

# Grinding in the Prison House

by Carter Conlon

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*The devil's plan is to take away spiritual vision and power, but as true believers in Christ, we have the power of God within us and can live a life of victory and separation from God.*

**Duration:** 48:43

**Scripture:** Judges 16:18

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Surrender to God", "Spiritual Vision"

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## Description

Carter Conlon addresses the 'Corinthian problem' in his sermon 'Grinding in the Prison House,' emphasizing the danger of losing spiritual vision and succumbing to a life of profitless labor, as exemplified by Samson's downfall. He urges believers to embrace the cross and surrender their lives fully to God, warning against the seductive influences that lead to spiritual weakness. Conlon highlights the importance of recognizing one's identity in Christ and the power that comes from living a life dedicated to God's purposes. He encourages the church to rise up, cancel the enemy's mockery, and reclaim their spiritual strength through obedience and faith. Ultimately, he calls for a return to the simplicity and power of the Gospel, reminding listeners that true victory is found in surrendering to God's will.

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## Transcript

I'm going to be speaking number five in the series this morning on the Corinthian problem, subtitled The Root and Resolution to Powerlessness in the Last Days Church. And there is a concern that has been expressed by someone that felt as I'm preaching this that I'm saying goodbye to the church, I'm on some kind of a journey, I'll be leaving here. Just want to, if there are one or two that are concerned about this, I want you to alleviate your concerns.

I'm not going anywhere. Teresa and I are going to be staying here. So, this is a journey that the Lord's had me on.

Remember Paul said to Timothy, the husbandman that labors must be first partaker of the fruits. There have been four times, this is the fourth time in my life that the Lord has asked for something that was dear to me. Twice it's been finances to give away savings that I had, we had accumulated, that I thought were going to give us some measure of security in the future.

Once it was my career, giving up all that, in a sense, offered security again. And this last time, it's my own vision, I guess, of the rest of my life, how I'd like to live it. And it has a lot to do with family and

grandchildren and things like that.

And the Lord says, no, Carter, one more time, I want you to give it all to me. And I want you to embrace the cross and whatever that means for your life, wherever it takes you. And I just, so it's a spiritual journey that I've been on.

And I thank God for this because it would be a fraud for me to preach any of this to you, that if I'm not having to live it myself. For those who wish I would be leaving, all I can say is, just live long enough. You'll get your wish eventually.

Judges chapter 16, please, if you'll go there, Judges chapter 16. Message title this morning is, Grinding in the Prison House. Grinding in the Prison House.

Father, I thank you for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Lord, you are truly, truly speaking something to us and to this generation. I pray God give me the ability to speak this.

Give us the ears to hear it. Lord, help me to disappear that you may appear. Lord, help my voice to fade that yours might increase.

I thank you, God, with everything in my heart that today is a day of victory. Lord, today you're going to break bondages. There's going to be something of the devil is going to come crashing down and people are going to be free.

I thank you, God, with all my heart. Lord, there will be a shout of incredible and spiritual freedom at the end of this day. I give you praise and glory for this in Jesus' name.

Grinding in the Prison House, Judges chapter 16, beginning at verse 18. This is about Samson, a mighty, mighty anointed man of God, called to bring deliverance to the people of God. And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he has shown me all his heart.

Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her and brought money in their hand, and she made him sleep upon her knees. And she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head. And she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.

And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he woke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not, or he did not know, that the Lord was departed from him.

But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass. And he did grind in the prison house. That's the title of this message this morning, Grinding in the Prison House.

Now, Satan's plan for every true believer in Christ is to take away your spiritual vision, and to move you and I into almost profitless labor. That's where Samson ended up. And where there's no outflow of the supernatural in your life.

That's the devil's plan for you, folks. Make no mistake about it. He has seductive ways that he'll move you to this place, so that you are no threat to his kingdom.

No spiritual vision, that's where Samson ended up. Profitless labor, almost profitless. He's grinding in the prison house, so obviously there's perhaps a few things that are being done that are of some value.

And no outflow of the supernatural in his life. Now, Paul said to the Corinthian church, we've already discussed this in 2 Corinthians 11, verse 19. Paul said, you suffer fools gladly, seeing yourselves are wise.

Paul said, you've opened your door to people who are preaching to you, that the Holy Spirit, governing the hand of Paul, as he's writing, calls these people fools. You suffer them gladly, you've opened your heart to them, you've opened your home to them. He says, you suffer or you allow, if a man brings you into bondage, if a man devours you, if a man takes of you, if a man exalts himself, if a man smites you on the face, in other words, if a person comes, a man or woman, and makes a mockery of who you are truly called to be in Christ.

