

# Does Your Jesus Shine in the Dark

by Carter Conlon

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*Carter Conlon's sermon challenges listeners to reflect on whether their understanding of Jesus truly shines in the darkness of today's world.*

**Duration:** 41:37

**Scripture:** Psalm 33:10, Matthew 23:37

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Surrender To God"

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## Description

The sermon titled 'Does Your Jesus Shine in the Dark?' from Matthew chapter 23 emphasizes the importance of opening our hearts to the true Jesus, not a self-crafted version, to experience His light and power in the midst of darkness. The message calls for a genuine surrender to God's will, speaking well of His ways, and being indwelt by the Holy Spirit for miraculous multiplication in our lives.

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## Transcript

My message this morning is simply called, Does Your Jesus Shine in the Dark? Matthew chapter 23, beginning at verse 37, Does Your Jesus Shine in the Dark? Father, I thank you, Lord, for this word today. I thank you, God, for your word, which is indeed a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. I thank you for the indwelling power of your Holy Spirit.

I thank you, Lord, that I don't have to rely on any amount of natural strength or wisdom to deliver this. You are willing, more than willing, to override my frailty and to speak through me to every heart that you've gathered, both here in this physical place and also online, to hear these words today. I thank you, Lord, for the great privilege of standing as an oracle of your kingdom, and I dread ever speaking anything, Lord, that you've not spoken in your word or to my heart.

And so, Lord, I yield my body to you, and I ask only that your kingdom come, that your will be done in us, Lord, who live in this moment of time. God, let it be. Father, we thank you.

Thank you for open hearts today. Thank you, Jesus Christ, for speaking to us in your precious name. Amen.

Does your Jesus shine in the dark? Matthew chapter 23, verse 37, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her, how often I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. See, your house is left to

you desolate, for I say to you, you shall see me no more till you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Phenomenal thought when you look at this passage of scripture and you begin to realize that they had the visible appearance of God in their midst, the people of that generation.

The son of God, the third person of the Trinity, the word of God that the Bible says was there in the beginning before the creation of all things. And by him, all things were created. He was there with them, but they would not receive him.

Something in their hearts had closed them off to who he really was, what he was really saying and to whatever he was really calling them to. And then just as suddenly as he had appeared in their midst, essentially speaking to the people of that time and everyone who shares that similar heart that they had, then he suddenly disappeared. In other words, you won't see me anymore.

You can go to the temple, all you want to do. You can sing, you can read the scriptures, but you will not see me until these words come from your lips. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

It's so ironic because these people were being given a clear vocal description of the heart of God. In verse 37, he's saying, I wanted to gather you and your children. I wanted to pull you close to my heart where I could protect you.

And I would begin to grow and prosper you in the grace and the knowledge of who I am. And that's the same word that it applies to every heart here today, to every person, every persuasion, every walk of life. God says, I want to gather you and I want to gather your children.

I want to pull you in close. I want to protect you. I want to speak to you.

I want you to grow in the grace and the understanding of who I am, what I have done and what I'm willing to do for you. Psalm 33, if I may just read it to you, it says these words in verses 10 to 12, the Lord brings the council of the nations to nothing. We're seeing that happen all around us today.

He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect. I don't know if we've ever been in a bigger tailspin than we are in globally today. The council of the Lord stands forever.

The plans of his heart to all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord and the people he has chosen as his own inheritance. Blessed is that nation.

Blessed are those people. It's so important to understand what we're going to be saying. If we're going to say today, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

It's not just a matter of speaking a word. There's a whole connotation to this one sentence, but we won't get there until we get close to the end of what God's given me to speak on. But you were not willing, he says to the people.

In other words, as he said in John chapter one, verse 11, he came to his own and his own did not receive him. And you say, why, why would they not receive the son of God? Isn't that what Israel was all about? Isn't that what their heritage was about? Weren't they the children of promise? Weren't they supposed to be blessed and subsequently be a blessing to the people of the whole earth? Wasn't that their calling? Weren't they living, waiting, breathing, longing for the moment of the Messiah's coming. And so the question would be why then when he did come and he came with indisputable proof, he could walk on

water.

You know, anybody else could ever do that. He could raise the dead. He could give sight to the blind.

He could stop funeral. He was a, he was the best one to ever invite to a funeral because he, the funeral would never go any farther than encountering him. The dead person would always come back to life.

He could, there was, he could take a little boy's lunch and feed five to 10,000 people with it. It was no, people had heard voices, the voice of God, the father came down from heaven. It was audible.

