

# Finding Light in Darkness

by Carter Conlon

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*We must put our trust in God's promises and not our own understanding, and be willing to suffer for righteousness' sake and not be afraid, in order to find light in darkness and be a vibrant testimony for Christ.*

**Duration:** 46:29

**Scripture:** 1 Peter 3:8

**Topics:** "Spiritual Strength", "Faith Perseverance"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of finding light in darkness, both spiritually and in challenging circumstances. It encourages believers to trust in God's promises of strength and light, even in times of persecution and uncertainty. The message highlights the need to seek God's presence, be ready to defend our faith, and live as a testimony of Christ's power and love in a world that may reject us.

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## Transcript

I want to talk to those this morning who are afraid of the darkness. I want to talk to you about finding light in darkness. Jesus said in the gospel, when he got up at the temple and opened the text of scripture, one of the reasons why the Holy Spirit was on him was to give sight to the blind.

Now that's not just physical sight to the physically blind, but to give spiritual sight to those who don't see their way out of a circumstance. Life maybe for them has gotten so dark that they don't see a future. And that might be you today.

You might be here and you're in a place of mental torment. You're in a place of persecution in your family. You're in a place in your work environment where you're being cast out as evil because you want to do things God's way.

No matter what the situation is, the one thing I know for sure that God promises light and darkness to his people, he promises to be a light to us, promises to give us strength that is not natural. It is supernatural comes from him, the power to be carried, the power to be strengthened by God almighty himself. And so that's my prayer today for everybody who's finding themselves today in a position where you don't know how you're going to go forward, or perhaps we will individually or collectively find ourselves there tomorrow.

We don't know what the future holds for us, but we do know that God holds our future. If we're willing to put it into his hands, he holds it. And Jesus himself said, you've been placed in the father's hand and nobody can take you out of the father's hand.

You and I are not called just to squeak through to eternity. We're called to be a vibrant testimony at all times in moments throughout history where the gospel is in season. And in moments where it's out of season, we have been in season for many years in America, but now we're heading quickly to an out of season experience moment in history.

But it's in these times that God gives us the power to shine for him a supernatural life. I thank God for it with all my heart. First Peter chapter three, please.

If you'll turn there with me, first Peter chapter three in the new Testament. Now, father, God almighty Lord, all I can do is deliver your heart. You have to come Lord and quicken your word.

You have to produce in us a desire to live for you. The scripture tells us that you cause us to will and to do of your good pleasure. So Lord, we just cast ourselves at your throne this day.

Oh God. And I ask you in Jesus name, that you would stir every heart, mine included to believe your words, to cherish and value the things that you speak to us in the text of scripture, to not ever treat your words casually. God, you promised to give us oil for a darkened time.

You promised to give us light to see a way out of our circumstance. And so father, I ask you in Jesus name for an anointing of the Holy spirit that will cause gladness in the people's hearts will cause our hearts to burn for truth and give us a desire to walk in it in a new way. Jesus son of God walk among us as your people.

Come down with your presence Lord in the fullness of what that means. We ask you Lord for the full measure that we're allowed of your presence in this world at this time. Lift us, carry us, cause your words to find a lodging place inside of every one of our hearts, guide us and guard us into and through the future.

I ask you Lord to deliver those that are oppressed, give sight to those who can't see their way out of their present circumstance, vanquish the powers of hell. Father, we thank you for it. As we sang today, we want to lift Jesus higher and we bless you for it in Jesus mighty name.

First Peter chapter three, beginning at verse eight. Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion on one another, love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous, not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing for he who would love life and see good days. Let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit.

Let him turn away from evil and do good. Let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are open to their prayers.

But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil. And who is he who will harm you if you'd be followers of what is good. But even if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you are blessed and do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear, having a good conscience that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ

may be ashamed.