Now, Paul was a spiritual father, and he's imploring this church. This season, as it is, where God's testimony had come into this society called Corinth. Paul saw the danger, he knew where it was heading, he knew biblical history.

He saw the patterns and plans of the devil. That's why Paul could write, we're not ignorant of Satan's devices. A lot of people are, even in our generation, but Paul wasn't.

He knew how the enemy worked. And he's coming to this church, and as a father, trying to guide, as it is, wayward children, that are heading out into a place of peril, and they're not aware of where they're going. And he's pleading with them, in a sense, would you consider what it is that God has given me to speak to you about? Now, if you go ahead, just for a moment, to Proverbs chapter 5, it speaks of the spiritual condition that Samson arrived at.

And I can't even fathom, when we get to the throne of God, the countless thousands that have followed in his footsteps, have made the same tragic mistakes that he made. In Proverbs chapter 5, verse 7, the writer says, Hear me now, therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth. Remove thy way far from her.

Now, when you see the her in here, it really speaks about a seductive religion. I've always believed that, about these verses of scripture. And come not nigh to the door of her house, lest thou give thine honor unto others, and thy years unto the cruel.

Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth. Or, in other words, what should have been yours is taken from you, and your labors be in the house of a stranger. And you mourn at the last, when your flesh and body are consumed, and say, How I have hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me.

Now, Satan's plan against the church has always been to turn the supernatural into the natural. It's to have the plan and the power of God, that's most clearly understood through the preaching of the cross, to fade into the background. Paul wrote to the church of Corinth, and he said, A fear, lest your minds, in 2 Corinthians 11, verses 3 and 4, should be turned away from the simplicity that's in Christ.

Paul said, I brought something to you of the Savior. I brought to you an understanding of where true power in the Christian life lies. It's not in gathering to yourself, it's in giving the life that God's given you, and letting it flow through you to others.

And Paul was clearly saying, This is where the power of God is. And he's trying to put a picture as it is of Calvary before this church, and saying, Look, this is where the power is. This is where your redemption was bought.

This is how the power of God moves through this generation until Christ comes again. And then he says, If somebody comes and preaches another Jesus, you're in a spiritual condition that you might receive it. You might well bear with it, Paul says.

And folks, that's the tragedy. We're living at a time when another Jesus is being preached. In many, many places.

It's another Christ. It's His name, but it's not Him. It's not what He represents.

It's not where His power is. And this is where we've arrived at. And I think throughout biblical history, we've come to a time very much like when the children of Israel were in captivity in Egypt.

And suddenly Moses appears on the scene. And the people were confronted with what they had lost sight of. They had lost sight of the power of God.

Where is the power of God? How does the power of God manifest? How does He operate? What does He do? Moses did not appear on the scene with a strategy, a ten-year plan, seven steps to spiritual freedom. Moses walked into the camp, an older man. He's got a stick in his hand, which is really a type of the cross of Jesus Christ.

He's got a sermon that God has given him that's only one line long. Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness. That's His whole message.

And that's the plan of God. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1.18, This is foolishness to the natural man. And the natural mind that's always looking for its own strength to its own resources and counting its own numbers.

The natural mind, the natural man that looks in the mirror and says, I know how to do this. I know how this can be done. I've been given intelligence.

I can figure this out. But Paul says earlier in Corinthians, It's not the mighty, not the noble, not those who know everything that are called. It's the weak.

It's those who know they need a savior. Those who are aware that I don't have what it takes to do this. Who open their hearts and God comes in in supernatural power.

And they simply begin to follow Him in obedience. As Christ followed the will of His Father. In Gethsemane, even to the cross.

There's a church that follows the will of God through Jesus Christ. And God begins to move through them in the supernatural one more time. Now in order for Satan to hold captive a people who in Christ have a strength superior to his own.

Now the devil knows it. He knows that you have a strength in you that can take his kingdom down. You, I'm not talking about collectively all of Times Square Church.

I'm talking about you individually. You, young lady, young man, older person. You're sitting here.

You have within you the resident power of God if you're a true believer in Jesus Christ. And Satan knows it. He lives in fear of the day that somebody realizes this.

And rises up out of obscurity because he knows history. He knows what has happened. He knows what can happen to his kingdom when a young boy like D.L. Moody who could almost neither write nor read.

And he was a prankster who worked in a shoe repair shop. Who comes to Christ through a Sunday school teacher. And decides that he's giving his all to God.

And then all of a sudden thousands and thousands in the years to come. Their lives are transformed by this bumbling, stumbling preacher. As historians recounted who could hardly say the word Jerusalem.

