

Facing a Moment of Bitter Division

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon calls believers to stand united against division, emphasizing the power of speech and the church's role in promoting love and reconciliation in a fractured society.

Duration: 35:34

Scripture: Proverbs 18:21

Topics: "Christian Unity", "Righteous Living"

Description

This sermon titled 'Facing a Moment of Bitter Division' is a powerful message urging believers to guard their speech, seek unity, and resist the divisive spirit prevalent in society. Drawing from Psalms 17, the speaker emphasizes the importance of purity in speech, seeking God's protection from evil influences, and striving for righteousness and unity in the body of Christ amidst a world filled with division and hatred.

Transcript

Psalm 17, please, if you will. Psalm 17. I have a message the Lord's put on my heart called, Facing a Moment of Bitter Division.

Facing a Moment of Bitter Division. And Father, I thank you God with all my heart. I thank you for your presence here.

I thank you for the strength that you give to us as we make the choice to live for you. I thank you for the calling that you've placed on all of us to be a city set upon a hill that cannot be hidden. You told us that we are the light of the world.

And so Lord, we've been asking you to remove from us anything that hinders the brightness of that testimony. God Almighty, give me the grace to speak this today, overshadow my frailty, help me to hide behind the cross. And Lord Jesus Christ, speak to every heart, speak to my heart, to the hearts of your people.

This is a perilous and dark moment in history, but Lord, you promise to have a testimony that is burning bright and alive and giving glory to your name. So God, we thank you for this with all of our heart in Jesus name. Psalm 17, beginning at verse one, it's a Psalm of King David.

Hear a just cause, O Lord. Attend to my cry. Give ear to my prayer, which is not from deceitful lips.

Let my vindication come from your presence. Let your eyes look on the things that are upright. You've tested my heart.

You have visited me in the night. You have tried me and found nothing. I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.

Concerning the works of men, by the word of your lips, I have kept away from the paths of the destroyer. Uphold my steps in your paths that my footsteps may not slip. I have called upon you, for you will hear me, O God.

Incline your ear to me and hear my speech. Show your marvelous loving kindness by your right hand. O you who save those who trust in you from those who rise up against them, keep me as the apple of your eye.

Hide me under the shadow of your wings from the wicked who oppress me and from my deadly enemies who surround me. They have closed up their fat hearts. With their mouths, they speak proudly.

They have now surrounded us in our steps. They have set their eyes crunching down to the earth as a lion is eager to tear his prey and as a young lion lurking in secret places. Arise, O Lord.

Confront him. Cast him down. Deliver my life from the wicked with your sword.

With your hand from men, O Lord, from men of this world who have their portion in this life and whose belly you fill with your hidden treasure. They are satisfied with children and leave the rest of their possession to their babes. As for me, I will see your face in righteousness.

I shall be satisfied when I awake in your likeness." A phenomenal psalm from King David. There's no historical account of what were the circumstances actually when he wrote this, but most who study it tend to agree that it's most likely at the point in the kingdom of Israel where Saul has completely backslidden. He's a totally secular leader now, even turning to spiritism.

He's leading the nation away from God. And then you have King David who bears in himself the touch of heaven. He is the anointed of God to lead that nation at that particular time.

And there's a battle raging now in this society between the two. It would appear that Saul has the upper hand and his armies, and it would also look in the natural like David is on the losing end of this struggle that's going on, this moment of bitter division. David is concerned because all around him is such wicked speech.

It's everywhere. It's permeating the air. Speech about vengeance, thoughts about murder, all kinds of things are going on at that particular time.

No shortage of it. Even the distressed in debt and discontent that came to him when he was hidden away from King Saul and his army, even they were advocating harm to the leader of Israel at that time. And David begins to cry out and says, God, would you protect me? Would you protect me and keep me from the paths of the destroyer? I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.

God, I want my speech to be clean. I want the words that I say to be right in your sight. And David goes on and says, you've examined me every night and found nothing.

In other words, before I go to bed at night, I trust God's Holy Spirit to do an inventory of my life that day. Have my words been seasoned with grace? Have they produced healing? Have they created thirst for God? Have I spoken truth? Have I stayed away from the pathway of the one who comes to steal, kill, and destroy? God, your touch is on me. I'm asking you to protect me.

Proverbs 18:21 says death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit. In other words, we can't escape the power of our own words. Sometimes people think that they can be free to speak whatever they want, and there will be no consequence to it.