It's very, very important for you and I to understand the context of this book. First Peter, if we don't know the context of it, we can treat it casually, not realizing what was happening at this particular moment in history. Peter, the apostle wrote this book under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

He wrote it to believers in Christ who were beginning to endure opposition in the Roman provinces where it would soon be an all-out persecution that would be sanctioned by the government of that day. The Roman historian Tacitus wrote about it just a few years after the event. It was the year AD 64.

Rome was on fire. Rome burned for six days and seven nights, consuming three quarters of the city. The Roman experience or experiment of social re-engineering was beginning its failure and decay from within.

The emperor Nero, in order to hide his own incompetence as the society around him burned, shifted the blame to the Christians, the people who spoke of the coming of a new king in a new kingdom whom he considered a threat to his empire. He arrested certain of the Christian leaders. He tortured them and convicted them of the crime of hating the human race.

From that point onward began one of the most vicious assaults against New Testament believers that history has ever recorded. And if you know the history, Christian believers in Christ were taken into the Roman arena. They were covered in wild animal skins and torn apart by dogs, men, women, and children.

They were used as sport and gladiatorial games. They were impaled and set on fire to provide light at night in the king's garden. They were crucified.

They were beheaded. One of the most vicious, vicious assaults ever in the history of humankind. It's very interesting to note that recently a very well-known and high-level politician in this country intimated that Christians are violating the rights of certain people by simply existing.

In other words, we are the ones standing in the way of America's new social order. We are the modern-day haters of the human race, in their opinion. The Bible tells us that we're not to be ignorant of the times and seasons in which we're living, that we are children of light and we're not to be children of darkness.

The gospel of Matthew chapter 25, Jesus warned of a coming day when people had no oil for their lanterns. It's not that they didn't have access to oil, they just chose not to bear it within themselves. And they could not see the bridegroom in the darkness that came upon the whole earth at that time, because in Matthew 25, Jesus is talking about the last days just before his return.

They couldn't see. They had treated the word of God too casually. They weren't really serious about their walk with God, about their faith in God.

They didn't fully understand that this is a supernatural life. It's not just an agreement with a set of facts that keeps us out of hell and guarantees us heaven. No, if you're in Christ, you become a new creation.

The Bible says the old things are passed away and behold, all things are become new. If you are indeed in Christ, you've made a conscious decision to turn from old ways of living, old ways of thinking, old ways of doing things. The Bible says from the vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers.

That means those that whole society you came from that didn't know God, you made a conscious decision to turn from it and turn towards that which is God's destiny and purpose for your life. God knows what we're going to face. God knows what you are going to face.

Now there are collective times in society when the whole of society has to go through a period of being unappreciated, sometimes vilified, other times hated. God knows that. God knows the times that you have to go through or are going through at this present time.

God knows what's going to knock on your door tomorrow. God knows what you're going to face in the marketplace, in the workplace. God knows the members of your family that are going to vilify you just before they make the decision to turn to Christ themselves.

When you look at the text of scripture and where Peter says, sanctify the Lord God, set apart the Lord in your hearts. Make the choice to embrace that which God speaks and God is. Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.

In other words, your Bible, the words of God are no good if you just leave them in your Bible or on your iPad. The word of God has to come into your heart. Remember the scripture says the entrance of thy words gives light.

It's the entrance of God's word, not just the knowledge of God's word. It's the entrance of God's word. You can know God's word, but not obey it.

Sanctify the Lord God he said in your hearts and be ready always to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you. You have to understand that Peter is writing to people who are going to be torn apart by dogs in an arena. Now I'm not suggesting ever that's going to be our future.

Please don't misunderstand me, but that was their future and that's the context in which these words were being given to them. Set apart your heart for God and if you choose to do that there's going to be such a hope in you that people who live outside of the kingdom of God are going to stand in amazement when they see the strength that God gives you, when they see the light that God gives you. Historians tell us that as Christians were being put to death in the arena that Roman citizens rose to their feet and made a commitment to Christ choosing to die in the arena with believers who had such strength rather than to live in a godless kingdom.