Folks, people came to laugh at him. But the power of God moved through him. And God moved in incredible power because there was a man one more time or a woman as history has recorded that finally says, I realize something.

The devil is out there trying to convince the whole church world that he's got all the authority. But I realize something. That one grandmother who lays hold of God can put him to flight.

And cause there to be a revival in our cities. But he must go after something in order for him to hold the people captive. He has to go after something.

It's the only thing which he knows if they will yield it. It will make them as weak as other men. The strategy of the devil doesn't change.

He's after something in you today. And if he can get it, you're going to be just as weak as every other person in this society. Although you'll be speaking the name Jesus.

But there's no manifestation of his glory and his power. Book of Judges, again, chapter 16 tells us that Samson could not be held with any form of cord that this world could produce. Delilah, which is a type of this seductive religion, comes into his life.

And she overtly asks him. It's not even hidden. Tell me, where is the source of your great strength? And how can we afflict you? How can we take this strength away from you? Now, Samson has an inner knowledge.

And he begins to convey this knowledge. Now, he's playing a very dangerous game when you play with sin. It's dangerous.

In Judges 16, chapter 16, verse 7. Samson said, If they bind me with seven green wits, or that means cords that were never dried, then I will be weak and shall be as another man. Now, Samson knew that he could not be bound with any multitude of new devices. That means any new battles, any new trials or strategies that you may not have faced before.

The devil will try to tell you, believer in Christ here this morning, that he's going to get you. He's going to bind you. There's something coming your way.

There's something you've come into, maybe in the last while. A new battle. You've never faced it before.

And he's trying to tell you, you're not going to get through this. But Samson, with the anointing of God, he knew that there's nothing new that can be brought that hasn't been gone through by Christ. Now, we know this.

Samson didn't. But there's nothing that Christ has not triumphed over. He's broken all the cords of sin.

He's broken every power of hell. There's absolutely nothing that can come your way. The devil can throw at you that is new.

There's no new struggle. There's no new battle that can bind you. And take away the strength of God that is in you.

And then later on in chapter 16, again in verse 11, he said to her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that were never occupied, I shall be weak and be as another man. And tells us that he could not be bound with even the greatest of the proven strengths of this world. Things that have been proven.

Things that have been tried. Things that have had the strength as it is perhaps to hold gates shut and pull ships and do other such things. Samson knew that with the anointing of God on him, no matter how great a strength in the past, if it's an old battle, if it's an old strategy, an old tactic, whatever it is, you cannot be bound with it.

Child of God, do you know this this morning? Do you realize this? Do you know your position in Christ? Do you know that when he said at the end, It is finished. And it was not just for dramatic effects or to look good in the scriptures. It was finished.

The power of hell was broken. The power of the demonic to bind you was over. As a child of God, you are raised from the dead by the spirit of the Lord.

And the power of sin and death has no more dominion over you. There's nothing of this world that can stop what God wants to do in and through your life. Chapter 16, again in verse 13, Delilah said to Samson, Up to this point or hitherto, you've mocked me and you've told me lies.

Tell me where you might be bound. And he said to her, If you weave the seven locks of my head with the web. Now he said, In other words, I can be, I'll become weak.

And Samson knew he could not be defeated in his mind. That's really what it speaks about. You can try to tie my head down as it is, but I can't be tied down.

You cannot be defeated in your mind, folks. That's where the argument is. But you can't be defeated there.

If you're in this book, if you know who you are in Christ, there's no weapon formed against you, no weapon that can prosper. Do you understand? And every tongue that rises against you in judgment, you have the right in God through Christ to condemn it. You have the right to condemn it.

You have the right to declare it null and void. You have the right to tell Satan to go right back where he belongs. You have this authority.

You cannot be bound in your mind. You cannot be tied down with thoughts. You cannot be overcome with new trials.

You have within you the Christ who rose from the dead, folks. You have within you this Christ. You cannot be triumphed over.

Folks, if you and I just get to the point of understanding that and don't live your whole life fighting this battle, you've already won. Amazing when you think of it. The devil just keeps you fighting and fighting and fighting and it just never dawns on people, hey, I've already won this battle.

I'm already on the victory side. This opponent has already triumphed over. I'm already standing on his head.

What more do I need to do? He's already under my feet. All he's doing is flapping his yap from the ground and I'm just buying into his lie and fighting this battle. It's won.

Praise be to God. That's why Paul said, I'm more than a conqueror in Christ. I can do all things through Christ who has strengthened me.

