong perception of an event or a happening. And all of a sudden, if the feeling goes, and that's why so many churches just start out so good and they just blow apart.

Because there's no understanding that unity is a choice. I can choose to be unified with you or I can choose just to walk by my feelings. Psalm 133 speaks of that.

And, of course, the blessing of that unity is the commanding, as God says, of the blessing of life everlasting. When I walk together in unity with my wife, there's a blessing of God that comes on my home, comes on my children. I remember my daughter just a few weeks ago came to my wife and said, Mom, she said, I would give anything to have a life like you and Dad have.

She said, you have such an awesome life. Well, that's an incredible thing. You see, we just walk together in unity.

We love God. We study the Word of God. We have an open time of discussion, one with another, if there are issues that need to be challenged or changed in our home or in our individual hearts.

And you see now your children beginning to see that and saying, this is desirable. I want this. I want.

You see, that's the power of unity. God says where there's unity, I command a blessing. Everything that is beneath that unity is the blessing of God's life starts to touch it.

It's amazing when you begin to see it. And there's incredible power in unity. Could you imagine the U.S. military going into Iraq and commanders saying, Well, I'll go this way.

Another one says, Well, I feel like I'm going. I'll go this way. I'll take that road.

I'll go over here. You imagine how long that kind of an army would last. You see, in the Scriptures, whenever God wanted to defeat an enemy army, he would send disunity into their ranks.

And the end result is that they would take their swords and begin to fight one with another. How many times do we see it in the Old Testament? Disunity ends up with infighting. And that's why so many churches end up infighting, because they don't understand the power that is in unity.

I think of when I was a police officer years ago, there were people that I had to work with that I was not personally drawn to. And those things are part of life. You come into church, and there are people in the church that I might be more inclined to be drawn to, and there are others that I'm less inclined to be drawn to.

That's just the reality of life. You all understand that. But I want to tell you something.

When we had to go to a call, I could have been in a lunchroom, for example, and having a very, very vocal discussion, sometimes very negative ones. I'm talking now my pre-Christ days, so you have to understand. And we could have a very, very vocal disagreement about something.

And sometimes it could even get quite vocal. And yet when I would head out, when we would head out after we leave, and we'd head out into battle as it is, and a call would come in over the radio, and one of those men, perhaps maybe the same man, was in trouble. There's never a moment's hesitation.

Because once you put on the uniform and walked out the door, you were unified. And there's power in that unity. Never a moment's hesitation to go into a violent situation, a bank robbery, whatever it is, to go into a violent fight, whatever it is, not a moment's hesitation.

There's an understanding that there's a unity that is far beyond our mutual feelings, one for another. And there's incredible power in unity. Now, of course, the church's unity is to go beyond enduring one another.

God says, I'm going to give you a loved one for another. That's another dimension altogether, which we can only arrive at by the power of the Holy Ghost. But we can't, by God's grace, get there, to the point where we actually genuinely love one another by the power of God's grace within us.

In the military, my son Jason told me that quite often they would go on very lengthy marches. And sometimes these marches would go for even days, where there'd be no sleep, because they had to simulate battle conditions. When you're on the move, for example, when the troops went into Iraq, there's no time to stop and sleep.

Sometimes they were up for three, four days straight, marching, moving, constantly. And in that time, some of the soldiers get weary. They get tired, for whatever reason.

Some are just less physically able to keep up the march than others are. And he said, part of the training, they would be marching together in ranks, sometimes five abreast, long columns. They'd be marching together in rank, and part of the training is when you saw soldiers' knees begin to droop, and you saw his head go down, and you saw he's beginning to lose his stride.

And of course, when everybody is marching in unison, it's easy to spot somebody who's out of stride. And the moment you saw a soldier becoming weary, part of the training is to begin to encourage that soldier, as they march. Amazing.

He said the guys on all sides would begin to yell to him, you can do it, and all this other stuff. Left, forward, right, and just start calling out, and just start infusing strength into that man with words of encouragement. Remember Paul, in 2 Corinthians 2, verse 7, talked about a man who had to be disciplined by the church, but then he goes to the church and says, go to that man now and encourage him, lest he be swallowed up of sorrow.

Remember the song they were singing, God is good and his mercy endures forever. And part of the ministry of walking in unity in the body is when we see somebody out of step, we don't look for fault in them, and we don't go and broadcast it to other people. We don't start talking to the person on our left and on the right about how weak this particular person is, and how they're kind of missing the flow of everything that's going on.