Be ready to answer those who say to you how can you have hope in this hopeless time? How can you have joy when so many are standing against you? How can you, how can you bless when you're being so cursed? How can you speak nicely of this boss in the market workplace who speaks so evilly of you? Be ready to give an answer. You are the only Bible that many people are going to read in this generation. And for the sake, for the sake of people who live in darkness, if the glorifying of Christ and the winning of the lost is truly our goal, for the sake of those who will not know the strength of God any other way, God may permit you, God may permit me to have to go through some very, very difficult times, not for our sake, but for their sakes.

That they will have before them a visible demonstration of the keeping power of God. The whole purpose of the Christian life is not to be lived for ourselves. Yes, there's great benefits to living in Christ, but the purpose of living in Christ is for the sake of others.

And when society gets to the point where it can't hear any other way of times, the only way God could have ever gotten through to an evil thinking, medial Persian king is to have an old man called Daniel go into a lion's den. There's no other way. There's no other way at times and seasons that God can get through to people who are gripped of darkness, other than to show them what light looks like.

And that light is in earthen vessels. You are the light of this world. You and I are city set upon a hill that cannot be hidden.

This is the call of God in my life. It's the call of God in your life. It's not a place where we willingly want to go.

None of us want to go there because God foreknows foreknows he forewarns this epistle of Peter was written to these Christian believers about one to four years before their deep trial was about to begin chapter two in verse nine. He told them, he said, you're a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, his own special people that you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light. You and I are called out of darkness.

We are called to stand for Christ. And I counted a high calling, an incredible privilege. And there has to be something in every one of our hearts that says, Oh God, fill me with light.

Fill me with life. Many of us are cowards and we know it in a heart. We don't, we don't, we know we wouldn't have the power to stand under the circumstances that they had to, but we bear within these earthen vessels, the power of one who did stand the power of one who knows our infirmities, the power of one who did not turn back the power of one who went to a cross, the power of one who conquered death, the power of one who rose from the dead on the third day.

We bear that life within these earthen vessels and the cry of my heart and yours has to be in this generation. Oh God, come and give us light, strengthen us, prepare us Lord God, for we don't know what we're going to face tomorrow. And many of us need the strength of God's light to get through the day we're living in now.

In Matthew 25, there were half of the people waiting for the return of the bridegroom. And they went to those who had oil and they said, give us of your oil. It's not, they didn't have access to it.

They just didn't put it in the right place. Psalm 101, if you get a chance to read it sometime in the future, God was clearly speaking to King David about a day coming in his life. Instead of David listening to the voice of God, he simply wrote down his defense against why the things that God was telling him would never ever come into his life and he would never consider it.

Listen to what he said. I will behave wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when will you come to me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

God was trying to tell David, something's going to happen to you inside of your house. And instead of listening, instead of going to God, instead of saying, God, give me the power not to do this. He simply presented a defense.

No, I would never do that. No, I would never walk with a deceitful heart within my house. Goes on to say, I will set nothing wicked before my eyes.

I hate the work of those who fall away. It will not cling to me. A perverse heart shall depart from me.

I will not know wickedness. And when you read it, you realize when you know how David sinned with Bathsheba, you know that God was trying to tell him, David, you're going to fall away. You're going to get lazy spiritually.

It's going to be a time for Kings to fight, but you're going to make a wrong choice and you're going to stay home. And when you should be in your chariot or on your horse, you should be fighting for the honor of God and the earth. As you've done, David, all your life, you're going to choose to stay home.

And in your spiritual laziness, you're going to get up in the evening and your eyes are going to fall upon something that's going to bring great harm to you and to your house. Instead of agreeing with God, instead of calling out and saying, God be merciful to me. David responds by saying, I'll set nothing wicked before my eyes.

I hate the work of those who fall away. It will not cling to me. A perverse heart shall depart from me.

David, God was telling him, David, a crooked heart's going to get ahold of you. You're going to become, you're going to be turned into a man. You never believed you would ever be.