They heard, this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased. It's truly amazing. There was, the evidence was indisputable, just as the evidence in our generation of the reality and the presence of Christ among his people is indisputable.

The transformed lives, the testimonies, the new song, the new heart that God gives to his people. So many stand up in this church, even on Sunday night and testify as to what God has done. And the song of their heart is simply only God could have done this.

And I've heard some testimonies in this church and I've stood at the back of this church or sat on the platform and myself said only God could have done this in this person's life. How's it possible this person is even sane, let alone serving God, let alone prospering in the things of his kingdom. Jesus said in John chapter three, verse 19, here's the, I think this is as simple as it gets.

He came to his own, his own wouldn't receive him. And the latter part of that verse, he says, men love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. In other words, what they had become, what their religion had produced was less than it was supposed to be.

According to the true definition of God, the true definition of what God says his kingdom is all about. And even worse, they wrapped their deeds in religion. And it was covered by their own sense of right standing with God, surrounded by a man-made wall through which they could choose who to let in and who to keep out.

Doesn't that describe all religion? Doesn't that describe the religious as you can get ahold of any one of our hearts that are here today. We can wrap ourselves in it. We can call ourselves by any name we want.

We can develop a right standing with God, which is of our own definition. It doesn't necessarily meet the definition of that right standing that's achieved by faith and through grace alone. We can surround ourselves with a man-made wall.

It can have a name, denominational name to it. It can be a building. It can be just something we build around ourselves in the spiritual realm.

They say, you can't, you can't come, you can't come towards me. You can't get through this wall. I'm blocking you out.

I don't care who you say you're speaking for. I'm not willing to listen to you. And then we can choose once all of this stuff is intact, who we let in and who we keep out.

These people were less than one generation from being conquered and dispersed. It was not that many years down the road, the Roman empire was going to come in and destroy their temple in their city. They

were going to be dispersed throughout the world and destroyed in one sense.

And, but it was the final rejection of the son of God that ultimately sealed their fate. When he stood outside this wall that they had built around themselves. And he said, Oh, Jerusalem.

In other words, all my people, all the people of God, I sent prophets to you to warn you about your condition, but you stoned them. I have so often wanted to gather you and show you my heart. I wanted to protect you and give you strength.

I wanted to give you life. I wanted to give you light in the midst of what you're about to face, but you wouldn't come to me. But even in the midst of this proclamation of judgment comes a promise.

Remember that mercy still triumphs over judgment. I have little doubt that this world is under the judgment of God. I have little doubt the judgments are going to get worse, successively worse.

He describes it in the Bible as a woman who's about to give birth to a child, how the birth pangs become more intense and closer and closer together. And you know, in your heart, as I do in mind that we are entering such a time. If you're not aware of it, even last night, North Korea detonated a hydrogen bomb.

They have the technology now to cause massive destruction throughout the world. And we find ourselves in an incredibly precarious position, but God, it should not take us by surprise. And he gave us a way out.

And he said, if you will say blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, you'll see me again. It's so important now because he described in chapter 24, right after seeing these words, a season of destruction that would come upon the people of that time. And it did come exactly as he said, not one stone of the temple will be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.

I've been to the temple in Jerusalem and seen these massive stones thrown down one from another laying in a field. He told the people that there would come a time upon this world where deception would begin to abound, where wars and rumors of wars would begin to break out in the earth. Nation would rise against nation.

And because of these wars, I'm assuming there'll be famines, diseases, and earthquakes in various places. He said that all of these are the beginnings of a sorrow that's going to encompass this earth that will Mount its final rebellion against the Lordship of Jesus Christ. He told his own disciples that you're going to be hated of all nations for my namesake.

And we've seen even a taste of that in this nation in the last several years, where suddenly it's out of fashion, even considered evil by some to be a follower of Jesus Christ. He talked about false prophets arising and deceiving many leading people to messiahs that don't shine in the dark. May I put it that way? He said the gospel of the kingdom would be preached in all the world.

There'd be a sudden gathering together to him of those whose hearts are right in the sight of God, according to the words of God. In chapter 25, he said, there's going to be a type of people who only realize in the darkness that they don't have light. They had a Jesus and they built this Jesus around their own righteousness.

They built this image of Jesus around what they think Jesus should look like, how Jesus should speak, what he should do, how he should lead, how he should govern their lives. There's a problem though, with

this Jesus, he doesn't shine in the dark because he's not the real Jesus. He's one crafted and created out of the hearts of men.

