

Easter Morning

by Carter Conlon

Jesus offers us a new life and a sure foundation, and we must take a step of faith to receive it.

Duration: 31:25

Scripture: Matthew 7:24-29, John 6:37, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, Revelation 20:11

Topics: "Easter"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that everything we long for in life, such as purpose, direction, and stability, can be found in Jesus. He quotes Jesus' words about building our lives on a foundation that cannot be shaken. The speaker also discusses the challenges and uncertainties of life, including sudden changes and the impending final shaking of the world. He highlights the love and grace of Jesus, who took upon himself the punishment for our sins and offers forgiveness and a new life. The speaker passionately urges the audience to taste and see that God is good and to embrace the new life of forgiveness that Jesus offers.

Transcript

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This recording cannot be posted on any website. However, written permission to link to the Times Square Church homepage may be requested by emailing info at timesquarechurch.org. Other recordings are available by calling 1-800-488-0854 or by writing to Times Square Church Tape Ministry, 1657 Broadway, New York, New York, 10019. Matthew chapter 7 of the New Testament, I'm going to read to you from verses 24 to verse 29.

If you have a Bible, you might want to share with the person who's beside you, both here in the education annex as well. Father, thank you for how you have so manifested your glory in this house today. How wonderful it is to have salvation, to know Jesus Christ in the fullness of everything, oh God, that you've intended for us as your people.

Now today, Lord, we ask you to open the way of grace and understanding to those who don't yet know or understand what it means to be saved from the power of sin and brought in to an assurance of eternity with God. I ask you for an anointing to fall on every hearer, abide in the sanctuary, oh God, in every

overflow room. Let your kingdom come.

We ask this in Jesus' mighty name. Jesus said, whosoever therefore shall hear these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell not for it was founded upon a rock.

That was verse 25 of Matthew chapter 7. And everyone that hears these sayings of mine and does them not shall be likened to a foolish man which built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell and great was the fall of it. And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes.

Now this is a very profound statement. Here is a man speaking things that others are speaking. Quite often when Jesus spoke he quoted scriptures and things that were common and known among those who were students of the Old Testament.

But Matthew said he taught them as one who had authority. There is a difference between somebody standing outside of a high rise, for example, here in New York City, who is simply describing it and its magnificence, between that person and another person who comes along who actually built the high rise. His words would have authority.

He would be able to describe something in a way. He would have an authority to change things perhaps that were not going up according to their proper design. And if you were listening to the two men describe the same building, you would know instantly that one man had a deeper authority.

He had an authority to build, he had an authority to tear down, to change things. The other man just had an opinion about what he was looking at. And this is exactly what the people were confounded with in the day that Christ walked among them.

He taught them as one whose words had the power in themselves to be accomplished. The Sadducees and the Pharisees, the religious leaders of the day, were offended at his teaching. Because his teaching exposed the powerlessness of their words.

And they sent some of the temple guards and they said, Go and arrest this man and bring him to us so that we can examine him. The temple guards went. And you can just imagine the dismay of these religious leaders when the temple guards returned and they didn't have Jesus with them.

And the chief officer said to the priests and the Pharisees, they said to these guards, They said, Why have you not brought him? And the guards looked back at them. And I can just imagine the perplexity in their faces when they said, Never has a man spoken like this man. Like we've heard a lot of men speak.

Now, these temple guards were familiar with the temple and they heard a lot of men speak about God. There were a lot of opinions about eternal things. I can imagine them coming into the temple and saying to some of the people around, Where is this man called Jesus? And these are men who are just called to do their normal duty the course of the day, to yield to whatever the will is of those that are over them in authority.

I see them walking into the temple and stopping for a moment just to listen to this man. And every man in his heart saying, I've never ever heard a man speak like this. It's not just that he has a deeper opinion than others around.

It's not that he's more articulate or clever. No, there's a force in his words. There's a force that these temple guards most likely realized was something beyond what human ability was able to produce.

Never has a man, never any man, they said, has spoken like this man. John, in speaking of Jesus, says he was the Word, he was with God. In fact, he was God.

John says he was in the beginning with God and all things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life and the life that was in him was the light of men. This word that the temple guards were listening to was the voice of God that said, let there be light and light was.

The voice of God that has the power and ability to create. The voice of God that allowed you and I to exist even before, the Bible says, we were formed in our mother's womb. God determined that we should have life.

This voice of God. John said we saw him. We saw the one who was the architect of all things.

Not a man who has simply an opinion about creation. A man who created creation. A man who spoke out of the abundance of the love of his heart and made a world and made a universe.

And created man in his own image. And because of the depth of his love and his own desire for companionship, he breathed into this man that he created. And the Bible says this man became a living soul.