You're going to put a note, David, in the hand of one of your faithful warriors. And you're going to send them to Joe at the captain of your army. And you're going to have him put one of the most faithful men, a mighty man of God.

He was listed among the mighty men of God. You're going to have him put in a place where he's going to be killed. The sweet Psalmist that once fought for the glory and honor of God in Israel.

David goes on to say, whoever slanders his neighbor, I will destroy him. Whoever has a proud look, I will not endure. God was telling him, David, you're going to speak against your neighbor.

And in pride, you're going to come to the point where I'm not going to be able to speak to you anymore. David goes on and says, he works deceit shall not dwell within my house. He will not.

He will tell his lies will not continue in my presence. You see, the point is the oil was available. The oil was available, but he couldn't hear it.

He wouldn't hear it. He chose to do things his own way. And I plead with you with all my heart.

I don't know what tomorrow is going to bring. I really don't know, but I know you're going to need oil. And I know the time of arguing with God is over.

The time of justifying lifestyles that God says are not right is over. The time of being in relationships that you shouldn't be in is over. The time of being spiritually lazy is over.

You have to go and get oil now. That's why when they came to those that had oil in Matthew 25, and they said, give us of your oil. And the response was weak hands.

It's not ours to give. You have to go and get it for yourself. You have to get into this book and you say, God, let these words become my value system.

Let them become my life. Let them become my heart. Let them become everything that I am.

Let my thoughts be wrong and let yours be right. God order my steps in your word. Order my steps to stop me from justifying wrong.

Don't let me do it anymore. And even David's son went on to do the same thing. When you think of how God was trying to speak to Solomon, it's stunning when you read it.

If you get a chance later, read all of Proverbs chapter two and Proverbs chapter five. God was trying to speak to this man. He's writing it down, but he's not ingesting it.

You can go to all the Bible studies you want, but if you're not willing to ingest the word of God, he says, listen, my son, he says, pay attention to my wisdom. Now, Solomon is writing it down because God speaking it to him. He's calling him my son and he's writing it down, but he's not going to obey it.

Lend your ear to my understanding that you may preserve discretion and your lips may keep knowledge for the lips of an immoral woman drip honey and her mouth is smoother than oil. But in the end, she's bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death.

Their steps lay hold of hell. Unless you ponder her life, the path of life, her ways are unstable. You do not know them.

Therefore, hear me now. My children do not depart from the words of my mouth. Remove your way far from her.

Do not go near the door of her house. Lest you give your honor to others and your years to the cruel one. Lest aliens be filled with your wealth and your labors go to the house of a foreigner.

And when you mourn at last, when your flesh and body are consumed and say, how I have hated instruction and my heart despised correction. I've not obeyed the voice of my teachers nor inclined my ear to those who instructed me. I was on the verge of total ruin in the midst of the assembly and the congregation.

God was trying to tell Solomon, you're going to make allegiances with foreign powers. And in order to seal those allegiances, you're going to take wives from foreign Kings into your court. And they're going to turn your heart.

And in the end, you're going to build buildings that lead people to hell. And he wrote it down. Isn't it amazing? He wrote it down, but he couldn't embrace it.

We can write the scripture up by hand, but it makes no difference if we're not willing to embrace it for the strength of God comes to you and comes to me. When we open this book and say, from this day forward, these are my thoughts. From this day forward, this is my value system.

This is my guide. And I'm not going to argue with the word of God. I'm going to do what the word of God says, and I'm going to trust God for power to do it because I can't do it in my own strength.

Peter said to the Christians of this time, chapter four, verse 12, do not think it's strange, beloved concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you as some strange thing happened to you. Rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you're reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

On their party is blaspheme, but on your part is glorified. Don't think it's strange. When we come into moments in history where Christ is rejected, where the word of God is rejected, where God's people are rejected, don't think it's a strange thing concerning this fiery trial, which is to try you.

It's happened throughout history. It's happened to others. It's happening in the world.