Because has that not always been the inherent problem of fallen man that in ourselves, that's what Satan showed in Adam and Eve, in ourselves, we can be as judges and we can know what is good and what is evil. That's the inherent fallen nature of humanity. And so if that is not surrendered, we bring that into the kingdom of God and we form the Jesus that we want.

We pick and choose little pieces out of the scripture and we start cutting and pasting. And before you know it, we have crafted a Jesus. The problem is that when darkness comes, when trial hits, when difficulties abound, when it looks like there's no way out, this Jesus doesn't shine in the dark.

Matthew chapter 25, Jesus said, there's going to be five wise and five foolish in this last hour of time. And the foolish suddenly because of the darkness realize we can't see him. Why are you so excited about this moment we're living in? Don't you understand how difficult these days are and are going to be? But the righteous will say, can't you see? Can't you lift up your head? Don't you understand the bridegroom is coming? Can't you see him? Do you understand? The unrighteous, the foolish will say to those that were wise, give us what you have.

What is it that you have that gives you this kind of vision? Why can you see Jesus in this darkened moment in history? When we don't see anything, we see destruction. We see difficulty. We see bankruptcy.

We see moral failing. We see society degenerating all around us, but yet you are clapping your hands and you are talking about a great day, not just to come, but it's already here. What is it that you see that we don't see? Why is it that the Jesus we have made, we can't see him? Why has he hidden from us? Why is he outside of our view? Thank God the judgment still comes with a promise.

Second Chronicles 7.14 defines it as a game-changing prayer that begins with the recognition of its own need. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves. Do we have the courage? Do we have the courage? Do I have it? Do you have it? Do we have it individually? Do we have it collectively to say, God, our ways may not all be your ways and our thoughts may not all be your thoughts.

Do we have the courage to say, Lord, I opened the gates of my heart and I want to say to you, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. I want it to be real. I want it to be true.

I don't want some religious fakery of my own creation guiding me and supposedly guarding me. I want the real Jesus. I need the real Jesus.

There's a time when if we feel that we don't see him anymore, there's a time to throw off the pride. There's a time to cast away all the pretense and all the fakery and like the blind man say, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me because I can't see you. He had that man brought, he stopped the whole crowd.

He had that man brought to him and he said, what do you want me to do for you? And he said, I want to see. I want to see Lord. I don't want to be caught blind anymore in this generation.

I don't want to be found among those whose lamps have gone out because I crafted another God view than the one that conforms to truth and scripture. God, please help me with this. King David says in Psalm 24, beginning at verse seven, let me just read it to you.

Lift up your head. So he gates and be lifted up you everlasting doors and the king of glory shall come in. Who is this king of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle, lift up your heads, open your hearts.

The real Jesus is mighty. The real Jesus is powerful. The real Jesus has the keys to death and hell in his hands.

The real Jesus lives in total victory. The real Jesus has conquered death and hell in the grave. The real Jesus sits at the right hand of all authority and all power.

The real Jesus lift up your heads. Oh, you gates and be lifted up. You everlasting doors and the king of glory shall come in.

Lift up your heads again. He says in verse nine, oh, you gates lift up you everlasting doors and the king of glory shall come in. Who is this king of glory? And we answered the Lord of hosts.

He is the king of glory. In other words, the God of all the armies of heaven, the God of all dominion, all authority, all power, the one who gives light in the midst of darkness, strength in the midst of weakness, freedom from captivity, healing from the wounded heart, sight to the blinded eye, lift up your heads and open your gates. And the king of glory will come in, you know, all power.

If you go back to the original text in Matthew chapter 23, for he said, you will not see me again until you say blessed as you comes in the name of the Lord. Now, if you look at the context in the original writings of the word blessed, here's what it means. It means when we want what he wants for our lives and not what we want, we want what he wants, not what we want.

That's what the word blessed means. That's the first of four definitions of the word. It's Lord God, you know what I need.

You know where I should go. You know what you're trying to make me into. You have the plan to where my life will become fruitful, where my life will be solid, where my testimony will be secure, where my vision will be clear and clean.

God, you know, so help me to escape what I want and help me to embrace what you want for my life. That's what it means to say, blessed. Your ways are higher than my ways.

Your thoughts higher than my thoughts, your plans higher than my plans. That's the heart. You will not see me until you say blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

You'll not see me again until you want what I have for you. I am the head. You are the body.

We need to get back into right order again. He is not a servant that we order around and use him to fulfill our life plan. That is not who Jesus Christ is.

He is the head. We are the body. He has the right to dictate where we walk, how we reach, what we say, what we do.