But don't forget, the Bible says, be not deceived. Whatever a man sows, he's going to reap. Whatever you're sowing as you go through your day, you're going to reap that in your own life.

You're going to reap it. God will not be mocked. That's what the scripture begins with.

Whatever you sow, you're going to reap. And some will reap it now, here, in time, and others will reap it in eternity. Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 12.

Just let me read it to you. Verses 35 to 37. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

But I say to you that for every idle word that men may speak, they will give an account of it in the day of judgment. Every word is recorded. Did you know that? You will stand before God one day and give an account, give an account of all your speech in public, in private, when you thought no one was listening.

For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. Proverbs 22:11. This is a beautiful verse that I love.

I wrote it out one time when I was a young pastor in Canada and put it on my desk. He who loves purity of heart and has grace on his lips, the king will be his friend. I love that particular proverb, 22:11.

Unity with God and friendship with the godly had always been the source of David's strength. He loved righteousness. He hated wickedness.

He stood on the side of truth, and because of it he had known an empowerment of the spirit of God, and he knew that God had called him to something deeper than what people around him were discussing and trying to get into his spirit. He says, you've tasted my heart. You visited me in the night.

You tried me and found nothing. I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. God, I want my speech to be right.

That has to be the cry of every true believer in Christ in this generation in particular, because there's such evil abounding in people's speech now. You and I must not be partakers of it. We have to ask God for the grace.

Lord God almighty, help me to represent your kingdom, a kingdom of forgiveness, a kingdom of reconciliation, a kingdom of salvation. God, that's my mission on the earth. Do not let my mouth represent any other kingdom.

David said, concerning the works of men, by the word of your lips I have kept from the pass of the destroyer. I have loved your word. I hear what you're speaking to me, and it's by the things that you have

spoken to my heart I have not gone down the path that this society seems to have no power to resist.

Uphold my steps in your path that my footsteps may not slip. God almighty, help me. Has to be the cry of every believer in Christ now.

Oh God, help me. God, help me. I don't even want the spirit of the news agencies getting into my spirit.

Oh God, help me. God, help your people. God, help your church.

Lord Jesus Christ, don't let that wicked spirit get a hold of us. Oh God, may we not be found as part of it in this generation. All around David were unjust accusations.

Murmuring was in the air. Talk of vengeance was abounding. It was everywhere.

Brother was divided against brother, family against family, and former friend against friend. The social climate was like quicksand, and David knew that to venture into it without divine protection was to be swallowed up by it. I can't tell you how many times I've stood in this pulpit in the last 10 years, warning you that a day of such bitter division was coming to this nation, that if you were not grounded in the word of God, if your value system was not God's value system, you would have no power to stand against it.

Like a river, it would sweep you along in its channel to places you never thought you were going to be capable of going. Jesus himself warned about the spirit that would be in this world in the last day. In Matthew chapter 24 verses 10 and 12, many will be offended and will betray one another and hate one another.

And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. The love of truth will grow cold. The love of the work of God will grow cold.

The love of humanity will grow cold. And sad to say, even the love that we are supposed to have for one another in the body of Christ will also begin to grow cold in some people's hearts. What a tragedy that will be because our strength, the glory of God, the testimony of God is found in unity.

When brethren dwell together in unity, it's like the oil that was poured upon the head of Aaron, the priest down to the skirts of his garment. In other words, the power of God, that ability to be set apart for God, the ability to stand and see the power of God emanate from your life comes when you and I are walking in unity with God and with one another as the body of Jesus Christ. Like the dew upon the mountains when the sun hits the snow on the highest peak of a mountain and it begins to melt and supplies moisture to everything around its base.

When you and I are walking together in unity as the body of Jesus Christ, as the body of Christ on the earth, when we're walking together in unity, there's a river of life that flows from us and it gives drink to those that are thirsty in our streets and in our homes and in our society. Just as Joseph's father Israel gave him a coat of many colors, so too God the father gave his son Jesus a body. I believe that Joseph's coat was a type of Christ in his church.

God gave his son Jesus a church of many colors. Thank God for that coat of many colors. Revelation chapter seven and verse nine tells us that one day a great multitude which no one could number of all nations, tribes, people, and tongues are standing before the throne together worshipping God, crying out among the created beings of heaven, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts.

Heaven and earth are filled with his glory. And just as Joseph did, Jesus had to suffer betrayal. He was sold out for coins.

He was falsely accused and shut up and forgotten. Joseph shut up and forgotten in prison and Jesus Christ shut up and forgotten in a tomb with a stone rolled in front of it. But thank God he did it all for us.