Blessed be God. Blessed be God. Whatever God's called you to be, you can be.

You will be if God is in you. If he's calling you to do it, you will do it. Christ in you will accomplish his purpose for your life.

And the purpose for your life and mine is always to give him glory, to bring glory and honor to his name by doing things that cannot be done by the natural man or the natural mind. Now, Samson said she vexed him. She pressed him daily with her words and urged him and vexed him unto death.

In verse 17, he told her all his heart and said, There's not come a razor upon my head. I've been a Nazarene unto God from my mother's womb. If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me and I shall become weak and be like any other man.

Here's what the devil is after. If my separation to God, this is what Samson finally told this seductive spirit. If my separation from God for the purpose of freeing others from oppression is willfully or unwittingly forfeited, then I will become weak as any other man.

And that's why we're living with a weak and emaciated church age, folks. The separation, the enemy's gone after it and he's gotten it. The separation.

The separation really from the purpose. When the angel of God appeared to Samson's mother, told her, he said, you're going to have a child. This child's going to have the Holy Spirit.

He's going to be mighty and he's going to deliver the people of God. He's going to deliver his people. That was the call in his life.

That's why there was this might. And folks, when we lose that separation, when we begin to take this anointing and use it for ourselves, when we begin to live to ourselves, when the whole focus of coming to church is what can I get out of God today? And we've lost this separation. We've lost this understanding that I'm not called to be as the world.

I'm not called to think like this world. This whole world is living for itself. And look at the mess it's in today, folks.

I'm not called to be a reflection of that mess. I'm called to be empowered by the Spirit of God for the sake of the souls of every man, woman and child ever born into this world, to let them know that they can be free, to let them know a Savior died for them 2,000 years ago, to let them know they can have hope and a future and an end that their heart in God has always desired for. Samson said, you take away my separation.

You take away this Nazarite vows it is that's upon me, and I will become weak. And this, folks, is why we're living in a weak church age. This is why a society can pass by the doors of most churches in America today, not even giving what's going on in there a second thought, because the value system is the same.

There's nothing in there that confronts the ungodliness that is all around them. Paul knew that this is what Satan was after in the Corinthian church, and he battled desperately to get them to see exactly what was at stake. To take away their separation, Satan will always send and use a form of seductive and enticing religion.

That's what he's always done. What did he do in Eden? He came, the Scripture says he was more subtle, more cunning, a strategy as it is, a scheme, and he comes with a subtlety. He's described as a snake in the Garden of Eden, but I wonder sometimes, did he appear in a white suit? Did he look like something that was really attractive? How did he appear in the Garden of Eden? He came in in subtlety, and he walked in and talked to Eve, and subsequently Adam.

And he threw out a theology that masqueraded as something that would fulfill. When she saw it, it says it was good for food. Something that would bring personal gratification.

It was desired, and it was pleasant to the eyes. Good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and desired to make one wise. Then she bit into the theology of the devil himself, and she moved away from that which had been upon her, this incredible glory of God that was on Adam and Eve.

Think about Delilah coming to Samson, and causes him, just pleads with him, this pleading religion as it is, this pleading spirit, show me the source of your strength. I want to take away your strength, and it wasn't even a hidden thing. That's what amazes me about this.

She was overt about it. How can your strength be taken away? And he knew that she was ratting him out to the Philistines, but still played this very, very dangerous game. I wonder how many today could sit in this house and say, I know what Pastor Carter is saying is the truth, but you'll go home, and you'll turn on Delilah one more time.

You'll put your Delilah tape in, because it makes you feel good. This seductive thing that's going after you, and you actually know it's going after you. You actually know it's going after the source of the life of Christ, but you will still turn it on.

You will still listen to it. That's what Samson did, and he played a very dangerous game, and ultimately it cost him. Go to the book of Proverbs, please, chapter 7, if you will.

We're going to take a look at this spirit that comes to take away the anointing of God and the strength of God. Proverbs chapter 7. I'm going to begin at verse 1. Now, I want you to see this as a seductive religion. My son, keep my words and lay up my commandments with thee.

Keep my commandments and live, and my law is the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers and write them upon the table of thine heart. Verse 4. Say unto wisdom, thou art my sister, and call understanding thy kinswoman, that they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flatters with her words.

This is a spirit of religious flattery. For at the window of my house I look through my casement, and I beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youth, a young man void of understanding. Passing through the street near her corner, he went to the way of her house.

In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night, and behold there met him a woman with the attire of a harlot and subtle. Remember, it describes Satan in Genesis 3, more subtle than any beast of the field. With the attire of a harlot and subtle of heart, she is loud and stubborn, and her feet abide not in her house.