Yet, of course, we know, understanding the story, that man sinned against him. And because he's a holy God, sinful man cannot dwell in the presence of a holy God. All it takes to be a sinner is to commit one sin.

All you have to do to be a murderer is kill one person. You don't have to kill the whole world. You kill one person and you're a murderer.

You commit one sin and you're a sinner. Separated from God. Tell one lie.

You are now a liar for the rest of your life. It is a blot that comes into your character that cannot be erased by anything of this world. That is simply what you are.

And, of course, the Bible tells us that man is born to sin as sparks fly upward. It's a nature that was passed on to us from our first parents who sinned against God. And we have no recourse against it.

It's a blot and a blight in our character that causes us to do things that perhaps even things we don't want to do. And these things, of course, alienate us from God for all of eternity. That means when we die, we're separated from God.

Because sin cannot dwell in the presence of a holy God. But John said about this man Jesus, he said, We saw him, and in him was a life, and this life was the light of man. John saw something.

And when you look in the Greek New Testament, it means a light that was never lit by anybody. It didn't have a beginning and it can never be put out. Everything, in other words, that man is looking for was in

him.

Everything that you and I long for is in Christ. John saw it, the early disciples saw it, the temple guards became aware of it when they heard him speak. Everything that we look for in life, purpose, direction.

Everything you long for. Everything the businessman here today has been searching for. Everything the man who's wandering aimlessly in confusion, heading towards the gates of his own death.

Everything you've been looking for. Everything the struggling mother, everything that the concerned father, the parents who legitimately perhaps are afraid for their children in this generation. The stability that you've wanted in your life and home.

This inward itch that you've been unable to scratch all of your life. Everything you've longed for is found in him. Jesus said, whoever hears the words that I speak, builds his life on a foundation that cannot be shaken.

Storms can come suddenly. A phone call can change the direction in the course of your life and health. Loss of health can come without a moment's notice.

Changes can come in fortune or circumstance that are outside and beyond our control. And of course, the Bible speaks of a sudden and final shaking that's coming to all this world. And if you are honest this morning, there's something inside of you that knows that things are moving very quickly in that direction.

Nations, as Jesus said, are rising against nation. Rogue governments now are getting their hands on very fearful weaponry. Difficulties.

Jesus talked about a perplexity of nations coming. Waves and the seas roaring. We saw that recently with the tsunami that affected certainly disastrously parts of the world just in our days.

A final shaking is coming when sin will have brought such a weight with it into the very universe that God created that by virtue of the nature of God, he will be compelled to fold up this universe as it exists today and to recreate a new heaven and a new earth. The writer of Hebrews says that everything that can be shaken will be shaken. Everything possibly that can be shaken will be shaken.

There will be a rise in our generation of some very difficult and dark days. But the writer of Hebrews says something else. Only that which cannot be shaken will remain.

Only that which was perhaps here before all these other things came into existence and will be here still when it is all over cannot be shaken. The word of God existed before all of these things around us. The word of God in compassion created it.

The word of God in justice will judge it. The word of God in mercy will recreate it. As a kingdom where those who have trusted in his word can dwell with him for all of eternity.

John says the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we saw his glory. It was the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. We saw him.

Some people think that to see God must be a fearful thing. Indeed it is. If you leave this world not understanding or experiencing the salvation that God offers through his son, I guarantee you it is a fearful thing to appear in the sight of a holy God.

Paul the Apostle says knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men. But John saw something else. He saw God come down to the earth taking on himself the form of a man.

And he looked at this man Christ Jesus. And John said this man is full of truth. Yes.

Truth is in him. He is truth. He can't be anything other than what he is.

When he speaks he speaks the truth. But John said we also saw this grace and the word grace means a kindness. It's a willingness to freely give.

A God who had every right to judge us for our sin. A God who has every right to condemn the whole universe as it exists today into an eternal abyss apart from him. A God who would be completely justified without question to cast away those who have rejected his goodness.

Manifests himself to us in such a love that our natural minds cannot comprehend it. All we can sing about it. We can talk about it.

But can we really understand the depth of this love? God becoming a man. That in itself is such an incredible bridge between what is divine and what is human. We can't understand with our natural mind the journey that that is.

From God to leave where he dwelt to become a man. To walk among us for 33 years. To not only walk among us but to be rejected, despised, spit upon, whipped, hated, falsely accused.

And ultimately to hang on a cross and suffer the wrath that was reserved for you and I and our sin. Truth says all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Romans chapter 3 verse 23.

There's not one righteous. The Bible says not even one. Truth says the wages of sin is death.

Eternal separation from God. Romans chapter 6 and verse 23. This is our just due.