But they begin to shout out and encourage. Oh beloved, would be to God we could see that in the church all the time. That we would encourage one another.

We see somebody with their head down, they're a little bit out of step, and we're quick to speak the Scriptures, and we're quick to infuse life in one another. We're quick to do just what natural military powers learn to do. And my son shared with me that many times that's all a soldier will need.

His brethren around him just begin to shout it up as it is, and as they do, he's just infused with a new sense of purpose. And how many here this afternoon, you know that there have been times in your life that you've come into the house of God, or perhaps some other fellowship place, and you're ready to give it up. And a word of encouragement what it did for you.

I remember years and years ago while building the church in Canada, I got so discouraged. We started out with such great gusto, and this is God, and this is wonderful. All kinds of workers.

It was a big, well not big, you could fit the whole thing in a rotunda here, but it was a fairly big church for there. And you know we started out repairing it, and there's this enthusiasm that week one you've got 35, 55 people there. Week two you're down to 40.

Week three you're down to 25. Week four you're down to 15. Week five it's the pastor who's left.

And I remember I was, that's the point I was at. So much work to do and so discouraged. And the devil just climbed on my back, and my head went down.

And I remember it was an evening, and I was leaving the church. I'd been painting on a scaffold, and I was walking out the door just so discouraged. So the weight of the lies of the devil on me.

And my step was slow. I was losing my balance as it is. My head was down.

And I remember coming to the door, and I saw this shadow because it was getting dark of just two little old ladies come walking in the church. And they didn't attend the church. They were from the community.

And one lady just reached out to me. I remember she had a \$50 bill in her hand. She pressed it in my hand.

She said, Pastor, you're doing a good job. This is good for the community. Keep up the good work.

We just want you to know we're for you. And I walked out of that building, I'm telling you, just ready to take on the world again. Just a word of encouragement.

It's so important. You see, that's why Paul says to Timothy, don't entangle yourself with the affairs of this life. You see, because the entangled mind only thinks about himself.

The entangled mind is all me and mine and mine and I and my job, my car, my house, my girlfriend, my boyfriend, my this, my that, and totally misses what's going on in the house of God, totally misses what's going on in the army. That's why Paul says, Timothy, don't let your mind be entangled with the things that entangle the minds of everyone in this life who's without God. Timothy, be singly focused.

Endure hardship as a good soldier. Be careful. You're going to have to teach others.

But you as I've encouraged you, Timothy, remember, Paul had encouraged him. Timothy was fearful. And remember, Paul's words in the previous letter, he said, God's not given us a spirit of fear, Timothy, but power, love and a sound mind.

Can you imagine when Timothy read that? Oh, yeah. Can you imagine that? That's actually not understanding. That's going to be the Bible one day.

But you get this letter from Paul and Paul is encouraging you. And I can see Timothy picking up and becoming strong by these encouraging words. Now, if even in encouragement as the march is going on, my son said, if the soldier is not picking up, perhaps he's sick, maybe he's got some kind of an illness on him, who knows what is happening.

But if it fails, if the encouragement doesn't seem to be doing it, the next step that they do is they take the load off his back because every soldier carries about 100 to 150 pound pack on his back. And I remember Jason saying to me, if it doesn't work, the encouragement, then one of us takes the pack and carries a double pack. So it now carries 300 pounds on his back.

Amazing. I was thinking, God, help me. When I heard this, help us to understand.

Paul says, let me just read to you in Romans, for the sake of time, I'll just read it to you in Romans chapter 15 and verse 1. He says, we then that are strong, oh, go there, Romans chapter 15. He says, we then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves. We ought to carry the load as it is.

There are times that you and I have just got to do something. It's not enough just to say, God bless you, be warmed and filled and all the rest of that. But there are times it's got to go beyond that.

We have to do something about this person's situation. There's a load on them, whether it's stopping to finally counsel and pray or maybe just saying, look, I'm going to call you every day for a week. I'm just going to pray for you.

Whatever the load is, whatever the enemy is using to destroy this person of God, we've got to go beyond just words sometimes and take on the load. He said, and let every one of us, verse 2, please his neighbor for his good to edification. In other words, we're to take on the weaknesses as it is of others, not living for ourselves, and let us do good.