Now she is without, now in the streets, and lies in wait at every corner. So she caught him and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with me, and this day have I paid my vows. Therefore I came forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.

In other words, I have a relationship with God. I know the way to peace. I've decked my bed, verse 16, with coverings of tapestry, with carved works and fine linen of Egypt.

I've perfumed my bed with myrrh and aloes and cinnamon. Come, verse 18, let us take our fill of love until the morning. Let us soulless ourselves with love.

In other words, let's focus on ourselves. Let's do the things that we love to do. That's what the Spirit says.

That's how the Spirit comes. That's how it takes away the anointing of God from the church of Jesus Christ. That's what Paul knew was happening in Corinth.

That's what he was fighting for in the church of that society. The Spirit that says, come now, enjoy yourself. You see, the next verse says, the good man's not at home, he's on a long journey.

He's taking a bag of money with him, and he'll come home at the day appointed. No, no, come, enjoy yourself. Let's focus on ourselves now.

The good man is gone. He'll come back someday, and we'll be here when he returns. But let's just do what we want to do.

And with her much fair speech, verse 21, she caused him to yield. And with the flattering of her lips, she forced him. He goes after her straightway as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, till a dart strike through his liver as a bird hastens to the snare and knows not that it is for his life.

Think of Samson falling asleep eventually, the Scripture says, on the knees of this seductive spirit. Harken to me now, therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways.

Go not astray in her paths. She has cast down many wounded. Yea, many strong men have been slain by her.

Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death. Many, many strong men. I think of the thousands that are sitting in places, sitting under a seductive spirit, using the name of Jesus Christ, causing the people to turn from the focus that is God to focusing on themselves.

A theologically completely different perspective than that which is found in Christ. And you see the men and women sitting there who should be strong, who should be mighty, but they've been slain by this spirit. They're sitting there, and everything that God intended them to be, now is forfeited, it's gone.

They're sitting there glassy-eyed, watching these star-spangled preachers stand before them and talk about themselves, and how they can use God for themselves, and how it's all about themselves. And folks, their strength is gone, they don't know it. They're simply grinding in a prison house, going around and around with profitless works, no spiritual vision, and no outflow of the supernatural.

Always living in the natural, always thinking, if I just put on a better suit, if I increase my stride just a little bit, if I smile just a little bit more, I'm going to advance in society, and I'm going to have power, and I'm going to have prestige, and all the gold is going to be mine. Oh folks, what a tragedy. These are strong men.

These are men and women who are destined to do something for God. They should be on the mission field, they should be walking with God, they should know the power of the supernatural, but they've been deceived. They have no discernment.

They've walked into the house of a spiritual harlot, and they're now focused on themselves. And folks, that's where Corinth was going. That's why Paul took three trips, that's why Paul wrote letters, that's why Paul was willing to endure scorn and ridicule, that's why Paul wouldn't walk away.

He said, I'm jealous for you, I'm jealous for the testimony of God in you. I have brought you into the kingdom of God, Paul said, and I want to present you as a pure bride to Jesus Christ. But there's something coming in, you've opened your hearts to this thing, and you're going to lose the anointing.

You're going to lose the true sense of what the power of God is all about. And Paul fought so hard for this, but yet so many people refused this, even in our generation. They will sit and agree.

It's amazing. What did the Old Testament prophets, he said, God said the people come, they listen to you, they say, you've got to go to Times Square Church. You've just got to hear the word that's coming forward.

It's convicting. We have an inner witness that it's true. But this particular prophet, God said, they come, they listen, you're like a sweet song being played on the trumpet, but they will not do it.

They will not walk there. And they know it's truth, and it's almost like, okay, as long as we know where truth is, we can go out and play our games for another week, another two weeks, we can live for ourselves. But if things get really tough, we know where truth is.

We know where we can come back to it. Yeah, we'll get it right. We'll get it right.

We know what the truth is. So we'll go out and do this. And Samson played that game, not realizing that eventually it cost him his spiritual vision.

He couldn't get back. Oh, folks, there are so many living in this situation in previous generations and in ours again today. But something began to happen, and I speak this prophetically for this generation.

Something began to happen. People are tired now. They're tired of the conferences.

They're tired of the seminars. They're tired of the books. They're tired of trying to hold this whole thing together.

They're tired of going around in circles. They're tired of hearing about the power of God, but never knowing it, never walking in it. They're tired.

They're tired of giving all the resources to somebody who just stands and says, oh, give it all to me, I'll do it for you, and I'll relieve you of the problem as it is of serving God. Oh, folks, they're tired. I can feel it in my spirit.