He is the head. We are the body. Lord Jesus Christ, I want what you want.

That's a hard prayer to pray. It's a hard prayer for anybody to pray. It's hard for me to pray now at my age, you know, because in my heart, I wouldn't mind resting a little bit.

It's the truth. I don't like carrying the weight sometimes that I have to carry. And I find myself in a physician heal thyself moment.

I have to live by what I preach. I can't be preaching one thing to you and be secretly doing something else. It has to be in my prayer closet.

What is your will for my life? Where do you want to take my feet? And what do you want me to do for your glory? To say blessed means that we speak well of all that he is and all that he brings. That's the second definition of blessed. Remember the first one.

We want what he wants, not what we want. And secondly, we speak well of all that he is and all that he brings. We don't live our whole life saying, why have you done this? Why have you taken me there? Why have you allowed this to come into my life? When the scripture says, all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose.

And we begin to speak well. We don't come in here moaning. We don't come in complaining.

We don't come in accusing God. We say this is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Thank God. We speak well of all that he is and all that he brings. He might have to bring some very unpleasant things into our city, our nation.

He might have to do that. It might have to intensify in the days ahead for the sake of people who, if their whole sense of security is not shaken, they won't even consider the kingdom of God. And you and I, as the people of God, if we have a heavenly value system, if it really is about eternal souls, if it really is about men, women, and children finding Jesus Christ as Lord and savior, then we will have in our hearts a willingness to go through what other people have to go through so that we might be there to be a voice, to tell them where security is found and how you can find light in the midst of your darkness.

To be blessed means that we believe that to be indwelt by God is the greatest blessing of all. To be indwelt by God. I shouldn't even have to be making this point.

It seems ridiculous to have to preach this and try to convince people that to have God come and actually indwelt your physical body is a good thing. Now, it's not a good thing if you formed your own righteousness, built your own wall, crafted your own religion, and you don't want God to mess it all up. Then it's not a good thing.

Then you're going to keep him on the outside. But he says, I don't want to live on the outside. I want to live on the inside.

And when Christ comes in the power of the Holy Spirit, that's when we become a new creation. That's when everything starts to change from the inside out. We are literally born again by the Spirit of God.

We are given a new mind. We're given a new heart, a new spirit, a new value system, a new direction. It's like the old man, as the scripture says, dies and a new one is born.

Anybody here got pictures of yourself before you were saved? Scary, isn't it? When you look into that face, how dark that face was. I have one or two of the people, we had our house burned down one time, so we lost everything. But a few people have given me pictures of the before Christ years, and I had one, I looked at it.

Thank God that man's dead. That's all I can say when I looked at it. That's a scary looking man.

But it's something to be able to look at yourself in a picture and say, that man died. And when the Holy Spirit came, another person was born inside this physical body. And so the greatest blessing of all, when I opened my heart, is that God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, indwelt this physical body.

And he doesn't become an add-on to your agenda. He throws your agenda out. It goes out every window, it goes out every door, and a new agenda begins to take over.

And when we say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, we are saying, that's what I want. I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I want God's Holy Spirit in my life.

I want the Holy Spirit to govern me, govern my actions, my conscience, my direction, my heart, my hope. I want him to give me, as we're going to talk about at one o'clock, these giftings that he says he gives to those who belong to him. I want to be indwelt, and I believe this is the greatest blessing of all.

To say, blessed, the fourth thing means that we believe that in him, that is in Christ, we will be miraculously multiplied. We believe that with all of our heart. I do with everything inside of me.

It has been the most incredible journey. I can't explain it if you don't know it. If you do know it, I don't have to explain it.

It's been the most incredible journey. Has it been easy? No. Has there been a fight, mostly with myself, all the way along the journey, as he's been calling to walk on the water, and I'm looking for the rocks.

I don't mind, as long as there's a rock about two inches under the water, and he's looking for faith, and I'm trying to substitute something else for it, like called reason and stuff like that. But it's been an incredible journey, and he is constantly multiplying inside of our hearts what we need to do what he's called us to do. Thank God he doesn't leave us on our own.

And thank God, the older you get, the more you don't want any mixture at all. I don't want part of me and part of him. I want all of him and none of me.

I never want to get into the place where Jesus is standing outside of my life saying, oh, Carter, Carter, how I've longed to gather you. I wanted to draw you close to my heart. I wanted to give you authority and power and protection, and you wouldn't come.

So now you won't see me. I'll be hidden from you until you say, blessed to see who comes in the name of the Lord. Let me read to you from Psalm 118, what David says, beginning at verse 13.