You see these words mean a whole lot more maybe to Christian people in Syria today than they might to you and I this morning. People who 10 years ago maybe felt they were living in relative peace in an environment in a sense that tolerated them, allowed them in measure to practice their religion, somewhat religious, somewhat a secular society, and suddenly they're fleeing for their lives, crossing a sea in rubber rafts, many of them drowning, trying to make the journey to get to a place where their children can live in safety. And how do you think they feel when they read these words? Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you.

It's not strange that this world turns on Christ and on those who follow him. Chapter 4 verse 4 says, in regard to these they think it's strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. They speak evil of us simply because we won't bend with the new norms of society.

We can't. If the word of God is our guide, we can't bend to it. Chapter 5 verses 8 and 9, he says, be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Resist him steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. Be sober, be careful, because the adversary that we fight is seeking to devour us now. Resist him in the faith.

In chapter 3, it says in verse 14, but even if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you are blessed. If you're suffering in the workplace because you're a Christian, you're blessed. You're suffering at home because you're the only Christian in your family, you're blessed.

You're suffering even because you feel lonely, because you've turned to Christ and you're right in the middle of trying to break away from an old way of life and find this new life in Christ. And you find yourself in a valley of the shadow of death, a place of incredible loneliness, and there's suffering involved in it. You're blessed.

And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. Do not be afraid of these voices of the roaring lion that comes against you, telling you you're a loser, telling you you're making a mistake, telling you you're too extreme, telling you why don't you just bend and bow like everybody else. Why do you stand firm in the workplace when everybody else is caving in? Why do you bring all this trouble on your own head? But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

Set your heart apart and say, I'm going to live for God. I know what this is like. I was a time in my former secular employment where I was all alone.

I mean, I was all alone and the threats were numerous and they were public and they were vocal. I remember the day when one of my superiors, an advanced superior, walked into the office where I was sitting with other men that I was working with, pointed his finger right at me and said, we're going to get you. We're going to get you.

But I had sanctified the Lord God in my heart and I had made a decision. I'd written it on a sign and hung it over a tree limb in my house in the country and said, choose you this day whom you're going to serve. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Choose you this day. And yes, the fiery trial came to try me more than one time throughout my life. And there will be other times in the future, but God gave me a supernatural strength.

I remember one time I was called into an office of a superior and he was so mad at me. He was literally just spitting at me across the desk. His face was red and flushed and he was angry.

And he was telling me, this is not an evangelical association that you're part of. And I want you to stop speaking about Jesus Christ. I want you to shut your mouth and just do your work.

And you had better listen to what I'm saying. And when he was done, he says, now, what do you have to say for yourself? I looked at him. I said, you need God in your life, sir.

He said to me, why do you say that? I said, because in the book of Proverbs, it says a man who has no control over his spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls. And you, sir, have no control over your spirit. And then the strangest thing happened.

Suddenly a softness came upon him and he just started pouring his whole life out. The struggles, the depression, the broken marriage, he just poured it all out. And an entryway was made for the gospel.

There was another man that worked in my office and he saw what was happening and how I was being threatened and vilified. And one day he said to me, what is it that you have in you? It gives you such strength. What is it that I see in your life? You know, remember David, the Psalmist said, he took me out of a horrible pit of the miry clay and set my feet upon a rock and put a new song in my heart.

And many will see it and fear. It doesn't say they'll hear it. They'll see it.

You see, many people can quote scripture, but the scripture is not visible in them. It's simply words coming from their mouth. But when, when the, when the entrance of his words have has caused light inside, people see it.

It's not something I told him about Christ. He gave his life to Jesus and God did a marvelous healing in his life. I was threatened and warned that when I, because I was in public relations at the time, that when you're out doing these public things, you dare not speak about Jesus Christ.

And I was fresh off of a recent warning. And I remember going to this neighborhood gathering that was experiencing a lot of crime. And so I was giving a presentation on various ways the crime can be prevented in neighborhoods.