Everything that Christ went through was that we may be forgiven and we may find ourselves in a place where all we need to glorify his name is given to us, especially in moments like this. Oh thank God. I hope you feel in your heart what I'm feeling in my heart.

We could conceivably be entering into the finest hour for the church of Jesus Christ, the true church of Jesus Christ, the blood-washed church of Jesus Christ, the genuine brothers and sisters in Christ in the church of Jesus Christ. Praise God. In the gospel of John, chapter 17, Jesus prayed a prayer for you and I. He was speaking to his father.

He says, but now I come to you and these things I speak in the world that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I've given them your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that you should take them out of the world but that you should keep them from the evil one.

They are not of this world just as I am not of this world. Sanctify them by your truth. Set them apart.

Make them different, oh God. Your word is truth and you have sent me into the world. I've also have sent them into the world and for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

In other words, Christ is saying, Father, for their sakes I set myself apart to suffer what needs to be suffered that also they may have the power to be set apart in an ungodly time to do and to fulfill the full calling of their mission while they live in this world. I do not pray for these alone but also for those who will believe in me through their word. Here's the prayer, that they all may be one as you Father are in me and I in you that they may also be one in us that the world may believe that you sent me and the glory which you gave me I've given them that they may be one just as we are one.

I in them, you in me that they may be made perfect in one and that the world may know that you've sent me and has loved them as you have loved me. We are living in a moment in history where we're watching scripture fulfilled right before our eyes.

It is truly amazing if you are a student of especially of that which is prophetic you see the armies of the world are lining up just as the bible said they would everything is unfolding just as christ said it was going to unfold but this last day this last day is going to be marked by bitter divisions especially along ethnic and racial lines it will be all throughout the world there'll be this sudden flood of hatred one for another people will gravitate to that which is culturally socially linguistically and racially familiar and start to shake their fist at everyone else what a glorious opportunity God has given us as the body of Jesus Christ especially here in New York City where 104 different nations are gathered together to worship God praise God for that we are on the prayer meeting

on Tuesday night now in 179 nations throughout the world where people from around the world are coming in online and they're looking at you and they're looking at me and they begin to realize as Jesus prayed only God could be doing this only God could be bringing these people together only God could be giving them the power to love one another statisticians say it can't be done you can't bring together this

many people and have them walk together in unity and in love that's what the statisticians the church statisticians say well let them say what they want to say my bible says we can become one as Christ and the father are one thank God thank God now David finds himself surrounded by a society bent on wickedness bent on division bent on evil speaking and he prays and says keep me as the

apple of your eye hide me under the shadow of your wings from the wicked who oppress me and from my deadly enemies who surround me your deadly enemies are everything every voice around you that will try to take you out of that fellowship that God has prescribed his church to be that will try to sow bitterness and division in your heart I want to make a statement this morning and I want you to hear me on this if there's anybody in this church listening to my voice and you are promoting division between culture to culture language to language social status to social status or race to race this is not the church for you you do not belong in this church and so I strongly advise you to get up and get out if you're not willing to repent because if you don't we're going to help you find the exit

door in this house you will not sow division here praise be to God this is the church of Jesus Christ this is the body of Christ this is the code of many colors that God gave to his son what an awesome thing it is to be part of the testimony of God on the earth in this generation and whether or not you fully understand it God has opened the door the window to this church to many nations now throughout the world who are coming in and beginning to understand unity is possible genuine biblical love is possible we can get along with each other in Christ hallelujah to the lamb of God David says arise oh lord and confront him and cast him down deliver my life from the wicked with your sword in other words with your word God deliver me from those who would try to sow something in me that you

don't want into my life God deliver me from my own heart that wants to hold on to and harbor past injustices and speak about it every day God deliver my heart deliver me with your word oh God that's got to be the cry of every saint of God we are a city being set upon a hill and the testimony of God will not cannot must not be hidden in this generation we have an opportunity to show this fragmented bitter divided ever vengeful society there is a way to life there is a way to freedom there is a way to hope there is a way to a future and it's found in Jesus Christ the son of God who died to forgive us our sins David says as for me I will see your face in righteousness I will be satisfied when I wake in your likeness I love the original King James he basically says I'll be satisfied when I

