

Finding Strength in the Fire

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the necessity of relying on God's strength in the midst of life's challenges and recognizing our own limitations.

Duration: 44:56

Scripture: Mark 14:32

Topics: "Spiritual Strength", "Godly Humility"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the need to find strength in God, especially in times of trials and challenges. It highlights the importance of surrendering our own strength and relying on the supernatural strength that God provides. The speaker shares personal experiences of despair and the realization that human effort is insufficient, leading to a call for humility and dependence on God's strength for victory in the battles ahead.

Transcript

Praise God. I want to talk to you this morning about finding strength in the fire. Finding strength in the fire.

Mark chapter 14, please, if you'll go there, Gospel of Mark chapter 14. And I would like to speak to those that are going through a fire at the moment, and you're wondering, where am I going to find the strength to get through this? How am I going to? I've been there. I know what that feels like.

So I'm not just bringing you something that's just strictly theological, but I've lived through this. I've known what it's like to have despair tug at my heart and to wonder where the strength is going to come from to get through tomorrow. And it's also for us as a body collectively, because I do believe that there's a fire about to break out throughout this world as this world launches its all-out assault against Christ and everything righteous.

There's a fire that's about to break out in every society. And you and I are going to have to have strength to get through. We're going to need the strength that only God can give.

We're going to have to find it now. Very, very hard to find that strength in the midst of a time of panic. You need to find it beforehand.

Get oil in your lamp now, my brother and my sister. Lord, I thank you, God, for this word. I thank you, God, for the strength that you give, Lord, to stand, to represent you.

I've never ever stood in my own strength. God, you give always more than we're able to bring to you. And you take the little we have, you multiply it, and then you begin to feed thousands of people with it.

This all belongs to you. This is your word. Unless you quicken it, it's just information.

You're the only one that can make it burn and live within our hearts. You're the only one who can speak it and cause it to create life. It's you, Jesus.

The glory goes to you. God Almighty, keep us from ever even thinking that we have any more part in this than being invited by you, by grace on this journey. I thank you, God, that you take us in our foolishness, in our weakness, in our nothingness, that you might become everything.

The testimony might be of you, Jesus, and not of us. And so today we give you the glory even before your word is spoken. For every heart that will be strengthened, every tactic of the devil that will be destroyed, every set of eyes that will be opened, God Almighty, every victory that will be won, we give you the glory now before we even go into the battle.

We thank you for it, God, with all my heart in Jesus' name. Mark chapter 14, finding strength in the fire, beginning at verse 32. And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane.

And he said to his disciples, sit ye here while I shall pray. And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sorrow-amazed and to be very heavy. And he said to them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.

Tear ye here and watch. And he went forward a little and fell on the ground and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee.

Take away this cup from me, nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. And he came and found them sleeping and said to Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

And again he went away and prayed and spoke the same words. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy, and neither wist they what to answer him. In other words, basically it says they didn't know.

They had no more excuses. They didn't know really what to say. And he came the third time and said to them, sleep on now and take your rest.

It is enough. The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Now I want to read to you just from Psalm 127 verses 1 and 2. You don't need to turn there. But the scripture says except the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain that build it. Except the Lord keeps the city, the watchman wake but in vain.

It is vain for you to rise up early and sit up late and to eat the bread of sorrows. For so he gives his beloved sleep. Now what in the world could the psalmist be talking about? Are we not supposed to take up our cross? Are we not supposed to share in the labor of Christ? Are you and I not called to weep for the lost? Why would the psalmist call it vain or mean without purpose or empty or meaningless? What is it on our part that he could be referring to? Why does he say it's vain for you to rise up early and sit up late and eat the bread of sorrows? For if God's not building the house, your work is for nothing.

If God's not building the testimony inside of your life, if it's you that's building it, if it's your staying up late, if it's your eating the bread of sorrows, if it's human effort that's trying to build this testimony, it's in vain. It will never really amount to what God has destined it to be. And we can understand what the psalmist meant in Psalm 127 when we go to our opening text and we realize that it was preceded by sincere people.

They're making sincere boasts of sincere loyalty to Jesus. It was a type of when you and I first came to Christ and we go to an altar, we hear a message on something and we say, God, though none go with thee, still I will follow. And we really mean it.