And in the middle of the presentation, there's about 60 or 70 people in this rather large house. And this lady raises her hand in the middle of it. And she said to me, officer, she said, you're talking about crime statistics and ways that we can guard and protect our neighborhoods and lock our doors and such.

Like she said, but everything in you is saying something else. What is it that I am seeing? What an amazing question. I've just been threatened the week before that there's going to be a real price to pay.

So I said, well, as, as a servant of the people, which is, I am here to do this. I said, I'm not allowed to speak of this. I said, I'm a believer in Christ.

I'm a Christian. I said, I'm not allowed to speak of it. Unless everybody in this room wants to hear the story, then I can.

And the whole room, all 60 people said, yes, yes, yes. Tell us, tell us. But you see the key, it's not just that I was bold.

Naturally, I wasn't actually. It's that I had embraced the word of God and the scripture says, and I'm going to say it again. The entrance of thy words gives light.

This wasn't just something to learn. It was not just a suggestion. This, this was, this was right.

Thinking according to God, this was right. Living according to God. This was, this was what my future is supposed to look like.

According to God, this was strength. According to God, this was oil in my lamp for darkened times. According to God, this was God being willing to work his miraculous power inside of any vessel, no matter how humble our beginnings, no matter how disadvantaged our position has been in society, no matter how many voices were roaring at us and telling us, you'll never amount to anything.

This was God saying, I will make you what I've destined you to be. You will be what I've called you to be. And you will do what I've called you to do.

And you will have light in darkness and you will have strength where you used to have weakness. When we make the choice to say, God, touch me with your word. I'm not looking just to come to church, to be pacified in my sin.

I'm not looking just to get over the guilt feelings of my past week and go out the door and do it all over again. I'm looking for the new life that you promised me in Christ. I'm looking for that abundant life.

I'm looking for your Lord Jesus to glorify yourself through me and do it in a manner that people will see it. And they will fear God because they will know that there is a God when they see it. And they will know there's one before whom they one day have to stand and give account of themselves.

They will know because they have a testimony standing before them. Be ready to be filled with hope when everything seems to be against you. When people ask you why, how can you stand? How can you sing? How can you smile? How can you be kind in everything that you're having to go through? Your only answer is going to be because I have found the light of Christ in my heart.

Peter gives finally some very simple instructions in our opening text today. Simple things to get light. Finally, all of you be of one mind.

Have compassion for one another. Love as brothers. Be tenderhearted.

Be courteous. Not returning evil for evil or reviling. That means evil speech for evil speech, but on the contrary, blessing.

Knowing that you were called to this that you may inherit a blessing. How do I get oil? I forgive. And I choose to be kind even when people are unkind to me.

Not easy, but not impossible in God. I'll tell you, there were times when I was a young Christian that only a holy hand reaching up from inside and pulling my tongue back kept me from saying what I wanted to say. But God makes it possible to forgive.

God makes it possible. And he would love life and see good days. Let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit.

You know, we're living in a day when there's just, I, I want to go to heaven soon because I can't handle the speech anymore. I can't even, I can't even watch the news. The evil speaking is just becoming so commonplace now that people don't know what they're becoming.

They have no idea what they're becoming. And the prayer of my heart is God, don't let me go there. Don't let me start speaking the way they speak.

Especially now that we're in an election season, folks, I want to tell you something. The problem in America is not Republicans or Democrats or Libertarians or Independents. The problem is we've fallen away from God as a society.

That is the problem. So I don't want to be part of the evil speaking. It doesn't mean I'm stupid.

It doesn't mean there are not issues to discuss. But you and I will know when it's turned from just discussing it into evil. Let him seek peace and pursue it for the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are open to their prayers.

And here's our answer. I've chosen to speak truth. I've chosen to turn from evil.

I've chosen to do what is good. And God hears my prayer. When I ask him for help, he gives me help.

When I need strength, he gives me strength. That's what it's all about. God hears my prayer.

And God will give me strength and God will be my light. God will be my heart and God will be my hope. Ask him today for the strength that you need now.