You pushed me violently. He's talking about his enemies, that I might fall, but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and song, and he has become my salvation.

The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous. The right hand of the Lord does valiantly. And we heard some of that voice of rejoicing and salvation in this sanctuary today in our worship

time.

The right hand of the Lord is exalted. The right hand of the Lord does valiantly. I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord.

In other words, I'm not going down into defeat, no matter how dark this day gets, but I'm going to live in the midst of it. And I'm going to live to declare who God is to a generation that desperately is going to need to know him. Verse 18, he says of Psalm 118, the Lord has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death.

Open to me the gates of righteousness, and I will go through them. And I will praise the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous shall enter.

I will praise you for you have answered me and you've become my salvation. The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing.

It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Save now, I pray thee, O Lord. O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

We have blessed you from the house of God. And here's what King David was saying. I have been violently opposed that I may fall.

I find myself in a position that I'm not able to stand against my enemies. If you look at Psalm 118, where it starts, you can see David was overwhelmed. His enemies were all around him.

He didn't know what to do. Darkness was closing in. But he said, Oh God, I've opened my heart to you.

I've opened fully the gates of my life to you. And I bless you, Lord. And he's the one who first says these words, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

We have blessed you from the house of the Lord. Now you and I know that if you read that Psalm, that a sudden and supernatural strength came into his life and he was given power to rise up. And of course, David was a light to his generation, a light that continues to shine right through the pages of scripture, right into our time.

Because he opened the gates of his heart to truth. That's what made him a man after God's heart. That is the definition of a man or woman after the heart of God.

It's not all the religion. It's not all the verses of scripture that you can quote. It's not even the frequency of your church attendance.

As good as those things may be, the fact is that you have opened your heart to the real Jesus. You have opened your heart to the truth of God. And inside you have said, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

God, I want everything from my life that you have for me. I speak well of you and all that you're doing. When it causes pain, I speak well of you.

When I don't understand it, I speak well of you because I trust and believe that everything I've placed in your hand has a divine purpose. I believe that to have the Holy Spirit of God is the greatest blessing that any human being, myself included, could ever experience on this side of eternity. And yes, I fall short today.

Yes, I don't see how I could ever accomplish what you've called me to do. I'm fearful, some could say. I struggle in areas of my life.

I don't feel like I've got the giftings and tools that are needed to do what I feel in my heart you might call me to do. But I say blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord because I believe that in you, I will be miraculously multiplied and you will give me everything I need for what you've called me to be and what you've called me to do. And so today, I'm not willing to be among those who are going to wall off Christ.

I'm not willing to be among those whose ears are going to be open to be deceived by another Jesus. I don't want to be among those who are living in darkness and can't see anything of God or good in my generation. I don't want to be among the self-consumed, even though they've covered it all with religion, that are going to be spiritually bankrupt in the time when people around so desperately need the testimony of Christ within their lives.

And so today, I hear your voice and I'm not going to harden my heart. I don't know what you would do, but if Jesus' voice standing looking at his city had been audible, I would have run through that gate and I hope you would too say, here am I, send me. My heart is open.

Others may close their hearts. Others may close the gates. Others may build a wall around themselves.

Others may clothe their darkness in religion, but I'm not willing, oh God. Here I am. I want to see you.

I want a clear vision of you. I never want to lose sight of you ever again in my lifetime. I want you to be there in my every day.

And so I say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. You've come to me. I can still hear you.

I can still hear your voice pleading for me. And so Lord, I open the gates of my heart and I say to you, blessed is he who comes. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

I will not stone those you send to draw me close to yourself. I will not shut the gates of my heart. I will not live to try to preserve myself and my identity and what I think my life should look like.

But oh God, I believe, I believe that you will bless me because I'm willing to open the gates of my heart and my life to you today. That's what this is all about. And this is the moment to make that kind of a choice.

My brother, my sister, the days are dark and getting darker. We don't know in this city how long we have. We don't know what tomorrow is going to bring, but I do know this, that if I open my heart and you open yours to the real Jesus, he will shine in us in the darkness.

By the grace of God, he will. Whatever your struggle, whatever your trial, whatever your difficulty, even if your own heart condemns you, God is greater than your heart. I want to encourage you now to consider simply responding to the words that you've heard today.

Say, Lord, blessed are you. You have come and you are willing to take me and to cause me to have life in the midst of the confusion and darkness of this generation we're now living in. You're willing to give me a song, a testimony, a life, and a light.