Let us do to our neighbors that which brings them to a place of greater strength. For even Christ, Paul says, pleased not himself. As it is written, the reproaches of them that reproach thee fell on me.

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now the God of peace and consolation grant you to be like minded one towards another, one towards another according to Christ Jesus. That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He says, Paul says, if you are in a position of strength, you see a brother who is weak. Go beyond just words and take whatever that load is that they're carrying and help to carry it. Whatever the situation is, move beyond just issues of personal comfort.

Remember that Christ did this so that we might be one in heart and song with both God and with one another. Next, if all of these things fail, you'll see a group, and I could picture this as he was sharing with me. The soldiers were marching.

Now there was one, usually the strongest one there, had 300 pounds on his back, and the others were encouraging, but it wasn't working. This soldier is still beginning to buckle. The next thing they were to do is to support that soldier.

Sometimes the one in the back would grab their shirt and lift them up, and one on either side would hold their arms, and they would begin still speaking. One is carrying the load, and the rest now are supporting this particular soldier. Amazing.

What a picture of what the church should be. Isn't it amazing? Paul says, support the weak, comfort the feeble-minded. He says in Acts chapter 20, I have showed you all things, how that so laboring you ought to support the weak.

And remember, Jesus said, it is more blessed to give than to receive. We are to support one another. We are to carry one another.

We are to hold one another up. And finally, the last thing, if all else fails, and it's obvious that that soldier is going down. You know there's a motto in the military, I think you probably know it, we leave none behind.

It's in the Marines. We don't even leave the dead behind. Nobody stays behind.

And there's a point where they just simply carry the fallen. There's another soldier, and my son has seen this, it's been part of their marches, where finally one soldier just has to reach down, pick that person up, put him over his shoulder. There's a specific way they learn to carry.

And now marches at the same pace with that soldier on his back, over his shoulder. One's carrying the pack, they're still encouraging it. Now the encouragement comes to the one who's got the fallen soldier on his shoulder.

But he said, the rule is, nobody is left behind. Nobody is left behind. Would be to God we would get that in our hearts in the church of Jesus Christ.

Nobody is left behind. Not one. Not one in this house is left behind.

The devil doesn't gain advantage over one of you. Discouragement doesn't take one of you down. That we could say one to another, brother, as long as I'm sitting beside you, or standing with you, the devil will never take you down.

As long as God's given me strength and a word to speak, and arms to carry, and the strength to walk with you, the devil will never take you down. You will never be overpowered by the power of evil. We're going over the finish line and we're all going.

That was the very grit that Moses had in his heart when he stood before Pharaoh. It's the very principle he had in his heart. When Pharaoh said, let me make you a deal.

How about the women and men go out and sacrifice and leave your young ones here. Remember Moses stood and he said, I make no deal, Pharaoh, no deal with you whatsoever. We're all going.

Our young are going, our old are going, our wives are going, our children are going, our goats are going, our cattle are going, our sheep are going, and half of your stuff is going with us as well. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Carrying the fallen, carrying those that have had difficulty. There has been a saying in the church over the years that it's the only army in the world that murders its wounded. And it's tragic.

When we fall, we've got to learn to pick one another up. We've got to learn to carry one another. In the church of Jesus Christ, Paul says, Timothy, the Lord give you understanding in all things.

My son Jason told me of a time in a forced march on one of the, it was either a Balkan country or it was Japan. I don't quite remember. But they're on a forced march and a terrible storm came and a soldier, they were in a wooded area, was wounded somehow.

And he told me, he picked him up and carried him out. And I said to him, did you get a medal for that? I said, you should get a medal for doing that. And he looked at me with this funny look and it was like to say, dad, don't you understand? You don't get a medal for what you're supposed to do.

Medals are only for exemplary service. You know, beloved in the church, we don't get medals for what we're supposed to do. We're supposed to lay our lives down as a living sacrifice for the purposes of God.

Paul said this is reasonable service. There's nothing unreasonable about it. To lay our lives down.

We're supposed to walk in unity. We don't deserve a medal because we do a good deed. Many people do a good deed and say, well, you know, nobody recognizes it.

So I just decided never to do another one. You don't get a medal for doing what is reasonable. It's reasonable to walk together.

It's reasonable to encourage each other. I want to close with Isaiah chapter 46, if you will, please. Isaiah chapter 46.