I've meant it. I remember singing it as a young Christian, though none go with thee, still I will follow. That's what Peter said in verse 29 of Mark 14, though all be offended, yet not will I. Everyone may opt out in a time of fear and when the going gets tough, but you can count on me, God.

I will be with you. I will walk with you. I said those words.

I meant those words. I was young. I was in my 20s when I got saved.

And I was sincere to the core of my whole being. I meant every word I said until you get to the point in your walk with God where you can't go on. I remember how angry I got at God and I accused him of somehow betraying me, somehow leading me on this goose chase of thinking I could serve him only to take my strength away, not realizing that he was leading me to something, a place where I was going to find strength in the midst of my own fire.

Though all should leave you, yet will not I. And yet I will not deny you. And yet even the others, actually in Matthew 26, 35, he even took it deeper. He said, though I should die with you, yet I will not deny you.

Anybody here ever said those words? Thank you for your honesty. I really, really appreciate you raising your hand. Though I should die with you.

Though, you know, folks, you and I don't know what we would do facing a firing squad. Easy to say that sitting in Times Square Church and having a choir like this and Mama May singing the way she does. I mean, any one of us could come to the altar and say, though I should die with you, I will never betray you, I'll never run from you until the guns come in the door.

Or we find ourselves at work with a very angry red-faced boss saying, are you a Christian? If you keep speaking it's going to cost you. Then suddenly the powerlessness of our boasting comes to the surface. They were clearly warned that their own strength was insufficient, clearly told that the future was going to demand something of them that they didn't have, but they still held to this belief, which was very sincere at the moment.

Verse 31, he says, Jesus told him in verse 30, you're not even going to get through the night before you deny me. You're telling me that you're not going to run. You're not going to be offended.

And of course, if you add Matthew into that, you're telling me you're willing to die with me in Jerusalem, but I'm telling you, you're not going to get through the night before you deny that you even knew me. And then verse 31 says, he spake more vehemently. No, that's not true.

Now keep in mind, it's God that's telling him this. And he's arguing with God because he was sincere. I was sincere.

You are sincere. I felt I had the strength to get through and to finish this journey with everything, the resources that I had at the moment. Though I should die with you, I will not deny you.

And all of them said the same thing, all around the table. John, who was going to run from the garden. James, we don't even know what happened to him or where he went.

When it came time to where he really needed his own disciples and said, I'm so troubled by this moment. There's such a weight upon me. There's something being asked of me that's so difficult.

I need you now to pray with me. All of them said the same thing. We'll be there when you need us.

We'll stand for you when the moment gets hot. You see, we sincerely want to believe that we're more loyal than we actually are or more capable than we actually are. It's very hard for humanity because you remember the essential sin of our nature is that we can be as gods.

We can know good and evil. We believe that we have a strength that we don't have. We believe that we're more loyal than we really are.

We believe that we have a capability that we actually don't in ourselves possess. And so Jesus comes out of this season of prayer. He takes Peter, James, and John.

Now Peter is making the boast and leading the gang. Peter is the one who's actually leading the room to disagree with the Son of God. When you look at it, it's actually quite incredible.

And John, who's leaning on his, at the Last Supper, is leaning on his chest. He's so loyal, so loving, so devoted. Let me hear your heartbeat, oh God.

You know, it's amazing. He's going to flee naked out of the garden very, very shortly. So he takes Peter, James, and John into this inner place, this intimate place that not everybody else can fully ever understand because he needs to teach them something.

You realize that, you know, James is going to have, and John is going to have leadership, key leadership positions in the church, as is Peter. And he said to the monk, I'm in a place of sorrow. And the sorrow is leading me to a place of death.

So stay here with me and watch. In other words, hell is against me. I'm in a fierce battle.

And he fell, and he prayed, and he came out in verse 37, and he found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? Could you not watch with me one hour? Now, I've heard this preached on, and I have preached on it this way, sad to say, myself in the past. It's almost like a condemnation.

It's almost like Jesus came out and condemned him for not praying. I've heard preachers take this passage of scripture and condemn the people for not praying an hour a day. Could you not pray with me one hour? How deep is your loyalty? That's not really what was happening here.

You have to see it in the context of what came before it. Just hours before, they're at a table, and Peter is boasting of his loyalty and his inner strength that he thought he had. And you see what Jesus is saying to

Peter.