Those who have sinned against God. Those who walk in willful rebellion to the word of God. But grace says, he that comes to me, I will not cast him out.

Jesus spoke this in John chapter 6 and verse 37. Truth says, Revelations chapter 20 verse 11. The earth and everything associated with it will be taken out of its place.

But grace says, my sheep hear my voice. And I know them and they follow me. And I will give them eternal life and they shall never perish.

And neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. That's what grace says. Those who come to me, Jesus said, I will hold you in my hand.

And everything around you might shake. And difficult days might come. And ultimately you will have to cross the same river of death that all of humanity has crossed before you.

But when those who are without God are moving towards eternity on a very shaky, crumbling foundation. Those who have put their trust in me, Jesus said, I'm going to hold you in my hand. I'm not going to cast you away.

I'm never going to let you go. John said also those who received him, he gave them the power to become the sons of God. Even to those who believe on his name.

And he said in verse 16 of chapter 1, And we have all received of his fullness and grace for grace. Not just holding me, John said, in his hand. But coming to live within me.

And giving me the power to be another person. Recreating me from the inside out into the image of the type of person that God had destined I should be. Before sin entered into my life.

Forgiving me for the wrong that I've done. You ask me today, how complicated is this? What do I have to do? What changes do I have to make in my life? It's not a matter of doing something. It's a matter of believing what God has already done.

Jesus came to this world. He was God in the human body. Fully man.

Fully God. He paid the price for all the wrong things that you have done. And that I have done.

He says, if we will turn to him. If we will acknowledge that we have sinned against God. A proud man can't get into heaven.

It requires a humility. How humble is it really just to agree with God? How foolish not to. God says, yes, you have sinned.

You've fallen short of the glory. But I've come that you might have life. If you will acknowledge that you've sinned.

And open your heart. And invite me to come into your life. And forgive you.

I will. I will forgive your sin. He said to the prophet Isaiah, let's reason together.

Though your sins are as red as scarlet, they will be as white as snow. He said elsewhere through Isaiah. I will not even remember your sin anymore.

I will take it upon myself. That's why I died for you. This incredible love.

Of a savior. And I will take your sin upon myself. And I will forgive you for the wrong things that you've done.

And I will cover you. With my hand. I will hold you close to my heart.

And he says beyond that. I will live within you. And I will give you the power.

To live a new life. The psalmist David says, oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. If I could today, I'd leave this platform.

And I'd grab every man in this room by the lapels of your jacket. And I'd shake you. And I would encourage you, taste and see.

Taste and see that God is good. Taste and see that everything you've longed for is found in Him. Taste and see that everything that you've built might be crumbling around you.

But what He offers cannot be shaken. Taste and see this new life of forgiveness that He offers. Taste it and see it.

Yes, God knows you have questions. You don't have all the answers this morning. And God knows that.

But it begins with a simple step of faith. Of saying, Jesus, I have sinned against you. I've sinned against heaven.

I've sinned against the laws of God. I've lived a life apart from God's truth. Because of it, my foundations are crumbling.

But you offer me something through your word that cannot be shaken. Today, I choose to open my heart. I choose to give my life to Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior.

This is not an invitation to another religion. Beloved, this is eternal life. Jesus is not another God.

He is God. You will never ever in your life have a more defining moment than this moment. I had a moment like this back in 1978.

When an invitation was given to receive Christ as my Savior. I had a lot of questions in my heart. Because there were so many opinions.

Just so many opinions about God. But I saw something in some people that so provoked my heart. And I said, oh God, if this is real, then I want this.

If you are who they say you are, I want you as my Lord and Savior. The Lord heard that prayer. It was an honest cry.

And all he requires of you this morning is honesty. You don't have to know all the answers. But you have been touched today by something of the supernatural and you know it.

You have heard songs that move you. There's something about the name of Jesus that doesn't go away. You try to reject his name.

But his name stays implanted in your consciousness. And his name stays because he created you. He is your creator.

He does give you the power to draw your next breath. He is the one who died for you. He is the one who is willing to give you everlasting life.

It doesn't matter how old you are. It doesn't matter how much you've done. It's not about these things.

You don't have to clean up your act to come to God because you can't clean it up. It's impossible. It's too dirty.

You can't clean it up. He has to be the one who covers it. As you heard earlier, with his own blood, his own sacrifice, he covers your sin.

Today, education annexed. I know there's many people in overflow rooms and even in the rotunda and balcony. The Bible tells us that the angels in heaven are waiting to rejoice over one sinner that repents and comes to Christ.

One single mother, one homeless person, one businessman, one sinner. One entertainer. No matter what you are or what you've done.

Heaven is waiting in anticipation of the decision that you're about to make. This is a decision for eternity. Let's pray together, just for a moment.