Beginning of verse one. The Lord says, Belle, bow down. Nebo stupid than their idols were upon their beasts and upon their cattle.

Your carriages were heavy laden. There are a burden to the weary beast. Now he's talking about his own people.

They had made false wrong choices. And because of it, there was a heaviness that came on them. They stoop.

They bow down together. They could not deliver the burden. But themselves are gone into captivity.

No, the beast couldn't pull it. And they themselves could not get free from it. Then verse three says, Harken unto me, O house of Jacob and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are born by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb.

And the Lord says, verse four. And even to your old age, I am he. And even to where hairs will I carry you.

I have made and I will bear. Even I will carry and deliver you. God says you made a mess.

In other words, he's speaking to his own people. You made a mess and you got into such a mess. You couldn't even go forward.

But he says, I want to remind you of something. I started carrying you the day you were born. The day you trusted in me, I began to carry you.

And I make a promise till the day that you're old and your hair is gray. I will continue to carry you and deliver you. You've not made this journey on your own.

You've made it because my strength has been given to you. I will carry you. And the amazing thing about the scripture is that God does this through his church.

He doesn't send angels to carry the weary and the weak. He sends his church. He sends me.

He sends you. Because he lives in us. We now become the expression of this carrying power of God.

I think many churches in our generation have not learned this. And because of it, they have been grossly deficient in the knowledge of God. Because they've been terribly deficient in the practice of God.

I am part of the body now. And I am responsible to have that heart of God to carry those who need to be carried for a season. In the church of Jesus Christ.

I deliberately didn't read two cards today from those who were being baptized. I'm only assuming, but I feel from the writing that these are younger people. And I want to read to you what they said, those that are being baptized.

Since coming to Times Square Church, there's more peace and love in my heart. I have a long way to go. But with all the great people here and their prayers, I'm getting closer to God.

That's an amazing thing. There's a young person saying, I've got a long way to go. It's been a tough road.

And there's a lot I have to learn, but there's some great people here. And I want you to know that people coming into this church are looking to the church for strength and help. Ultimately, yes, we point them to Christ, but don't forget that Christ is in us as well.

And here's another one. A young man, he says, I got saved while serving a prison term. And since my release, I've experienced the peaks and valleys of David.

In the last four months, it's been real tough because the choices I've made were in the flesh. But by the grace of God, the Lord has touched my heart. And now by grace, I'm back on the road that leads to eternity.

It's been real tough. This young man says, I come out of jail and I've made some wrong choices. I guess my question is really, when God sends people who need help to this church, are they going to find disentangled warriors? People whose minds are the mind of Christ.

People who walk by unity by choice, in unity by choice, not feeling. People who have learned to encourage the weary because they too have been encouraged in their times of weariness. People who will say, let me help you with this.

You've taken on something that's a little too big for you. Maybe your aims, objectives, maybe it's just a personal problem, but let me stop in my busy life and give you a hand. It's people who take time to support those that are falling down.

Become the hand of God. Become that extended strength of God to those that are weary and weak in the walk. And finally, those that get to the point and say, I'm not letting the devil have you.

I'm not letting the devil have you. There's a young lady in this church that I'm praying for personally, that the Lord's put on my heart, that has a great future. Was part of the fellowship here and was worshiping God in this church for some time and yet fell captive to the lies of the enemy.

And I'm just not willing to let her go. I've gone to the prayer closet and I've encouraged others to pray and say, I hate it when I see the devil gain advantage over any child of God. And I'm not willing to say, well, what the heck, you know, we've got 8,000 people here, so what's one? No, that's not the heart of God.

Remember that Jesus left the ninety and nine and went after the one. Went after that one that was lost and the enemy was getting advantage over. And for a season, some of these will come back and they're confused and they've got all kinds of questions and very few answers that they understand.

And there's a time where we just simply have to learn to carry them. I thank God that that heart, I believe, is in this church. I do believe that true Christian love and charity begins at home.

And of course, for us, many of us, that's the new family we have in God. This is where it begins and then it extends out from here in the coming days. I do believe with all my heart that this choir, you're going to have a call in the commission.

You already have it. God's given it to you. But you're going to have to learn to walk in unity.

You're going to have to go back and hear this tape and periodically play it again. You're going to have to decide to make the commitment to what it is that God's commissioned you to do. And we will stand behind you and support you.