Could you not even muster up one hour's worth of strength in yourself? You remember your boast, Peter. You remember how you talked about how you'll go with me everywhere I go, and you'll be there when I need you. Don't you even have an hour's worth of strength in you? That's really what he was saying to Peter.

He was not condemning him for not praying. He was trying to get him to understand that in himself, he does not have the strength to finish the journey. He has an inner desire.

Remember, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. He has a desire like you and I have. I want to glorify God all of my life.

I want to become everything that God wants me to be. But one of the things that the Lord has to do in each of our lives is lead us to a place of understanding that you don't in yourself have the resources to finish this journey. You think you do in a time of peace.

You think you do when you're sitting at a table and all is well, and the bread is there, and everything is simply just theological at this point, but it's not practical yet. You've studied the fire. You've talked about the fire.

You know everything. You've gone to fire conferences. You know all this stuff about fire, but you've never been in the fire yet.

It's only when we get in the fire that you and I really find out what really is in us. And when you and I truly get in the fire, I'll tell you right now, what's of me is not going to stand. What's of me is going to burn.

What's of Christ is going to remain. Their failure was obvious. Look at verse 40.

It says when he returned, he more or less tries to get Peter to come into a place of reasoning. James and John would have heard it as well. Then he tells them again, watch and pray.

Your spirit is, the spirit is ready, but the flesh is weak. And he goes away the second time, and when he returns, he found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. The battle was intense.

It was deeper than anything that they'd ever faced before, and they had no more excuses. They had no more boasts of loyalty. In other words, verse 40 says they didn't know what to say.

Matt said this way, they had nothing left to say. Suddenly, their powerlessness of their former profession is in ashes at their feet. Each man now had a choice.

Do I hold to my former self-image, or do I finally admit to my own inability to go forward without divine help? Do I hold to my self-image? Do I hold to the thought that in myself I can do these things? You see, that's the essence of a religious spirit, and it only survives by condemning everybody else around. When you're in, if you're in a place of a religious spirit, there's a, there's a condemnation towards others that comes into your heart. That basically says, well they may backslide, but I will not.

They may deny you, but I will not deny you. And there's a pride that gets a hold of the human heart. But let me tell you something, there's a fire coming to this whole world that is going to refine all of that stuff, and we are going to find out that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

There's not one righteous, not even one. We're gonna find out that you're no stronger than I am, and I'm no stronger than you are. Left to ourselves, we're all going to run, and we're all going to fail him.

It's only that which is of Christ in us that's going to cause us to stand in these last days. Praise be to God. I have no problem admitting my own inability to finish this journey.

It's part of my prayer every day. God, you know I can't make it to the finish line, but you can. You are within me, and I believe that in Christ and through Christ, I can do all things.

I can run this race. I can finish it, but not in my strength. In your strength, being lived out with inside of my life.

And when he comes out the third time, verse 41, he says to them, sleep on now. Take your rest. It is enough.

The hour has come. The son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Sleep on now.

In other words, I'm making a way for you now from this day forward to enter into where strength really is found. You finally see that it's not in yourself. You're going to find out, as the Hebrew boys did one time, that you need the fourth man in the fire or you're not going to get through it.

Let me read to you from the book of Hebrews chapter 4. Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. Now this faith has got to be in the work of somebody else, not our own work.

For we which have believed to enter into rest, as he said, as I've sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest, although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spoke in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, and God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And again in this place, if they shall enter into my rest, seeing therefore it remains that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief.

Again he limited a certain day in David saying, today after so long a time as it is said today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. If Jesus had given them rest and he would not have afterwards spoken of another day, there remains therefore a rest to the people of God. And here's the key verse, verse 10 chapter 4 of Hebrews, for he that has entered into his rest, that's the rest of Christ, he is also ceased from his own works as God did from his.

He has ceased from trusting in his own strength. He has ceased from leaning on his own resources. He has ceased from trying to figure out his journey from his own thoughts.

He has ceased from trying to pray in his own strength. He has given up the rights of his life to another, and he has allowed the spirit of the living God to come into his body or her body and allowed that place to become the temple of God, and has yielded the rights and says, God I yield my strength because it's worthless, but God by your promises I lay hold of your strength, which is my life. You're going to carry me, oh God, you're going to, you're going to expand the borders of my courage.

You're going to expand the borders of my mind. You're going to expand the borders of my thinking. I turn to you as the source of my strength.

My spirit has been willing, but my flesh is weak. God Almighty. But I thought the word of God says take up your cross and follow me.