You're willing to stand before me all of my days that I would never lose sight of you again. Today, if you just want to say, if you just want to say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. You want to say it to Jesus Christ himself.

I'm going to ask as we stand in a moment, would you get out of your seat? Would you just come down to this altar or stand between the screens in North Jersey at home and in the education annex, and together as a church, we're just going to say, Lord, I've heard this word and I don't want to ever have you disappear from me. And so I say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. If that's the cry of your heart, I'm going to ask you to come and join with me.

And I'm going to pray with you today because I need the same prayer that you do today. We're going to pray together. Let the light of Christ shine in this church until Jesus comes.

Let's stand together. And if God's moving on your heart, slip out wherever you are and just make your way down. We're going to worship for just a few moments and we're going to pray together.

Just make your way down. Make room for everybody that's going to come. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Praise God. Just slip out of your seat wherever you are. I'm going with God.

I'm going with God. Let the whole city wall itself off. I'm going with God.

Let people clothe themselves with their own homemade Jesus. I'm going with God. Only one Christ shines in the darkness.

Only one Christ gives light when everything begins to get dim. And that's the Jesus I want, the Christ of the Bible. Let that be the cry of your heart.

Just come, just come. Slide out wherever you are. Wherever you are, husbands and wives, if you have a friend, bring your friend with you to say, let's just pray together that we would have an open heart to the fullness of what God has for us, the fullness of his life for each of us.

Let that be the cry of your heart today. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, God.

Thank you, Lord. Some of you may not be aware of it, but our president has declared today a national day of prayer for the entire nation. I thank God for that.

I really do with all my heart. You know, you may not agree with all of the policies and obviously not everybody's going to, but I can't agree and you can't agree that we need to turn to the Lord in prayer. And I'm thankful for leadership that recognizes that.

And so we're going to pray. We're going to join our brothers and sisters all across the nation now who are praying today for an outpouring of God's spirit, for mercy, for divine mercy, for wisdom, for direction, and for yourself, that you and I might be lights that shine in the darkness because Christ, the real Jesus, is inside of us giving us strength and power. Father, we lift our hands to you today.

We lift our hearts, Lord, and we join with brothers and sisters in Christ from all across the nation. God, we recognize, Lord, that we deserve justice and judgment as a people, but perchance, Lord, you've given us a moment of mercy, an opportunity to reflect on our behaviors and our ways, Lord, and to turn to you for the strength and the help that only you can give. We ask for forgiveness for America for literally doing what is in the scripture today, for building a wall around ourselves and creating a righteousness that doesn't conform to truth.

God Almighty, we ask you, Lord, that these walls would come crashing down. Lord, Father God, that we might once again behold the face of our Christ in our towns, in our churches, Lord, among our communities. We ask you, Lord, you said if your people would humble themselves and pray and seek your face and turn from wickedness in their own lives and hearts, you would hear and forgive and heal their land.

Lord, we ask you for healing everywhere we go today, every life we speak to, all that you've given us to set our hands to. We ask you for a healing to flow through us, O God, to this darkened and corrupt society we now live in. Father, we thank you so much, God.

Thank you so much that we can lift our voices with countless, countless hundreds of thousands throughout the nation that are praying today for a moment of mercy. Thank you, Lord, that from the leader God to those that are living in the parks, there's a recognition that it's time to pray. It's time to put away foolishness.

It's time to turn to God. Lord, you said we would see you again when we said, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. So here in Times Square at the very center of many things in this city, in this world, there's a group of people gathered this morning who are willing to say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Come, Lord Jesus. Come, Lord Jesus. Come, Lord Jesus.

We ask you to visit our streets, visit our homes, visit our schools. God Almighty, visit our stores. God, visit everywhere.

Visit our parks. Visit the hardest places, O God, that only you can go to in the city. We welcome you, Holy Spirit.

We welcome you to this city. We welcome you, Jesus. We open the gates, O God, of our hearts, Lord, and of everything and all that we are and over all that you've given us authority.

And we say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed are you, Jesus. We bless you, Lord.

We bless you in the sanctuary. We bless you in our getting up. We bless you in our laying down.

We bless you in our journey, O God, throughout our day. Thank you for coming to us, O God, and giving us life and light in the midst of this darkened moment in history. Now, I thank you, Father, that your word says, in the tents of the righteous there is rejoicing.

There is great joy in the tents of the righteous. So thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you for a shout of praise. Thank you for a shout of glory in your house. Thank you, God, for victory.

Hallelujah to the Lamb of God.

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