We might be here with the stuff and you might be traveling on the road and going into colleges and doing all kinds of wonderful things and seeing the glory of God manifested. But it will not be without a battle. It will not be without scars.

It will not be without people to get weary. There must be a compassion. You must ask God for the grace to look beyond your own needs and to look to the needs of those around you.

And then one day soon, you're going to have a song that's going to shake the very foundations of hell itself. You're going to have a song that can open prison doors like Paul and Silas and set captives free. At midnight, they sang praises to God and prayed.

They'd come through a difficult time. Their backs were sore, but they were still caring one another. I could see Paul encouraging Silas and Silas encouraging Paul to the point where, in spite of their pain and discomfort, they decided to praise God.

And as they praised God, they had a song in the midst of that fellowship of encouragement that caused prison doors to just literally fly off their hinges. They saved an ungodly Philippian jailer and his whole house got saved. And it's just like the overflow of that song just kept going.

There was no stopping the overflow of a simple song at midnight. Amazing, isn't it? Just a simple song of praise in a time of adversity. And hell's gates were shaken right to the core.

Beloved, let that anointing be on this church, especially this coming here. I have a word now. See, this altar call is really more for the church.

I want to pray for the church now. And myself, Lord. Father, God, I ask you in Jesus' name to help me, to help this body to be aware that there are so many people in our midst that are discouraged and weary.

And some are even falling over in their walk with God. Help us, Lord, to not be entangled with the same thinking, the same selfish thinking of the society all around us. God, help us to be sensitive.

Help us, Lord, to reach out and to be an army that walks together in unity, true, godly unity. Lord, help us to not be singing a song that is false, but a song that is true, that we can walk hand in hand and we can sing God is good, his mercy endures forever. Lord, you're good and you're merciful.

And we ask you, Lord, for an anointing on Times Square Church. I feel in my heart this is a divine moment for this church. And I do ask for an anointing to rest on us of compassion.

Lord, an anointing that takes us out of selfishness and away from all the entanglements of such a busy time. So many thoughts just permeating the airwaves and people's minds and lives. And help us to understand that we've been grafted into a body, the body of Jesus Christ, a mighty army, oh God.

Help us, Lord, to have care and compassion one for another. God, help us to put away evil thoughts and selfish thoughts, oh God. Help us, God, to make the choice to walk together in unity, not to walk by our feelings, but a choice deep in our heart to say this is right.

This is the way of God. This is the way I will walk. Father, I thank you, Lord, for this is what you're going to do in this church.

God, I believe it with all my heart. That's why you sent this word today. Lord, we ask you to do this for us, oh God.

And help us this coming year. Now, Father, we pray as a church. Now, the whole church, let's pray.

We pray for these who have come to the altar today. God, we ask, Lord, that you encourage them. We ask, oh God, that you give us the ability to lay a hand on someone's shoulder, to speak a good word into their ear, to take up a burden if necessary, oh God, and to carry those that are falling down.

Lord, we ask that in our hearts that there be something that is birth of God that says not one is left behind. Not one. Not one is surrendered to the enemy.

Not one is left on the road. God, because this is the church. This is about compassion.

It's about Christ. It's about caring, oh God. This is not empty religious talk.

This is the body of Jesus Christ, the church of the living God. Father, God, help us now. Help all of us, Lord.

And Father, I ask that you bless those who have come to the altar. Bless them, God, with the strength that only you can give. Bless them with a word, God, a word, oh God, that can only come from heaven.

Father, I thank you, Jesus. I thank you, Jesus. Now, for those who have come to the altar, listen to me carefully.

This is what the Lord gave me for you. Now, thus saith the Lord that created you. Oh, Jacob informed you.

Oh, Israel, do not be afraid. I've redeemed you. I've called you by my name.

You are mine. When you pass through the waters, I'll be with you. And through the rivers, they'll not overflow you.

When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned. Not even the smell of smoke is going to come upon you. You are honorable in my sight.

I have loved you. I am with you. Do not be afraid.

I will bring your seed from the east and gather them from the west. I will say to the north, give up. And to the south, keep not back.

Bring my sons from afar, my daughters from the ends of the earth. Everyone that is called by my name, I've formed him for my glory. Yea, I've formed him.

Yea, I have made him. The Bible says, every weapon formed against you will not prosper. It will not prosper.

This is the conclusion of the message.

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