Didn't Jesus say if you're going to be my disciple deny yourself and take up your cross? Doesn't it involve human effort to a certain point? It does, but have you considered, have we considered that even Jesus Christ in his own natural physical strength could not carry the cross all the way to Calvary? Think it through for a moment. If the Son of God couldn't carry the cross, then neither can you, and neither can I. Mark 15, 21, the Bible says that God sent a man called Simon, a Cyrenian, to carry the cross of Jesus Christ the full distance because he couldn't physically carry it all the way. And if Christ could not carry the cross, then neither can you, and neither can I. He was enabled to go forward in his humanness.

He was fully God, but he was also fully man. And in that part of him that was fully man, he was enabled to go forward to that will that his father had for his life in the strength of another. Not just the Holy Spirit, but that which represents the Holy Spirit to you and I. God sending away to him to strengthen him so that he could finish his journey.

You and I find out that the kingdom of God always has been, and all which will be advanced by those who have found a source of strength that's not available to those who try to follow Christ by the sheer force of human will. It's called walking in the flesh. Even if its intentions are good, it will not get you the full journey.

You'll go far, but you won't go all the way. There's a fire comes to every life. It might be the fire of discouragement, disappointment, betrayal.

I don't know what it is. Could be a physical fire, could be a social upheaval like is happening in the Ukraine today. It will be one or many of those things even combined that will finally get you and I to a place that's where we say if I'm going to finish this journey, it's going to have to be the strength of another inside of me.

This is not a message can be heard by the spiritually proud. It can only be heard by those who have the humility to admit that I can't make this journey in my own strength. That's why the word says if my people are called by my name will humble themselves before they even pray.

Will humble themselves and pray and turn from their wicked ways. And I see that as everything in me that tries to imitate Christ, but it isn't Christ. Everything in me that tries to pretend it's holy and isn't God.

Everything that in me that tries to pretend it's spirit, but it's not. Finally by God's grace we die that we may live. Unless the seed falls into the ground and dies it abides alone.

God will not walk with those who walk in their own reasonings and strength until we get to an end of it. Until we're finally faced down in the dust with our cross upon our shoulders and suddenly calls another one whom he sent called the Holy Spirit of Almighty God to pick that cross up. And in the midst of our own weakness we find the strength that is not our own.

It's a strength of God. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God. Glory to his holy name.

It's always advanced by those who finally come to an end of themselves. Oh God thank you. I thank him every day.

Oh God I praise him from the depths of my heart that Carter Conlon is dead and Jesus Christ is alive. And my prayers you see me and where he's not dead kill him. Kill him Lord.

Put him to death. I don't want this old nature governing me. I don't want my thoughts leading me.

I don't want my strength carrying me because all these things are going to fail me. And they have repeatedly over the years. All of these.

I don't want to try to figure everything out. I just want to walk by the leading of the Spirit. I just want to do what God calls me.

I don't want to do anything more or anything less than called by God to do. It is a marvelous place to be. There's a strength here that's not found in youth.

I was preaching in Texas a few weeks ago and I said to the ministers in Texas there's only one thing in life I'd never want to be again and that's young. I left that behind a long time ago. Thank God I left it behind me.

I was stronger than most. I was more determined than most are. I had a strong strong will.

I remember grabbing a guy who was always he was always drinking and falling and drinking and falling and he'd come to the altar and cry like a baby. I remember grabbing him and say I give up drinking you can give up drinking too. But he'd look at me in the eye and cries I can't I can't.

I said yes you can. Until one day I went face down on the road lost my strength by the grace of God. It's amazing.

I remember the same guy after I had come back and found that I needed the strength of God to continue this journey. He said pastor you still preach hard. He said but I find such hope in your preaching lately that I never found before.

I found that rather curious. I am told today that he is walking with God now. How do I know that I am still being led by my own inner resources and not that which is of Christ.

How do I know it. Well the answer is quite simple. If I am being led by the force of human will and not by the Spirit of God I am still making promises to God.

If you are making promises to God you're going to fail. But if you are living by the promises of God to you then you're going to be able to finish the journey. That's why he came out of the garden and he said sleep on now and take your rest.

Oh thank God. I'm about to make a way for you to find the strength of another for your journey. You're not going to have to make promises to me anymore but I'm going to make promises to you and my Holy Spirit is going to come down and the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead is going to quicken your mortal body and you're going to have strength that those who live in their own abilities are not going to have.