wake up with your likeness I will be satisfied oh God to have your heart your character formed in me I will be satisfied to turn away from my thoughts and my ways and my own darkened heart that would want to cause me to go in the wrong direction I will be satisfied to be an ambassador of a kingdom of forgiveness I will be satisfied to do the will of God and not my own will I will be satisfied to have the touch of God upon my life every morning when I get up to say oh God thank you for one more day to speak good things one more day to talk about grace one more day to encourage people to forgive one another and not to be part of that sewer that is causing people to hate and to blame in our society today by the grace of God we will represent the one who went to a cross that all men women and

children may be forgiven let the ungodly pursue what they will but I choose to worship you in truth I will not make excuses for wrong thinking this word is going to be that that which governs my heart my life and my mind I will not be a part of any division in the house of God or the nation I will not be a partaker of it praise be to God thank God I will wake up each day with the reflection of who you are on my countenance I will fight against no one but I will fight for everybody that heaven might be their home and my eternal home as well protect me oh God from being swallowed up by the evil and divisive speech of our day it's not going to

get any better folks it's going to get worse I think it could get to the point where our city's become difficult to govern such vilification and we're

moving rapidly to a place where people the unstable and those who will be made unstable by wrong thinking will think they can do violence even in the name of God it's such a tragedy help me to live for the benefit of all people and to even love those who have caused me pain that is that is the church of Jesus Christ that is the coat of many colors that is the testimony that is the reason why we sing the way we do and have the joy that we have we will not ever allow division to come into this church Proverbs says an angry countenance turns away a backbiting tongue so you have my permission to put on your angry countenance when anybody tries to divide you from anybody else you just tell them you just get away from me right now just stop speaking and get away from me you're not taking away

the blessing of God from my life you are not drawing me into division you're not drawing me into your hatred you're not drawing me into your racism whatever it is I'm not going there I'm not going with you you go if you want but I'm not going with you praise be to God let me never divide the body of Christ now if David had to pray this prayer David the sweet psalmist who killed a lion and a bear and Goliath David who had the oil of God poured on his head from the prophet Samuel David who knew he was called to rule and reign if David had to pray for that protection how much more do you and I have to pray how much more do we not have to just assume that we will do things that are right and forget that we have a capability of moving in a direction that is wrong that's why I encourage

everybody listening to the sound of my voice you must read your Bible now that's the the word of God is the lamp for your feet and the light for your path the word of God is where the promises of God are that will help you to become the man or woman that God has designed you to be the word of God according to David and others it will keep you from the paths of the destroyer the one who comes to steal kill and destroy you'll be kept from that path by staying in the word of God and folks as much as we love you as much as the pastors of this church dig as deep as we can in the word of God for your sake we can't do it all you have to get in there yourself you've got to open this book and in the morning and say God help me help me to be like you help me to understand your word and it's not

volume it's the quality of what you do read that you understand it help me to meditate on your word let it let it establish my my my thoughts let my my heart my ways be established in your word God help me not to forget that I am an ambassador of forgiveness and reconciliation don't let me be found drawn down that river of the ungodly who want to divide and accuse and and vilify and name call don't let me go there and then at the end of the day as David said you say to visit me in the night oh God and try me and prove my heart how has my speech been today have I spoken well of other people has my speech caused anyone to be thirsty for the kingdom of God have I healed wounds as I traveled through the day or have I just gone with the multitude as they head down this pathway of bitterness

and division David had to pray said God you have to help me you've got to give me the strength he said uphold my steps in your path that my footsteps may not slip for he knew the frailty of his own heart and you and I need to know it as well if we get out of the word of God if we start losing communion with God the next thing you know we're we're in the lunchroom and we're just saying the same spewing the same filth as everyone else around us drawn down that river of destruction and we're not making a difference for God if David had to pray it then you and I have to pray it as well Lord protect me from being swallowed up by the evil and divisive speech of our day protect me oh God protect me because I will answer for my words you will too I'll answer for my words you see I thank God

there's a lot going on in the country today that can divide but I thank God there's more going on the word of God that can bring us together God has given us an opportunity to be a testimony like none other oh thank you Jesus thank you Jesus I don't know what happened in that cave but I know that as they met with King David and these men were discontent and distressed when they met with God they came out of their might and many of them got to dance with David behind the ark as the presence of God was once again ushered into Jerusalem they went in weak and they came out strong they went in defeated and they came out warriors for for a righteous cause for a good cause and they knew that God was with them help me to live for the benefit of others oh God don't let me be selfish help me Lord