Jesus, I ask you now to let everyone in this house know that the words and the songs that have been sung in the presence of your love that they have felt is real. It's more real than this world that we stand on. Because this world is going to perish, but your love is everlasting.

I pray God with all my heart that men and women and children and young people have the courage today to say, Jesus, I need you. I need you as a savior. I need this everlasting life that you offer.

I acknowledge that I have sinned. And that you are indeed the light of my life and of this world. Today, I make the choice to bend my knee before you and confess with my tongue that you are Lord.

Father, I pray, give great grace. For some here may never have another chance to do this. Give great grace, oh God.

Let nobody miss eternity today who's hearing the sound of your voice. I thank you for this in Jesus' mighty name. I'm going to ask everybody in this sanctuary, in the annex and all the overflow rooms, who can say, Pastor, I hear you, but beyond you, I hear God speaking to my heart.

I know this is true. I don't understand it all, but I know it's true. And I hear God speaking into my heart.

And I want this sure foundation that God offers my life. If this is you today, would you stand? We won't embarrass you. We won't ask you to do anything foolish.

But just stand right where you are. Would you do that right now? God bless you, sir, madam, madam. God bless you.

Others, please, unashamedly. God bless you. Just, you don't have to be ashamed.

It's nothing to be ashamed about. Jesus is offering you everlasting life. I see many up in the balcony in the back.

Would you just stand wherever you are? Fathers, you need to take this step if you've come with your family today. And you need to stand for the truth of God. You need to confess that you need Christ.

And God will give you everlasting life. Now we're going to pray together. And every person in the sound of my voice who wants to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

You may not have had the courage to join these that are standing throughout the sanctuary or the annex building. But in your heart, you do want to receive Christ as your Savior. I'm going to encourage you to pray this prayer with us.

And for the benefit of those who have stood, let's pray together today. Lord Jesus Christ, I believe that you are the Son of God. I believe you came to this world to give your life as a sacrifice for my sin.

I'm sorry for my sin. And I don't want to live under its dominion any longer. I open my heart, Jesus, in this very moment.

I invite you into my life to be my Lord and my Savior. I believe in my heart that you died for my sin. And on the third day, you were raised from the dead by the power of God.

As a sign to me that my confidence in you is not in vain. As Jesus was raised, so will I be raised out of the power of death. And I will be freed from the stain of sin.

I believe this with all of my heart. God, thank you for hearing me. Thank you for receiving me.

I believe at this very moment, I am saved. I am saved. I am saved.

Now let's join the angels and thank God for those that have come into God's kingdom. I'm going to ask you in a moment to stand. And I have an altar call to give today.

And it's for every person who's here. See, Pastor, I have accepted Christ into my heart, but I am living on a very shaky foundation. I'm not living right for God.

I need to be encouraged in the Lord. If you'll step out, make your way to this altar, we're going to pray together. And we're going to believe God to give you great strength.

That everything Christ provided for you, every foundation he gave that you can walk on, that you will begin to understand it and begin to walk in this foundation. If you're backslidden, you need to come back to God. Then slip out of where you are.

Make your way to this altar. Young lady, you did stand up to receive Christ. God bless you.

Wonderful day in your life. Those that received the Lord, you come forward too. Let's all stand.

Balcony. Main sanctuary. You need encouragement in the Lord.

Please come and meet us here. We're going to pray together. Father God Almighty, I pray this day that you encourage those that have come to this altar.

Lord, you are the way, the truth, and the life. And all the strength and life that we will require is found in you. Help us, God, to turn from our ways.

Things that we do, think and say, oh God, that are displeasing to you. Give us the power that you promised to give to those who trust in you. To honor you.

And to walk on a foundation that cannot be shaken. God Almighty, give strength to these who have acknowledged their need today. And Father, we just thank you for it.

Lord, lift your face up upon them. Let your goodness be known in their hearts and minds. Let your strength become their portion.

I pray for this altar. I pray for the annex for those that have come forward. I pray that your glory rests on our house, oh God.

Rests on every Christian in this city. Jesus, prepare us and keep us in whatever days lie ahead of us, oh God. Let us stand in the truth that you have provided for us.

And let us trust in the sacrifice in your provision. Father, we thank you for this. God, with all of our hearts, we give you the praise.

We give you the glory. Jesus, you are holy. You are a wonderful Savior.

You're an incredible God. We love you, Lord. We thank you, God, for your goodness to us.

Thank you for your mercy. Help us to dig a little deeper into your love this day, oh God. And to understand the depth of your love.

We thank you, God, with everything that's in our hearts. Now, let's all just give him a thank offering, a praise offering. This is the conclusion of the message.

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