I see it with what God is speaking to my heart. People all over, especially in the Western world, they're just tired of the endless circles. They're tired of the powerlessness.

They're tired of the grinding. They're tired of the devil mocking them at every turn. They're tired of reading in the scriptures of what they should be, and yet looking in the mirror at what they've become.

They're tired of it. They sit glassy-eyed in some of these places while silver-tongued people talk to them about their incredible destiny, and yet they're not going anywhere. This destiny is not happening in their lives.

The only one driving the Rolls-Royce is the people who are preaching to them. It's not happening to them, folks. But something began to happen.

Samson's eyes were out, and he's grinding in the prison house, and he's going around in circles, but the scripture says, the hair of his head began to grow again in chapter 16 and verse 22 of Judges. I see this happening. I see people are just... The separation is coming back, folks.

It's just coming back. There are people who are just tired of the grind. They're just tired of going nowhere.

They're just tired of this whole Western concept of Christianity. They're tired, and their hair is starting to grow. The separation is coming back.

Praise be to God. I thank God with all my heart. The devil is having a party over Samson's head.

He is just enjoying this triumph. He's gathering together all of the hordes that are given to darkness and laughing over the balcony and looking at this that was supposed to be the deliverer with the anointing and bringing the people of God out of captivity and into freedom. And he's enjoying this.

Calls together 3,000 people who are of a like spirit. And the scripture says in Judges 16 and verse 26, well, actually earlier, it says, the people saw him. They praised their God.

Verse 24, and they said, our God's delivered into our hands our enemy. The destroyer of our country which slew many of us. And it came to pass when their hearts were merry.

They said, call for Samson. Let us make sport. I see so many people today mocking the church of Jesus Christ.

And they called for Samson out of the prison house. And he made them sport. And they set him between the pillars.

Now Samson's hair is growing. Hallelujah. He's tired of the mockery.

There's something in the heart of God's people in this generation like happened to David when he came into the camp of the Philistines and said, enough of this. Who's this uncircumcised Philistine that he's mocking the armies of the living God? Enough of this reproach in the name of Christ. Enough of people coming in with a cup of coffee and putting their feet on the altar rail in the house of God.

It's time for people to tremble now before a holy God. They're going to be standing before a holy God very soon. And Samson came into the house.

He said to the lad that held him by the hand, suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house stands that I may lean upon them. Praise God. There were two pillars that held this house up.

This house of rejoicing over the testimony of Christ. This house of rejoicing over the power of God in his church. And it was the worship of the false and the mockery of the true.

Praise be to God. These are the two pillars. They were the worship of the false.

They praised their God who delivered into their hands the enemy, the destroyer of our country which slew many of us, and the mockery of the true. Call for Samson that we may make sport. Oh God, Samson said to this young man, show me where the pillars are.

Show me where the pillars are. And I feel there's a generation rising up now that's saying the same thing as Samson. Show me where the pillars of this mockery are.

Where are the pillars of this mockery that allows that which is evil to exalt itself above that which is good, allows ungodly people to make fun of the church of Jesus Christ as if we have no power, as if they have nothing to be afraid of, as if there's no consequence to living in sin, as if they'll never stand before a holy God and be judged for how they've lived. Show me the pillars of this house. And Samson, it says in verse 29, took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood and on which it was borne up, the one in his right hand and the other with his left.

And folks, to me, it is a pure picture of the man or the church that one more time embraces the cross and all that it means in his life. Praise be to God. With one hand he took one pillar and with one hand he took the other and said, I know that the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but to we who are saved it is the power of God.

I know that the abandonment of oneself to the purposes of God is not popular in this generation, not even in the house of God. But I know therein is where I find the power of God. I know that's where the Holy Spirit is.

I know that's where the glory of God is manifested. I know that's where men and women are set free from the power of hell and death. Samson said, no more, no more grinding in the prison house, no more walking around with no vision.

With my one hand I take one and with my one hand the other. I have decided to follow Jesus. No turning back, no turning back.

Samson dies to himself and for this brief moment of his life upon the earth he lives for the honor and purposes of God. This is where this church age has to go. We've got to one more time begin to realize

where the power of God really lies.

It's not in the people who live unto themselves, it's the people who die unto themselves. Unless a seed falls in the ground, Jesus said, and dies, it will abide alone. But if it dies, it will bear much fruit.

Jesus said, if you are my disciple, deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me. If you seek to gain your life, you're going to lose it. He's not talking about your future physical life, folks.