Don't put it off till tomorrow. Ask him for the strength that you need to turn from what you know isn't good. Ask him for the strength to love his word if you don't love it.

You might be afraid of hell and you don't want to go there, but you really don't love the word of God. It's not, it's not changing your character. Ask him for the strength because my brother and my sister, we're going to need oil.

And if you're in a darkened place now, don't be afraid to ask God for the strength you need. You can't do it on your own. You can't stay in that marriage in your own strength.

You can't get out of that other relationship in your own strength. You can't stop this practice in your own strength. You can't love people that you've started to hate in your own strength.

You can't become kind when they're unkind to you in your own strength. There's no way to do it apart from the spirit of God. Jesus said, the father seeks such to worship him.

Those who worship him in spirit and in truth. In other words, they have embraced the truth of the word of God and they are trusting the Holy Spirit to make that truth a reality in their lives. They're coming into the house of God like you and I are today and saying, Lord, I am not what I'm supposed to be, but I know what your word tells me that I will be.

And so I'm trusting you, Holy Spirit, to produce this fruit in my life. And I'm going to worship you, God, with all my heart. And I'm going to thank you that you're going to change me from image to image and glory to glory, even as by the spirit of God, that you're going to make me kind.

You're going to give me a forgiving heart. You're going to give me the power to speak good when others are speaking evil. You're going to make me a testimony of righteousness and you're going to do something so powerful in me.

The people in the workplace, in my apartment, my neighborhood, my home, and my own family are going to look at me and say, give me a reason for the hope that is in you in the days that we're living in. Give me a reason. And what the devil intends for evil is going to turn to a testimony for Christ.

Thank God. Thank God. Thank God.

I want to give an altar call this morning here in the main sanctuary at Times Square Church in North Jersey, in the Education Annex, and those that are listening online as well. God bless you. Give me oil.

We're going to worship at this altar for 10, maybe 15 minutes, even. But let it be the cry, because you know your circumstance. You know where you can't see a way out.

You know where you can't, your eyes don't see a way forward. Your heart can't find it in your own natural strength. But if you will turn to God with all your heart, he'll give you the way out.

He'll give you a song in the midst of your darkness and a testimony where you should be swallowed by despair. To those suffering from depression, I want you to come. We're going to pray for you.

We're going to pray, say, God, give us oil. Give all of us oil that we may see light in our darkness. This is a sober and a serious altar call this morning.

If you come with an honest heart before God, he will answer you. He will give you light in your darkness. God bless you.

Let's stand. If you want to come forward to the altar here, just in front of the sanctuary, just come forward. We'll wait for you here.

We're going to worship together. We're going to pray together. The balcony go to either exit.

Please make your way down to the annex. You could step between the screens, but just make your way here. God, give us oil.

Give us light in our darkness. In Jesus name. The Lord never brings you a word because he's angry with you.

He loves you with an everlasting love. The Bible says it's deeper and richer than you could and I could ever imagine. And as his sons and daughters, he wants the best for us.

So he says, let my words, words, let my words come into your heart and begin to govern your life. Because Jesus said, I came to give you life and I came to give it to you abundantly. And that's got nothing to do with money and jobs.

That's not abundant life. The abundant life is Christ. It's, it's his life being lived inside of us.

Would you pray just a simple prayer with me? Lord Jesus help me now never to be casual with your words and your calling. That's on my life. Bible tells me that when your words find a place in my heart, it brings light into my life.

You said you came to give sight to those that are blind. So help me to see the divine purpose, the eternal purpose for my life. Make me a light on a hill that cannot be hidden.

And even in my weakness, give me a song of praise to you that can be seen before it's heard. Thank you Lord for the knowledge that you always choose the weak to confound those things that stand in their own strength. And you've chosen me because you love me.

I love you Jesus. I love you Jesus. Thank you for speaking to my heart every day in your precious name.

Amen.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/27/SID27463.mp3>

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/ArNxPrxppfA.mp4>

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