You're going to have thoughts that those who live by their own reasonings are not going to have. You're going to have joy that those that live by their own successes or failures are not going to have because you're going to know inside that this life that you're living is not of your own making. It's not of your own strength.

You don't have to make promises to God because we can't keep them. You can't keep your promises to God so keep on making them until you finally face down in the dust and realize you can't be a better

husband. You can't be a better friend.

You can't be a better employee. You can't stand in the fire. There's so many things you can't do so stop saying you can't.

You can't. Only Christ inside of you can. Thank God.

Sleep on now. Sleep on now. Sleep on now Jesus said.

You gave it your best try but when the fire came you found out you didn't have the resource you thought you had. Human zeal is not going to get us through. Listen to me those that are online.

Human zeal is not going to get us through these coming days. We're going into a fire. We're going into a trial.

We're going into a battle almost unprecedented throughout time. We're going into a fight. We're living in the days of social rebellion against the Holy God.

We're going into a time when it's going to be extremely unpopular to be a follower of Jesus Christ. We're going into a time when many are going to flee because they have stood in their own strength. Their testimony is going to be driven into the ground.

They're going to find themselves without resources. But oh thank God we're living in a time when many prodigals are coming home. Many who took the resource of God and went the wrong way with it.

They're going to come home and when they come home they're going to find a covering. They're going to find an empowerment. They're going to find a journey.

It's not in my righteousness. It's not in my strength. It's not in my promises.

There was a victory won for me on Calvary. By God's grace I have put to rest my promises. I've put to rest my boastings.

I've put to rest any leaning on the flesh. I've put to rest leaning on any past record of victory because that's no guarantee of success tomorrow. The only guarantee I have is Christ within me who's the only hope of glory that you and I will ever have.

It's my prayer every day. God I won't have the strength to face what I know is ahead of me. I don't have the natural strength to face it but oh God you do and you live inside of me so you carry me God.

You carry me. Help me to put my own reasonings and strength to rest. Help me to put it to sleep and give me the grace to enter into the victory that was won for me.

That the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead may now quicken my mortal body and give me the strength that I need to get to the end of this journey. I will not stand in my own strength and neither will you. There's no record of the past that will keep us in the days that you and I are about to face not too far ahead of us.

2nd Peter chapter 1 verse 2 to 4 according as Peter says grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord according as his divine power his power has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue.

I love that. He has called us and he has given us promises and our calling is the word glory means that which is within us that brings the rep the name of God to reputation.

He's called us through his life within us to bring his own name to reputation. Now how's that possible? If I can do it then that's not bringing his name to reputation. If I can do it then you can do it.

Then anybody else can do it and that would be our message. We can do it. We can all do it.

We just we just buck up. We just encourage one another and we can do it. That brings no glory to God.

Anybody can do that. No sir he's called us to something that brings his name alone to reputation. Think about the day of Pentecost when they came out of that upper room all of them having gone in their failures.

All of their boasts had come to nothing. All their declarations of love and loyalty had melted into the sand and they've gone into that upper room and now suddenly the life the promises that had been provided had become theirs and they burst out of that upper room into a hostile marketplace and they had an inner glory that could only come from God. They had a testimony that only God can give and they were speaking of the things to come.

Amazing. We are called also to virtue that means moral excellence in a society that has been baptized in filth. The television sets are just a sewer pipe into our society now.

Even the G movies you ever notice they have to curse the name Jesus once. That's the trademark of Hollywood now. I've been praying God shake that place.

God shake that place and show them that they have offended a holy God whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature. That means that the life of Christ by these promises that are given to us having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Putting away our promises, putting away our pride, putting away our boasting and turning to Jesus with all our heart and recognizing it doesn't matter how long I've been here in the church and part of the kingdom of God.

You're on level ground with me and I'm on level ground with you. The hungry heart gets the power. Thank God for the simplicity of Christ.

Jesus said these words to his people. We use them in evangelism but it's amazing. These words were actually spoken to those who are supposed to represent his honor and glory on the earth and he said to his own people, come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

He wasn't talking to people who thought they were sinners. He was talking to people who threw the law and they had access to God through the law. People who had given it their best effort to be holy, the best effort to be good, the best effort to be godly, the best effort to preserve truth on the earth but they were so tired.