He's talking about what he has for you. He's talking about the glory of God, the power of God, the ability that God gives to reach out in the supernatural and do things you can't do with your own strength. Praise be to God, praise be to God, praise be to God.

Hell is having a party over his head and many who are here today, you could say, Pastor, that's my life. I read this in the scriptures, but hell is partying on top of my head. The devil is laughing at me.

He's binding me with new battles. He's bringing old struggles back into my life. He's tying my mind down.

I just go through my day fighting in my mind. Victory is not even an option for me. I just keep fighting and fighting and fighting.

Hell is having a party over my head, just as it was with Samson. I think, folks, it's time for you to cancel the party. That's what Samson did.

The party's over, folks. I wonder if that's what he said before he grabbed the whole of those pillars. Party's over, folks.

You've laughed at God long enough. You've laughed at the anointing long enough. The only way to do this is you lay hold of God's purpose for your life.

Lay hold of God's purpose. Jesus Christ did not come to this world and die so that we can, through Him, fulfill our own desires. Jesus Christ came, bought us with His blood.

We are no longer our own. We are rightfully owned by the Son of God. He has the right to use our lives as He sees fit.

Find the purpose of God. Embrace the cross of Christ. It's the only way you bring this powerless mockery down that you find all around you today.

Praise be to God. You and I are called to bring freedom and victory to other people. Blessed be the Lord.

Party's over, Satan. Party's over. I'm going with God.

You know, an interesting thing happened to me. Many of you know that I've struggled with health issues for, oh, I guess 10 years now. And it was because of these issues that I began to think about retirement maybe in several years.

I began to plan for it. This is what the Lord's asked me to give up. No plan, no future.

He said, you live and die doing what I called you to do. And just recently, for the fourth time in my life, I just took everything that was dear to me and gave it to Him. And the moment I did that, I stopped coughing.

It's been an amazing month. I preached six times a couple weeks ago or a week and a half ago in Texas throughout, including the Sundays here in the church. And normally, preaching that many times, I'd be almost down for the count for a month.

Came back, it's as if I hadn't preached at all, but fully strong. The Lord says, if you want to know my strength, give your all to me and embrace my plan. I don't know what His plan is.

As far as I know, I'll be here till the day I die. I don't know. I really don't know.

I don't have a plan anymore. Day to day, walk with Him. And there's such victory in it, such freedom in it.

It's time to cancel the party, folks. It's time to stop grinding in the prison house. As soon as we begin to move into doing what we think should be the future of our lives, there's a prison that comes with it.

There's struggle that comes with it. There's mockery that comes with it. There's a mental battle that's deeper and darker than anything you've ever known that comes with it.

Because we're trying to press into a kingdom and bring all this baggage with us into this kingdom and it doesn't fit through the door, folks. You can't bring it in. It's like trying to take a camel, like as they said, through the eye of a needle.

This doesn't fit. You can't bring it in. You come into God with a heart that says, Lord, I'm yours.

And whatever you want to do with me, let me never say no to you, God. Let me never look in the mirror and say it can't be done. Let me not limit you, Lord.

Let me not say to you, you can't furnish a table in this wilderness. God, you are God. You sent Moses with a stick in a one-line sermon.

You brought three million people out of captivity, God. May I see it. May I embrace it.

May I open my mouth. May I stand in the marketplace. May I just finally realize I can't be defeated by the enemy.

I have the God of the universe inside of me. How can I be defeated? If God be for us, who can be against us? I have this life of Christ in me. And it's time to cancel the party.

You spend your whole week fighting these things in your mind. And all the devil's got to do is throw a new green cord at you every Tuesday. And you're done for the week.

Or come back with an old rope. Or just tie your head down with arguments one more time. And here you are, struggling, struggling, coming to church, just trying to survive.

When God says, I didn't call you to survive. I called you to be more than a conqueror. I called you to stand and make a difference in your generation.

I called you to tear down powers and principalities of darkness. I showed you these things in the Old Testament so you would understand what it's like to walk with Christ in the new. I showed you David.

I showed you Samson. I showed you Deborah. I showed you Barak.

I showed you Jael. I showed you all these people. They're all types.

They're all shadows of what you're to be as the body of Christ in this generation. Praise be to God. We're not called to walk through this city all week just trying to survive.

We're called to be more than conquerors. We're called to bring the life of Christ with us wherever we go. We're called to speak to men's hearts.

And as we do, Satan must release his grip and let them go. We're called to give the life of God and bring sight to the spiritually blind. We're called to speak into bruises of the human heart and see the supernatural healing of God begin to go forward and set people free from captivity and darkness.