help me to understand the pain others may be experiencing and help me to be a vessel that can bring healing into their hearts don't let me be found among the dividers and God help me to love people who have hurt me because that's what you did Jesus father forgive them you said you were beaten beyond human recognition the pain was immeasurable that was going through your body the nails in your wrists and in your feet crown of thorns on your head and all that came out of your mouth was father forgive them they don't know what they do God would you help me would you help me to lay down the wrong if I have the wrong sword in my hand would you help me to lay it down would you help me to be kind would you help me to love especially in your church and among your people because you said that

would be irrefutable evidence that Christ came and died for the lost that there would be a love among the people of God that this world cannot reproduce even in its best efforts it can only be born by the spirit of God that's what God will do I'd like to give an altar call this morning for every person here and those that are online at home and you know you know your speech has not been what it should be but like King David you have the courage and the humility to say God would you help me would you help me to speak right do you help me to think right would you help me to esteem your body would you help me to love your people remember Paul said in the book of Corinthians that many people in the church are weak and sickly and some have even spiritually fallen asleep because they don't

understand they haven't discerned correctly what it means to be part of the body of Jesus Christ they've come in they want salvation but yet they've they've held on to forms of division in their midst and it's putting them to sleep spiritually because this kingdom is all about love and forgiveness that's what it's all about so God would you help us to speak right now father I thank you that you have given me your heart today I thank you for the ability to speak this word I thank you God with all my heart Lord for you are speaking to us as a church for you have opened the window of this church to many many people throughout the world it is a very unique place where you brought together people from over a hundred nations as a testimony of who you are and what you can do when people turn to

you and so God we ask you Lord to protect us we ask you to hold us keep us from the paths of the destroyer help us to be satisfied to be like you we don't need to be like anybody in the world but to be like you every morning when we awake help us to have open hearts to let you examine our speech at the end of the day and give us a truly humble heart God I ask you Lord for a literal explosion of love in this church 30 years ago you had pastor David Wilkerson write the words on the marquee of this church the church that love is building I thank you God that was as prophetic as anything that's ever been spoken in this pulpit this is a church that love is building so we ask you Lord to extricate all hate from this building God we thank you starting with our lips our mouths our report in Jesus

name we're going to stand in just a moment and if you want to just come forward and say God protect me I feel like David I feel surrounded I'm surrounded in the workplace I feel surrounded in society I feel there's

just such evil speech it's getting into my spirit and I don't want this to govern my life and as we stand if God's speaking you just come and join those that are already on their way to the front of this altar let's stand balcony go to either exit main sanctuary just slip out we're going to worship for just a little while in the annex you can step between the screens the same in North Jersey and people online you can stand right up in your living room wherever you are and we're going to pray together for a love and a unity that only God only God could give to his church praise

God praise God Father God in Jesus name Lord the love that you speak about in your word is only attainable by your Holy Spirit and by the promises that you give to us Lord for left to ourselves we will bitterly divide as a society around us is doing but God there is a unity that you speak of and a love you said Father they might be one as you and I are one God Almighty God there's there's not even a paper thin division between you and so Lord we ask God that that same spirit come upon us as a people Lord and as this world divides along racial ethnic lines linguistic lines and cultural lines that we would be found coming together as your body throughout the world Lord that we would truly love one another God no matter what our language or what country we're in Lord that we would love one

another the way that you have called us to love that the world may know the world may know that Jesus Christ was sent to pay the price for sin and to break the bondage of evil God we thank you Lord for what you are doing in our midst we yield to it oh God we do surrender all we surrender our grievances we surrender our wayward tongues Lord we surrender our spiritual laziness God we surrender it all and ask you to be God in us and God to us and God through us Lord be our strength be our life be our breath be everything that we are and have and ever will be God Almighty we ask you Lord that you would forge a deeper bond of love and unity in this church than we've ever known before Father we thank you Lord we thank you we thank you may we be able to say the enemy has nothing in us he has no

access to us he has no place here Father we thank you that this is a church that love is building your church is being built by the love of Christ all over the world God Lord we thank you for it help us to be a true testimony oh God to those who are looking in wondering is it possible is it possible can people love one another can they walk together in harmony can they be at peace can they truly forgive God let this church be a testimony to this generation of who you are oh God Almighty we just thank you for where you're taking us Lord and for what you're speaking to each of our hearts as David said we will be satisfied every day when we get up to know that your countenance is upon us and your heart is beating within us Lord we are your body this coat of many colors that you've given to

your son God Almighty we are that body Father we thank you and praise you for it in the mighty name of Jesus hallelujah

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