They were so overwhelmed and suddenly the Son of God stands and speaks to his people just as I believe he's speaking in this generation to every Christian who's read every book on how to do this and how to do that and how to be this and how to be that. Seven steps to this, 16 steps to that. You've read about enough steps to get you to heaven and you put them all together and you've tried them and they

don't work.

Oh you were a wonderful husband weren't you for seven, eight, nine days until she tried to tell you something about your character. Then you found out how wonderful you really were didn't you? How much you had truly changed, how much you were truly going to be given to your wife as Christ loves the church until she had the audacity to tell you that you were arrogant. Come unto me, come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden, tired of trying to be holy, tired of trying to be godly, tired of making promises to God that we can't fulfill.

I'll give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Learn of me, I'm meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest for your souls.

In other words, you don't find me in a high place of human pride, you find me in a low place where you finally get to the point of saying I don't, we don't have anything to say. We tried to pray, we tried to be there when you needed us, we tried, they were speechless, they had no more excuses. That's why I said take your rest now.

My yoke is easy and my burden is light. I found it folks. I'm not making an idol Boston.

I'm doing more now than I've done in years with less effort. There's a joy inside now because I need him as much as you need him. And I am, I don't have the luxury of strength to do it my own way.

So I'm way ahead of some here today in that regard. Some are still strong and you still feel you can do it. You want to make your mark as it is in this world.

You're going to make it, you're going to hit a brick wall and leave the imprint of your forehead in it. That's going to be your mark. And then once you've made your mark, then remember that he gives his beloved rest.

It is vain for you to rise up early. It is vain for you to stay up late and eat the bread of sorrows. For if he doesn't build the house, it doesn't get built.

If he's not the one who's changing you, you don't get changed. It's vain for you to stay up late and cry hot tears over your failure. Vain for you to think you can enter into the work of God in human strength.

Oh, you can. I've done that. I know what that's about.

You can go a great distance too as well before you run into the wall. But God's mercy will not let human effort represent his kingdom. And one of the ways he gets rid of that is he sends a fire.

The fire will purify his house. The fire will purify my heart. It will purify yours.

Times are coming that will prove the worth of my testimony and yours. Times are coming on all of us. Some of you are going through it now, but we're all going to go through it in the days ahead.

This world is unraveling very, very quickly. Scripture is being fulfilled right before our eyes. Christ is coming.

It is going to be a difficult day. But for those who are willing to come to an end of our own strength, you will find the strength that only God can give. And let me tell you, it is awesome to walk in the strength of God.

It is incredible to not make promises to God because we can't keep them. It is wonderful to let God build the house. This is the house.

Unless he builds it, we labor in vain. We make our boasts at the table. We make our promises in the garden.

But until God builds the house, what a difference from the last supper to the day of Pentecost when suddenly nobody's walking out with a plan. They're walking out with the person of Christ in the form of the Holy Spirit inside of them. They're walking out in the strength of another.

Can you imagine if they'd come out with a survey? What will it take you to come to church? How foolish it would be to be reading that in scripture. No, we're going to finish where we started. You and I are going to need each other.

We're going to need the strength of God. As Pastor Williams so ably said in the communion service today, we're going to need him. We're going to need each other.

We're going to need the courage that only God can give. And I thank God he's willing to give it to us abundantly. More than you can even ask.

David, remember King David, he says, you prepared a table for me in the presence of my enemies. Not like on the other side of the valley, he's right smack in the middle of the enemy army. You prepared a table for me.

And my cup overflows. Amazing, isn't it? Right in the midst of all the anger and everything that wanted to crush the testimony of God, God prepares a table of the strength. The table is the strength of God.

He found it. In spite of his failures, in spite of his own struggles and trials, in spite of the obvious things he did wrong, he found that table and he found that goodness. And he found the mercy of God that follows him all the days of his life.

He found the promise that he was not going to finish a failure. And he didn't, even though he did fail, he didn't finish a failure. Thank God for these things.

Thank God. I'd like to give an altar call this morning for those who've come to an end of your own strength and you're ready to receive the strength of God. For people who just come and say, Lord, I just give up making promises to you.

I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't even promise my loyalty. I come to church on Sunday and I make this great boast. We sing these songs and I really believe it.