We're called to move and live in the supernatural, folks. And Paul knew that's what Corinth was in danger of losing. He knew it because their focus was shifting to themselves.

God help us in this hour. God help us one more time to let this separation begin to grow. Oh, folks, let the separation grow.

I've been listening to things. I've walked into some places recently where the gospel is supposedly being preached. And it's tragic to hear what's coming from pulpits in our generation.

Children are angry. Kids are starving to death spiritually in the streets. And you've got preachers and pulpits saying it's our turn for the gold.

It's our turn for the silver. God help the spiritual stupidity of this generation. Folks, it's time that you and I were separated to the purposes of God.

It's time to cancel the devil's party. Cancel the mocking. It's time to walk in the supernatural.

Folks, one thing about the life of Paul. Like him or hate him, you had to deal with him. You couldn't ignore him when he walked into a room.

And that's the way it should be for every Christian. Like us or hate us, you should have to deal with us when we come into a room, when we walk into an environment. Praise be to God.

The scripture says we bring with us the savor of Christ. We bring the savor from, for some it's life unto life and for others it's death unto death. But we bring the savor of Christ with us everywhere we go.

Praise be to God. Oh, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. My other call is simple.

In the annex, here in the main sanctuary, cancel the party today. Cancel the devil's party over your life. Cancel the mockery of demonic powers.

Cancel these struggles that you've already won in Christ. Get up and move to the will of God. It's as simple as that.

Lord, whatever you've got for my life, I give you what I thought my life should be. I surrender it. Folks, I don't know how else to say it.

There's nothing else that's going to get anybody through the coming days. I surrender what I thought my life was supposed to be. I give it to you, Lord.

And God, you take it now and you use my life for your glory. Only thing I ask, Holy Spirit, is wherever I go, there has to be a reckoning. Praise be to God.

There has to be a reckoning with you. Your presence has got to be in my life. I prayed this prayer.

And I don't want this to sound wrong, but I was on the platform a few weeks ago. God was digging so deep into my heart. You've got to give this thing to me.

You've got to let it go. It'll affect everything you do. It's going to affect your preaching.

It's going to take away your spiritual vision. The Lord says, you've got to let it go. And I prayed.

I was walking here on a Sunday morning and I said, okay, here's the deal, Lord. If I have to give you all that I am, you have to give me all that you are. That's the deal, Lord.

I need all of you to give all of me. I can't do it otherwise. God, I need everything that you are.

I need everything that you have. And not only do I ask for it, Lord, I believe I have the right to knock on your door as the man who needed bread and say, Lord, I'm not going away until you give it to me. I need it.

Bless be God. If this is in your heart today, if it's time to cancel the party and embrace the will of God for your life. Folks, don't come here just to dump your conviction.

Come here and let it be the beginning of something new in your life. If this is your heart, and if you're not willing, I had a young man tell me recently, he said, the first time I ever heard you preach, I was sitting in this church and I was saying, no way, no way, man. I'm not willing to do this.

I'm not willing to lay down my life or my career or any other thing. And I said, thank God you said that. I appreciate that.

At least you knew where you stand. And then he said, I went home and he was miserable. He said, I couldn't escape it and kept coming back and kept coming back and finally got to the point of getting out of his seat and coming here.

And he said, I'm going with God. I talked to him this week. I'm going with God.

This young man said, I'm going all the way with God. Whatever God has for my life, I'm going with him. Praise be to God.

Let's stand. The Holy Spirit is drawing you. Join these that are coming.

And we're going to pray together. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Lord. Greg, just lead us for a little while. Let's worship in the annex.

You can step up between the screens in the main sanctuary, the balcony. Go to either exit. Just make your way with these that are coming and embracing the will of God.

Whatever it is, embracing the will of God. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Jesus.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Praise God.

Pastor William just came over to me and gave me a verse of Scripture for you and for me. Here's what it says from the book of Micah. Last chapter, verses 8 to 10.

Do not rejoice over me, my enemy. When I fall, I will arise. When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me.

I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I've sinned against him until he pleads my cause and executes justice for me. He will bring me forth to the light. I will see his righteousness.

Then she who is my enemy will see and shame will cover her who said to me, Where is the Lord your God? Mine eyes will see her. Now she will be trampled down like mud in the streets. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. These are the days of Elijah. These are the days of Elijah.

There will be a church. There will be a church. There will be a church in this generation.

Praise be to God. There will be a church. You and me.

There will be a church and thousands and thousands of others of God. Thank you, Lord. These are the days of Elijah.

Let's rejoice together. Let's rejoice.

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