And then I go to work and I'm, I'm, I'm a I can't even open my mouth. And I promise you I'm going to do better, but I can't. I need a source of strength that is not my own.

And so I've come to an end of myself. The big, the admission of failure folks in the church of Jesus Christ is the beginning of the supernatural. The unwillingness to admit our condition is to carry on in the flesh and it produces rigidity.

It produces judgment. It produces joylessness. The older brother, remember, said to his father, you're not even giving me a goat that I can celebrate with my friends.

And here this boy that's come home and made a mess. You're you've killed the calf and you've struck up the band and here you are dancing. Thank God.

One day we are going to dance in this church, the whole service. I feel it coming. I feel it coming.

Praise God. I want to, in God's stead, I want to call those who just, you've come to an end, come to an end of trying to figure out how to get through your fire. You've come to an end of, of your own promises because they're worthless.

And you just are willing to receive the strength of God. Come to me, he said, all who are trying to be holy or trying to get through your trial. And you're heavy.

Your relationship with me has become heavy. It's not meant to be that way. It should be carried by God.

You shouldn't be carrying God. You should be carried by God. He said, come and learn of me.

My yoke is easy. My burden is light. I'm meek and lowly at heart and you will find the rest you've been longing for.

And so if that's you today, we're going to stand in the balcony, go to either aisle, come make your way down the annex of sanctuary and the same in North Jersey campus as well. And those that are watching at home, just come, just find the strength that God is willing to give you. We're going to worship for a little while, join these that are on their way down already.

And let's pray together. Father, I pray for my brothers and sisters at this altar. Please, God, give us the strength, the courage to embrace these words, Lord.

Lead us to that place of rest where we have ceased from our own labors as God did from his. Bring us into that perfection of what you did for us on the cross. Lead us to the strength of your Holy Spirit.

Give us hearts, God, to believe your promises to us. Thank you, Lord, that it's not our life. It's not our strength.

It's not our promises. You died to save us from these things, Lord. God, thank you for this new life that you promise us through Jesus Christ.

Thank you for the power of the Holy Spirit to raise us from the dead and to give us that new life that is miraculous. It's sovereign. It's supernatural.

It's God breathed into us the way you breathed into Adam and he became a living soul. Lord, you breathed into us again because of the cross and we have come back to what was lost. Thank you for favor and relationship.

Thank you for strength. Thank you for walking in us through the fire and carrying us when we can't carry ourselves and giving us peace when everything around us is shouting for us to be afraid. Thank you, God, for giving us that fragrance of Christ as we walk through the world, which is a testimony in itself, the peace in our hearts that Christ is alive.

Thank you, God, that you've caused us to this glory. You've called us, oh God, to walk in a way that brings glory to you, not through human effort, but by that which you alone can do in us. Thank you for the

privilege of yielding to you and admitting that we don't have the strength to do this.

Thank you, God. Thank you, Lord, for what you eventually did with Peter and James and John. Thank you for what you did in these three men of God and how great they did represent you on the earth, but not in their strength, Lord, in yours.

Thank you, Father. Give us understanding of these things. Don't let us put it away as just another theological lesson in our library.

Help us to embrace it. Help us, God, as we ate of the bread and drank of the communion juice, Lord, today. Help us to eat and drink of these words that they might become part of the very fabric of who we are in Christ.

Don't let us put it away, God. Don't let us say, that was interesting, and let it fall through our fingers. Save us from ourselves, O God, and bring us into the life that you bought for us.

Bless, my brothers and sisters. God, bless those online. Bless those in North Jersey.

God Almighty, bless those that are visiting today. Bless our coming in and going out. Make us a people of rest, a people that can put away our own labors and enter into the labor of God.

Father, we thank you for these things. We praise you. We bless you, God, with all of our heart today.

Let this be a great day for the kingdom of God. Let this be a great day in each of our lives. We thank you in Jesus' name.

Hallelujah to the Lamb of God. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, God.

Thank you, God. Can you give a shout of victory today? Give a shout of victory. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Glory. Glory. What's that song? Shouts of joy abound in the tents of the righteous.

Shouts of joy. Shouts of joy for those who are walking with God, who lay hold of Christ. There's something that comes into the heart that makes us lift our voices and give glory to God.

Let's do that one more time. Give glory to God. God bless you.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/25/SID25487.mp3>

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/R4VliZiRUAs.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/carter-conlon/finding-strength-in-the-fire/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net